THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF A

CLASSROOM AIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focused on the process of designing, implementing, and formatively

evaluating an eight week Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program

(CAPD-TP) on behavior management and academic instruction within the context of a

New Jersey state approved private special education school for students with behavioral

and/or learning disabilities using Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation

framework. In the Clarification phase, a needs assessment was conducted in order to

clarify the professional development needs of the classroom aides. The results of the

needs assessment indicated that the classroom aides would benefit from professional

development training activities in the domains of behavior management and academic

instruction. This information was used in the Design phase to develop the Classroom

Aide Professional Development Training Program's (CAPD-TP) purpose, goals, and

activities. The first main goal of the program was that classroom aides would report

increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction

strategies. The second main goal was that the classroom aides would utilize behavioral

management strategies and academic instruction strategies presented in the program

when working with students. The CAPD-TP met for a period of eight weeks during a 30-

minute prep period designated by the school director for the program. In the Evaluation

phase, five questions were delineated and investigated. Results of the formative

evaluation indicated that the program met one of its goals but not the other. The

classroom aides did report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and

academic instruction strategies. They did not meet the goal of utilizing these strategies in

the classroom. Overall, the classroom aides rated the CAPD-TP to be a valuable and

satisfying experience. Finally, the program was implemented as designed with a few minor changes including an increased budget and a slightly shorter session length than expected. This dissertation adds to the limited literature on professional development for classroom aides by providing a case study example of the design, implementation, and evaluation of such a program. The external validity of the Classroom Aide Professional Development Program is weak, as results cannot be generalized outside of this private, special education school setting. Recommendations include the continuation of the program, the development of a summative evaluation process, and increased collaborative, team building activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my cousin, Gregory, whose determination and hard work served as my inspiration to enter the field of school psychology, and whose own schooling experience has shaped both my professional and personal journeys.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Dissertation Task

The focus of this dissertation is on the design, implementation, and formative

evaluation of an educational professional development training program targeted for

classroom aide paraprofessionals within the context of a New Jersey state approved

private special education high school for students with behavioral and learning

disabilities. Currently, the school has a classroom aide professional development training

program (CAPD-TP) that has been in existence since 2007; however, the organization

has not previously had the time or resources to conduct a thorough program evaluation.

Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation framework guided this process, which

included conducting an assessment of needs, redesigning, implementing, and formatively

evaluating the school's CAPD-TP. This process involved Maher's (2012) four program

planning phases: the Clarification phase, the Design phase, the Implementation phase,

and the Evaluation phase. The process was documented using a case study approach,

which allowed for a detailed examination of the development and implementation of a

program within a specific context.

In the Clarification phase, a needs assessment was conducted to (1) clarify the

current concerns of the relevant stakeholders regarding professional development needs

of the classroom aides, and to (2) clarify the needs and resources of the school as an

organization. To clarify the professional development needs of the classroom aides, the

primary investigator used relevant classroom aide vocational knowledge and skill

domains to frame and organize data protocol development and data gathering. These

domains included 1. Behavioral Management, 2. Academic Instruction, 3. Technical Job

Duties, and 4. Communication. To conduct the needs assessment, the primary

investigator administered the following protocols: 1. Needs Assessment Questionnaire for

the classroom aides, teachers, counselors, and administrators, and 2. Classroom

Paraprofessional Skills Inventory for classroom aides and teachers. The protocols

included both multiple choice and open-ended questions. A context assessment was

conducted using Maher's (2012) AVICTORY approach. This approach considers eight

factors that "indicate readiness of the organization for a program and that identify factors

that may facilitate or inhibit program design, implementation, and evaluation" (Maher,

2000, p. III-68). The eight contextual factors include:

     1. Ability of the organization to commit resources

     2. Values of organizational members

     3. Ideas about the situation held by organizational members

     4. Circumstances within the organization that relate to its structure and direction

     5.Timing

     6. Obligation to assist the target population

     7. Resistance that might be encountered

     8. Yield or benefit that may result from the program.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school's director and principal in

order to discuss the needs and readiness of the organization as a whole.

In the Design phase, the program purpose, goals, and activities were developed

and defined. The goals of the program were largely dependent upon the data gathered

from needs assessment activities. Furthermore, these goals were specific, measurable,

attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART) and directly linked to the target population's

knowledge, skill, and ability (KSA's) needs identified in the Clarification stage. Once the

goals of the program were established, the design phase considered other program design

elements such as eligibility standards and criteria, methods, materials, equipment,

facilities, program components and activities, budget, personnel, incentives and a

program evaluation plan.

The Implementation phase of the program took place through regularly scheduled

training sessions at the school and was conducted by the primary investigator.

Implementation was monitored, facilitated, and structured using protocols and

frameworks developed by Maher (2012) and the primary investigator. The

implementation process utilized Maher's (2012) DURABLE approach, which specifies a

series of "implementation procedures, activities, and behaviors" (p. V-9). Implementation

of the program was concerned with issues such as attendance, participation, relevance to

the context, scheduling, and session content.

The Evaluation phase of the program included the formative evaluation of the

CAPD-TP. This process involved the development of program evaluation questions,

protocols to collect data related to those questions, and methods for analyzing,

interpreting, and communicating results of the evaluation data. Program questions

addressed the following areas:

      1. To what extent have program goals been met?

      2. What knowledge and skills did the classroom aides perceive themselves

         as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were

         utilized?

3. What knowledge and skills did other stakeholders (teachers/administrators) perceive the aides as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

4. To what extent did the classroom aides find the program to be valuable and a satisfying experience?

5. To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

During the program evaluation process, Program Evaluation Question 3 listed above was deleted from the original design. Teachers rated the classroom aides so highly during the needs assessment process (using the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report) that the primary investigator assumed that a pre and post comparison would not prove meaningful. The Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report was therefore not utilized during the Program Evaluation Phase. Protocols for collecting program evaluation information included: (1) the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire and (2) the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report. The protocols consisted of multiple choice and open-ended questions related to the program evaluation questions. Data from the protocols were collected, aggregated, and evaluated by the primary investigator. Quantitative results are reported in terms of means and percentages, as well as through tables and graphs. For qualitative data, responses were analyzed thematically. Limitations of self-report will be discussed.

Rationale

Contributions to the Psychological and Educational Literature

A program addressing the professional development needs of special education classroom paraprofessionals has relevance for the psychological and educational research

literature because to date few professional development programs for paraprofessionals have been systematically evaluated (Giangreco, Suter, & Doyle, 2010). Furthermore, the literature that does exist is limited in that it mostly focuses on specific disabilities, such as the Irvine Paraprofessional Program for ADHD, and does not always generalize outside of a single disability and/or context (Kotkin, 1998).

A review of the existing literature on professional development in education indicates that most studies have focused on training teachers. Examples include museum initiated professional development for teachers (Grenier, 2010), web-based services (Whitaker, Kinzie, Kraft-Sayre, Mashburn, & Pianta, 2007), summer academies (Foster, 2010), blogging (Sun, 2010), and learning community approaches (Doppelt, Schunn, Silk, Mehalik, Reynolds, & Ward, 2009). Furthermore, existing literature provides suggestions for how to go about creating professional development programs for paraprofessionals specific to a context's needs, usually with an emphasis on instructional strategies (Cobb, 2007; Keller, Bucholz, & Brady, 2007; Passarro, Pickett, Latham, & HongBo, 1994).

Relevance to the Special Education Context

A program addressing the professional development needs of special education classroom aides has relevance for the special education context because classroom paraprofessionals are becoming increasingly present in special education settings and most receive very little formal training that would prepare them for this position (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009; Riggs, 2001; Tejero Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). For example, Giangreco, Suter, and Doyle (2010) explain that research on special education paraprofessionals has grown rapidly in recent years due to an increased

presence in inclusive special education environments and this research has shown that most paraprofessionals begin working with limited formal training and most of the training is informally on-the-job (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009; Riggs, 2001; Tejero Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008).

In addition, needs assessments have been conducted across different samples of paraprofessionals and many of the training needs identified have been similar including topics such as behavior management, specific disabilities, and curriculum modifications. Riggs (2001) reported that a sample of 200 paraprofessionals identified "knowledge of specific disabilities, behavior management, communication, learning styles, and understanding inclusion" (Riggs, 2001, p.80) as the areas of greatest need for professional development. Another study found that paraprofessionals reported a need for training across 15 knowledge standards including basic technologies for students with disabilities, indicators of abuse, remedial strategies, and procedures regarding behavior management (Carter et al., 2009). The need for professional development programs to address these training needs is evident in this literature.

Relevance to the Current Context

The current context is a New Jersey state approved private special education high school that provides educational and related services to students with behavioral and learning disabilities. The school employs fourteen paraprofessionals in total, with approximately two to each classroom. The classrooms are staffed in such a way that the students remain in the classroom for their core academic subjects and the teachers rotate from room to room. As a result, the students consistently spend most of their day at school with the paraprofessionals in their classrooms. A program addressing the

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professional development needs of the classroom aides has relevance for the current

context because these paraprofessionals come to the school with diverse educational

backgrounds and work experiences that may or may not be related to working in special

education or working with this population of students. This program would benefit both

the paraprofessionals and relevant stakeholders by identifying training needs, providing

professional development training sessions, and formatively evaluating the program.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Current State of Paraprofessionals in Education

In 2007, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 312,000

paraprofessionals were employed in special education. Federal data provided by the U.S.

Department of Education indicate that these numbers have risen, reporting that

approximately 445,000 full time equivalent teacher aides were employed in special

education in the Fall of 2009. Other estimates report that the number of paraprofessionals

in special education currently range anywhere from 600,000 to 1 million (McKenzie &

Lewis, 2008). The U.S. Department of Education (1999) explained that the number of

teachers, teacher aides, and related service personnel is reported by each state.

Paraprofessionals may be reported in either the teacher aide category or the related

service personnel category. It can therefore be difficult to estimate the exact number of

paraprofessionals working in the United States' education system. Furthermore, many

states only report paraprofessionals who are employed in federally funded or mandated

programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Regardless of the disparate statistics,

there exists consensus among researchers that the number of paraprofessionals working

in educational settings is rapidly increasing in the United States (French, 2003; Giangreco

& Doyle, 2002; Giangreco, Suter, & Doyle, 2010; McKenzie & Lewis, 2008).

Paraprofessionals go by a variety of titles: paraeducators, special needs assistants,

teacher aides, learning support assistants, teaching assistants, educational assistants,

instructional aides, teacher assistants, and more informally, "paras" (French, 2003;

Giangreco & Doyle, 2007; Giangreco, Suter, & Doyle, 2010). This lack of universality in

terminology has also been accompanied by a lack of agreement in roles and job responsibilities of paraprofessionals (McKenzie & Lewis, 2008; Morrissette, Morrissette, & Julien, 2002). The literature agrees that clearly defined job descriptions are often unavailable or nonexistent (Morrissette et al., 2002; Riggs & Mueller, 2001). The obscurity that exists in regards to terminology and job responsibilities has led to confusion among paraprofessionals who fulfill these roles and the teachers who supervise them (Morrissette et al., 2002).

Some researchers have tried to bring clarity to the situation by organizing paraprofessionals into three major types: instructional paraprofessionals, paraprofessionals and aides, and educational interpreters (Bernstore, 2001). Most special education paraprofessionals fall under the category of instructional paraprofessional. These paraprofessionals assist and support the classroom teacher by fulfilling responsibilities outlined by educational plans established by the teacher (Bernstore, 2001). Paraprofessionals and aides differ from instructional aides in that they focus on helping to "motivate pupils, build students' self-confidence, provide more individual attention, and increase services and resources available to students" (Bernstore, 2001, p. 37). This enables the classroom teacher to focus solely on the educational needs of the students. Finally, there are educational interpreters. These paraprofessionals provide services for hearing impaired students (Bernstore, 2001).

The literature outlines different roles that paraprofessionals fill. There seems to be consensus that one of the main roles involves direct instruction. In one study of paraprofessionals in Connecticut, they reported to spend more than 50% of their work hours involved in direct instruction activities (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). Other activities

include reinforcing concepts previously taught by the teacher, assisting with behavior management, monitoring children outside of the classroom, and daily planning activities (Tejero Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Still other activities include facilitating social peer relationships, providing small group instruction, and clerical work such as copying and filing (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009). Others list primary responsibilities as assisting to maintain healthy learning environments, providing objective data that teachers can use to modify learning activities, assisting in the assessment of students, and leading instructional activities developed by the teacher to individuals or groups of students (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

It is clear that the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals are vast and varied. As a result, there has arisen some controversy regarding the appropriateness of the use of paraprofessionals for some of these job responsibilities. In a review of the literature, Giangreco et al. (2010) summarizes that the greatest areas of disagreement about paraprofessional responsibilities exist around the following areas: the extent and nature of instruction, planning and adapting educational activities, role in assessment, communication with parents, and clerical duties. With a long list of job responsibilities and controversy surrounding these roles, it is easy to see how role confusion can ensue.

History of Paraprofessionals in Education

Paraprofessionals started to become more widely employed in educational settings after World War II due to a shortage of professional teachers (Morrissette et al., 2002). In addition to this shortage, the baby boom played a role in changing the face of paraprofessionals in the classroom (Brown, Farrington, Knight, Ross, & Ziegler, 1999). The rapid increase in birth rate led to an increase in the number of children with severe

disabilities that survived labor and delivery. As a result, the school system began to see a greater number of children with significant disabilities in their schools. Commonly, these children were rejected from mainstream education and segregated into private settings. These private institutions often relied on paraprofessionals to serve as educators. Brown et al. (1999) explained, "Most who provided direct services in these segregated private settings were untrained, relatively low paid, not college educated, or licensed" (p. 250). Meanwhile, paraprofessionals who were employed in mainstream education originally served to help with clerical and administrative duties.

In the 1960's and 1970's, even more individuals were employed as paraprofessionals in order to assist in community action programs that were arising due to changes in the social and political climate of the United States (Morrissette et al., 2002). Title I and Head Start programs began to serve large numbers of children from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Paraprofessionals were hired to support these efforts. In addition, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed in 1975 and required public schools to provide a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel, 2006). While this landmark legislation began to advance the inclusion of severely disabled children in the public education system, most public schools continued to use a segregated service model whereby disabled students were provided an education separate from typically developing peers. In this model, paraprofessionals were the main service providers, performing instructional duties historically reserved for professional teachers (Brown et al., 1999).

In the mid 1980's, schools began to use paraprofessionals in general education classrooms to assist children with severe disabilities as an alternative to complete segregation (Brown et al., 1999). Unfortunately, however, declines in federal funding and support in the 1980's led to a decrease in the attention paid to paraprofessional employment and professional development. In the 1990's an even greater interest in the use of paraprofessionals began to emerge in response to legislative actions such as the passage and reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The Education of All Handicapped Children was amended and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. IDEA was reauthorized in 1997 and again in 2004 when its name was changed once again to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). A key part of IDEA and IDEIA is that children with disabilities must be educated with nondisabled children to the greatest extent possible (Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel, 2006). As a result of this stipulation, children with disabilities have become increasingly included in general education classrooms. In order to be successful academically and socially in general education, students with severe disabilities often require extra support. Frequently, this support is provided in the form of a classroom paraprofessional or a one-to-one aide. While this has led to an increase in the employment and use of paraprofessionals in special education, some have argued that this has led to an overreliance on these paraprofessionals for support in special education (Giangreco, Halvorsen, Doyle, & Broer, 2004).

Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, credentialing requirements were established for paraprofessionals working in Title I schools in both general and

special education capacities. These standards require newly hired paraprofessionals to meet one of the following criteria: have an associate's degree, have completed two years of college coursework, pass a rigorous test showing the ability to assist students with reading, writing, and mathematics, or complete a Performance/Portfolio Assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). NCLB outlined the activities of the paraprofessional as including: one-on-one tutoring, assistance with classroom management, instructional assistance in computer labs, participation in parent involvement activities, assisting in libraries and media centers, translating, or providing instructional support under the direct supervision of a teacher (McKenzie & Lewis, 2008).

Changing Roles in Education

As the public education system began to serve larger numbers of children in special education, more paraprofessionals were hired and their roles began to change. The U.S. Department of Education explained, "While they still performed routine monitoring, clerical, and housekeeping tasks, paraprofessionals also reviewed and reinforced lessons and assisted students with other learning activities initiated by the teacher" (1999, p. III-4). Giangreco and Doyle (2002) summarize other factors that contributed to this change to include: shortages of special education teachers, increased early childhood special education services, increased classified students with high-intensity needs such as autism, and increased responsibility assumed by general education teachers.

The increased responsibility of general education teachers as a result of increased inclusive practices is consistently identified in the literature as one of the main reasons for increased hiring of paraprofessionals. Classified students often require more attention

and resources from the classroom teacher than his or her peers (French, 2003). In an effort to support teachers and students, special education administrators have increased the numbers of paraprofessionals that they hire (French, 2003). French (2003) also points to an increased emphasis on student achievement under the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and NCLB. Some administrators have turned to hiring paraprofessionals in an attempt to assist their students in making annual yearly progress. In addition, shortages of fully qualified professionals has led administrators to rely on paraprofessionals to provide related services and classroom assistance in an attempt to meet all of the needs of students in special education (Brown et al., 1999; French, 2003).

Furthermore, the changing role of paraprofessionals is fueled by the changing roles of teachers. Increasingly, teachers are being seen as managers of education rather than direct service providers (Morrissette et al., 2002; Salzberg & Morgan, 1995; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay & Stahl, 2001). In this model, paraprofessionals provide direct academic instruction, sometimes without the necessary educational training and supervision. Giangreco (2003) explains that teachers often delegate the task of instructing students with disabilities to paraprofessionals because they assume that they have specialized training to work with special education students. This assumption is often false. Furthermore, a "training trap" develops when teachers see that paraprofessionals receive any type of training or professional development (Giangreco, 2003, p.51). Once teachers see this training take place, they feel even more comfortable in delegating instructional duties to the paraprofessionals in the classroom.

Training Needs of Paraprofessionals in Education

Most paraprofessionals begin working with limited formal training and most of the training is on the job (Carter et al., 2009; Riggs, 2001; Tejero Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Paraprofessionals in education often receive minimal or no introductory training before being placed in the classrooms (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). For example, in a survey of 313 paraprofessionals, almost half reported on the job training as the most common form of training received (Carter et al., 2009). Of the training provided on the job or through in service training, the most common topics included basic educational terminology, rules and procedures regarding behavior management, purposes of programs for students with disabilities, effects of disabilities on students, ethical practices, curriculum, and child development (Carter et al., 2009; Tejero Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Others report training regarding monitoring children, clerical duties, and providing instruction (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). While paraprofessionals report both methods of formal and informal training, one study found that "70% of respondents indicated that teacher inservice was available to them, but more than three quarters of those who received training believed it was irrelevant" (Riggs & Mueller, 2001, p. 58).

Topics identified as areas of needed training include helping students with assistive technology, completing disability paperwork, assisting with related services, and implementing behavior management programs (Carter et al., 2009). Other needs assessments identify knowledge of specific disabilities, behavior management, communication, learning styles, and understanding inclusion as top training priorities (Riggs, 2001). Still more paraprofessionals report a lack of training in managing challenging behaviors and how to modify and adapt the curriculum (Riggs & Mueller,

2001). A study of schools in three rural states indicated that a majority of paraprofessionals reported training needs in the areas of behavior management, understanding special needs, and the role of the paraprofessionals (Passaro, Pickett, Latham, & HongBo, 1994). Despite the evidence for training needs that can be found in the literature, there has been limited progress in the development of policies and programs to address these needs (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

The Council for Exceptional Children and the National Resource Center for Paraeducators looked to fill this gap in policy by developing and validating a set of knowledge and skills that paraprofessionals who work with exceptional children should be expected to master. These organizations delineated a set of ten standards that reflect the knowledge and skills that are essential to the role of a paraprofessional in education. While these standards are aspirational in nature rather than mandatory, the CEC "expects that agencies will ensure that all paraeducators working with individuals with exceptional learning needs have, at a minimum, mastered the Paraeducator Common Core and appropriate specialization knowledge and skills…" (CEC, 2009, p.189). The ten standards cover knowledge and skills regarding: (1) foundational knowledge of exceptional learning needs and programs, (2) development and characteristics of learners, (3) individual learning differences, (4) instructional strategies, (5) learning environments / social interactions, (6) language, (7) instructional planning, (8) assessment, (9) professional and ethical practice, and (10) collaboration.

Professional development guidelines and mandates have also begun to develop in response to recent legislation of No Child Left Behind and the reauthorization of IDEIA in 2004. The passage of No Child Left Behind of 2001 introduced changes in the

education system aimed at improving academic achievement and increasing accountability of teachers and schools in general. In order to meet requirements for highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals, schools must allocate between 5% and 10% of their Title I funds for professional development activities. These funds can be used for teachers as well as paraprofessionals at the discretion of the local district (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Furthermore, NCLB "requires that paraprofessionals be provided with professional development opportunities in the areas of the core curriculum, instructional strategies, state academic standards, and state assessments" (Section 2123[a][3][A] as cited in McKenzie & Lewis, 2008, p. 460). The reauthorization of IDEIA in 2004 also provides some guidance regarding training and supervision of paraprofessionals; however, it does not outline the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals as explicitly as NCLB. Part B requires paraprofessionals to be trained and supervised according to State laws and policies (McKenzie & Lewis, 2008). Part C requires an overarching comprehensive system of professional development that includes training opportunities for paraprofessionals as well as teachers (McKenzie & Lewis, 2008). While these laws begin to provide guidance regarding the training and professional development of paraprofessionals, there still exists variable interpretation and implementation of these guidelines across different states and local districts.

Barriers to addressing the training needs of paraprofessionals must also be acknowledged. Formalized trainings often incur costs for tuition, books, and travel that may not be available from the district or affordable for the individual paraprofessional (Steckelberg & Vasa, 1998). Furthermore, paraprofessionals enter the educational system

with different levels of experience and training and work with a diverse population of students in terms of disability, ethnicity, and educational achievement. As a result, these paraprofessionals possess a diverse set of training needs that may not be able to be addressed with a single or formalized training program (Riggs & Mueller, 2001).

It is important to note however that training needs transcend even those reported by paraprofessionals. Teachers too require preparation and professional development surrounding the appropriate use and supervision of paraprofessionals in their classrooms (Morrissette et al., 2002; Wallace et al., 2001). In a study investigating the knowledge and skills needed by teachers to supervise paraprofessionals, Wallace et al. (2001) reported, "lack of preparation was a main concern for teacher in *Training* and *Management of Paraprofessionals*" (p. 530). This is especially true of general education teachers who work in inclusion classrooms who have not received formal training on how to implement behavior support plans or modify curriculum for special education students (Marks, Schrader, & Levine, 1999). With teachers lacking the necessary training and competencies to manage paraprofessionals and paraprofessionals relying on "on-the-job" training, there exists a clear gap in training.

Issues Related to the Use and Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals

While the literature surrounding the roles, responsibilities, and needs of paraprofessionals has grown in recent years, research surrounding the effectiveness of paraprofessionals has been limited thus far. With an increase in the use of paraprofessionals as a primary support for disabled students in general education classrooms, this research is vital in informing policy and decisions regarding the employment, role, and training of paraprofessionals in education.

A study by Gerber, Finn, Achilles, and Boyd-Zaharias (2001) investigated the relationship between teacher aides and students' academic achievement by looking at longitudinal data gathered on 6,300 students by Tennessee's Project STAR. One of their research questions asked whether the presence of a full-time classroom aide in a large class size or small class size affects student achievement in Grades K, 1, 2, and 3. Results indicated that the standardized achievement scores of students in classrooms with aides were not statistically different from the scores of students who participated in classrooms without aides. In fact, students in classrooms with a small class size performed better regardless of aide presence in the classroom. Further results indicated that student achievement was not significantly correlated with the aides' level of education or years of work experience. Finally, the authors compared the time that the aides spent involved in different activities with the students' academic achievement. The results showed no significant relationship for these variables in grade 1 and 2; however, the results in grade 3 were significant ($p < .05$). These results indicated that greater amounts of instruction by the classroom aides were correlated with poorer academic achievement. These results should be interpreted with caution however as the students were not reported as either classified or non-classified. While these results provide a "bigger picture" perspective regarding the use of teacher aides, they should not be considered representative of special education or inclusion classrooms as a whole.

Through classroom observations and interviews with related service providers special education teachers, parents, general education teachers, instructional assistants, and administrators, another study found that the proximity of the paraprofessional to the student with a disability in an inclusive setting has the potential for both positive and

negative effects on the student and the classroom as a whole (Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997). The authors' findings conclude that the proximity and availability of a paraprofessional in the classroom allows professional staff to pass along the responsibility of educating the student. They found that paraprofessionals were making and implementing most decisions surrounding curriculum and instruction without the training to do so (Giangreco et al., 1997). In addition, the paraprofessionals were observed to frequently separate the student from the larger group and foster dependence on adults. Peer interactions between the disabled student and non-disabled peers were found to be encouraged and hindered by paraprofessionals depending on whether the paraprofessional was liked by the non-disabled peers. Giangreco et al. (1997) explained that the paraprofessional and disabled student often came as "a package deal" and the quality of the disabled student's peer relationships depended on the relationship that the paraprofessional was able to establish with the non-disabled students in the classroom. These results must also be interpreted with caution as the study focused on a population of students with multiple disabilities who were all identified as deaf-blind.

Proximity of paraprofessionals has also been found to serve as a positive factor in promoting student academic engagement. Werts, Zigmond, and Leeper (2001) observed and coded interactions between three student – paraprofessional dyads. The students were diagnosed with Spina Bifida, Asperger syndrome, and Autism respectively. Analyses indicated that these students exhibited greater percentages of academic engagement behaviors and lower percentages on non-engagement when the paraprofessional was judged to be in close proximity to the student (within 2 feet).

Kotkin (1998) also reported benefits of employing paraprofessionals to work with students with behavioral difficulties. The author compared students with ADHD who received social skills training with students with ADHD who received the same social skills training along with the support of a classroom aide. Students in the group that received the training and the support of a paraprofessional showed greater improvement in regards to disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Taken together, these studies highlight that the use of paraprofessionals to support students with disabilities has the potential to have both positive and negative implications for social and educational development.

Program Planning and Evaluation

To date, the author of this article has been unable to locate research literature on the documentation of program planning and evaluation activities specific to the professional development of paraprofessionals in education. There is however an abundance of available training materials and manuals. The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals has a webpage devoted to paraeducator training materials that lists approximately 40 training programs and materials covering topics such as working with medically fragile children, positive behavior strategies, working with English language learners, and early education issues.

One such training program is "Before the Bell Rings: What Every Paraeducator Should Know" (National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals). This program consists of a 6-part video and facilitator guide. Its goal is to foster ongoing professional development across pre-school, elementary, and secondary grade levels. Topics covered include: definitions of roles and responsibilities of paraeducators; how to communicate

effectively with teachers, administrators, parents, and students; how to develop problem-solving and behavior management skills; and how to deal with ethical issues and guidelines. The facilitator's guide provides sample meeting agendas, materials for overhead projectors, activities for each topic, and information on where to find additional resources. This program must be purchased by the school district or individual facilitator.

Other examples of training programs include "The Paraprofessional's Guide to Assisting Classroom Instruction" (Wallace, 2003). This program consists of a workbook covering 5 content areas that include: Definition and Role of Paraprofessionals in Educational Settings, Communication and Team Building, Establishing and Maintaining Rapport with Students, Supporting the Teaching of Teachers and the Learning of Students, and Data Collection for Monitoring Student Performance. There is also an accompanying 25-minute video that highlights the information on instruction. The video presents an overview of roles and responsibilities, factors that impact learning, and principles of normal development. More specifically, the video covers behavioral, cognitive, social cognitive, and constructivist theories of learning. It also covers the difference between teacher-directed instruction (direct instruction and assisted learning) and student-centered instruction (constructivism, inquiry learning, and problem based learning). Dr. Teri Wallace has also developed an accompanying manual entitled, "The Teacher's Guide to Supporting and Supervising Paraprofessionals in the Classroom" (2003). This program also contains a workbook for teachers and a 20-minute video. Similar to the paraprofessional workbook, this workbook contains 5 content areas that include: Self Assessment and a Plan for Development, Definition and Role of Paraprofessionals in Educational Settings, Communication and Team Building, Planning,

Scheduling and Delegating, and On-the-Job Training and Performance Feedback. The video presents seven competency areas that teachers should work towards: communicating with paraprofessionals, planning and scheduling, providing instructional support, modeling for paraprofessionals, managing the work of paraprofessionals, providing on-the-job training, and advocating for involvement and professional development.

Project PARA, a project conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, provides research and training materials for both paraprofessionals and the teachers that they work with. Their training materials are presented in the format of a Web-based self study program and are offered without charge to schools and teacher training programs. The program requires the district to provide an instructor or mentor to manage the paraprofessionals' online work. The Paraeducator Self Study Program consists of 14 topics grouped under four major units: Instructional Support, Special Education, Early Childhood, and Assisting in Content Area. Each of the 14 topics comes with a pretest, lessons, activities and a posttest for each topic. The tests and activities are to be monitored by the instructor or mentor appointed by the district. The Instructional Support Unit covers topics of roles and responsibilities, organization and classroom management, developing instructional skills, effective communication, and ethical issues. The Special Education Unit covers introductory material, behavior management, observing and measuring student performance, autism spectrum disorders, and transition/job coaching. Early Childhood covers issues of growth and development. Finally, Assisting in the Content Area covers assisting with reading instruction, written language development, and fundamental mathematics skills.

While there exist many options to choose from in regards to training materials and programs, to the author's knowledge, there has only been one study that has collected data on the efficacy of a training program for paraprofessionals (Giangreco, Backus, CichoskiKelly, Sherman, & Mavropoulos, 2003). This study conducted a quantitative evaluation of two training programs for paraeducators: (1) Paraeducator Entry-Level Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities (CichoskiKelly et al., 2000) and (2) Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors: A Paraeducator Curriculum (Backus & CichoskiKelly, 2001). The researchers chose a set of 20 sections combined from each program to be used as part of the trainings. The local school-based instructor chose whether to use a regular format (one unit or 3 hours per week, each week) or an alternative format (interactive TV, summer institute, inservice training over a 2 month period, units taught once a month, etc).

At the end of the training program, paraeducators completed a Knowledge Review quiz which consisted of 10 multiple choice questions which assessed their knowledge of the core content of each unit (Giangreco et al., 2003). Both the paraeducators and the instructors were also asked to rate the materials and content of each unit in terms of relevance, understandability, usefulness, and quality. Analyses indicated that paraeducators scored in the upper range on all topics covered in the Knowledge Review regardless of whether they participated in a regular or alternative format. Furthermore, paraeducators and instructors rated the materials and content of the units similarly. Paraeducators provided positive ratings of the objectives, readings, activities, materials, and practicum requirements for the units provided by both courses. They did express some concern that the reading level may have been too difficult at times. When

asked what was the most important or useful thing that they had learned for each unit, responses fell within the following six categories: affirmation, student-family perspective, importance of topics, reference points, strategies, and energized to act (Giangreco et al., 2003). Paraeducators also reported that the trainings helped them to consider parent and student perspectives, as well as reflect on their own behaviors and experiences. Similar to the paraeducators, almost all of the instructors rated the objectives of the units as important or very important. They also reported positive ratings of readings and activities but found some of the readings to be repetitive or hard for the paraprofessionals to read. The authors conclude that the "paraeducators gained new knowledge, perspectives, and skills that had direction application to their work" regardless of the training format or level of previous experience (Giangreco et al., 2003, p. 17).

The most comprehensive research regarding the systematic planning and evaluation of professional development training programs can be found in a study by Giangreco, Broer, and Edelman (2002). This pilot study followed four historically inclusive schools in Vermont, grades K-12, that implemented a process entitled, A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports. Through this process the schools were able to "self-assess their paraeducator practices, identify priorities in need of improvement, develop action-plans, and implement them" (Giangreco et al., 2002, p. 3). The process consisted of ten steps that were implemented by a team of 5 to 8 participants that included teachers, administrators, parents, and paraeducators. Each team received a workbook that outlined how to complete each of the ten steps in the planning process. The workbook was presented as something to be used as a guide, but something that

could also be tailored to fit the needs of the local school. The ten steps of the Schoolwide

Planning for Paraeducator Supports were as follows:

1. Inform your local school board of your intention to establish a team, or use an existing team, to address paraeducator issues.

2. Ensure that the team includes the appropriate members of the school and local community.

3. Have the team assess their own status and fact-find in relation to the six paraeducator topics:

   a. Acknowledging Paraeducators,

   b. Orienting and Training Paraeducators,

   c. Hiring and Assigning Paraeducators,

   d. Paraeducator Interactions with Students and Staff,

   e. Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators, and

   f. Supervision and Evaluation of Paraeducator Services.

4. Prioritize and select topics and specific issues that reflect areas of need within the school and that the team will work on first.

5. Update your local school board of the team's ranked priorities.

6. Design a plan to address the team's ranked priorities.

7. Identify local, regional, and statewide resources to assist in achieving team plans.

8. Implement the team's plans.

9. Evaluate the plan's impact and plan next steps.

10. Report impact and needs to your local school board.

The authors' research team collected feedback through (1) a copy of the school's

completed workbook and meeting minutes, (2) questionnaires completed by the school

team, (3) documentation of the outcomes from the team's planning. The process and

outcomes were evaluated according to six questions:

1. How did the school teams rate themselves in reference to 28 indicators of paraeducator support?

2. What were the schools' self-identified paraeducator supports?

3. What actions did the schools choose to address their paraeducator priorities?

4. Did the paraeducator planning process do what it purported to do?

5. How did the team members rate the paraeducator planning process across a series of consumer-oriented variables (e.g., importance, ease, helpfulness)?

6. What were the participants' perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement of the action-planning process?

Results indicated that between 50% and 86% of the 28 indictors were rated by each

school to be in need of "some work" or "major work." The highest rated priority across

all four teams was the indicator of Roles and Responsibilities, followed by Orientation

and Training and Hiring and Assigning. All four schools developed policies and

procedures to address these issues, whether through team meetings, clarifying roles,

developing orientation materials, or developing professional development opportunities

for paraeducators. Approximately 96% of the study participants felt that the planning

process helped them to uncover and address paraeducator issues in their schools. The

team members rated the process as occurring at a reasonable pace (81%), as an important

activity, and one that was logical and easy to use. The main strengths of the program

were that it brought people together to discuss relevant issues, it was organized and

useful, and that it was adaptable to the local school. The main weaknesses of the program

were that it used a lot of jargon, scheduling conflicts, and difficulty getting general

education teachers and parents involved in the process. The authors explained the importance of their findings in providing a field-tested tool and process that other schools can use to improve their own paraeducator supports.

While the literature regarding the systematic planning and evaluation of professional development training programs for paraprofessionals in education is limited, there are numerous studies that document the planning and evaluation of other types of programs within educational settings. One such example is the evaluation of a behavioral program for young children with developmental disabilities in an urban public school (Maher, 1997). This study used a case study approach to document the process of planning and conducting the evaluation. The evaluation was based on a systems framework and involved key stakeholders in the process. The author reported that her findings suggested that evaluations of special education programs can occur in public schools in way that is practical and meaningful to those involved.

Another study provided a case illustration of the planning and evaluation of a consultation process for a preschool handicapped program (Cangelosi, 1995). Through a consultation process, the author aimed to teach basic skills associated with program planning and evaluation and support key stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating a preschool handicapped program. A final example is a case study regarding the involvement of school professionals in planning for special education program evaluation (Maher, 1998).

New Jersey State Approved Schools

The New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code outlines program options for classified students in special education. All students must first be considered for

placement in a general education classroom, as this is the least restrictive environment. In a general education placement, the student may receive services that include curricular or instructional modifications, teacher aides, assistive technology, related services, consultation services, and in class resource programs. The Code further explains that students with a disability who cannot remain in the general education setting with supplementary services can be considered for alternative placements. Examples of alternative educational program options include single subject resource programs, a special class program in the local district, a special education program in a vocation and technical school, a program in a hospital, and a state approved private school for students with disabilities.

In order to be approved as a private school for students with disabilities, the school must submit an application to the State Department of Education according to the following regulations:

1. The applicant shall submit a description of the program and services to be offered which shall include, but not be limited to:

    i. The educational philosophy of the program;

    ii. Characteristics of the program, which shall include the number of students to be served, numbers and types of classes, number of school days, and daily hours in session;

    iii. The curriculum and materials including a description of how the core curriculum content standards will be implemented;

    iv. A mechanism for evaluating student progress and program efficacy; and

v. The organizational structure, including projected number of personnel by title, job function and personnel requirements, including certification (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.2).

The school must also submit "a survey of need indicating the number, age range, types of students with disabilities to be served by the proposed program/services and the reason these students cannot be served in the resident district, supported by documentation from local public school districts" (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.2). The Department of Education will notify the program of its decision within 90 calendar days after receiving the needs assessment. Once the school is approved, it must submit further information that includes information such as administrative policies and procedures of the school, staffing information, and a projected budget. Annually, state approved schools must submit information regarding staffing, student demographics, student placement and termination data, financial information, valid fire inspection certificates, as well as health, HVAC, and sewerage plant inspection certificates if applicable (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1; N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.4).

The local sending school district remains responsible for the student's IEP development, annual review, and reevaluation (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.5). All personnel serving students with disabilities at the approved school must be highly qualified and licensed in accordance with federal and state law (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.6). Discipline procedures allow the approved school to suspend a student for up to 10 consecutive or cumulative school days in a school year; however, they must notify the student's case manager (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.6). The school day must consist of at least four hours of academic work, not including times such as lunch and recess (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.6). The

approved private school for children with disabilities is monitored by the Department of Education. If found to be in noncompliance, the Department of Education may implement a corrective action plan or revoke approval immediately or at the end of the current school year (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.10).

<center>Relevance to School Psychology</center>

In the 21st century, the role of the school psychologist has expanded greatly. No longer considered solely psychometricians, school psychologists have "become increasingly recognized as providers of comprehensive mental health and educational services" (Merrell et al., 2006). While Merrell et al. (2006) attribute this change in role mainly to the employment of school psychologists in non-school settings, this expanded role has become increasingly present in school settings as well. In an assessment of school psychologists' professional development needs, Fowler and Harrison (2001) investigated five domains that characterize the main job roles of a school psychologist: assessment, consultation, direct service, program planning and evaluation, and research. While program planning and evaluation was not identified as the area of greatest need, at least 50% of the respondents rated this domain as being a moderate to high level of professional development need. The current study aims to add to the literature in providing a case study example of how school psychologists can implement a program planning and evaluation process in a practical, real-world setting.

In addition, school psychologists play a fundamental role in the assignment of paraprofessionals to classrooms and students when determining individual education program needs as members of the child study team. In an expanded role, school

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psychologists have the potential to be charged with the responsibility of training,

supervising, and evaluating paraprofessionals employed in special education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Setting

The setting is a New Jersey state approved private special education school for students with behavioral and learning disabilities. These students often have a variety of disabilities that affect their academic and behavioral performance. Examples of these disabilities include autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, oppositional defiant disorders, and emotional disturbances. The school currently has two locations that serve approximately 90 students. The primary location houses the high school and high school prep programs. The curriculum is tailored to each student's IEP requirements and most students are considered to be on grade level academically. The school offers a full range of academic courses including, AP or advance placement courses. The secondary location contains the middle school program, academy program, and transition program. At both locations, each classroom has one special education teacher who serves as the homeroom teacher and 1-2 classroom aides.

The school utilizes a behavior modification program known as the Wolf Program which was developed in 2009 in response to an organizational assessment of social and behavioral needs. The program is based on social emotional learning and positive behavioral support principles and is designed to teach students the critical thinking and behavioral skills necessary to be successful both academically and socially. The Wolf Program consists of 3 major components: universal schoolwide programming, selected group programming, and targeted individual programming. The universal programming includes services that all students receive on a regular basis and is centered on five social

skills competency areas (citizenship behavior, social presentation, conversation skills, self management, and social problem solving). The Universal component includes these five core social skill competency areas, the behavioral point system, and individual and group counseling. The Selected Group Programming includes small counseling groups for students identified demonstrating elevated levels of need in specific areas such as anger management and social skills. The Targeted Individual Programming provides services to students demonstrating high levels of challenging or risky behaviors through Strategy Development Support Services and crisis counseling.

Target Population

The target population consisted of approximately 14 classroom aides. Three of the aides are males and the remaining eleven are females. All classroom aides were eligible to participate in the current study.

Consent Procedures

Classroom aides: The study was explained to the participants by the principal investigator at a pre-training meeting. The consent was read and the participants' questions answered. The participants signed the consent form. A dated and signed copy was given to the participant.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators: The study was explained in the body of the consent form provided to the subject. The consent will be read and signed by the subject. The principle investigator's contact information was provided in the consent form content so that she could be contacted with any questions regarding the study. Upon receipt of the consent form by the principal investigator, a dated and signed copy was given to the participants in a sealed envelope returned to his/her mailbox in the main office. The

principal investigator signed over the seal so that no unauthorized person had access to the contents of the envelope without the knowledge of the participant.

Coercion considerations: All participants were informed through the content of the consent form that participation is voluntary and that they may choose to discontinue their participation in the current study at any time without penalty. It is important to note that attendance at the trainings was mandatory as determined by school administration, but participation in the study through the completion of questionnaires was optional. Participation in the study had no bearing on their employment status, pay rate, benefits, or any performance evaluations that may be conducted by the school.

Needs Assessment Methods

The director of the school/organization was interested in obtaining information regarding the training needs, implementation, and formative evaluation of the classroom aide professional development training program. The needs assessment aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to assisting in providing academic instruction?

2. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to assisting in the behavior management of students?

3. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to communicating with students, teachers, and staff?

4. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to performing vocational duties including clerical duties, supervisory duties, self-care, and professional development?

The needs assessment questions were answered with the following protocols. All protocols remained anonymous.

Needs Assessment Protocol 1: Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that require the respondents to rate themselves on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option.

Needs Assessment Protocol 2: Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides

This protocol consists of 60 items that are a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The items require respondents to rate themselves on their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. The respondents are also asked to complete demographic information in regards to gender, age, and educational/training backgrounds.

Methods: Protocols 1 and 2 were completed by classroom aides during a pre-training meeting that occurred two weeks prior to the beginning of implementation. During this meeting, the aides were informed of the program planning and evaluation procedures and consent was obtained. If choosing to participate, the aides completed these questionnaires during the second half of the meeting that occurred in the school's computer lab. The aides who chose not to participate were excused at that time. No other school personnel was present at this time and did not have any knowledge of participation

status. Questionnaires were provided via an electronic format on Survey Monkey. The primary investigator funded a "Select" membership on this site. She was the only person with knowledge of the log on name and password. This type of membership provides enhanced security (SSL).

Analysis: For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated for each item. This data are presented in tables and graphs. For open-ended questions, data were separated into themes and frequency counts of these themes were calculated. Data are presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries.

Needs Assessment Protocol 3: Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory - Teacher Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that require the respondent to rate the classroom aides assigned to his/her homeroom classroom on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option.

Needs Assessment Protocol 4: Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators

This protocol consists of 5 items that require the respondent to answer multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding his/her perception of the training needs of the classroom aides and the current state of the training program.

Methods: Protocol 3 was completed by teachers about each of the classroom aides assigned to their homeroom classroom. Protocol 4 was completed by teachers,

counselors, and administrators. Protocols 3 and 4 were administered in a paper and pencil format. Each teacher counselor, and administrator received an envelope that contained a consent form, Protocol 3, and Protocol 4. They also received an instruction sheet that instructed them to complete the forms if they chose to participate. They were instructed to seal the consent form and questionnaires in the envelope upon completion. They were asked to sign over the seal to ensure that no changes were made to their responses. Finally, they were asked to return the sealed and signed envelopes within one week to the school's administrative assistant who placed them in a locked filing cabinet in the main office to be retrieved only by the primary investigator. Once retrieved by the primary investigator, the data was kept in a locked filing cabinet in her personal residence. After three years time, the data will be shredded.

Analysis: For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated for each item. This data are presented in tables and graphs. For open-ended questions, data were separated into themes and frequency counts of these themes were calculated. Data are presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries.

Needs Assessment Protocol 5: Interview Questions for the Director and Principal

The interview protocol consists of 8 open-ended questions.

Methods: The interviews were conducted by the principal investigator during the two-week needs assessment period. She scheduled the interviews with the school's administrative assistant. The director and principals were interviewed individually and the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. The interview protocol questions were covered and probed for further clarification as necessary.

Analysis: The content of the interviews were analyzed for themes. Themes from the interviews were compared and contrasted with the themes gathered by the other needs assessment protocols.

Development of Protocols: All protocols have been developed according to Maher's (2012) needs assessment procedure as outlined in his program planning and evaluation model. This process followed the following steps:

1. Identify psychological and educational domains on which needs assessment may focus.

2. Decide which domains are relevant for needs assessment.

    a. Current Study Domains

        i. Academic Instruction

        ii. Behavior Management

        iii. Vocational Duties

        iv. Communication

3. For each domain, delineate needs assessment questions that, when answered, will guide subsequent program planning.

4. Formulate a structure of needs that can guide needs assessment planning.

5. Specify variables on which data can be collected to answer each needs assessment question.

6. Develop and select methods, procedures, and instruments that will allow data to be collected as a basis for answering each needs assessment question.

7. Specify procedures for analysis and interpretation of the needs assessment results.

8. Delineate an approach for communication and use of needs assessment information.

9. Specify needs assessment roles, responsibilities, and timelines.

10. Place the needs assessment plan in appropriate documents (protocols for questions)

11. Follow through on the needs assessment, using needs assessment protocols.

12. Construct a Needs Assessment Results Document

Roles, Responsibilities, and Timelines: The primary investigator was responsible for the administration, collection, and analysis of all data. All needs assessment activities occurred over the course of approximately two weeks.

Communication of Results: The results of the need assessment were placed into a Needs Assessment Results Document that followed Maher's (2012) format:

I.   Purpose of the Needs Assessment

II.   Description of the Target Population

III.   Organization and Client

IV.   Structure of Needs

V.   Needs Assessment Questions and Answers

All data were aggregated and no individual responses were made available in order to ensure anonymity. A copy of the Needs Assessment Results Document was provided to the director of the school (the client). The principal investigator met with the administrator who supervised the program to review the data. A summary of the data was presented to the classroom aides at the first training meeting in order to explain the

rationale for the training program design. Again, all data were aggregated and no individual responses were made available in order to ensure anonymity.

<center>Program Design Methods</center>

The data collected from the needs assessment was used to inform the content and design of the training sessions. The training sessions took place every Thursday (for a period of eight weeks) from 8:10-8:40 AM at the primary location and 2:30-3:00 PM at the secondary location during the prep period designated by the school for these trainings.

Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation model guided this process. The following methodology was used:

1. Describe the Program Purpose and Goals

   a. Review the needs of the target population and context.

   b. Begin formulation of a written statement of program purpose.

   c. In relation to each need, or set of needs, specify the goal in terms of human states, conditions, or qualities (KSAs).

   d. For each specified goal, decide how it can be measured.

   e. Determine whether the specified and measurable goal is attainable by the target population.

   f. Decide whether the specified, measurable, and attainable goal is relevant for the target population.

   g. Delineate a timeframe within which the specified, measurable, attainable, and relevant (SMART) goal is likely to be attained.

   h. Formulate a complete version of the program purpose linked to SMART goals.

2. Consider Program Design Alternatives

    a. Consider program design elements

        i. Basic Reference point – statement of program purpose and

            goals

        ii. Eligibility standards and criteria

        iii. Policies and procedures

        iv. Methods and techniques

        v. Materials

        vi. Equipment

        vii. Facilities

        viii. Components, Phases, and Activities

        ix. Budget

        x. Personnel

        xi. Incentives

        xii. Program Evaluation Plan

    b. Develop the Program

        i. Develop the program's human resources

        ii. Develop the program's technological resources

        iii. Develop the program's informational resources

        iv. Develop the program's financial resources

        v. Develop the program's physical resources

        vi. Develop the program's temporal resources

Program Implementation Methods

The implementation phase was conducted in accordance with Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation model. This phase included the following:

1. Review the program design

    a. Specify and evaluate the elements of the program design.

    b. Make necessary recommendations in preparation of the program design elements for successful program implementation.

    c. Follow through on program design element recommendations.

    d. Document a revised program design, as necessary.

2. Facilitate program implementation

    a. Discuss the program with people who will be involved with and affected by its implementation.

    b. Understand the needs and concerns of people with respect to implementation of the program.

    c. Reinforce people for appropriate involvement in program implementation.

    d. Acquire the sanctions and supports that will contribute to successful program implementation.

    e. Build positive expectation of people about successful program implementation.

    f. Learning to implement the program successfully is considered fundamental to successful program implementation and is an ongoing process.

g. Evaluating the process of program implementation occurs in a planned, purposeful way.

3. Monitor program progress

    a. Determine what people, with what needs, have been participating in the program.

    b. Decide whether the program's purpose and goals are being addressed.

    c. Judge whether the program's eligibility standards and criteria are being utilized.

    d. Determine whether policies and procedures of the program are being followed.

    e. Assess whether methods, techniques, materials, equipment, and facilities are being used as anticipated.

    f. Judge the extent to which the components, phases, and activities of the program are occurring as planned.

    g. Consider whether the budget is being expended as authorized.

    h. Identify how program personnel are performing their roles and responsibilities.

    i. Decide whether incentives are being applied within the program as intended.

    j. Determine whether program evaluation activities are occurring as planned.

In order to assess different aspects of program implementation, the primary investigator developed and used an implementation log that documented and monitored start times,

end times, attendance, methods used, participation level, and any other concerns that arose during the implementation phase. The primary investigator developed an agenda for each session that documented the content of each session. Together, the implementation log and agendas helped to address and evaluate issues surrounding implementation of the program.

Program Evaluation Methods

The program evaluation took place during the first two weeks of June 2012 once the training sessions were completed. The program evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent have program goals been met?

2. What knowledge and skills did the classroom aides perceive themselves as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

3. What knowledge and skills did other stakeholders (teachers/administrators) perceive the aides as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

4. To what extent did the classroom aides find the program to be valuable and a satisfying experience?

5. To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

The original design documented here was later amended to exclude Program Evaluation Question 3 listed above. Because teachers and other stakeholders had rated the classroom aides' knowledge and skills so highly during the needs assessment process, it was determined that a pre and post comparison of their knowledge and skills as rated by the teachers would not prove meaningful or practical at this time.

Program Evaluation Protocol 1: Classroom Aide Feedback Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of 16 items that require the classroom aides to complete multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire aims to gather information regarding whether the aides found value from the training program, what they perceived as valuable, and what changes they would like to see in the future.

Program Evaluation Protocol 2: Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that require the respondents to rate themselves on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option.

Methods: Protocols 1 and 2 were completed by the classroom aides at a post-training meeting that occurred 2 weeks after the completion of the training program. Survey Monkey was used in the same manner as during the needs assessment described previously. The principal investigator remained outside of the room as to not influence any responses. She was available for questions or clarification about questionnaire items upon request.

Analysis: Data from the protocols were collected, aggregated, and evaluated by the primary investigator. For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated for each item. This data are presented in tables and graphs.

For open-ended questions, data were separated into themes and frequency counts of these themes were calculated. Data are presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries.

Program Evaluation Protocol 3: Implementation Log

This protocol consists of 7 items to be completed by the primary investigator after each training session. Items are multiple-choice and open-ended formats.

Methods: The primary investigator completed the implementation log upon the completion of each training session. The logs were placed in a binder that remain in a locked cabinet in the primary investigator's private residence.

Analysis: Upon completion of the training program, data from the logs were aggregated and analyzed by the primary investigator. For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated for each item. These data are presented in tables and graphs. Open-ended questions were separated into themes and frequency counts were calculated. Data are presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries. After three years time, the data will be shredded.

Communication of Results

The results of the program evaluation data were aggregated and placed into a Program Evaluation Results Document.

I.   Overview of the Program Evaluation

II.   Description of the Program that was evaluated

III.   Program Evaluation and Answers

IV.   Program Evaluation Protocols

All data were aggregated and no individual responses were made available in order to ensure anonymity. A copy of the Program Evaluation Results Document was provided to

the director of the school (the client), the principal, and the administrator who supervised the program. The principal investigator met with the principal and the administrator who supervised the program to review the data.

CHAPTER IV

CLARIFICATION PHASE

SECTION I: Introductory Information

Organization Information

   The organization where the principal investigator assisted a client with the design

and implementation of a program intended to benefit a group of special education

classroom aides is a New Jersey state approved private special education school for

students with behavioral and learning disabilities. Students who attend this school often

have a variety of disabilities that affect their academic and behavioral performance.

Examples of these disabilities include autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities,

oppositional defiant disorders, and emotional disturbances. The school currently has two

locations that serve approximately 100 students. The primary location houses the main

high school program. The curriculum is tailored to each student's IEP requirements and

most students are considered to be on grade level academically. The school offers a full

range of academic courses including AP or advance placement courses. The secondary

location contains the middle school program, academy program, and transition program.

At both locations, each classroom has one special education teacher who serves as the

homeroom teacher and 1-2 classroom aides. There are currently 10 classrooms in total.

   The school utilizes a behavior modification program known as the Wolf Program

which was developed in 2009 in response to an organizational assessment of social and

behavioral needs. The program is based on social emotional learning and positive

behavioral support principles and is designed to teach students the critical thinking and

behavioral skills necessary to be successful both academically and socially. The Wolf

Program consists of 3 major components: universal schoolwide programming, selected group programming, and targeted individual programming. The universal programming includes services that all students receive on a regular basis and is centered on five social skills competency areas (citizenship behavior, social presentation, conversation skills, self management, and social problem solving). The Universal component includes these five core social skill competency areas, the behavioral point system, and individual and group counseling. The Selected Group Programming includes small counseling groups for students identified demonstrating elevated levels of need in specific areas such as anger management and social skills. The Targeted Individual Programming provides services to students demonstrating high levels of challenging or risky behaviors through Strategy Development Support Services and crisis counseling.

Client Information

The client for this program was the director of the school. The school psychologist who supervised the classroom aide professional development training program, however, served as the liaison between the primary investigator and the client. He was authorized to make programmatic decisions regarding the program in lieu of the director when appropriate.

SECTION II: Target Population Description

Relevant Characteristics

The target population who was provided program planning and evaluation services was a small group of 14 special education classroom aides employed at a state approved private special education school during the 2011-2012 academic school year.

Demographic Characteristics

The majority of classroom aides (78.6%; N=11) were female. There were three male classroom aides (21.4%). There were five aides between the ages of 20-30, two aides between the ages of 31-40, two aides between the ages of 41-50, four aides between the ages of 51-60, and one aide over the age of 60. Aides ranged in their total time of experience working as a classroom aide from 5 months to 10 years, with an average of approximately 4 years. The average time of employment at the current school is also 4 years, ranging anywhere from 3 months to 10 years.

The classroom aides' educational backgrounds range from some college but no degree to a graduate degree. Four aides have some college education but no degree (28.6%), three aides have an associate degree (21.4%), five aides have a bachelor degree (35.7%), and two aides have graduate degrees (14.3%). Half of the fourteen aides also have certifications. Four aides hold substitute certifications and three aides hold certifications in other fields including real estate and CPR. Twelve of the fourteen aides have been employed in both related and unrelated fields including summer camp positions, childcare providers, real estate, accounting, and law enforcement.

The classroom aides have had both formal and informal training for their work as a classroom aide. The majority of aides refer to the training they have received at the current school as the basis of their training. One aide has received training through community college, another through personal experience with a disabled family member, and a third aide has received training through a law enforcement teaching experience.

SECTION III: Needs Assessment

Structure of Needs

The structure of needs of this program for special education classroom aides has been adapted from the foundations of the training program that has been in place since 2007. These foundations focus on four main areas of training: Academics, Behavior Management, Vocational Duties, and Communication.

Academic Instruction

In the domain of Academic Instruction, needs were divided into three categories: 1) Content (knowledge of and skills using academic material), 2) Methods (knowledge of and skills related to assisting teachers and assisting/instructing students academically), and 3) Technology (knowledge of and skills related to using computers and other assistive devices related to academic instruction).

Needs Assessment Question. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to assisting in academic instruction?

CSA-DSA. The current state of affairs (CSA) was that the classroom aides do not have the knowledge and skills to assist in providing academic instruction. The desired state of affairs (DSA) was that the classroom aides do have the knowledge and skills to assist in providing academic instruction.

Data Collection. The data collection variables included 1) personal knowledge of academic content and 2) knowledge and skills related to instruction and related technology.

Behavior Management

In the domain of Behavior Management, needs were divided into three categories: 1) Content (knowledge of and skills using behavioral interventions, behavioral disabilities, classroom management, and social coping skills in general), 2) Methods (knowledge of and skills related to assisting teachers and assisting/instructing/managing students behaviorally), and 3) Technology (knowledge of and skills related to the school's behavioral program, the Wolf Program).

Needs Assessment Question. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to assisting in the behavior management of students?

CSA-DSA. The current state of affairs (CSA) was that classroom aides do not have the knowledge or skills to assist in the behavior management of students or the classroom. The desired state of affairs (DSA) was that the classroom aides have the knowledge and skills to assist in the behavior management of students and the classroom.

Data Collection. The data collection variables included: 1) knowledge of specific disabilities and behavioral interventions and 2) skills related to managing behaviors.

Vocational Duties

In the domain of Vocational Duties, needs were divided into four categories: 1) Clerical duties (paperwork, copying, organizing), 2) Supervisory duties (supervising/monitoring students inside and outside of the classroom), 3) Self care (managing work related stress), and 4) Professional Development (knowing one's strengths and limitations, having goals for improvement).

Needs Assessment Question. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to performing vocational duties including clerical duties, supervisory duties, self-care, and professional development?

CSA-DSA. The current state of affairs (CSA) was that the classroom aides are not able to communicate effectively with staff and students. The desired state of affairs (DSA) was that classroom aides are able to communicate effectively with staff and students.

Data Collection. Data collection variables included: 1) Knowledge of the job role, 2) Skills in copying, organizing, etc., and 3) Having goals for self-improvement.

Communication

In the domain of Communication, needs were divided into three categories: 1) Communicating with staff, 2) Communicating with students, and 3) Receiving communication.

Needs Assessment Question. To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regards to communicating with students, teachers, and staff?

CSA-DSA. The current state of affairs (CSA) was that the classroom aides do not have the knowledge and skills to complete vocational duties. The desired state of affairs (DSA) was that the classroom aides have the knowledge and skills to complete vocational duties.

Data Collection. Data collection variables included: 1) Verbal and nonverbal communication skills and 2) The perception of feeling validated and understood.

Organization, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

Classroom aides completed two protocols: Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory-Self Report. Teachers also completed two protocols: Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report. Counselors and administrators completed the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators only. Data from these protocols was divided up amongst the four domains: Academic Instruction, Behavior Management, Communication, and Vocational Duties. Data was further divided into the subdomains of knowledge and skills. Each item on the protocols was linked to a particular domain. For all protocols, percentages and frequencies of responses were calculated for each multiple choice item. For open ended items, data was separated into themes and the frequencies of themes were calculated.

Guidelines for Communication and Use of Needs Assessment Information

Information about the needs of the target population was shared with the client and the supervisor of the classroom aide professional development training program. The client was provided with a written summary document that explained the identified needs in each of the four domains. The summary document included the following information:

I. Purpose of the Needs Assessment

II. Description of the Target Population

III. Organization and Client

IV. Structure of Needs

V. Needs Assessment Questions and Answers

Roles, Responsibilities, Timelines

The primary investigator was solely responsible for implementing the needs assessment, which included holding a pre-training meeting with the classroom aides and distributing and collecting the appropriate protocols from teachers, counselors, and administrators. The needs assessment process took place between March 14 and March 28, 2012.

Needs Assessment Protocols

Five needs assessment protocols were used to collect data: 1) Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides; 2) Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators; 3) Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory-Self Report; 4) Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory-Teacher Report; and 5) Interview Questions for the Director and Principals. All of these instruments were developed by the primary investigator and based on the four domains discussed above.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides

This protocol consists of 60 items that are a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The items required the classroom aides to rate themselves on their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties and communication. The respondents were also asked to complete demographic information with regards to gender, age, and educational/training backgrounds. A sample of this protocol may be found in Appendix A.2.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators

This protocol consists of 5 items that required the respondent to answer multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding his/her perception of the training needs of the

classroom aides and the current state of the training program. A sample of this protocol can be found in Appendix A.2.

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that required the classroom aides to rate themselves on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option. A sample of this protocol may be found in Appendix A.2.

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that required teachers to rate the classroom aides assigned to his/her homeroom classroom on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option. A sample of this protocol can be found in Appendix A.2.

Interview Questions for the Director and Principals

The interview protocol consists of 8 open-ended questions that required the respondent to discuss his/her perception of the training needs of the classroom aides and the current state of the training program. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, with the purpose of determining the current state of affairs and the desired state of affairs from the viewpoint of the school's administration. The 8 questions were covered and probed for further clarification as necessary. A sample of this protocol may be found in Appendix A.2.

Needs Assessment Results

Interviews were conducted with the school's director and two principals (referred to here as the administration) in order to gain a better understanding of the administration's perspective of the needs of the classroom aides. Another purpose was to better understand the administration's view of the current state of affairs and desired state of affairs in relation to the training program currently in existence.

The administration perceives the greatest strength of the classroom aides as their dedication to and compassion for the students they work with. The greatest area of need for growth was identified as their ability to adapt to the expectations of the various teachers they work with. The administration believes this is due to inadequate and/or ineffective communication between teachers and aides. The overall goal of the administration is to get all staff "on the same page" in regards to effectively assisting students behaviorally and academically.

The interviewees were also asked about each of the four needs assessment domains: academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. All interviewees prioritized the domains of behavior management and academic instruction. The administration believes that effective behavior management is a necessary foundation for academic instruction and learning. Communication was also seen as an integral part of effective behavior management and academic instruction; however, it was not prioritized by the administration as a training topic in and of itself. Finally, the administration agreed that the classroom aides' knowledge and skills related to vocational duties were adequate and did not need to be addressed at this time.

Results of Needs Assessment Question 1

Needs Assessment Question 1: To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regard to assisting the teacher with academic instruction?

The first needs assessment question sought to determine the extent to which classroom aides required additional knowledge and skills in order to assist the teacher with academic instruction. The data collection variables included 1) personal knowledge of academic content and 2) knowledge and skills related to instruction and related technology. Data was collected using items from the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA), the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ), the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR), and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR). Items were grouped into those pertaining to knowledge and those pertaining to skills. These questionnaires were completed during the needs assessment phase that occurred 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the classroom aide training program. The results are presented below.

Academic Knowledge

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The majority of classroom aides (69.2%) agreed that that they possess adequate personal knowledge in all academic areas to assist the students they work with. One respondent disagreed with this statement. The results for Item 10 are listed in Table 1. One respondent skipped this item.

Table 1
Results of NAQ-CA Item 10

I possess adequate personal knowledge in all academic areas (Math, Science, English, History, Foreign Language) to assist the students I work with.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	69.2%	15.4%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=9)	(n=2)

Of the academic areas that aides assist in for instruction, 58.3% indicated that they require additional personal knowledge in the area of Foreign Language. In addition, 41.7% indicated a need for additional personal knowledge in Math and Science. Respondents were permitted to select more than one academic area for this item. Next, respondents were asked to elaborate on specific topics within those subjects that they require additional knowledge on. The total number of respondents on this item was 10. Respondents indicated that they require more knowledge in Spanish (N=6) and Geometry (N=3). The results for Item 11 and 11a are displayed in Table 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 2
Results of NAQ-CA Item 11

Please indicate any areas in which you require additional personal knowledge. (Select all that apply.)

Math	Science	English	History	Foreign Language
41.7%	41.7%	8.3%	8.3%	58.3%
(n=5)	(n=5)	(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=7)

Table 3
Results of NAQ-CA Item 11a

Of the areas you indicated above, please elaborate on specific topics within those subjects. (For example, if you selected math, perhaps you need additional information regarding geometry.)

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Spanish / second language	6
Geometry	3
Algebra II	1
Math in general	1
Physics	1
Chemistry	1
Biology	1

N = 10

The majority of classroom aides either agree (38.5%) or strongly agree (46.2%) that they can accurately complete the academic assignments that are assigned to the students they work with. One respondent strongly disagreed. The results of Item 12 are listed in Table 4. One respondent skipped this item.

Table 4
Results of NAQ-CA Item 12

I can accurately complete the academic assignments that are assigned to the students I work with.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	38.5%	46.2%
(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=5)	(n=6)

Classroom aides were asked to report whether they had received formal or informal training on instructional methods and techniques. Approximately half (53.8%) reported that they had in fact received formal training. Less (30.8%) reported that they have not received any training. For those classroom aides who have received training, they were asked to indicate the instructional methods they are familiar with. Two respondents referred to training provided by the current school; however, they did not

refer to specific instructional methods or techniques. Others referred to methods such as differentiation, repetition, and the use of visual aides. The results of Item 13 and 13a are listed in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.

Table 5
Results of NAQ-CA Item 13

I have received formal or informal training regarding instructional techniques to assist in student learning.

Yes	Somewhat	No
53.8%	15.4%	30.8%
(n=7)	(n=2)	(n=4)

Table 6
Results of NAQ-CA Item 13a

If you answered Yes or Somewhat, please indicate which instructional methods you are familiar with.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Professional development provided by the school	2
Differentiation	1
Repetition	1
Visual aids	1
PEMDAS	1
FANBOYS	1
CPR/First Aid	1
Student teaching	1

N=7

Respondents were asked to list any instructional strategies that they currently use to assist students academically. Seven respondents answered this item. The two most common strategies reported are providing the student with an example (N=3) and reading to the student (N=3). In total, 10 aides provided responses to this item. Results for Item 16 are listed in Table 7.

Table 7
Results of NAQ-CA Item 16

Please list any instructional strategies that you use to assist students academically.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Provide an example	3
Read to them	3
Humor	1
Redirection	1
Differentiation	1
Taking apart problems	1
Math handouts	1
One-on-one instruction	1
Rephrasing the question	1
Write notes for them	1
Completing the assignment before the students in order to be prepared	1

N = 10

The classroom aides also reported on their familiarity with certain computer programs that are often used by students for academic assignments and activities. All of the classroom aides that responded to this item reported that they are familiar with and able to use Microsoft Word. A majority also reported being familiar with and able to use PowerPoint (83.3%) and Excel (75%). Two respondents skipped this question.

Table 8
Results of NAQ-CA Item 18

Please select the computer programs that you are familiar with and able to use:

Microsoft Word	Excel	PowerPoint
100.0%	75.0%	83.3%
(n=12)	(n=9)	(n=10)

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ).

This questionnaire was completed by 19 out 26 teachers, counselors, and administrators that were asked to participate. Teachers, counselors, and administrators

were asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, communication) that classroom aides possess the greatest strength in. Approximately one-third (36.8%) identified that classroom aides have the greatest strength in vocational duties. An almost equal number of respondents (31.6%) identified the greatest strength as assisting with academic instruction. The results for Item 1 are listed in Table 9.

Table 9
Results of NAQ Item 1

In which of the following areas does the classroom aide staff possess the greatest strength? (Select only one.)

Academic Instruction	Behavior Management	Vocational Duties	Communication
31.6%	21.1%	36.8%	10.5%
(n=6)	(n=4)	(n=7)	(n=2)

Teachers, counselors, and administrators were also asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, communication) in which classroom aides possess the greatest need for improvement. A majority (76.4%) of respondents identified the area of behavior management as the area most in need of improvement. Respondents were also asked to elaborate on how knowledge or skills in these areas need to be improved. Knowledge and skills listed include: education on specific disabilities (N=11), specific behavior management techniques (N=11), and communication of expectations and concerns (N=4). The results for Item 2 and 2a are listed in Table 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 10
Results of NAQ Item 2

In which of the following areas does the classroom aide staff require the most
improvement? (Select only one.)

Academic Instruction	Behavior Management	Vocational Duties	Communication
11.8%	76.4%	5.9%	5.9%
(n=2)	(n=13)	(n=1)	(n=1)

Table 11
Results of NAQ Item 2a

Describe how knowledge or skills in this area need to be improved.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Specific disabilities	6
Specific behavior management techniques	6
Communicating expectations and concerns	4
Reactions to students	2
Wolf Program techniques	1
Resolving conflict	1
Clerical duties/paperwork	1
Math	1

N = 16

Teachers, counselors, and administrators were asked to list any specific topics/areas that they felt were most important for the classroom aide training program overall. The majority of responses (35.3%) focused on training regarding specific disabilities and accompanying strategies and communicating with students and other staff (29.4%). Results of Item 3 are listed in Table 12.

Table 12
Results of NAQ Item 3

List any specific topics/areas that you feel are most important for the classroom aide
training program.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Disability specific training	6
Communication	5
Working with ED/ODD	2
Academic support	2
Clear job description	2
Resolving conflict	1
Addressing current problem students	1
Setting boundaries	1
Stress reduction	1
Wolf Program behavior management	1

N = 17

Academic Skills

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

Classroom aides reported that they are best at assisting students in the area of

Math (41.7%) and least able to assist students in the area of Foreign Language (46.2%).

The results of Item 14 and Item 15 are displayed in Tables 13 and 14 respectively. Two

respondents skipped Item 14 and one respondent skipped Item 15.

Table 13
Results of NAQ-CA Item 14

I am best at assisting students academically in the following content area:

Math	Science	English	History	Foreign Language
41.7% (n=5)	8.3% (n=1)	16.7% (n=2)	16.7% (n=2)	16.7% (n=2)

Table 14
Results of NAQ-CA Item 15

I am least able to assist students academically in the following content area:

<u>Math</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Foreign Language</u>
30.8%	15.4%	7.7%	0.0%	46.2%
(n=4)	(n=2)	(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=6)

In determining the skills of classroom aides to assist in academic instruction, it is important to know which methods or techniques they utilize in working with students. Item 16 addresses their knowledge as well as their skills in this area. Results of this item were reported above in Table 7.

The classroom aides' skills in using technology to assist in academic instruction were also assessed. The majority of respondents agreed (46.2%) or strongly agreed (46.2%) that they are able to use a computer independently. Furthermore, 61.5% indicated that they were knowledgeable and skilled enough in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel to assist the students in their use of these programs. Results of Items 17 and 19a are displayed in Tables 15 and 16 respectively. One respondent skipped both of these items.

Table 15
Results of NAQ-CA Item 17

I am able to use a computer without any assistance.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	46.2%	46.2%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=6)	(n=6)

Table 16
Results of NAQ-CA Item 19a

Of the programs I indicated above, I am skilled enough to assist students in their use for academic purposes. (Refers to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel)

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>**Agree**</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
7.7%	0.0%	15.4%	61.5%	15.4%
(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=2)	(n=8)	(n=2)

The classroom aides also reported on their abilities to assist students in using assistive technology including a scientific calculator and an Alpha Smart computer. Approximately one-third (35.7%) agreed that they are able to assist students in using a scientific calculator. A larger number of classroom aides (42.9%) strongly agreed that they are able to assist students in using their Alpha Smart computer to complete an assignment. The results for Items 20 and 21 are displayed in Tables 17 and 18 respectively.

Table 17
Results of NAQ-CA Item 20

I can assist students in using a scientific calculator.

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>**Agree**</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
14.3%	7.1%	21.4%	35.7%	21.4%
(n=2)	(n=1)	(n=3)	(n=5)	(n=3)

Table 18
Results of NAQ-CA Item 21

I can assist students in using their Alpha Smart to complete assignments.

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>**Strongly**</u> <u>**Agree**</u>
14.3%	7.1%	0.0%	35.7%	42.9%
(n=2)	(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=5)	(n=6)

N=14

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ).

This questionnaire was completed by 19 out 26 teachers, counselors, and administrators that were asked to participate. Teachers, counselors, and administrators

were asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior

management, vocational duties, communication) that classroom aides possess the greatest

strength in and the one area that they require the most improvement. They were also

asked to identify any areas or topics they felt were important for the trainings overall.

These results were considered in assessing both the knowledge and the skills of the

classroom aides. The results of Items 1-3 may be found above in Tables 9-12.

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR).

The classroom aides also assessed their own skills in regards to assisting in

academic instruction on the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report.

Overall, the majority of classroom aides reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that

they effectively assist in academic instruction across various academic domains, except

for Foreign Language instruction. Results from Items 1-8 are displayed in Table 19.

Table 19
Results of CPSI-SR Items 1-8

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
1. Overall, I effectively assist students with academic instruction.	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (6)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
2. I effectively use and assist students with assisted devices and other technology (ex. Alpha Smart, computers).	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	7.1% (1)	35.7% (5)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
3. I effectively reinforce academic skills taught by the teacher.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	50.0% (7)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.36	14
4. I effectively assist students with Math instruction.	7.7% (1)	15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)	53.8% (7)	15.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.54	13*
5. I effectively assist students with Science instruction.	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	21.4% (3)	71.4% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.64	14
6. I effectively assist students with English instruction.	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	64.3% (9)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	4.14	14
7. I effectively assist students with History instruction.	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (7)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
8. I effectively assist students with Foreign Language instruction.	7.1% (1)	28.6% (4)	28.6% (4)	14.3% (2)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.14	14

* One respondent skipped this item.

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR).

Teachers were asked to rate the classroom aides on the same 8 items reported

above which were adapted for the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher

Report. This inventory was completed by 9 out of 14 teachers asked to participate.

Overall, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that classroom aides possess

adequate skills to assist in academic instruction across various domains.

Table 20
Results of CPSI-TR Items 1-8

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N *
1. Overall, (s)he effectively assists students with academic instruction.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	27.3% (3)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.73	11
2. (S)he effectively uses and assists students with assisted devices and other technology (ex. Alpha Smart, computers).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	18.2% (2)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.45	11
3. (S)he effectively reinforces academic skills taught by the teacher.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.36	11
4. (S)he effectively assists students with Math instruction.	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	54.5% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.09	11
5. (S)he effectively assists students with Science instruction.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	27.3% (3)	18.2% (2)	54.5% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.27	11
6. (S)he effectively assists students with English instruction.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	18.2% (2)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.45	11
7. (S)he effectively assists students with History instruction.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	18.2% (2)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.45	11
8. (S)he effectively assists students with Foreign Language instruction.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	27.3% (3)	63.6% (7)	9.1% (1)	4.70	11

* Each teacher rated 1-2 classroom aides.

Results of Needs Assessment Question 2

Needs Assessment Question 2: To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills assisting the teacher with behavior management?

The second needs assessment question sought to determine the extent to which classroom aides required additional knowledge and skills in order to assist the teacher with behavior management. The data collection variables included 1) knowledge of specific disabilities and behavioral interventions and 2) skills related to managing behavior. Data was collected using selected items from the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA), the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ), the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR), and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR). Items were grouped into those pertaining to knowledge and those pertaining to skills. These questionnaires were completed during the needs assessment phase that occurred prior to the beginning of the classroom aide training program. The results are presented below.

Behavior Management Knowledge

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The majority of classroom aides reported that they are aware of the disabilities of the students they work with (63.4%) and are familiar with the behavioral symptoms that accompany those disabilities (61.5%). The results of Items 22 and 23 are displayed in Table 21 and 22 respectively. One respondent skipped Item 23.

Table 21
Results of NAQ-CA Item 22

I am aware of what disabilities the students I work with have.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	7.1% (n=1)	64.3% (n=9)	21.4% (n=3)

Table 22
Results of NAQ-CA Item 23

I am familiar with the behavioral symptoms that accompany the disabilities of the students I work with.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.7% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	7.7% (n=1)	61.5% (n=8)	23.1% (n=3)

The classroom aides were asked to list any specific disabilities that they would like to learn more about. The most common disability reported was Austism/Asperger Syndrome (N=3). The results of Item 24 are displayed in Table 23. Three respondents skipped this item.

Table 23
Results of NAQ-CA Item 24

Please list any specific disabilities that you would like to learn more about.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Autism/Asperger Syndrome	3
OCD	2
All	2
Depression	1
Bipolar disorder	1
Processing information	1
Emotionally disturbed	1
Tourette Syndrome	1
ADHD	1

N = 11

The majority of classroom aides indicated that they are knowledgeable about various behavior management strategies (46.7%); however, a large number also

responded neutrally on this item (33.3%). The results of Item 25 are presented in Table

24. One respondent answered this question twice.

Table 24
Results of NAQ-CA Item 25

I am knowledgeable about various behavior management strategies.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	**Agree**	Strongly Agree
0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%
(n=0)	(n=0)	(n=5)	(n=7)	(n=3)

To further assess their knowledge of behavioral management strategies, the

classroom aides were asked to list any behavioral management strategies that they have

learned about or are familiar with. The most frequent responses were Wolf Program

strategies and point system (N=3), redirection (N=2), and Keep Calm and other

relaxation techniques (N=2). The results of Item 26 are listed in Table 25.

Table 25
Results of NAQ-CA Item 26

Please list behavioral management strategies that you have learned about or are familiar
with.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Wolf Program	3
Redirection	2
Keep Calm / relaxation techniques	2
Planned ignoring	1
3 P's	1
Non violent crisis intervention	1
Self management checklist	1

N = 10

Overall, the classroom aides reported that they are clear on their role in assisting

the teacher with behavior management (46.7% agree; 26.7% strongly agree). The results

of Item 30 are presented in Table 26. One respondent answered this question twice.

Table 26
Results of NAQ-CA Item 30

I am clear on how to assist the teacher with behavior management and what my role is in doing so.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	6.7%	20.0%	46.7%	26.7%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=3)	(n=7)	(n=4)

The classroom aides were also asked to rate their understanding of the school's

behavior management system known as the Wolf Program and the point categories that

comprise part of this program. While the majority agreed (38.5%) or strongly agreed

(23.1%), there was also a significant proportion that responded neutrally to understating

the purpose of the Wolf Program (30.8%). One respondent did not answer this item. In

regards to understanding the academic and social categories that comprise the behavioral

point system of the Wolf Program, 58.3% of respondents agreed that they understand this

aspect of the program. Two respondents skipped this item. The results from Item 31 and

33 are presented in Tables 27 and 28 respectively.

Table 27
Results of NAQ-CA Item 31

I understand the purpose of the Wolf Program.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	38.5%	23.1%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=4)	(n=5)	(n=3)

Table 28
Results of NAQ-CA Item 33

I understand the academic and social categories that comprise the point system.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	8.3%	8.3%	58.3%	25.0%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=7)	(n=3)

To further assess their knowledge of the Wolf Program, the aides were asked to

list any of the Wolf Program components that they are familiar with. The majority of

respondents were most familiar with the behavioral point system. The results from Item 32 are presented in Table 29. They were also asked which of the Wolf Program Social Tools they were familiar. In comparing the three social tools, more were familiar with Keep Calm (83.3%) than the PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps (66.7%) and B.E.S.T. (50.0%). Results for Item 34 are presented in Table 30. Two respondents skipped this item. On a related item, Item 36, one respondent indicated that they do not use components of the Wolf Program due to a lack of knowledge.

Table 29
Results of NAQ-CA Item 32

List any of the Wolf Program Components that you are familiar with.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Point systems; social and academic points	4
Timeout	2
Rewards program	2
PEGSEE	1
BEST	1
Job training	1
Job training	1

N = 8

Table 30
Results of NAQ-CA Item 34

Which of the following Wolf Program social tools are you familiar with? (Select all that apply.)

Keep Calm	PEGS-SEE	B.E.S.T.
83.3%	66.7%	50.0%
(n=10)	(n=8)	(n=6)

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ).

This questionnaire was completed by 19 out 26 teachers, counselors, and administrators that were asked to participate. Teachers, counselors, and administrators were asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior

management, vocational duties, communication) that classroom aides possess the greatest strength in and the one area that they require the most improvement. They were also asked to identify any areas or topics they felt were important for the trainings overall. These results were considered in assessing both the knowledge and the skills of the classroom aides in the domain of behavior management. The results of Items 1-3 may be found above in Tables 9-12.

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR).

Item 12 of the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory partially considers the knowledge of the classroom aides in regards to the symptoms and behaviors of the students they work with. All respondents indicated that they are mindful and aware of the symptoms and behaviors that accompany the disabilities of the students they work with when implementing behavior management strategies (57.1% Agree and 42.9% Strongly Agree). Results from this item are presented in Table 31.

Table 31
Results of CPSI-SR Item 12

While working with students, I stay mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and respond to these symptoms appropriately.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.43	14

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR).

Teachers were also asked to rate the classroom aides on the same item reported above which was adapted for the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report. This inventory was completed by 9 out of 14 teachers asked to participate. Overall, the teachers' responses indicated that they perceive the classroom aides to

possess knowledge regarding the symptoms and behaviors associated with the disabilities

of their students. The results of Item 12 are presented in Table 32.

Table 32
Results of CPSI-TR Item 12

While working with students, (s)he stays mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and responds to these symptoms appropriately.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.64	11

* Each teacher rated 1-2 classroom aides.

Behavior Management Skills

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The classroom aides answered several items related to their skills in the domain of

behavior management. The majority of respondents agreed (33.3%) or strongly agreed

(33.3%) that they possess the skills necessary to assist the teacher in behavior

management. Respondents identified previous experience (N=2), a background in

psychology (N=2), and redirecting students (N=2) as skills that make them effective in

managing behaviors. Results from Items 27 and 27a are presented in Tables 33 and 34

respectively. One respondent answered Item 27 twice.

Table 33
Results of NAQ-CA Item 27

I possess skills necessary to assist the teacher in behavior management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6.7% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	26.7% (n=4)	33.3% (n=5)	33.3% (n=5)

Table 34
Results of NAQ-CA Item 27a

If you agree, please list the skills that make you effective in managing behaviors.	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
Previous experience	2
Psychology background	2
Redirecting students	2
Training provided by the school	1
Listening / caring	1
Following through	1
3 P's – planned ignoring, proximity control, prompting	1
Communication skills	1
Ability to stay calm	1

N = 8

Classroom aides were also asked to list any behavioral management strategies that they use and if they find these strategies to be effective. The most frequently reported strategies include use of the Wolf Program (N=3), redirection of students (N=2), and changing the topic so as to distract the student from whatever is upsetting them (N=2). In regards to whether the behavior management strategies used are effective, classroom aides reported that they are effective most or some of the time; however, it was acknowledged that the effectiveness often depends on the intensity of the behavior being addressed. Results from Items 28 and 29 are presented in Table 35 and 36 respectively. Three respondents did not respond on Item 28 and four did not respond to Item 29.

Table 35
Results of NAQ-CA Item 28

List any behavior management strategies that you currently use with the students you work with.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Wolf program	3
Redirection	2
Change the topic /distract student from what is upsetting them	2
Eye contact	1
Maintaining a routine	1
Behavior management checklist	1
Take a nurturing approach	1
Visual prompts	1
Verbal cues	1
Relaxation techniques	

N = 11

Finally, classroom aides were asked to identify which, if any, of the Wolf Program social tools they use. More respondents use the Keep Calm technique (81.8%) than the PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps (36.4%) and B.E.S.T. (45.5%). The results of Item 35 are presented in Table 36. Three respondents skipped this question.

Table 36
Results of NAQ-CA Item 35

Which of the following Wolf Program social tools do you use with your students to assist in behavior management? (Select all that apply).

Keep Calm	PEGS-SEE	B.E.S.T.
81.8%	36.4%	45.5%
(n=9)	(n=4)	(n=5)

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR).

The classroom aides also assessed their own skills in regards to assisting in behavior management on the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report. Overall, the majority of classroom aides reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they effectively assist teachers and students in behavior management, reinforce

behavioral-social skills, and respond to behaviors appropriately. Results from Items 9-13

are displayed in Table 37.

Table 37
Results of CPSI-SR Items 9-13

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
9. I effectively use and assist teachers with providing classroom behavioral management strategies for students.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.43	14
10. I effectively use and assist students with using social-behavioral coping skills (i.e., Wolf Program skills, social problem solving).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	57.1% (8)	28.6% (4)	7.1% (1)	4.23	14
11. I effectively reinforce to students the behavioral-social skills taught by teachers and counselors.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	42.9% (6)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.43	14
12. While working with students, I stay mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and respond to these symptoms appropriately.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.43	14
13. When a student is exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the classroom, I respond in an effective manner to manage the situation.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (6)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.57	14

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR).

Teachers were asked to rate the classroom aides on the same 5 items reported

above which were adapted for the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher

Report. This inventory was completed by 9 out of 14 teachers asked to participate.

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that classroom aides possess adequate skills

to assist in the various aspects of behavior management. Results of Items 9-13 are

presented in Table 38.

Table 38
Results of CPSI-TR Items 9-13

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N*
9. (S)he effectively uses and assists teachers with providing classroom behavioral management strategies for students.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.64	11
10. (S)he effectively uses and assists students with using social-behavioral coping skills (i.e., Wolf Program skills, social problem solving).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.55	11
11. (S)he effectively reinforces to students the behavioral-social skills taught by teachers and counselors.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.36	11
12. While working with students, (s)he stays mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and responds to these symptoms appropriately.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.64	11
13. When a student is exhbiting disruptive behaviors in the classroom, (s)he responds in an effective manner to manage the situation.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	27.3% (3)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.45	11

* Each teacher rated 1-2 classroom aides.

Results of Needs Assessment Question 3

Needs Assessment Question 3: To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regard to completing vocational duties?

The third needs assessment question sought to determine the extent to which classroom aides required additional knowledge and skills in order to complete vocational duties effectively. The data collection variables included 1) knowledge of one's role and responsibilities, 2) skills related to paperwork, copying, organizing, etc., 3) skills related to self care, and 4) knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses as a paraprofessional. Data was collected using items from the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA), the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ), the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR), and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR). Items were grouped into those pertaining to knowledge and those pertaining to skills. These questionnaires were completed during the needs assessment phase that occurred 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the classroom aide training program. The results are presented below.

Vocational Duty Knowledge

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The classroom aides indicated that they possess adequate knowledge to assist the classroom teacher in clerical duties such as making copies, organizing the classroom, and completing paperwork. The majority agreed (46.2%) or strongly agreed (46.2%) that they possess this knowledge. The results from Item 37 are presented in Table 39. One respondent skipped this question.

Table 39
Results of NAQ-CA Item 37

I possess adequate knowledge and skills to assist the classroom teacher in clerical duties (ex. making copies, organizing, completing paperwork, etc.).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	46.2%	46.2%
(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=0)	(n=6)	(n=6)

Furthermore, the majority of classroom aides (76.9%) confirmed that they are clear about their role and accompanying responsibilities. Of those who reported being "Somewhat" or not clear about their role, they referred to a lack of training and being unsure of their authority in making decisions about students. In addition, all of the classroom aides agreed (64.3%) or strongly agreed (35.7%) that they are clear in their role of supervising students outside of the classroom. The results from Item 38 are presented in Table 40. One respondent skipped this item. The results from Item 39 are presented in Table 41.

Table 40
Results of NAQ-CA Item 38

I am clear about my role and responsibilities as a classroom aide.

Yes	Somewhat	No
76.9%	15.4%	7.7%
(n=10)	(n=2)	(n=1)

Table 41
Results of NAQ-CA Item 39

I am clear about my role of supervising students outside of the classroom (walking in the hallway, working one-on-one, during special area classes such as gym).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	64.3%	35.7%
(n=0)	(n=0)	(n=0)	(n=9)	(n=5)

In order to assess the classroom aides' insight into their needs for professional development, they were asked to list areas of strength as a paraprofessional, areas for improvement, and two professional development goals for this school year. The two most

common areas of strength identified by respondents were patience (N=4) and empathy

(N=3). The results of Item 46 are presented in Table 42. The most common areas in need

of improvement identified by the classroom aides were staying calm in difficult situations

(N=3), patience (N=2), communication skills (N=2), and anticipating the needs of the

teacher/students (N=2). The results from Item 47 are presented in Table 43. The most

common professional development goals identified by the classroom aides include

increased knowledge of student disabilities and appropriate behavior management

strategies (N=3), helping students learn (N=2), and developing one's

patience/understanding (N=2). The results from Item 48 are presented in Table 44.

Table 42
Results of NAQ-CA Item 46

List your areas of strength as a paraprofessional.	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
Patience	4
Empathy	3
Motivation	2
Interest in the academic coursework	2
Connecting with others	2
Background knowledge	2
Ability to take direction	1
Communication skills	1
Time management	1
Organization	1
Sense of humor	1

N=13

Table 43
Results of NAQ-CA Item 47

List any areas of improvement that you have identified for yourself.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Staying calm	3
Patience	2
Anticipating needs of the teacher/students	2
Communication	2
Math skills	1
Computer skills	1
Behavior management strategies	1

Table 44
Results of NAQ-CA Item 48

List two professional development goals that you have for yourself this academic school year.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Better understand disabilities and behavior strategies	3
Help students learn	2
Increase patience/understanding	2
Better computer skills	1
Better Math skills	1
Communication	1
Learn more about subject matters	1

N=10

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ).

This questionnaire was completed by 19 out of 26 teachers, counselors, and administrators that were asked to participate. Teachers, counselors, and administrators were asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, communication) that classroom aides possess the greatest strength in and the one area that they require the most improvement. They were also

asked to identify any areas or topics they felt were important for the trainings overall. These results were considered in assessing both the knowledge and the skills of the classroom aides in the domain of vocational duties. The results of Items 1-3 may be found above in Tables 9-12.

Vocational Duty Skills

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The classroom aides indicated that they possess adequate skills to assist the classroom teacher in clerical duties such as making copies, organizing the classroom, and completing paperwork. The majority agreed (46.2%) or strongly agreed (46.2%) that they possess these skills. The results from Item 37 are presented in Table 39. One respondent skipped this question.

The classroom aides were also asked questions regarding their skills and abilities in the area of self-insight and self care. Sixty percent (60.0%) of respondents indicated that they leave work feeling stressed and worn out; however, 66.7% reported that they schedule time in their personal schedule to relax and de-stress. Major causes of work related stress were reported as a perceived lack of communication between aides and teachers or administrators (N=6) and the high demands of students with behavioral disabilities (N=4). Common self care activities utilized by the classroom aides include: exercise such as yoga, Zumba, or walking (N=7), reading (N=4) and spending time with family and friends (N=3). Results from Items 40, 41, 42, and 43 are presented in Tables 45, 46, 47, and 48 respectively.

Table 45
Results of NAQ-CA Item 40

I leave work feeling stressed and worn out.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	<u>Agree</u>	Strongly Agree
6.7%	0.0%	13.3%	60.0%	20.0%
(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=2)	(n=9)	(n=3)

*One respondent answered twice.

Table 46
Results of NAQ-CA Item 41

I schedule time in my personal schedule to relax and de-stress.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	<u>Agree</u>	Strongly Agree
0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	66.7%	20.0%
(n=0)	(n=0)	(n=2)	(n=10)	(n=3)

*One respondent answered twice.

Table 47
Results of NAQ-CA Item 42

What are the major causes of your work-related stress?

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Lack of communication	6
High demands of students	4
Lack of validation	2
Boredom	1
Physical tiredness	1
Absence of a teacher	1
Short lunch period	1

N=13

Table 48
Results of NAQ-CA Item 43

List any self-care activities that you partake in.	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
Exercise/walking	7
Reading	4
TV / movies	4
Spending time with family and friends	3
Eating healthy	2
Music	2
Personal counseling	1
Going to bed early	1
Cooking	1
Theater	1

N=11

Approximately half of the classroom aides agreed (53.8%) that they have a clear vision of how they want to improve as a paraprofessional. In addition, 61.5% agreed that they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses as a paraprofessional. Results from Item 44 are presented in Table 49. One respondent skipped this question. Results from Item 45 are presented in Table 50. One respondent skipped this question.

Table 49
Results of NAQ-CA Item 44

I have a clear vision/idea of how I want to improve as a paraprofessional.				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	23.1% (n=3)	53.8% (n=7)	23.1% (n=3)

Table 50
Results of NAQ-CA Item 45

I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a paraprofessional.				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	7.7% (n=1)	61.5% (n=8)	30.8% (n=4)

The classroom aides also assessed their own skills in regards to performing

vocational duties on the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report.

Overall, the majority of classroom aides reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that

they effectively complete vocational duties including clerical duties, supervisory duties,

self-care, and professional development. Results from Items 14-18 are displayed in Table

51.

Table 51
Results of CPSI-SR Items 14-18

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
14. I effectively assist teachers with clerical duties (i.e., making copies, faxing, points, paperwork, etc.) in a timely and organized fashion.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	35.7% (5)	64.3% (9)	0.0% (0)	4.64	14
15. I can effectively use computers to assist teachers with clerical and other duties (ex. extranet, internet, MS word, MS excel, etc.).	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	7.1% (1)	35.7% (5)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
16. I effectively monitor students outside of the classroom (ex. recess, walking in hallways, working independently).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (7)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.50	14
17. I know what my strong points, adequacies, and limitations are as a classroom aide.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (2)	42.9% (6)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
18. I use information provided by faculty, staff, and others in order to get better at my job.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	35.7% (5)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.50	14

Teachers were asked to rate the classroom aides on the same 5 items reported above which were adapted for the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report. This inventory was completed by 9 out of 14 teachers asked to participate. Overall, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that classroom aides possess adequate skills to assist in the various aspects of vocational duties. Results of Items 14-18 are presented in Table 52.

Table 52
Results of CPSI-TR Items 14-18

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
14. (S)he effectively assists teachers with clerical duties (i.e., making copies, faxing, points, paperwork, etc.) in a timely and organized fashion.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	90.9% (10)	0.0% (0)	4.73	11
15. (S)he can effectively use computers to assist teachers with clerical and other duties (ex. extranet, internet, MS word, MS excel, etc.).	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.55	11
16. (S)he effectively monitors students outside of the classroom (ex. recess, walking in hallways, working independently).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	81.8% (9)	0.0% (0)	4.73	11
17. (S)he know what his/her strong points, adequacies, and limitations are as a classroom aide.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.64	11
18. (S)he uses information provided by faculty, staff, and others in order to get better at his/her job.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.55	11

* Each teacher rated 1-2 classroom aides.

Results of Needs Assessment Question 4

Needs Assessment Question 4: To what extent do classroom aides need to improve their knowledge and skills in regard to communicating with students, teachers, and staff?

The fourth needs assessment question sought to determine the extent to which classroom aides required additional knowledge and skills in order to communicate effectively with students, teachers, and other staff. The data collection variables included 1) verbal and nonverbal communication skills and 2) perceptions of being "heard." Data were collected using items from the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA), the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ), the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR), and the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR). Items were grouped into those pertaining to knowledge and those pertaining to skills. These questionnaires were completed during the needs assessment phase that occurred 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the classroom aide training program. The results are presented below.

Communication Knowledge

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

Classroom aides were asked to report on their approaches to communicating with students. Common approaches including being honest, being kind and compassionate, using humor, and being aware of nonverbal communication such as tone of voice and eye contact. The results of Item 55 are presented in Table 53.

Table 53
Results of NAQ-CA Item 55

Describe your approach to communicating with students. Are there any particular strategies you use?

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Nonverbal prompting / paraverbal communication	5
Use of humor	2
Convey kindness	2
Use of trust	2
Being honest	2
Use of encouragement/praise	1
Giving clear directions	1
Observing them before speaking	1
Encourage them to relax/calm down	1

N=12

Respondents also identified concerns and/or areas for improvement in regards to communication with staff and/or students. Some concerns were related to consistency of messages given to students by all staff and the need for changes in the daily schedule to be better communicated throughout the school. The results of Item 60 are presented in Table 54.

Table 54
Results of NAQ-CA Item 60

List any concerns or areas for improvement in regards to communication with staff and/or students.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Respect in communication	3
Changes need to be communicated more quickly	2
Issues between staff members should be addressed privately	1
Consistency in messages given to students	1

N=7

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators (NAQ).

This questionnaire was completed by 19 out 26 teachers, counselors, and administrators that were asked to participate. Teachers, counselors, and administrators were asked to identify the one area (assisting with academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, communication) that classroom aides possess the greatest strength in and the one area that they require the most improvement. They were also asked to identify any areas or topics they felt were important for the trainings overall. These results were considered in assessing both the knowledge and the skills of the classroom aides in the domain of communication. The results of Items 1-3 are found above in Tables 9-12.

Communication Skills

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides (NAQ-CA).

The classroom aides were asked to evaluate their skills in communicating effectively with teachers and other staff members. The majority of respondents indicated

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that they work collaboratively with the classroom teachers (42.9% Agree and 35.7%

Strongly Agree). On a scale from 1 to 10 (1=ineffective and 10 = most effective), the

classroom aides rated their ability to communicate with other staff members as 8.86 on

average. All respondents answered this item and responses ranged from 7-10. Classroom

aides also reported some difficulties in communicating with staff (teachers, counselors,

and administrators). The most common concerns include being misunderstood by another

person (N=2) and feeling as though there is not an adequate response to a concern raised

(N=3). The results from Items 49 and 51 are presented in Table 55 and 56 respectively.

Table 55
Results of NAQ-CA Item 49

I work collaboratively with the classroom teachers.				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	42.9%	35.7%
(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=6)	(n=5)

Table 56
Results of NAQ-CA Item 51

List any difficulties you experience in communicating with staff (teachers, counselors, administrators.)	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
No concerns	4
Lack of response to concerns	3
Misunderstandings	2
Feeling out of the loop	1
Other	2

N=12

The classroom aides also indicated that they are able to effectively communicate

with the students they work with (50.0% Agree and 35.7% Strongly Agree). They also

reported being aware of their nonverbal communication (ex. eye contact) always (50.0%)

or most of the time (50.0%). The most common difficulty communicating with students

was reported experienced when students "shut down" (N=2). The results from Items 52, 53, and 54 are reported in Tables 57, 58, and 59 respectively.

Table 57
Results of NAQ-CA Item 52

I am effective in communicating with the students I work with.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	50.0%	35.7%
(n=1)	(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=7)	(n=5)

Table 58
Results of NAQ-CA Item 53

Describe any difficulties you experience in communicating with students.

Theme	Frequency of Theme
When students shut down	2
What to do when students are oppositional	1
Patience	1
Understanding a students cognitive level	1
Enforcing rules	1
None	1

N=7

Table 59
Results of NAQ-CA Item 54

I am aware of my nonverbal communication with students (ex. eye contact, body language).

Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(n=7)	(n=7)	(n=0)	(n=0)

Finally, the classroom aides were asked to provide insight into their personal thoughts and reactions to communicating with students, teachers, and administrators. Most do not feel defensive when receiving feedback from teachers, counselors, and/or administrators; however, 26.7% responded neutrally to this topic. The majority of classroom aides agree (42.9%) or strongly agree (28.6%) that staff speaks to them in a

respectful, professional manner. Classroom aides also reported that their opinions and

concerns are often acknowledged adequately (42.9%). Finally, they usually do no take it

personally when a student in disrespectful towards them. The results from Items 56, 57,

58, and 59 are presented in Tables 60, 61, 62, and 63 respectively. All respondents

answered each of these items; however, one respondent answered Item 56 twice.

Table 60
Results of NAQ-CA Item 56

I feel defensive when receiving feedback from teachers, administrators, and/or counselors.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
33.3%	26.7%	26.7%	13.3%	0.0%
(n=5)	(n=4)	(n=4)	(n=2)	(n=0)

Table 61
Results of NAQ-CA Item 57

I feel that staff speaks to me in a respectful, professional manner.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0.0%	7.1%	21.4%	42.9%	28.6%
(n=0)	(n=1)	(n=3)	(n=6)	(n=4)

Table 62
Results of NAQ-CA Item 58

My opinions, concerns, etc. are acknowledged adequately by other staff members.

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	0.0%
(n=4)	(n=6)	(n=4)	(n=0)

Table 63
Results of NAQ-CA Item 59

I take it personally when a student is disrespectful in the way he or she speaks to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
(n=6)	(n=4)	(n=4)	(n=0)	(n=0)

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report (CPSI-SR).

The classroom aides also assessed their own skills in regards to communicating with students, teachers, and staff on the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report. All of the classroom aides agreed or strongly agreed that they effectively communicate with students, teachers, and other staff members. Results from Items 19-22 are displayed in Table 64.

Table 64
Results of CPSI-SR Items 19-22

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
19. I communicate and interact effectively with the other staff members (teachers, aides, counselors, administrators, etc.).	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	35.7% (5)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.50	14
20. I communicate and interact effectively with the students in my classroom.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (7)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.50	14
21. I effectively communicate my needs/concerns to teachers.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (2)	42.9% (6)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	4.29	14
22. I effectively communicate my needs/concerns to the administration.	0.0% (0)	14.3% (2)	21.4% (3)	42.9% (6)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.71	14

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report (CPSI-TR).

Teachers were asked to rate the classroom aides on the same 4 items reported above which were adapted for the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report. This inventory was completed by 9 out of 14 teachers asked to participate. All respondents strongly agreed that classroom aides possess adequate skills to communicate effectively with students, teachers, and other staff members. Results of Items 19-22 are presented in Table 65.

Table 65
Results of CPSI-TR Items 19-22

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A	Mean	N
19. (S)he communicates and interacts effectively with the other staff members (teachers, aides, counselors, administrators, etc.).	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	72.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.55	11
20. (S)he communicates and interacts effectively with the students in my classroom.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	81.8% (9)	0.0% (0)	4.82	11
21. (S)he effectively communicates his/her needs/concerns to teachers.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	27.3% (3)	63.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.55	11
22.(S)he effectively communicates his/her needs/concerns to the administration.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	18.2% (2)	36.4% (4)	45.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	4.27	11

* Each teacher rated 1-2 classroom aides.

Summary and Interpretation of Needs Assessment Results

When viewed as a whole, the data suggests that the classroom aides would benefit from professional development training activities in the domains of behavior management and academic instruction. While the aides rated themselves as possessing adequate knowledge and skills in most of the four areas assessed (academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication), they did report a need for greater knowledge and skills in regards to understanding specific disabilities and specific behavior management strategies. They also reported needing additional training in academic strategies for academic subjects such as Math and Spanish. Likewise, teachers, counselors, and administrators identified the domains of behavior management and academic instruction as those areas that classroom aides would most benefit from professional development.

SECTION IV: Context Assessment

Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation framework includes an assessment of the organizational context. More specifically, the framework emphasizes the importance of understanding the organization's social, cultural, community, and organizational context in order to design and implement an effective human service program. This assessment helps to identify factors in the environment of the target population that provide meaning to their needs and provide direction for program planning and ultimately evaluation.

Maher (2012) provides the A VICTORY framework as one approach to delineating the needs of the target population and the conditions surrounding those needs. A VICTORY is an acronym that represents the first letter of a set of factors related to relevant contextual information. Each of the these factors is listed below:

1. Ability of the organization to commit resources to design and implement a human service program for the target population.

2. Values that people within the organization and other stakeholders ascribe to the target population and their needs, as well as to human service programs

3. Ideas that people have about the current situation in regards to the population and their needs

4. Circumstances within the organization related to its structure and direction

5. Timing of the human service program

6. Obligation felt by organizational members and other stakeholder to assist the target population through a human service program

7. <u>R</u>esistance that might be encountered with respect to assisting the target population within the organization

8. <u>Y</u>ield or benefit that may result for the target population as a result of the human service program

There are several methods that can be used to delineate the relevant context. One may interview key individuals within the organization about the A VICTORY factors. Questionnaires can also be used to obtain responses about these and other factors. In addition, a permanent product review, or review of written materials, is another possible method that can be used to make judgments and inferences about the context. Finally, judgment and inferences about the eight factors can be made based on the consultant's involvement and participation with the client and others within the organization. The organizational context for the classroom aide professional development training program is described below.

Abilities

Human resources for the classroom aide professional development training program included the school psychologist who supervises the program and the primary investigator (practicum student) who is responsible for all program planning and evaluation activities. The organization has one director (the client) as well as two principals, one for each of the school's two locations.

Informational and technological resources included the school's behavior modification program known as the Wolf Program which was developed in 2009 in response to an organizational assessment of social and behavioral needs. The program is based on social emotional learning and positive behavioral support principles and is

designed to teach students the critical thinking and behavioral skills necessary to be successful both academically and socially. Technological resources included SMART boards and computers used for conducting the needs assessment with the classroom aides and for presentation of materials during implementation of the training sessions.

Physical resources included use of the computer and science labs. Financial resources were adequate as the school provided the minimal funds necessary for copying materials. Temporal resources required and available for the program included eight training sessions, a pre-training meeting, and a post-training meeting. The organization designated the prep period on Thursdays for a series of eight weeks for implementation of the training program.

Values

The school has offered professional development activities to classroom aides for a number of years with the most recent program in existence since 2007. The administration has always valued professional development activities and continues to do so. Values that have been important to the organization include promoting students' academic and behavioral growth, consistent staff response to students, and professional development and growth of staff.

Ideas

The individuals within the organization were clear on the program planning and evaluation process as it was reviewed with them before activities began. Most people felt that more targeted services were necessary in order to adequately meet the needs of the target population.

Circumstances

The director of the school and the supervisor of the classroom aide professional development training program were high likely to remain in their current positions. It was publicly known that the principal of the primary location would be retiring at the end of the academic school year. This was not expected to affect the program as implementation ended before this took place. It was important to note that classroom aides are hired on a rolling basis. That is, more classroom aides are hired as the number and needs of students expand throughout the school year.

Timing

The most recent training program traditionally ran throughout the year therefore timing is appropriate. It would have been ideal, however, to starts the needs assessment process at the beginning of the academic school year.

Obligation

Active supporters were considered to be the school's director and the school psychologist who supervises the classroom aide professional development training program.

Resistance

Generally, there was no anticipated resistance to program implementation or evaluation.

Yield

This program was expected to increase classroom aides' personal knowledge of job related functions, as well as to increase their effectiveness in assisting students. The

program was also expected to increase consistency in classroom aides' interactions with

students and therefore increase the overall effectiveness of the school as an organization.

CHAPTER V

PROGRAM DESIGN PHASE

Purpose and Goals

Statement of Purpose

All classroom aides employed by the school will participate in the Classroom

Aide Professional Development Training Program (CAPD-TP). With the guidance of the

primary investigator and the CAPD-TP supervisor, the aides will be involved in a series

of group discussions and activities aimed at educating classroom aides about behavioral

management strategies and academic instruction strategies. As a result of these training

sessions, the classroom aides 1) will become knowledgeable about behavior management

and academic instruction strategies and 2) will utilize some of these strategies in working

with students.

Goals

1. Classroom aides will report increased knowledge of behavioral management
   strategies and academic instruction strategies.

   a. At the end of the CAPD-TP, the aides will complete a feedback
      questionnaire. It is anticipated that 80% of the classroom aides will answer
      "Yes" to the question, "Is there at least one piece of knowledge (lesson,
      main point, idea, or strategy) that you have taken from the aide trainings
      that you find valuable?"

2. Classroom aides will utilize behavioral management strategies and academic
   instruction strategies presented in the program when working with students.

a. At the end of the CAPD-TP, the aides will complete a feedback questionnaire. It is anticipated that 80% of the classroom aides will answer "Yes" to the following question: "Is there at least one strategy (lesson, main point, idea, or piece of knowledge) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you have used?"

Eligibility Standards and Criteria

All classroom aides are eligible to participate in the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program (CAPD-TP).

Policies and Procedures

The following is a list of the policies and procedures of the CAPD-TP.

1. Aides are to attend regularly scheduled 30-minute training sessions on a weekly basis for a period of 8 weeks.

2. Aides are to participate during the training sessions and complete any intersession assignments.

3. Aides are to bring their materials binder to each training session.

4. At the conclusion of the program, aides are to complete a program feedback form.

5. Aides are to abide by the policies and responsibilities as outlined in the school's "Job Framework for Classroom Aides" document.

Methods and Techniques

Methods

Training sessions will take place every Thursday over the course of eight weeks. Each session will follow a similar structure: 1) brief review from the previous week, 2)

introduction of the current session's topic, 3) discussion, case example, or activity, and 3)

summary of the session. Generally, the professional development presentations will be

delivered in a multimedia, interactive format. Methods that may be employed include

worksheets, lectures, group discussions, and video/audio recordings.

Techniques

Each training session will begin with the presentation of an agenda for the

meeting. Aides will be provided with a training binder to be used to collect and organize

the handouts that will be provided for each session.

Materials

Materials for the program include: paper, pens or pencils, and three ring binders.

The materials are targeted to the classroom aides. The primary investigator will create

CAPD-TP binders for each classroom aide at the beginning of the program. At each

training session, every aide will be provided with materials relevant to the topic for that

day. Examples of such materials may include meeting agendas and copies of PowerPoint

presentations. The program will also make use of audio/visual materials as appropriate.

These materials may be in the form of a DVD or may be available on the Internet.

Equipment

The CAPD-TP will require the use of the following equipment: a computer, a

Smartboard, and a photocopy machine. This equipment is available at the school without

any additional cost.

Facilities

The CAPD-TP will operate inside of the school. Training sessions will normally

take place in the science lab. If another type of classroom is required for any activities,

the primary investigator will seek approval from the CAPD-TP supervisor and any other appropriate administrators.

Components, Activities, Phases

The Classroom Aide Professional Development Training program will have two main phases. Phase 1 involves trainings regarding behavior management strategies and Phase 2 involves strategies related to academic instruction.

Phase 1 involves classroom aides attending 5 training sessions focused on behavior management strategies. The content of the training sessions will be designed upon completion of the needs assessment.

Phase 2 involves classroom aides attending 3 training sessions focused on strategies related to academic instruction. The content of the training sessions will be designed upon completion of the needs assessment.

Budget

CAPD-TP Budget 2012

Resources	Estimated Costs	Funded By
Salaries - Program coordinator - Supervisor	$0	School (No additional funds required for this program beyond base pay.)
Printing / Photocopying	$0	School
Office supplies (pens, paper, etc.)	$0	School
Incentives - Food, drinks, etc. - Training binders (quantity = 14)	$50 $30	Program coordinator
Total	$80	

Personnel

Program Coordinator
Role: The program coordinator designs and implements the program.

Responsibilities: The program coordinator is responsible for scheduling training

sessions, preparing all materials, delivering training sessions, completing an

implementation log for each session, recording the content of all training sessions,

and administering feedback forms at the end of the program.

Role accomplishments: training sessions designed, training sessions implemented

according to schedule, educated program participants, sessions documented

Relationships: The program coordinator communicates with the program

supervisor about the content and implementation of the program. The program

coordinator interacts with the classroom aides during training sessions. The

program coordinator interacts with the principal and director of the school as

concerns arise.

Program Supervisor

Role: The supervisor provides supervision to the program coordinator regarding

program content and implementation.

Responsibilities: The supervisor provides guidance to the program regarding the

content and format of training sessions. The supervisor also provides educational

resources that the program coordinator can use during trainings. Finally, the

supervisor facilitates communication between the program coordinator and the

director.

Role accomplishments: provided guidance and support to the program coordinator

as appropriate

Relationships: The supervisor communicates with the program coordinator regarding the design and implementation of the training program. The supervisor communicates with the director regarding any concerns related to the CAPD-TP.

Participants

Role: Participants are the classroom aides who attend and participate in the training sessions.

Responsibilities: Participants are responsible for attending and participating in group sessions, bringing their training binder to each sessions, completing intersession assignments, and learning about behavioral and academic strategies.

Role accomplishments: attended and participated in group sessions, development of a complete training binder, increased knowledge and skills related to behavioral and academic strategies

Relationships: Participants communicate with the program coordinator at training sessions. Participants may communicate with supervisor about any concerns related to the training program.

School Director

Role: The school director grants permission for the training to occur and to utilize school resources in doing so.

Responsibilities: Give permission for the training program to occur and address any related schoolwide concerns if they arise.

Role accomplishments: provided approval for training program and utilization of school resources

Relationships: The school director communicates with the supervisor and coordinator in regards to concerns about the training program.

Incentives

While there are no monetary incentives for this program, there are some nonmonetary incentives for the classroom aides. These nonmonetary incentives are outlined below.

Knowledge about behavior management and academic instruction strategies:

Aides will be taught about various strategies related to the areas of behavior management and academic instruction that can be used with the students they work with. They will also be given the opportunity to try out these strategies through intersession assignments and to reflect back on the utility of these strategies.

CAPD-TP Binder:

At the end of the program, aides will have amassed a complete training binder with materials from each training session that may serve as a future resource.

Food and Beverages:

The aides will receive coffee and/or snacks at training sessions.

CHAPTER VI

CLASSROOM AIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAM
CURRICULUM

Introduction

This program was developed according to the needs of the target population as determined by the needs assessment conducted prior to implementation of the program. The needs assessment phase indicated two domains of need for professional development: behavioral management and academic strategies. In the domain of behavior management, the aides self reported knowledge of the school's behavioral management program known as the Wolf program. When asked specific questions regarding the program, however, the aides' answers indicated that they were only familiar with certain aspects of the program, specifically the point system. They were more unfamiliar with the social skills tools and educational strategies associated with the program. A greater understanding of the purpose and context of the Wolf program was therefore prioritized in this professional development training program as the Wolf program serves as the underlying basis for all of the behavioral management strategies used at the school.

In the Clarification Phase, the classroom aides also indicated that the domain of academic knowledge and skills represent an area of need for professional development and training. Personal weakness in the academic areas of Spanish and Mathematics were commonly reported. While it was beyond the scope of the current program to provide academic instruction in these academic areas, the program focused on universal academic strategies that may be employed to assist in these areas. The program also focused on developing academic instruction strategies by building upon students' strengths.

<center>**Session 1:** Wolf Program Overview</center>

Objectives:
Discuss the purpose and goal of the Wolf Program.
Review the Wolf Program social skills tools.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector

Agenda:
I.   Foundations of the Wolf Program
    a. Social Emotional Learning
    b. Positive Behavioral Support
II. Goals of the Wolf Program
    a. Increase students' knowledge about social and adaptive functioning.
    b. Increase students' use of adaptive and academic skills.
    c. Decrease incidents of maladaptive social responses and interpersonal interactions.
III. Wolf Program components
    a. Targeted individuals
    b. Selected group programming
    c. Universal components
IV. Social Skills Tools
    a. Part of universal component
    b. B.E.S.T. (Elias & Brune-Butler, 2005)
    c. Keep Calm (Elias & Brune-Butler, 2005)
    d. PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps (Hartke, 2009)

References:
Cocuzza, F. J., Hartke, G. J., & Zambelli, G. C. (2009). Wolf Program Manual. Morristown, NJ: Shepard Schools.

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Objectives:
Discuss the PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps.
Apply the steps to case examples.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector
PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Worksheets

Agenda:
I. PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps (Hartke, 2009)
    a. Problem
    b. Emotion
    c. Goals
    d. Solutions
    e. Select
    f. Enact
    g. Evaluate
II. Case Example
    a. The Case of Sally: "I don't want to do any work. I had a rough night last night. I got in a fight with my mom about our dog. Now my teacher won't leave me alone! She keeps telling me to do this assignment. What doesn't she understand? I don't want to do it! I just want to go for a walk outside because the weather is so nice. If I walk out of the room, then at least I won't be disturbing the rest of the class. Right?"
    b. Pretend you are Sally and work with a partner to complete the first 4 steps of the "PEGS-SEE" Problem Solving Worksheet.
III. Homework
    a. Complete the first 4 steps of the PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Worksheet for a situation involving yourself or a student you work with.

References:
Cocuzza, F. J., Hartke, G. J., & Zambelli, G. C. (2009). Wolf Program Manual. Morristown, NJ: Shepard Schools.

Objectives:
Provide the context surrounding and the components of the Wolf Program's point system.
Apply the behavioral point system to a case example.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector
Handout of the Social and Academic Behavior Categories

Agenda:
I.   Purpose and context of the Behavioral Point System
    a.   The behavioral point system is a "positive, social learning intervention"
         that aims to improve students' social and academic behaviors.
II. Use of the Behavioral Point System
    a.   Students earn points, rather than lose points.
    b.   Students start each period with 0 points and earn for the demonstration of
         positive academic and social behaviors.
III. Discussion
    a.   Pick one of the Social Behavior categories (ex. Citizenship behaviors) and
         discuss as a group how a student would demonstrate these behaviors.
IV. Case example
    a.   The Case of Alex: Alex walks into the classroom with his hood over his
         head and his arms crossed. You greet him as he enters and he replies with
         a grunt. He was just in gym class and his team lost the basketball game.
         The teacher for the next period walks in and asks him to take it off. He
         complies, but curses at the teacher as he does so. The teacher ignores his
         behavior and begins with the lesson. Alex does not pay attention at first,
         but after several minutes begins to complete the worksheet assigned by the
         teacher.
    b.   What social and/or academic categories apply to this situation?
    c.   If you were the teacher, how would you justify your assignment of points?

References:
Cocuzza, F. J., Hartke, G. J., & Zambelli, G. C. (2009). Wolf Program Manual.
         Morristown, NJ: Shepard Schools.

<div align="center">**Session 4:** Oppositional Students</div>

Objectives:
Gain knowledge and understanding regarding the behaviors of oppositional students.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector

Agenda:
I.   The Oppositional Student Discussion
    a. What signs/symptoms do you think of when you hear the diagnosis of Oppositional Defiant Disorder?
    b. Are there any students you currently work with that you consider to be oppositional? Describe their behaviors.
II. The DSM-IV-TR Criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder
III. More than just opposition…
    a. Emotional Dysregulation
    b. Hostility / Provocativeness
IV. A Developmental Perspective
    a. The development of compliance behaviors. What is normative? What is not?

References:

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., Text revision) (DSM-IV-TR). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Boucher, C. R. (1999). *Students in discord: Adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Matthys, W., & Lochman, J. E. (2010). *Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder in childhood.* Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell.

Session 5: Strategies for Working with Oppositional Students

Objectives:
Gain knowledge of how to work with the behaviors of oppositional students.
Apply strategies for working with oppositional students to a case example.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector

Agenda:
I.   Types of Responses to Challenging Behaviors (Greene, 2008)
    a. Plan A = You must do what I say.
    b. Plan B = Collaborative Problem Solving
    c. Plan C = Dropping an expectation temporarily.
II. Collaborative Problem Solving
    a. Empathy
    b. Defining the problem.
    c. Invite the student to problem solve together.
III. Case Example
    a. During history class one day, the teacher announced that the class would spend the period in the library doing research. She instructed the class that students were expected to sit at the tables in groups of 3 or less. When the class arrived at the library, Rob looked straight at the teacher and then sat at a table where 3 students already sat. – How would you handle this situation?
    b. Shortly, the teacher walked up to Rob and quietly reminded him of the direction. For the next 5 minutes, Rob argued with the teacher about the unfairness and meaninglessness of her direction. The teacher, weary of the argument, finally said that she expected Rob to follow directions and walked away. – What could the teacher have done differently?
    c. Shortly, the teacher walked up to Rob and quietly reminded him of the direction. For the next 5 minutes, Rob argued with the teacher about the unfairness and meaninglessness of her direction. The teacher, weary of the argument, finally said that she expected Rob to follow directions and walked away.
    d. How could you use collaborative problem solving in this situation?
IV. General Guidelines
    a. Control your own anger.
    b. Remain calm.
    c. Help the child calm down.
    d. Try to show empathy.
    e. Be consistent with rules.

References:

Boucher, C. R. (1999). *Students in discord: Adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Greene, R. W. (2008). *Lost at school.* New York, New York: Scribner.

Hartke, G. (2008, March 11). *Oppositional defiant disorder* presented at Shepard Schools as part of the 2007-2008 Classroom Aide Training Program.

<p style="text-align: center;">Session 6: Learning Disabilities</p>

Objectives:
Gain general knowledge of the signs/symptoms of learning disabilities.
Gain a better understanding of what it is like to have a learning disability.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector
Handouts: Quasi-Stroop test; Visual Processing Disorder handout

Agenda:
  I. What is a learning disability?
    a. Definition provided by IDEIA (2004).
    b. Discussion of what the definition means in lay terms.
  II. Facts about Learning Disabilities
    a. 1 in 7 Americans has some type of learning disability (National Institute of Health)
    b. As many as 80% of students with learning disabilities have reading problems.
    c. Learning disabilities often run in families.
    d. Learning disabilities are not:
        i. ADHD, mental retardation, autism, deafness, blindness, behavioral disorders
        ii. Due to a lack of educational opportunities like frequent changes of schools or attendance problems
        iii. Due to unfamiliarity with the English language
  III. Common Learning Disabilities
    a. Dyslexia
    b. Dyscalculia
    c. Dysgraphia
    d. Auditory and visual processing disorders
    e. Nonverbal learning disability
  IV. What is it like to have a learning disability?
    a. Simulation of the LD experience using a test similar to the Stroop Test.
    b. Simulation of a Visual Processing disorder. Connect the jumbled numbers in order without lifting your hand from the paper.
    c. Discuss these experiences. What thoughts and feelings did you have while trying to complete these tasks?

References:
Adcock, B., & Remus, M. L. (2006). Disability awareness activity packet. Retrieved from https://www.dvusd.org/docs/edservices/Disability_Awareness.pdf.
LDOnline. http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/aboutld.

Session 7: Reading Disabilities

Objectives:
Gain general knowledge of the signs/symptoms of reading disabilities.
Gain a better understanding of what it is like to have a reading disability.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector
Reading Disability Simulation handout

Agenda:
I.   Background Information
    a.   Reading disabilities are the most common form of learning disabilities.
    b.   Children usually fall behind in recognizing letters and words by 1st grade.
    c.   Reading affects a student's achievement in almost all other academic areas (History, Science, Math, etc.).
    d.   Learn to read versus Read to learn.
II. Reading Skills involve:
    a.   Decoding
    b.   Word Recognition
    c.   Reading Comprehension
    d.   Reading Fluency
III. What is it like to have a reading disability?
    a.   Simulation activity

Reference:
Reddy, L. A. (2012). *Reading difficulties*. Class lecture at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ.

<center>**Session 8**: Academic Strategies</center>

Objectives:
Generate academic strategies for students with various learning disabilities.

Materials:
Aide training binders
PowerPoint presentation
Smart Board projector

Agenda:
I. Introduction
   a. Needs assessment data indicated that Math and Spanish represent the area of most academic difficulty for aides.
   b. We have been focusing on disabilities and strategies, but we should not forget to focus on strengths as well.

II. Activity
   a. Break into groups of 3.
   b. Each group gets assigned to one strength area:
       Auditory
       Visual
       Kinesthetic
   c. As a group, develop 3 strategies that you could use with a student who has this strength to complete the Math worksheet. Pretend that money, time, and resources are not factors – be creative!
   d. Smaller groups report to the larger group.

CHAPTER VII

FORMATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Introductory Information

Title of Program to be Evaluated

The title of the program to be evaluated is Classroom Aide Professional

Development Training Program (CAPD-TP).

Members of Evaluation Team

The evaluation team consists of Katherine Dulfer, who is a practicum student at

the school, as well as a school psychology doctoral student at Rutgers University.

Client

The clients for this program evaluation were identified as the administration at the

school. The administration includes the director of the school and the supervisor of the

classroom aide professional development (PD) training program. The supervisor of the

PD program invited the investigator to serve as a consultant in order to develop and

implement a program evaluation of the training program. The other members of the

administration agreed. The investigator is responsible for the implementation of the

program as well as the ensuing evaluation.

Target Population

The target population consisted of 17 classroom aides. It is important to note that

there were a greater number of participants in the Program Evaluation phase than in the

Needs Assessment process. Three aides were hired between the administration of the

Needs Assessment and the beginning of the Classroom Aide Professional Development

Training Program.

Rationale for Program Evaluation

The administration at the school is interested in obtaining information in several areas. A needs assessment conducted prior to the implementation of the program indicated that the aides required additional knowledge and skills related to assisting in behavior management and academic instruction. The training program has been in existence since 2007; however, the client lacks information about whether the program adds to the knowledge and skills of the classroom aides and whether the aides are satisfied with the program (current state of affairs). Through the program evaluation, the administration wants to know whether the training program adds to the knowledge and skills of the classroom aides and whether the classroom aides are satisfied with the program (desired state of affairs). The administration would like this information in order to ensure that the training program is meeting the needs of the classroom aides and to gain information regarding the status of the program, specifically if there are any areas in need of improvement.

<u>CSA</u>: Client lacks information about whether or not the program adds to the knowledge and skills of the classroom aides (target population).

<u>DSA</u>: Client has gained information about whether or not the program adds to the knowledge and skills of the classroom aides (target population).

<u>CSA</u>: Client lacks information about whether or not classroom aides are satisfied with the program.

<u>DSA</u>: Client has gained information about whether or not classroom aides are satisfied with the program.

Time Frame

The program evaluation was designed to implemented upon the completion of the CAPD-TP during the first week of June 2012.

Description of the Program

The description of the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training program was provided in the Program Implementation Chapter (Chapter VI – Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program Curriculum).

List of Program Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have program goals been met?

    a. Classroom aides will report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies.

    b. Classroom aides will utilize behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies presented in the program when working with students.

2. What knowledge and skills did the classroom aides perceive themselves as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

3. To what extent did the classroom aides find the program to be valuable and a satisfying experience?

4. To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

Program Evaluation Protocols

Protocol 1: Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of 16 items that required the classroom aides to complete multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire aimed to gather information regarding whether the aides found value from the training program, what they perceived as valuable, and what changes they would like to see in the future.

<u>Method</u>: Protocol 1 was completed by the classroom aides at a post-training meeting that occurred within 2 weeks of the completion of the training program. Survey Monkey was used in the same manner as during the needs assessment described previously. The principal investigator remained outside of the room as to not influence any responses. She was available for questions or clarification about questionnaire items upon request.

<u>Analysis:</u> Data from the protocols was collected, aggregated, and evaluated by the primary evaluator. For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated. This data is presented in tables and graphs. For open-ended questions, data was separated into themes and frequency counts of these themes were calculated. Data is presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries.

Protocol 2: Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report

This protocol consists of 22 items that required the respondents to rate themselves on skills in the domains of academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication. Response options consist of a 5 point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree in addition to a "not applicable" response option.

Methods: Protocol 2 was completed by the classroom aides at a post-training meeting that occurred within 2 weeks of the completion of the training program. Survey Monkey was used in the same manner as during the needs assessment described above. The principle investigator remained outside of the room as to not influence any responses. She was available for questions or clarification about questionnaire items upon request.

Analysis: Data from the protocols was collected, aggregated, and evaluated by the primary investigator. Means and percentages were calculated for each item. This data is presented in tables and graphs.

Protocol 3: Implementation Log

This protocol consists of 7 items that were completed by the primary investigator after each training session. Items are multiple-choice and open-ended formats.

Methods: The primary investigator completed the implementation log upon the completion of each training session. The logs were placed in a binder that will remain in a locked cabinet in the primary investigator's private residence. This data will be shredded after three years time.

Analysis: Upon completion of the training program, data from the logs was aggregated and analyzed by the primary investigator. For items with multiple choice responses, means and percentages were calculated for each item. This data is presented in tables and graphs. For open-ended questions, data was separated into themes and frequency counts of these themes were calculated. Data is presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries.

Guidelines for Communication and Use of Program Evaluation Information

The results of the program evaluation data were aggregated and placed into a Program Evaluation Results Document. This document has the following structure:

A.   Overview of the Program Evaluation

B.   Description of the Program that was evaluated

C.   Program Evaluation Questions and Answers

D.   Program Evaluation Protocols

All data was aggregated and no individual responses were made available in order to ensure anonymity. A copy of the Program Evaluation Results Document was provided to the appropriate administrators who include the director of the school, the principal, and the supervisor of the training program. The principal investigator met with the administrator who supervises the program and the principal to review the data.

Program Evaluation Results

Results of Program Evaluation Question 1

Program Evaluation Question 1: To what extent have program goals been met?

The first program evaluation question sought to determine the extent to which the goals of the program were met as outlined in the program design. There were two primary goals: 1) Classroom aides will report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies and 2) Classroom aides will utilize behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies presented in the program when working with students. Data was collected using items from the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire. This questionnaire was completed by

the classroom aides following the completion of the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program. The results are presented below.

Goal 1: Classroom aides will report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies.

The first program goal was assessed using Item 2 of the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire. Item 2 asked the following, "Is there at least one piece of knowledge (lesson, main point, idea, or strategy) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you find valuable?" It was anticipated that at least 80% of the classroom aides would answer "Yes" to this question. This goal was achieved as 81.3% of respondents (N=13) answered "Yes" to Item 2. One respondent skipped this question.

Goal 2: Classroom aides will utilize behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies presented in the program when working with students.

The second program goal was assessed using Item 3 of the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire. Item 3 asked the following, "Is there at least one strategy (lesson, main point, idea, or piece of knowledge) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you have used?" It was anticipated that at least 80% of the classroom aides would answer "Yes" to this question. This goal was not achieved, with 66.7% (N=10) of respondents answering "Yes" to Item 3. Two respondents skipped this question.

Program Evaluation Question 2: What knowledge and skills did the classroom aides perceive themselves as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

Data was collected using selected items from the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire. These items were completed by the classroom aides following the completion of the training program. The results are presented below.

On Item 1, the classroom aides were asked to indicate to what extent they learned about the following concepts and skills in the aide trainings: academic instruction, instruction strategies for a specific subject, behavior management, specific disabilities, vocational duties, self care, personal professional development, communicating with students, communications with teachers and administrators, and other. All classroom aides (100%; N=17) indicated learning about knowledge and skills (response option = Yes) related to behavior management and communicating with students. Over 80% of classroom aides reported learning about knowledge and skills related to academic instruction, specific disabilities, vocational duties, and communicating with teachers and administrators. The results of Item 1 are presented in Table 66. All respondents completed this item.

Table 66
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 1
To what extent did you learn about the following concepts and skills in the aide
trainings?

	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A	N
Academic instruction	88.2% (15)	5.9% (1)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	17
Instruction strategies for a specific subject	76.5% (13)	23.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17
Behavior management	100.0% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17
Specific disabilities (symptoms, strategies, etc.)	94.1% (16)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17
Vocational duties (copying, points, organizing)	82.4% (14)	11.8% (2)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	17
Self care	76.5% (13)	11.8% (2)	5.9% (1)	5.9% (1)	17
Personal professional development	64.7% (11)	23.5% (4)	11.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	17
Communicating with students	100.0% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17
Communicating with teachers/administration	87.5% (14)	6.3% (1)	6.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	16
Other	66.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (1)	3

In order to further analyze what knowledge and skills the classroom aides

perceived themselves as gaining from the classroom aide training program, respondents

were asked to elaborate upon Item 2 as described above in Program Evaluation Question

1. Item 2 required respondents who answered "Yes" to the question, "Is there at least one

piece of knowledge (lesson, main point, idea, or strategy) that you have taken from the

aide trainings that you find valuable?" to explain what their "take-away" was. Thirteen

respondents answered this question. Approximately half (N=7) referred to knowledge and

skills related to disability specific behavior management and academic instruction

strategies. The results are presented below in Table 67.

Table 67
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 2a

Is there are least one piece of knowledge (lesson, main point, idea, or strategy) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you find valuable? If yes, what is it?

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Disability specific strategies	7
Communicating with students	2
Understanding the experience of certain disorders	2
Other	2

N=13

In order the further analyze whether classroom aides perceived themselves as utilizing new skills, those that answered positively to "Is there at least one strategy (lesson, main point, idea or piece of knowledge) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you have used?" were asked to elaborate on their response. Eleven respondents answered this question. Most responses referred to topics related to the domain of behavior management. The results are presented below in Table 68.

Table 68
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 3a

Is there are least one strategy (lesson, main point, idea, or piece of knowledge) that you have taken from the aide trainings that you have used? If yes, what is it?

Theme	Frequency of Theme
Calming strategies	3
Being proactive in regards to difficult behaviors	3
General behavior management	3
PEGS-SEE Problem Solving Steps	2

N=11

Of those who reported using a strategy from the training program, 76.5% reported finding that strategy to be effective. The results of Item 4 are presented in Table 69.

Table 69
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 4

If you have used an idea, strategy, or piece of knowledge from the aide trainings, did you find it to be effective?

Yes	Somewhat	No	Very valuable
76.5%	11.8%	5.9%	5.9%
(n=13)	(n=2)	(n=1)	(n=1)

N=17

Results of Program Evaluation Question 3

Program Evaluation Question 3: To what extent did the classroom aides find the program to be valuable and a satisfying experience?

Data was collected using selected items from the Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire. These items were completed by the classroom aides following the completion of the training program. The results are presented below.

When asked to rate the overall value of the aide training program, all respondents indicated that they found the program to be valuable. An equal number of respondents (41.2%, N=7) found the trainings to be Valuable or Very Valuable. The results of Item 15 are presented below in Table 70.

Table 70
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 15

What would your overall rating of the aide training be?

No value	Somewhat valuable	Valuable	Very valuable
0.0%	17.6%	41.2%	41.2%
(n=0)	(n=3)	(n=7)	(n=7)

N=17

The classroom aides also reported that they perceived the professional development training program to adequately meet their needs as a non-certified staff member. Results of Item 14 are presented below in Table 71.

Table 71
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 14

To what extent do you feel the aide trainings addressed your needs as a non-certified staff member?

Not at all	Somewhat	Adequately	More than adequately
0.0%	23.5%	58.8%	17.6%
(n=0)	(n=4)	(n=10)	(n=3)

Furthermore, a majority of classroom aides reported to find the trainings helpful in regards to their professional development. A little more than half (58.8%) of the respondents indicated that they found the trainings to be "clearly helpful" in regards to their professional development. The results of Item 10 are presented in Table 72.

Table 72
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 10

Did you find the trainings to be helpful in regard to your professional development?

Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Clearly helpful	Very helpful
0.0%	29.4%	58.8%	11.8%
(n=0)	(n=5)	(n=10)	(n=2)

N=17

In general, the classroom aides reported liking how the aide trainings were organized and run. All respondents (100%, N=16) answered positively. One respondent skipped this item. Classroom aides reported that they found group discussions (68.8%) and case presentations (62.5%) to be the most effective training methods. They also reported that the training schedule (every week for a period of 8 weeks) as well as the materials and information presented were "Just Right." The results of Item 7 and Item 8 are presented below in Table 73 and Table 74 respectively. The results of Item 5 are presented in Table 75.

Table 73
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 7

Which training method did you find to be most effective? (Select all that apply.)

Lecture/ didactic	Case presentation	Discussion	Video	Audio
37.5%	62.5%	68.8%	6.3%	0.0%
(n=6)	(n=10)	(n=11)	(n=1)	(n=0)

N=16; One respondent skipped this item.

Table 74
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 8

The aide training occurred every week for a period of 8 weeks. How did you find this schedule?

Too frequent	Just right	Not frequent enough
17.6%	82.4%	0.0%
(n=3)	(n=14)	(n=0)

N=17

Table 75
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 5

How did you find the aide training materials and information?

Very basic	Basic	Just right	Somewhat advanced	Very advanced
5.9%	5.9%	82.4%	0.0%	5.9%
(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=14)	(n=0)	(n=1)

N=17

The classroom aides were also asked to report what they liked best about the aide trainings and what they liked least. Approximately half of the respondents (N=8) reported that what they liked most about the trainings was that the information was clear, concise, and new. The classroom aides also reported enjoying the group discussion and case studies as they provided an opportunity to learn from each other. The results of Item 11 are presented below. Two respondents skipped this item.

Table 76
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 11

What did you like best about the aide trainings?	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
Clear, concise, new information	8
Discussions/case studies	5
Ability to ask questions	1
Learning about reading disabilities	1

N=15

In response to what they liked least about the aide trainings, the classroom aides highlighted the lack of participation by some of their colleagues and pointed to a lack of support from each other and some of the teachers. Others felt that the sessions were either too long or too short and that they interfered with prep time. The results of Item 12 are presented below in Table 77. Five respondents skipped this item.

Table 77
Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 12

What did you like least about the aide trainings?	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
Lack of participation	4
Sessions were too long/too short	2
Time of day	2
Material was too basic	2
Need more hands-on activities	1
N/A	1

N=12

In relation, the classroom aides were asked to indicate how trainings can be improved in the future. Respondents indicated that they would like to see more case discussions as well as focusing on problem behaviors with current students. The results of Item 13 are presented in Table 78.

Table 78

Results of Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire Item 13

How can trainings be improved in the future?	
Theme	Frequency of Theme
More case discussions	4
Focus on disabilities	2
Problem solve situations with current students	2
Use of videos	1
Longer training sessions	1
N/A	1

N=10

Results of Program Evaluation Question 4

Program Evaluation Question 4: To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

Data was collected using Implementation Logs that were completed by the evaluator after each training sessions. Data collection also involved reviewing the original design documents and content of the training sessions. All information gathered was qualitative.

A comparison of the program design (please see Program Design Chapter) and the content of the training sessions indicated that the program was generally implemented in a manner that was consistent with the intended design. Implementation was not perfect, however, and minor implementation discrepancies are discussed below.

Schedule

The Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program was scheduled to occur for a period of 8 consecutive weeks with each session lasting 30 minutes. The sessions occurred as scheduled; however, each session lasted an average of 26 minutes. While the duration of the sessions did not conform to the intended design, this minor

discrepancy did not affect the quality of the sessions. This discrepancy is a result of practicality in terms of gathering a group and getting started on time.

Absenteeism

The original design did not account for absenteeism. There were 1-3 classroom aides absent from six out of the eight training sessions. Some of these absences were due to illness and others were due to obligations to be at other meetings. In relation, one aide joined the training program during the third training session. This aide, as well as those absent at other times, were provided with a copy of all materials presented at the missed training session(s). The implementer provided a brief summary orally and made herself available for any questions once the aide had time to review the materials.

Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures indicated that classroom aides were responsible for completing any intersession assignments. The implementer used an intersession assignment as a "trial run" in Session 2. Only 2-3 aides completed the assignment and resistance to such assignments was made clear through verbal and nonverbal reactions. In order to make the training program a valuable and satisfying experience for the classroom aides, the intersession assignments were discontinued for the remainder of the program.

Components, Phases, and Activities

Program components, phases and activities generally remained consistent from design to implementation. It is important to note however that the sessions did not exist as separate, discrete entities but rather were implemented in a fluid, continuous way. It was common for discussions and activities from one session to continue over to the beginning of the next session. This was mainly due to time constraints.

Materials

The original program design indicated that the training sessions would utilize audio/visual materials as appropriate; however, these types of materials were not used during this program. Rather, the implementer focused on the use of case examples and group discussions.

Budget

The budget of the program was slightly higher than indicated in the original program design. This was due to the fact that the primary investigator employed the use of Survey Monkey to complete the Needs Assessment and Evaluation forms with the classroom aides. These funds were provided by the primary investigator.

Program Evaluation Plan

It is important to note that the Program Evaluation Protocol entitled Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report was also completed during the program evaluation process. The results however did not prove meaningful as the classroom aides rated themselves highly on all domains (Academic Instruction, Behavior Management, Vocational Duties, Communication) when completing this questionnaire during the Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation Processes.

Evaluation of the Formative Program Evaluation

Maher's (2012) framework for planning and evaluating human service programs includes an evaluation of the program evaluation in order to elucidate whether future program evaluations can be improved and if so in what manner. This evaluation is based on four qualities: Practicality, Utility, Propriety, and Technical Defensibility. The meta-evaluation questions and responses are discussed below.

Practicality

To what extent was the program evaluation conducted in a way that allowed for its successful accomplishment?

The program evaluation occurred two weeks after the completion of the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program. It was scheduled during the same prep period in which the training sessions occurred. The classroom aides were required to complete the evaluation protocols on the computer through the Survey Monkey software. Completion of these forms took no longer than 30 minutes. The process was parsimonious and rapid.

Utility

In what ways was the resulting program evaluation information helpful to people? Which people?

The program evaluation was helpful for both the classroom aides and the supervisor of the professional development training program in terms of suggesting areas for improvement. It also identified effective components of the program that should be continued in future trainings. This has the potential to lead to improved quality of the program and an enhanced experience for the classroom aides.

Propriety

Did the program evaluation occur in a way that adhered to legal structures and ethical standards?

There is no indication that the evaluation violated legal structures or ethical standards. Data was collected and reported in such a way as to ensure anonymity of the participants. The program evaluation process and accompanying protocols were reviewed

and approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Technical Defensibility

To what degree can the evaluation be justified with respect to matters of reliability and validity?

The evaluation data appears to be reliable and valid within the context of the program and school in which it was conducted. Due to a small sample size (N=17), external validity and overall generalizability is low. These results should not be considered representative outside of the context in which it was conducted.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation was to design, implement, and formatively evaluate an educational professional development training program within the context of a New Jersey state approved private special education school for students with behavioral and learning disabilities. The dissertation used Maher's (2012) program planning and evaluation framework to guide this process. This process consisted of four phases: the Clarification phase, the Design phase, the Implementation phase, and the Evaluation phase.

In the Clarification phase, a needs assessment was conducted in order to clarify the professional development needs of the classroom aides. The needs assessment focused on four main knowledge and skill domains: 1. Behavioral Management, 2. Academic Instruction, 3. Technical Job Duties, and 4. Communication. This was done with the use of five protocols that were developed based on the relevant professional development literature as well as the existing design of the program. The results of the needs assessment indicated that the classroom aides would benefit from professional development training activities in the domains of behavior management and academic instruction. While the aides rated themselves as possessing adequate knowledge and skills in most of the four areas assessed (academic instruction, behavior management, vocational duties, and communication), they did report a need for greater knowledge and skills in regards to understanding specific disabilities and specific behavior management strategies. They also reported needing additional training in academic strategies for

academic subjects such as Math and Spanish. Likewise, teachers, counselors, and administrators identified the domains of behavior management and academic instruction as those areas that classroom aides would most benefit from professional development.

This information was used in the Design phase to develop the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program's (CAPD-TP) purpose, goals, and activities. The first main goal of the program was that classroom aides would report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies. The second main goal was that the classroom aides would utilize behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies presented in the program when working with students. The CAPD-TP met every Thursday for a period of eight weeks from March 22, 2012 to May 17, 2012 during the 30-minute prep period designated by the school director for this program. More detailed information regarding the content of each session can be found in the Implementation Phase chapter. The Implementation phase also included an Implementation Log that was designed to monitor implementation fidelity and integrity.

The Evaluation phase consisted of a formative evaluation of the CAPD-TP aimed at answering the following questions:

1. To what extent have program goals been met?

2. What knowledge and skills did the classroom aides perceive themselves as acquiring from the program and did they perceive that new skills were utilized?

3. To what extent did the classroom aides find the program to be valuable and a satisfying experience?

4. To what extent was the program implemented as designed?

Protocols were designed to answer these questions and included the following: Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire, Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report, and the Implementation Log. Results of the formative evaluation indicated that the program met one of its goals but not the other. The classroom aides did report increased knowledge of behavioral management strategies and academic instruction strategies. They did not, however, meet the goal of utilizing these strategies in the classroom. All classroom aides (100%; N=17) indicated learning about knowledge and skills (response option = Yes) related to behavior management and communicating with students. Over 80% of classroom aides reported learning about knowledge and skills related to academic instruction, specific disabilities, vocational duties, and communicating with teachers and administrators. When asked to rate the overall value of the aide training program, all respondents indicated that they found the program to be valuable. An equal number of respondents (41.2%, N=7) found the trainings to be Valuable or Very Valuable. The classroom aides also reported that they perceived the professional development training program to adequately meet their needs as a non-certified staff member. In general, the classroom aides reported liking how the aide trainings were organized and run. Classroom aides reported that they found group discussions (68.8%, N=11) and case presentations (62.5%, N=10) to be the most effective training methods. In response to what they liked least about the aide trainings, the classroom aides highlighted the lack of participation by some of their colleagues and pointed to a lack of support from each other and some of the teachers. Others felt that the sessions were either too long or too short and that they interfered with prep time. In

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relation, the classroom aides were asked to indicate how trainings can be improved in the future. Respondents indicated that they would like to see more case discussions as well as a focus on problem behaviors with current students. In general, the program was implemented as designed with a few minor changes including an increased budget and a slightly shorter session length than expected.

Discussion

Several issues arose when conducting this dissertation that are worth mentioning. The primary concern of the investigator was the initial ambivalence and/or resistance of the classroom aides to the training program. This was not universal to all participants but affected the group as a whole. Some of the classroom aides were enthusiastic about and actively engaged in the training sessions. Others, however, were openly resistant to the program as evidenced by talking while the primary investigator was leading the group sessions or turning their backs to the speaker while she was leading the training sessions. The primary investigator attempted to encourage stakeholder buy in by providing coffee at each training session and emphasizing the collaborative nature of the needs assessment and program design processes. The primary investigator was made aware later in the program that other factors may have contributed to this resistance including a recent decrease in benefits for the classroom aides.

Another factor that may have contributed to some resistance is the fact that the classroom aides have been employed at the current school for varying amounts of time. Aides ranged in their total time of experience working as a classroom aide from 5 months to 10 years, with an average of approximately 4 years. The average time of employment at the current school is also 4 years, ranging anywhere from 3 months to 10 years.

Feedback from some of the veteran staff indicated that some of the information presented was repetitive or knowledge that they already possess. Despite encouragement by the primary investigator to suggest alternate topics, she received little feedback regarding this concern.

Another issue that arose had to do with the protocols entitled Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report and Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report. These protocols were developed by the primary investigator based on the four domains of Behavior Management, Academic Instruction, Communication, and Vocational Duties for use in the needs assessment and formative evaluation processes. When analyzing the results from these protocols in the needs assessment phase, it became apparent that both teachers and classroom aides rated the aides as proficient in all domains. Because both teacher reports and self reports rated the classroom aides so highly, the protocols did not identify any areas of need. Due to this factor, the Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report was eliminated from the formative evaluation as it was assumed that a pre and post comparison would not prove meaningful. The Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report was retained for the formative evaluation however aides continued to rate themselves highly in all areas as expected.

In relation, time to complete the needs assessment was underestimated by the primary investigator. As a result, several classroom aides required extra time to complete the needs assessment while others chose to skip questions despite encouragement to complete protocols as completely as possible. This was taken into consideration when

designing the formative evaluation so that all aides would be able to complete the protocols in the designated time of 30 minutes.

Finally, it should be discussed that the second goal of the program design, that classroom aides would utilize new skills and knowledge in the classroom, was not met satisfactorily. The primary investigator had originally planned including intersession worksheets to reinforce generalization of skills; however, the first assignment was met with strong resistance as only two of the classroom aides completed the assignment. Informal observations and conversations revealed that the classroom aides already felt overburdened and these types of assignments added to this feeling and resulted in further resistance. The primary investigator decided to discontinue this practice in order to encourage stakeholder buy in and to improve the overall experience of the classroom aides.

Constraints

The main constraint of this study concerns its external validity. This dissertation used a case study approach (N=15-17) to the program planning and evaluation process. Participants were not randomly selected to participate in this study but rather did so as a professional development service offered by the school. Furthermore, the setting is a state approved private special education high school that provides services to classified students with behavioral and/or learning problems. The data that was collected during the needs assessment and program evaluation is not generalizable to other school settings. The Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program (CAPD-TP) was custom designed for the target population in the relevant context.

The second constraint of this study is that the design of the program evaluation was

formative rather than summative. This means that the program evaluation relied on the subjective opinions and personal knowledge and skills of the classroom aides rather than on objective, quantitative measures. Participant responses may have been affected by outside variables including interactions with administrators, past experiences, and the opinions of others. This design was chosen due to the practical and temporal limitations of implementing a program in a real world setting.

Recommendations

The main recommendation of the primary investigator is to continue with the annual program planning and evaluation process for the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training program. In order to accomplish this in a practical and meaningful way, it is recommended to condense the needs assessment process into a more basic questionnaire with fewer questions for the classroom aides than was used in this dissertation. This can be done by revising and/or shortening the Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides. Doing this will increase the efficiency of the program as it will require less time to complete this stage of the process.

A second recommendation is to move toward a more formalized, objective evaluation process. That is, the school might consider moving from a formative evaluation process to a summative evaluation process. For example, an evaluator could be designated to observe the aides in their classrooms implementing skills taught through the Classroom Aide Professional Development Training Program and rate them on their ability to do so.

Finally, this investigator recommends incorporating team-building activities as part of the training program. These can be stand-alone activities or they can be incorporated

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into various psychoeducational topics. One example of how this could be done would be to include more small group activities. Another would be to help the classroom aides develop a set of professional development goals and a process for reaching those goals.

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APPENDIX A

Needs Assessment Questionnaires

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Classroom Aides

Demographic Information

1. Gender (Please choose one.)
     Male
     Female
     Choose not to specify

2. Age: 20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   60+

3. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

     Less than high school degree
     High degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
     Some college but no degree
     Associate degree
     Bachelor degree
     Graduate degree
     Other (please specify)

4. Do you have any certifications?   Yes   No
     If yes, please list any certifications here.

5. How many years (total) have you worked as a classroom aide?

6. How long have you been employed at the current school?

7. What are the ages of the students that you work with?

8. Have you had any formal or informal training for your work as a classroom aide?
     Yes   No

     If yes, please explain what type of training you've received.

9. Please list any professions prior to your work as a classroom aide.

Academic Instruction

Content

10. I possess adequate personal knowledge in all academic areas (Math, Science, English, History, Foreign Language) to assist the students I work with.
     1=Strongly disagree

2=Disagree
3=Neutral
4=Agree
5=Strongly Agree

11. Please indicate any areas in which you require additional personal knowledge. *(Select all that apply).*
    Math
    Science
    English
    History
    Foreign Language

    11a. Of the areas you indicated on question 2, please elaborate on specific topics within those subjects. (For example, if you selected Math, perhaps you need additional information regarding geometry.)

12. I can accurately complete the academic assignments that are assigned to the students I work with.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

13. I have received formal or informal training regarding instructional techniques to assist in student learning.

    Yes
    Somewhat
    No

    13a. If you answered Yes or Somewhat, please indicate which instructional methods you are familiar with.

14. I am best at assisting students academically in the following content area:
    Math
    Science
    English
    History
    Foreign Language

15. I am least able to assist students academically in the following content area:
    Math
    Science
    English

History

Foreign Language

16. Please list any instructional strategies that you use to assist students academically.

Technology

17. I am able to use a computer without any assistance.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

18. Please select the computer programs that you are familiar with and able to use:
    Microsoft Word
    Excel
    PowerPoint

19. Of the programs I indicated above, I am skilled enough to assist students in their use for academic purposes.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

20. I can assist students in using a scientific calculator.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

21. I can assist students in using their Alpha Smart to complete assignments.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

Behavior Management

Content

22. I am aware of what disabilities the students I work with have.

1=Strongly disagree
2=Disagree
3=Neutral
4=Agree
5=Strongly Agree

23. I am familiar with the behavioral symptoms that accompany the disabilities of the students I work with.
   1=Strongly disagree
   2=Disagree
   3=Neutral
   4=Agree
   5=Strongly Agree

24. Please list any specific disabilities that you would like to learn more about.

25. I am knowledgeable about various behavior management strategies.
   1=Strongly disagree
   2=Disagree
   3=Neutral
   4=Agree
   5=Strongly Agree

26. Please list any behavioral management strategies that you have learned about or are familiar with.

Methods

27. I possess skills necessary to assist the teacher in behavior management.
   1=Strongly disagree
   2=Disagree
   3=Neutral
   4=Agree
   5=Strongly Agree

   27a. If you agree, please list the skills that make you effective in managing behaviors.

28. List any behavior management strategies that you currently use with the students you work with.

29. Discuss whether you find these strategies/methods to be effective

30. I am clear on how to assist the teacher with behavior management and what my role is in doing so.
   1=Strongly disagree

2=Disagree
3=Neutral
4=Agree
5=Strongly Agree

30a. If you disagree, please explain.

Technology

31. I understand the purpose of the Wolf Program.
   1=Strongly disagree
   2=Disagree
   3=Neutral
   4=Agree
   5=Strongly Agree

   31a. If you disagree, please explain.

32. List any of the Wolf Program components that you are familiar with.

33. I understand the academic and social categories that comprise the point system.
   1=Strongly disagree
   2=Disagree
   3=Neutral
   4=Agree
   5=Strongly Agree

   33a. If you disagree, please elaborate here.

34. Which of the following Wolf Program social tools are you familiar with? *(Select all that apply).*
   a. Keep Calm
   b. PEGS-SEE
   c. B.E.S.T.

35. Which of the following Wolf Program social tools do you use with your students to assist in behavior management? *(Select all that apply).*
   a. Keep Calm
   b. PEGS-SEE
   c. B.E.S.T.

36. If you do not use any of the Wolf Program social tools, please explain why.

<u>Vocational Duties</u>

Clerical duties

37. I possess adequate knowledge and skills to assist the classroom teacher in clerical duties (ex. making copies, organizing, completing paperwork, etc).
      1=Strongly disagree
      2=Disagree
      3=Neutral
      4=Agree
      5=Strongly Agree

      37a. If you disagree, please identify areas for improvement.

38. I am clear about my role and responsibilities as a classroom aide.
      1= Yes
      2 = Somewhat
      3 = No

      38a. If you answered Somewhat or No, please explain any areas of your role that remain unclear.

Supervisory duties

39. I am clear in my role of supervising students outside of the classroom (walking in the hallway, working one-on-one, during special area classes such as gym).
      1=Strongly disagree
      2=Disagree
      3=Neutral
      4=Agree
      5=Strongly Agree

      39a. If you disagree, please explain.

Self Care

40. I leave work feeling stressed and worn out.
      1=Strongly disagree
      2=Disagree
      3=Neutral
      4=Agree
      5=Strongly Agree

41. I schedule time in my personal schedule to relax and distress.
      1=Strongly disagree
      2=Disagree
      3=Neutral
      4=Agree
      5=Strongly Agree

41a. If not, what prevents you from doing so?

42. What are the major causes of your work-related stress?

43. List any self-care activities that you partake in.

Professional Development

44. I have a clear vision/idea of how I want to improve as a paraprofessional.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

45. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a paraprofessional.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

46. List your areas of strength as a paraprofessional.

47. List any areas of improvement that you have identified for yourself.

48. List two professional development goals you have for yourself this academic school year.

<u>Communication</u>

Communicating with Staff

49. I work collaboratively with the classroom teachers.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

    49a. If you disagree, what prevents collaboration from taking place?

50. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = ineffective and 10 = most effective), how would you rate your ability to communicate with other staff members?

51. List any difficulties you experience in communicating with staff (teachers, counselors, administrators).

Communicating with Students

52. I am effective in communicating with the students I work with.
  1=Strongly disagree
  2=Disagree
  3=Neutral
  4=Agree
  5=Strongly Agree

53. Describe any difficulties you experience communicating with students.

54. I am aware of my nonverbal communication with students (ex. eye contact, body language).

  1= Always
  2= Most of the time
  3= Some of the time
  4= Never

55. Describe your approach to communicating with students. Are there any particular strategies you use?

Receiving Communication

56. I feel defensive when receiving feedback from teachers, administrators, and/or counselors.
  1=Strongly disagree
  2=Disagree
  3=Neutral
  4=Agree
  5=Strongly Agree

57. I feel that staff speaks to me in a respectful, professional manner.
  1=Strongly disagree
  2=Disagree
  3=Neutral
  4=Agree
  5=Strongly Agree

  57a. If you disagree, please explain.

58. My opinions, concerns, etc. are acknowledged adequately by other staff members.
  1 = Always
  2 = Often

3 = Sometimes
4 = Never

58a. If you answered Sometimes or Never, please explain.

59. I take it personally when a student is disrespectful in the way he or she speaks to me.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

60. List any concerns or areas for improvement in regards to communication with staff and/or students.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will remain anonymous.

Job title: _____ Teacher _____Counselor _____Administrator

1. In which of the following areas does the classroom aide staff possess the greatest strength? (*Select only one*).

    a. Assisting with academic instruction
    b. Behavior Management
    c. Vocational duties (clerical duties, supervising students, self care, etc)
    d. Communication with students, teachers, and administrators

2. In which of the following areas does the classroom aide staff require the most improvement? (*Select only one*).

    a. Assisting with academic instruction
    b. Behavior Management
    c. Vocational duties (clerical duties, supervising students, self care, etc)
    d. Communication with students, teachers, and administrators

    2a. Describe how knowledge or skills in this area need to be improved.

3. List any specific topics/areas that you feel are most important for the classroom aide training program.

4. I feel that the classroom aide training program is valuable.
    1=Strongly disagree
    2=Disagree
    3=Neutral
    4=Agree
    5=Strongly Agree

    4a. If you disagree, indicate how the program could be more valuable.

5. List any comments, concerns, questions regarding the classroom aide training program.

APPENDIX B

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Self Report
This inventory aims to gather YOUR perspective on your skills as a paraprofessional.
Please rate yourself honestly on the items below. Your answers will remain anonymous.

Response options:
 N/A = Not applicable, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,
5=Strongly Agree

	Domain	Question	Response (Circle one)					
1	A	Overall, I effectively assist students with academic instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
2	A	I effectively use and assist students with assisted devices and other technology (ex. Alpha Smart, computers).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
3	A	I effectively reinforce academic skills taught by the teacher.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
4	A	I effectively assist students with Math instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
5	A	I effectively assist students with Science instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
6	A	I effectively assist students with English instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
7	A	I effectively assist students with History instruction	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
8	A	I effectively assist students with Foreign Language instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
9	BM	I effectively use and assist teachers with providing classroom behavioral management strategies for students.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
10	BM	I effectively use and assist students with using social-behavioral coping skills (i.e., Wolf Program skills, social problem solving).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
11	BM	I effectively reinforce to students the behavioral-social skills taught by teachers and counselors.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
12	BM	While working with students I stay mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and respond to these symptoms appropriately.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
13	BM	When a student is exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the classroom I respond in an effective manner to manage the situation.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
14	VD	I effectively assist teachers with clerical duties (i.e., making copies, faxing, points, paperwork etc..) in a timely and organized fashion.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
15	VD	I can effectively use computers to assist teachers with clerical and other duties (ex. extranet, internet, MS word, MS excel, etc).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
16	VD	I effectively monitor students outside of the classroom (ex. recess, walking in hallways, working independently).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
17	VD	I know what my strong points, adequacies, and limitations are as a classroom aide.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
18	VD	I use information provided by faculty, staff, and others in order to get better at my job.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
19	C	I communicate and interact effectively with the other staff members (teachers, aides, counselors, administrators etc.).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

20	C	I communicate and interact effectively with the students in my classroom.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
21	C	I effectively communicate my needs/concerns to teachers.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
22	C	I effectively communicate my needs/concerns to the administration.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

Domain Key:
A = Academic Instruction
BM = Behavior Management
VD = Vocational Duties
C = Communication

Classroom Paraprofessional Skills Inventory – Teacher Report

This inventory aims to gather your perspective on the skills demonstrated by the paraprofessional in your classroom. Please rate the paraprofessional honestly on the items below. Your answers will remain anonymous.

Response options:
N/A = Not applicable, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

	Domain/ Skill Type	Question	Response (Circle one)					
1	A	Overall, (s)he effectively assists students with academic instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
2	A	(S)he effectively uses and assists students with assisted devices and other technology (ex. Alpha Smart, computers).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
3	A	(S)he effectively reinforces academic skills taught by the teacher.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
4	A	(S)he effectively assists students with Math instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
5	A	(S)he effectively assists students with Science instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
6	A	(S)he effectively assists students with English instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
7	A	(S)he effectively assists students with History instruction	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
8	A	(S)he effectively assists students with Foreign Language instruction.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
9	BM	(S)he effectively uses and assists teachers with providing classroom behavioral management strategies for students.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
10	BM	(S)he effectively uses and assists students with using social-behavioral coping skills (i.e., Wolf Program skills, social problem solving).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
11	BM	(S)he effectively reinforces to students the behavioral-social skills taught by teachers and counselors.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
12	BM	While working with students (s)he stays mindful and aware of their disabilities, including the symptoms and behaviors that accompany them, and responds to these symptoms appropriately.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
13	BM	When a student is exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the classroom (s)he responds in an effective manner to manage the situation.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
14	VD	(S)he effectively assists teachers with clerical duties (i.e., making copies, faxing, points, paperwork etc..) in a timely and organized fashion.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
15	VD	(S)he can effectively use computers to assist teachers with clerical and other duties (ex. extranet, internet, MS word, MS excel, etc).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
16	VD	(S)he effectively monitors students outside of the classroom (ex. recess, walking in hallways, working independently).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
17	VD	(S)he knows what his/her strong points, adequacies, and limitations are as a classroom aide.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
18	VD	(S)he uses information provided by faculty, staff, and others in order to get better at his/her job.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

19	C	(S)he communicates and interacts effectively with the other staff members (teachers, aides, counselors, administrators etc.).	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
20	C	(S)he communicates and interacts effectively with the students in my classroom.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
21	C	(S)he effectively communicate his/her needs/concerns to teachers.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
22	C	(S)he effectively communicate his/her needs/concerns to the administration.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

Domain Key:
A = Academic Instruction
BM = Behavior Management
VD = Vocational Duties
C = Communication

APPENDIX C
Interview Questions for the Director and Principal

The interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured format. The following questions will be covered and probed for further clarification as necessary.

1. Describe the history of the classroom aide training program (to the best of your knowledge).

2. Do you view the classroom aide training program as valuable to the organization? Please explain.

3. What are your goals for the classroom aide training program?

4. Discuss any strengths of the current classroom aide training program.

5. Discuss any weaknesses of the current classroom aide training program.

6. Are there any knowledge or skill areas that represent areas of strength for the classroom aides?

7. Are there any knowledge or skill areas that represent areas of needed improvement for the classroom aides?

8. Are there any specific topics that you feel are most important to cover for professional development?

APPENDIX D
Implementation Log

1. Start time: _____

2. End time: _____

3. Number of classroom aides in attendance: _____

4. Topic of training session: _____

5. Methods used (circle all that apply).

    Lecture/Didactic
    Case presentation
    Discussion
    Video
    Audio

6. Please rate the overall level of participation for this session:

    1- No participation
    2- Some participation
    3- A lot of participation

7. Additional comments or concerns:

Classroom Aide Training Feedback Questionnaire

1. To what extent did you learn about the following concepts and skills in the aide trainings?

Response options
1 = YES   2 = SOMEWHAT   3 = NO

Academic instruction	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Instruction strategies for a specific subject	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Behavior management	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Specific disabilities (symptoms, strategies etc.)	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Vocational duties (copying, points, organizing)	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Self care	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Personal professional development	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Communicating with students	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Communicating with teachers/administration	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Other: _____	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A

2. Is there at least one (or more) lesson, main point, idea, strategy, or piece of knowledge that you have taken from the aide trainings that you find valuable?
    Yes
    No

    2a. If yes, what is it?

3. Is there at least one (or more) lesson, main point, idea, strategy, or piece of knowledge that you have taken from the aide trainings that you have used?
    Yes
    No

    3a. If yes, what is it?

4. If you have used an idea, strategy, or piece of knowledge from the aide trainings, did you find it to be effective?

> Yes
> Somehwat
> No
> I didn't try anything.

5. How did you find the aide training materials and information?

> Very Basic
> Basic
> Just Right
> Somewhat advanced
> Very advanced

6. What training methods were used? *(Select all that apply,)*

> Lecture/didactic
> Case presentation
> Discussion
> Video
> Audio

7. Which training methods did you find to be most effective? *(Select all that apply.)*

> Lecture/didactic
> Case presentation
> Discussion
> Video
> Audio

8. The aide trainings occurred every other week. How did you find this schedule?

> Too frequent
> Just right
> Not frequent enough

9. In general did you like how the aide trainings were organized and run?
> Yes
> No

> 9a. If you answered No, please indicate why.

10. Did you find the aide trainings helpful with regard to your professional development?

Not helpful
Somewhat helpful
Clearly helpful
Very helpful

11. What did you like best about the aide trainings?

12. What did you like least about the aide trainings?

13. How can trainings be improved in the future?

14. To what extent do you feel the aide trainings addressed you needs as a non-certified staff member?

Not at all
Somewhat
Adequately
More than adequately

15. What would your overall rating of the aide trainings be?

No value
Somewhat valuable
Valuable
Very valuable

16. Any other comments, thoughts, suggestions, or feedback?