

## **Various roles of Special Education Teachers and Paraeducators**

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Course SPD 501: Foundations of American Education

Grand Canyon University.

August 25, 2020.

Special education teachers work with students from preschool to high school. They instruct students who have mental, emotional, physical, or learning disabilities. For students who are visually impaired may need braille writing. Not that all students with emotional or behavior problems are categorized under autism spectrum disorders. Some may have sensory disabilities. Special children need Individual Education Plans (IEP). In order to design IEP, the educator needs paraprofessionals to collaborate with these students, and with their parents, administrators, and co-teachers to provide support reaching educational goals. In a collaborative learning environment, a teacher is a co-learner too.

After reviewing the information on the United States Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook for Special Education Teachers I have understood that paraeducators or paraprofessionals are teachers' assistants. "They may work with students with severe disabilities in a separate classroom or in a computer laboratory or in the cafeteria supervising students. The teacher assistant needs to understand the lesson and adapt it to the learning style of the students. Their feedback is helpful for the teacher to adjust the lesson.<sup>1</sup>"

"Teacher assistants typically do the following:

Reinforce lessons by reviewing material with students one-on-one or in small groups

Follow school and class rules to teach students proper behavior

Help teachers with recordkeeping, such as taking attendance and calculating grades

Get equipment or materials ready to help teachers prepare for lessons

Supervise students outside of the classroom, such as between classes, during lunch and recess, and on field trips"<sup>2</sup>.

Rita Pierson's<sup>3</sup> disposition of acting engages students in building their self-esteem. She helps a failing student get motivated to work harder highlighting a little achievement. Her dispositions reflect her dignity for her students. She said that we are educators and we are born to make a change. Following the standards (5.2) of the Council for Exceptional Children, she uses effective strategies to promote student- engagement, increase motivation, increase opportunities to respond, and enhance self-regulation of student learning (CEC Standards. 2020). Minority children, many of whom come from impoverished backgrounds, derive an obvious benefit from seeing minorities in the professions. (L. Dean Webb. Chapter 8. 2013).

Communication is one of the dispositions that an educator must exercise. If “communicating freely with paraeducators”<sup>4</sup> (Valerie. 2020), It could be by writing the expectations about chores and schedule on writing and getting signed by paraeducators and educators. It is better to avoid a problem than to solve it when it arises. For example, these expectations could be regarding one-to-one service or accommodate instruction, or lunch hour, or cell phone use policy. If communication is clear, the collaboration will be comfortable.

**Reference:**

1. Mohammad Nasirullah (Aug 21, 2020). GCU Online Forum discussion, Topic 4 DQ1. **Wrap up of Week 3.**
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Teacher Assistants, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/teacher-assistants.htm> (visited August 09, 2020)
3. Reference: Ted Talk with Rita Pierson (2020).  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/rita\\_pierson\\_every\\_kid\\_needs\\_a\\_champion/up-next?language=en#t-457199](https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion/up-next?language=en#t-457199)
4. Valerie Krieger (Aug 21, 2020). GCU Online Forum discussion, Topic 4 DQ 1. What roles do para-educators play in a child's life?