

Parent-Teacher Communication & Collaboration



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COMMUNICATION SKILLS: 5 Human Qualities that Enhance Communication



- Being Caring
- Being Respectful
- Being Empathetic
- Being Congruent
- Being Open

West, Idol, Cannon, 1999

Example of Being Caring for Communication



- Being Caring

Situation: Teachers pass in hall. Special educator asks how a student is doing in teacher's sixth grade science class.

West, Idol & Cannon, 1999

Example of Being Respectful

- Mrs. C, a new teacher, is teaching in a school where many are veteran teachers in this school. Although she's used to first names, she begins addressing teachers by full names and titles in the lounge.



Being Empathic Example



- Critical thinking skills are infused in a school, with teachers from various grades, specialists on a committee. The team understands the team leader's goals although ideas may differ.

Being Congruent



- A Program Coordinator suggests that a teacher build a cooperative reading tutor program with another teacher. They agree to “give it a try.”

Example of Being Open



- A student with a disability's parents have requested that she fully participate in her seventh grade class for content learning. The specialists and earth sciences teachers team to make this work.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS



- Active Listening
- Accepting, Caring
- Reflective Listening
- Focus

Six Factors of Successful Partnerships

- **Communication**
- **Commitment**
- **Equality**
- **Skills**
- **Trust**
- **Respect**

Collaboration : A Definition

- “an interactive process that enables teams of people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems. The outcome is...solutions... Collaborative consultation is to provide...programs for students with special needs within the most appropriate context...”

Collaborating is...

- “Collaborating is assisting or cooperating with. ... Communication, cooperating, and coordination are vital aspects of the collaborative process.”

Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck (1993)

Collaborative Teaming

Definitions and Rationale

- PROCESS
- SOLUTIONS
- SPECIAL NEEDS
- MOST APPROPRIATE CONTEXT

SOLUTION

- “Solution literally means becoming liquid enough to dissolve the particles making up the problem.”



History of Collaboration



- The Medical Model: Consultation
- The Triadic Model: Consultation
- Interactive Models: Collaborative Consultation
- Collaborative Teaming
- Trans-disciplinary Teaming

WHY COLLABORATE ?



WHY COLLABORATE ?

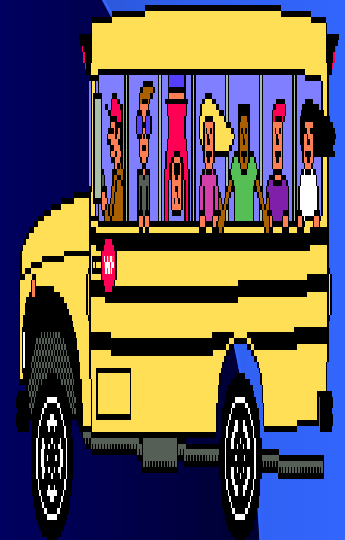


- Share Ideas & Goals, Create new Ideas
- Accomplish More
- Organization, Coordination
- Law provides for it: Interdisciplinary Team
- Group plans; evaluate progress
- Teachers share curriculum & work together
- Moral Support and Mentoring; share concerns
- More information on child; other perspectives
- Clarify realistic goals; Evaluate team & students



Collaboration Outcomes

- Individuals Value Collaborative Approaches to Work and Education
 - Austin (2001) Teachers' beliefs about...
- Professionals Who Collaborate Develop Trust *
 - Raider-Roth (2005) *Trusting What You Know*
- A Sense of Community Evolves
 - Drame (2002) Sociocultural context effects on teachers



WHEN DO WE COLLABORATE ?



- Co-Planning & Co-Teaching
- Assessment / Evaluation
- RTI (Responsiveness to Intervention)
- IEP Meetings/ Interdisciplinary Teams
- Teacher Assistance Teams
- Committees
- Parent Conferences
- Integration of Students in Social Settings
- Inclusion

Parent Conference Considerations

Good Ideas for Successful Teacher – Parent Conferences:

Welcome parents and make them feel comfortable.

Review the agenda; ask parents for other items to discuss.

Begin and end with positives about the child.

Don't use technical language that parents may not know.

Communicate concerns in a straightforward and sensitive manner.

Solicit parent reactions and recommendations to address any concerns.

Summarize any decisions or plan made at the end of the conference.

Set a target date for follow-up.

Collaborating with Students

- Villa, Thousand, Nevin (2010). Collaborating with Students in Instruction and Decision Making: The Untapped Resource. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Student Collaboration & Advocacy
- Cooperative Learning
- Peer Tutors
- Co-Teachers

How Do We View Collaboration?

General Educators



Special Educators



Continuum of Services

General Education
Classroom-
Inclusion

Special Education :

- Co-Teacher-Aide
- Resource Room
- Special Education Classroom
- Special School





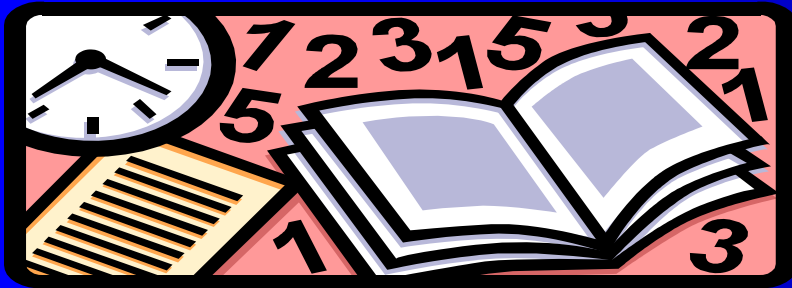
General Education Perspectives

Classrooms

Content Knowledge Valued
Curriculum Objectives & Sequence
Curriculum Materials Available
Content Resources Support
Community Learning Environment

Salient Factors for Classroom Teachers

Proactive
Responsibility
Multidimensionality
Simultaneity
Unpredictability
Immediacy
History



Kathy Carter

Salient Aspects of General Education Environments

- **High Student: Teacher Ratio**
- **Diversity of Students, Number of Students**
- **Accountability & Grade Teams**
- **Cooperative Learning, Multi-Level Groups**



Special Education Perspectives

- Focus on individuals' learning
- Learning styles
- Knowledge of disabilities & talents
- Adaptation of curriculum
- Modifications to learning environment
- Legal guidelines & paperwork (IEP's)
- Motivational & reward systems



Salient Factors for Special Educators

- Multiplicity of Roles
- Time and Space
 - Limited, Changing
- Cognitive Complexities
 - Children, Teams
- Flexibility
- Shared Responsibilities



Salient Features of Special Education Environments



- Student : Teacher Ratio lower
- Direct Instruction Time
- Perceptions of Special Education differ
- Accountability and Shared Responsibility
- Communication & Collaboration Skills
- Parent Roles and Meetings Frequent
- Resources may / may not be available

Characteristics of Special Education in US Schools

- Teacher Support or Assistance Teams
- Pre-Referral Interventions (RTI, TAT)
- Communications with Teachers and other Staff and Parents
- Direct Instruction
- Accommodations
- Paraprofessionals





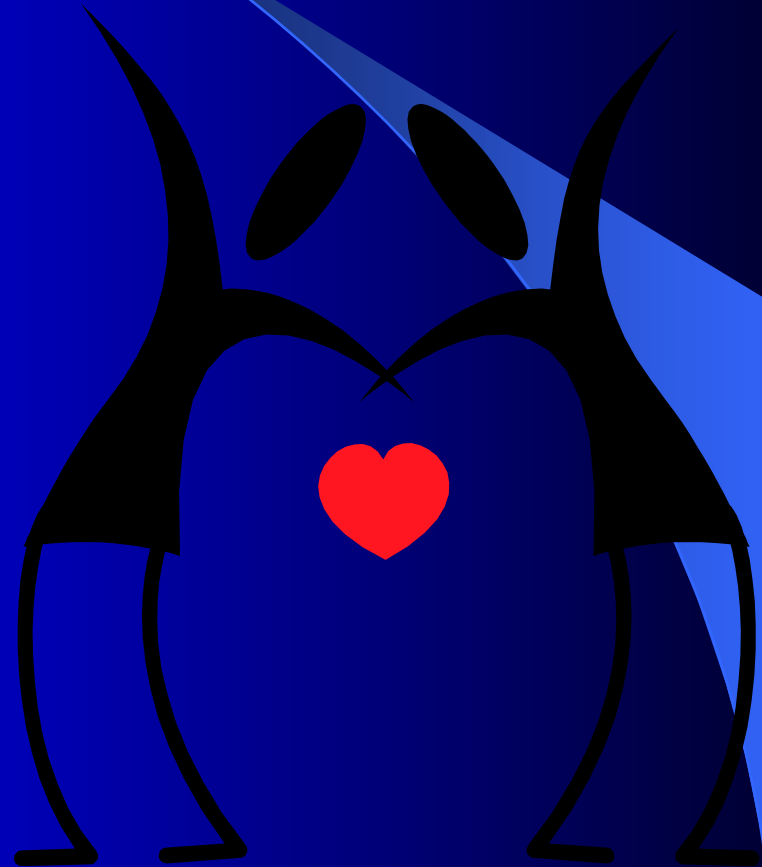
TEACHER BELIEFS

Beliefs & Behaviors Affect Collaboration

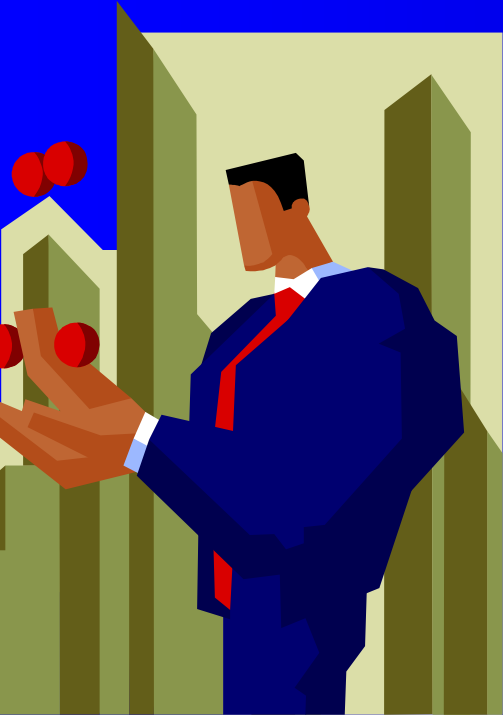


TEACHER BELIEFS

- Beliefs
- Attitudes
 - Goals
 - Priorities
- Behaviors:
 - Actions
 - Participation



BELIEFS



A belief is a personal conviction that something is true .

In most cases, a person's actions or resistance to action comes from beliefs.

Belief Systems develop for all teachers.

Teachers' Beliefs & Collaboration



- Interfering Beliefs

Some Examples:

“I’ve tried everything!”

“Why should I spend more time with this child?”

Teachers' Beliefs and Collaboration



- Facilitating Beliefs

Some Examples:

“I can make a difference.”

“Every child will learn if we find a way.”

Identifying Beliefs

- Listen
- Watch
- Ask
- Observe

Seek

Clarifying Beliefs

- Observe
- Ask Questions

Observe:

- What does the teacher say about a student?
- What nonverbal behaviors do you see when they talk?

Ask Questions:

“What do you want the student to do?”

“What have you done to assist this student?”

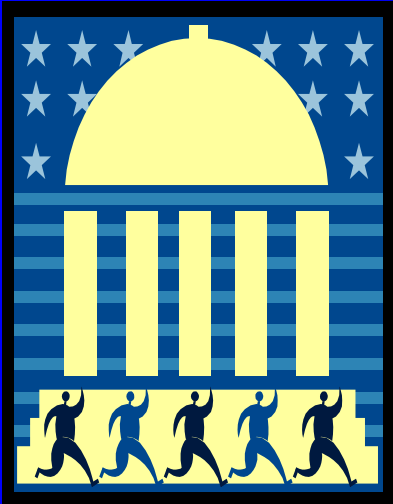
Responding to Interfering Beliefs



- Ignore
- Go around them
- Try to bring it into the open
- Respond to it directly, tactfully
- Indirectly provide your input
- Match your input to their belief system

Maria Nahmias, PhD.

Defining Characteristics for Collaboration



- Voluntary
- Parity
- Mutual Goals
- Shared Responsibility
- Shared Resources
- Shared Accountability

Barriers and Facilitators To Collaboration

- Training or Preparation of Professionals
- Knowledge
- Time to Collaborate
- Communication Skills



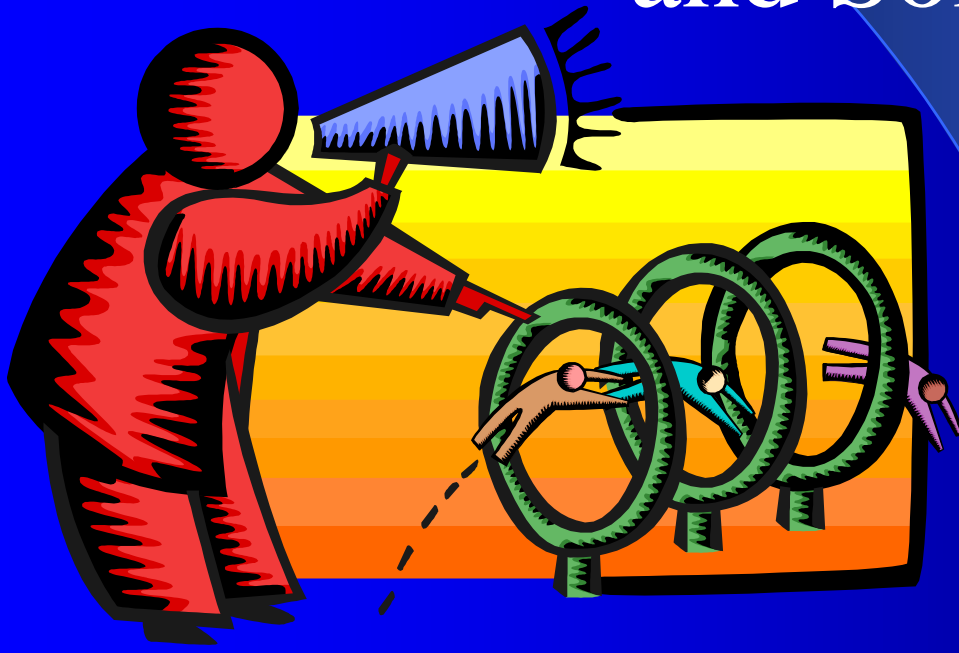
Facilitators To Collaboration

- Multicultural Awareness of Team Members
- Keeping Language Clear
- Time Awareness



Group Activity

Collaboration Problems, Barriers,
and Solutions



Group Activity

Collaboration Problems, Barriers, and Solutions

Barriers: Solutions:

Teachers don't know roles Role descriptions
written /in service on roles

Time Funds can assist with this: Thurs. Sub Day

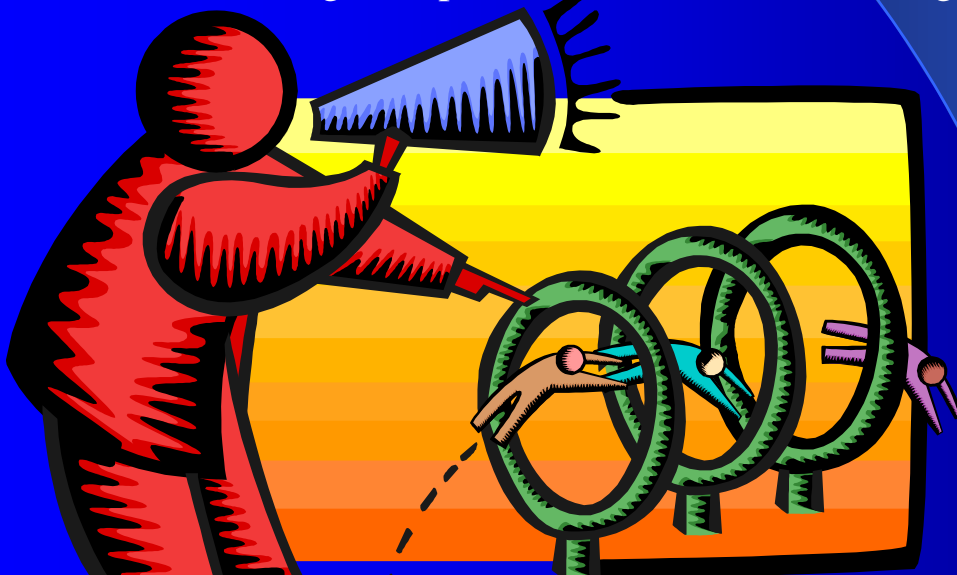
Interruptions in Meetings Signs on doors; value highlighted; agendas

Communication Skills Notebook among team members; log in plans
Follow -up

Website Link for each student , password protected, data, communications

Lack of Involvement Parents who love to come in and Share on Units as Guest Parents

Not enough Respect Ground rules on meetings and sharing time uninterrupted



ASPECTS OF TEAM COMMUNICATION

- Commitment to Common Goals
- Process of Team Building
- Individuality of Team Members
- Role Release and Role Transitions
- Competencies and Experiences of Team Members



Villa's 4 Personality Types

- Optimists
- Pessimists
- Confused
- Angry





Group Activity

INDIVIDUALITY OF TEAM MEMBERS

Novice / Experienced
Pre-service Teacher/ Mentor Teacher

Team Members' Roles and Variables

Pre-Service Teachers

More observational role; slowly take on more students & planning; may be more willing to adapt to individual students', curriculum needs; similar to novice teachers; depend on mentor \teachers' demeanor/perspective; inequality; an active role, but supervised by experienced teacher; enthusiasm, idealism

Team Members' Roles and Variables

Novice Teachers

New ideas; more creative perhaps in lesson plans; may be open minded in preparing lessons; more disability-aware & adaptive. Expected to do more in some schools; new teachers might want to take more on to gain respect and tenure. Will meet both mentors and nemesies.

Team Members' Roles and Variables

Experienced Teachers

Leaders, Mentors; know resources. May have more roles. May be a go-to person, with resources and experiences. May be set in their ways and less willing to change or adapt. May be territorial.

ROLE PLAYS



COMMUNICATION
WITH TEACHERS

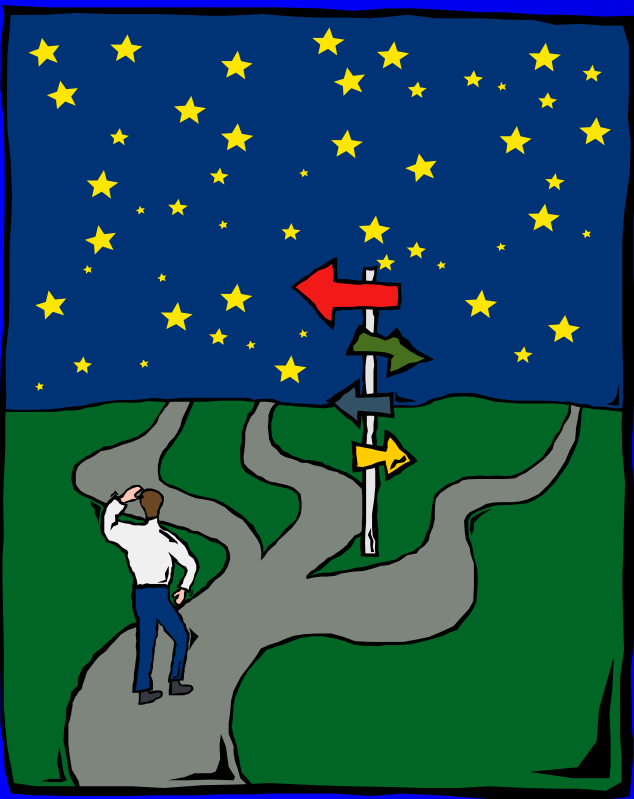


Co-Teaching

Collaborative Planning,
Teaching and Evaluation for
Students

SERP

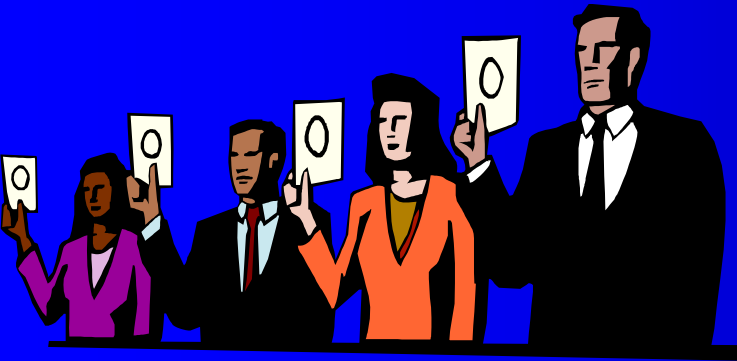
Dr. Nahmias



Co Teaching Defined

When two or more educators in the same environment share responsibility for students' planning, teaching, learning and evaluation.

5 Co –Teaching Styles



1. Supportive
2. Stations
3. Parallel
4. Complementary
5. Team Teaching

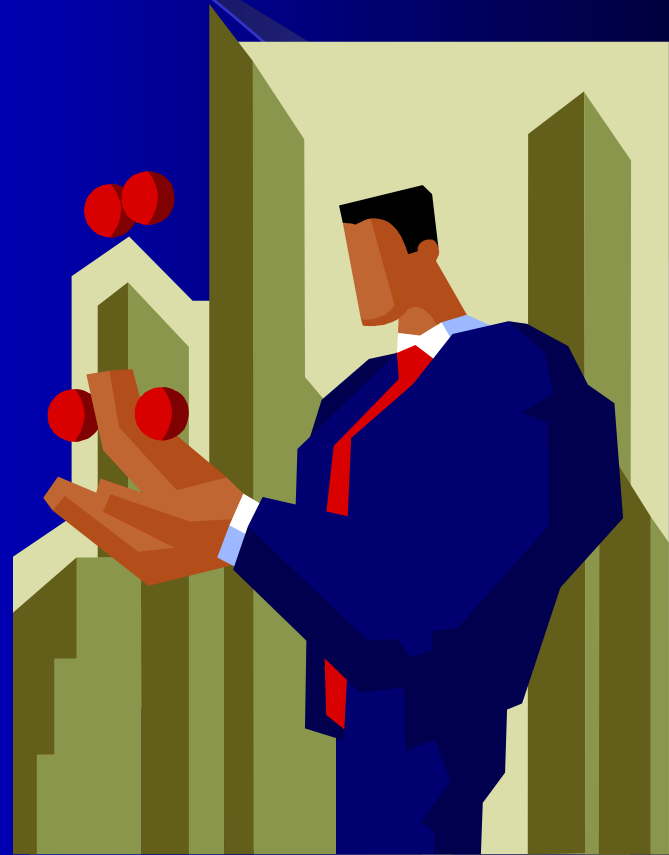
Questions for Video and Discussion



1. What are the benefits of the Parallel vs. Supportive Co-Teaching model?
2. What is Complementary Co-Teaching?
3. What are the benefits to students of Team Teaching?

What Teachers Need To Succeed in Co-Teaching

- Preparation
 - Knowledge
 - Skills
- Support
 - Administrators, Colleagues
- Experience
- Responsibility



Elements of Collaborative Teaching

- Shared Planning & Teaching
- Evaluation of Students Collaborative
- Classroom Management Plans Shared
- Student Supervision and Communication
- Team communication and problem solving
- Responses to Change and Social Needs
- Professional Growth

Parent –Teacher Communication

Discussion of Parents' Visit

Parent -Teacher Role Plays

Pilot Parents

Parent Connection

Teacher and Parent Roles in Meetings



ROLE PLAYS

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS



Parents and Teachers

Roles, Goals and Hopes



Human Qualities That Enhance Communication

- Be Caring
- Be Respectful
- Be Empathetic
- Be Congruent
- Be Open
- Be Honest



Adapted from West, Idol and Cannon, 1989

Communication Skills

- Verbal
- Non Verbal
- Listening
- Interaction

Communication

Quotations to Discuss

- “If you can’t help the parents,
● You can’t help the child.”

- “ If you don’t help the parent, you
don’t help the child.”

Why We're Teachers



What are your reasons for being an educator ?

Reasons:

- Explicit / Conscious
- Implicit / Unconscious

Examples of Why We Become Educators

- To be like another
 - Parent, mentor, teacher
- Wish to do good work in life
- Special experiences
- Special interests developed early
- Special Siblings



Teachers and Paraeducators

- Roles
- Responsibilities
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Co-Teaching
- Assessment Assistance
- Family and Classroom Coordination



Collaboration: Roles for Paraeducators

- Paraeducators as a Partner
- Paraeducators Co-Teach
- Paraeducators Assist
- Paraeducators Take Student Data
- Paraeducators as Inclusion Specialists
- Paraeducators as Paperwork IEP Participant



Preparing Paraeducators

Skills Needed

- Professionalism
- Special Education strategies and methods
- Behavioral techniques
- Communication Skills
- Collaboration with Teachers

Approaches for Teachers

Weekly Meetings

Daily Meetings

Posted Rules and Roles

Lesson Plans

Modeling and Mentoring

Para Educator Role Play



- Clarifying Roles:
- Page 301 Textbook Application 10.2
- Jane is a para-educator assigned to Martin, teacher of students with behavioral disorders. When he's off task what is the para-educators' role? Teachers' Role?

Common Problems with Paraeducators

- Attendance
- Behavioral Consistency
- Time for Collaboration & Communication
- Personalities and Students



Small Group Activity: Paraeducators

- 1. A paraprofessional works with a small group of students in the hallway every day. Students from nearby classes walk by and make jokes and comments. Paraprofessional tells students to stop talking and/ or she'll tell the principal of school rules violation.

Small Group Discussion: Paraprofessionals and Teachers

- 2. Special education teacher set up a behavioral management plan for all students in the class and has instructed the paraprofessional to give student a token every 10 minutes if he/she is working independently at that time. Para does not favor giving rewards for minimum participation so decides to give tokens only if student demonstrates her criteria for “good behavior for the entire 10 minutes.”

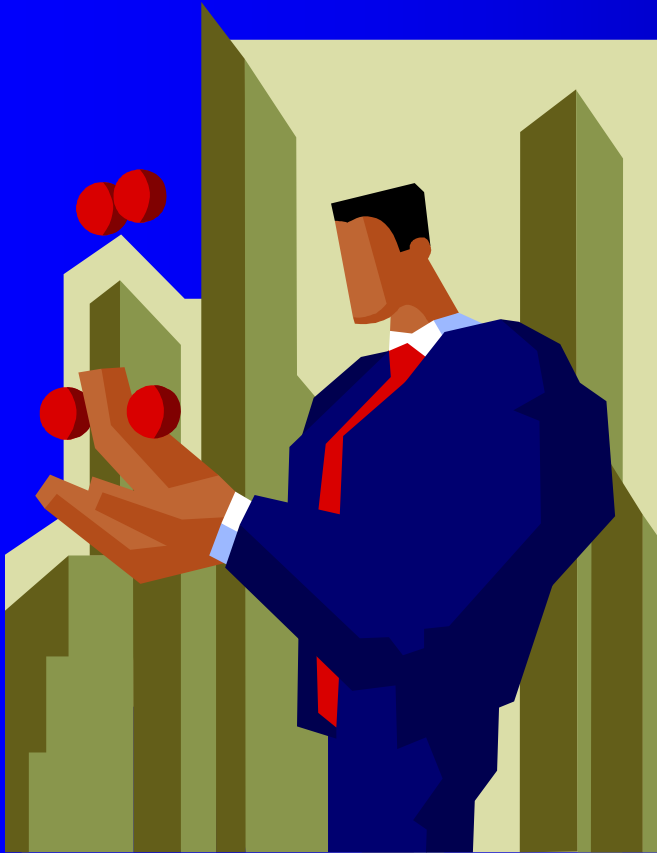
School Community Relations

- Identify and Meet members of your team
- Familiarize yourself with school's referral and pre-referral processes
- Build relationships with community liasons at your school
- Be aware of cultural and administrative factors at your school

What You Can Do In Your School

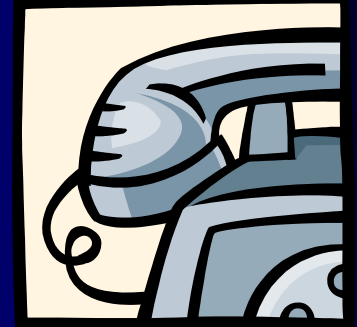
- Participate in Child Study Team
- Increase your visibility
- Co-Sponsor a club or sports team
- Create opportunities for students with special needs to display their talents and achievements
- Be a part of professional development staff

ROLE PLAYS



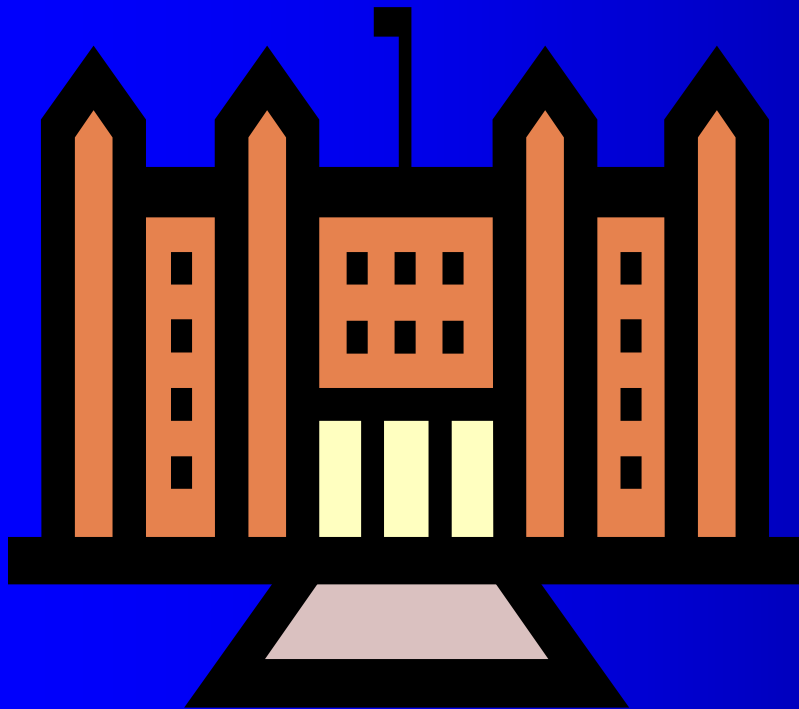
- Behavior
- Administrative Support & Negotiations
- School Psychologists

Negotiating with Administrators



- Set a meeting
- Write up your brief plan / concerns / ideas
- Meet with them on time
- Keep it brief
- Follow up by handing them written ideas
- Thank them!

What Makes a Good Administrator?



- Nice, sets tone
- Supportive
- Inviting to Teachers
- Problem solver
- Promotes collaboration
- Experienced

Voice, Collaboration and Inclusion

Skyrtic, Sailor, Gee (1996)

NCLB:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/asd/nclb/> (2012)

- **Constructivism**: What is it?
- How does **school reform** relate to special education and general education at this time of **NCLB and IDEA 2004**?
- How is **inclusive education** a **political** concept?
- What's **your role as a teacher** in schools?

Discussion of Reading Buswell and Schaffner

- **Families as Creative and Resourceful Collaborators in Inclusive Schooling (2002)**
- **Parents Advocate for their student**
- **Families of students with disabilities have strengths to bring to education:**
- **Culture, Experience, Community Resources, IEP input, and Change~**

Successful Schools for All Students

References:

- Friend, M. and Pope, K. (2005). Creating schools in which all students can succeed. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*. 56-61.
- Obiakor, F., Utley, C. et al. (2002). The comprehensive support model for culturally diverse exceptional learners: Intervention in an age of change. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 38, 1, 14-27.
- Villa, R., Thousand, J. and Nevin, A. (2010). *Collaborating with students in instruction and decision making*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

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and
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