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Training And Supervision Of Paraprofessionals In Special Education: A Qualitative Case Study

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TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have identified educator concerns about inadequate paraprofessional training and supervision in PK-12 schools. Studies also show special educators are not adequately prepared to train and supervise the paraprofessionals. Additionally, the voices of special educators and paraprofessionals are narrowly represented in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to document the most effective methods of training and supervision, as perceived by special educators and paraprofessionals in the case study school district. This qualitative case study included two surveys which incorporated the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) (CEC, 2015) and the concepts of adult learning by Drago-Severson (2015). The researcher framed the questions for the two interview protocols using the appreciative inquiry philosophy (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The findings suggested that special educators and paraprofessionals perceived the training of paraprofessionals to be inadequate for their positions in special services. Participants indicated a desire for a professional development system specifically designed for paraprofessionals in special services including pre-service trainings for all new positions and more opportunities to attend a variety of on-going trainings that relate to paraprofessionals' work in special services or their individual interests. Additionally, most respondents perceived the supervision of paraprofessionals to be adequate, although they desired improvements to the supervisory methods including scheduled and pre-designed meetings with supervising special educators and more interaction with administrative staff who provide evaluations. This study would be of interest to those responsible for paraprofessional training and

supervision in special services.

Keywords: Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals, Paraprofessionals Perceptions, Adult Learning Theory, Appreciate Inquiry, Special Education

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to our special angels that left us during these three years,
Christa Griffin, George and Elaine Hatch, Joyce Hilliard, and Robert Lade Jr.

"But isn't it true that the interactions of illusion are really a torrid view of human validity,"
supposed Zitzel Freemier

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An abundance of literature on paraprofessionals has suggested that training and supervision in many areas of the United States are on the edge of compliance with federal laws (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Goe, 2014; McDonough, 2014; Sherwin, 2014). The federal definition of paraprofessionals in legislation was first found in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). NCLB (2002) specifically defined paraprofessionals as "an individual who is employed in a preschool, elementary school, or secondary school under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher" (as cited in Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004, p. 2). Due to mandates put forth by NCLB and IDEA, states were tasked with developing proposals that are congruent with all elements of these acts in order to receive any federal funding thereby granted (Ramsey, 2013). This included developing state and local policies, standards, and training programs that assured all paraprofessionals who work with students with disabilities are prepared for their designated tasks ("Being aware of laws," 2015).

In the State of Maine, paraprofessionals are referred to as educational technicians, but for the purpose of this study are referred to as paraprofessionals. All school districts in Maine employ paraprofessionals to support students in special education (Maine Department of Education, 2017). Two studies, Goessling (1998) and Breton (2010), indicated that paraprofessionals in Maine perceived their training and supervision as lacking. For example, in Goessling's study in 1998, one paraprofessional claimed, "we are the invisible elves of the school" (p. 9). Furthermore, according to Breton's (2010) study, not much had changed by 2010.

He stated, “Findings in this study confirmed previous research findings, indicating that many paraprofessionals receive minimal, or no, supervision and that the quality of that supervision frequently is inadequate” (p. 43). In 2018, based on observations and conversations with colleagues in the field (Gough, Lajoie, & Milliken, 2016; W. Breton, personal communication, October, 2016), the researcher argued that training and supervision of the paraprofessionals in southern Maine had not changed and was still minimally meeting the regulations.

This chapter is an introduction to a qualitative case study considering the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in a suburban school district in southern Maine. It includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, assumptions, limitations, and scope of the study. Furthermore, this chapter will explain the conceptual framework of adult learning theory and the utilization of appreciative inquiry approach as a guiding philosophy for the collection and analysis of the study’s data. It also includes the significance of the study followed by a conclusion. The first section introduces the problem that propels the study.

Statement of the Problem

Since the 1990s, research has emphasized inadequacies in paraprofessional training and supervision (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Carter et al., 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Goe, 2014; McDonough, 2014; Sherwin, 2014). In addition, studies showed that the supervising special education teachers were not adequately prepared to train and supervise the paraprofessionals (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2012; Preston, 2015; Ramsey, 2013). According to Breton (2010), “often the least qualified persons are teaching the neediest students” (p. 35). However, research also indicated that paraprofessionals often assisted in “increasing positive interactions between students, and providing a high quality of life for students with disabilities”

(Binham, Spooner, & Browder, 2007, p. 340). Therefore, an adequate paraprofessional training and supervision system is a vital function in improving the outcomes for students with disabilities (Marzano, 2001).

In the case study school district, 14% of the student population received special services. Based on a previous survey data collected using Google Forms in October of 2017, the special training and supervision for paraprofessionals was not always adequate within the district. One paraprofessional wrote,

> When I started this work last year, I was placed on my first day with two students without any information given to me. I learned how to interact with my students by being with them. I was given no prior training or information whatsoever. It would have been extremely helpful if [paraprofessionals] could have a meeting prior to the first day of school to look at the students who are coming in to our classrooms. There was very little support given to me by administration and by my teachers. I learned from other [paraprofessionals] (Anonymous).

Furthermore, the previous data also indicated that the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals in the district were interested in receiving more staff development through various mediums designed for adult learners. This interest agreed with the research that suggests, "designing and facilitating professional learning should take into account adults' different ways of knowing" (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 40). As a result of reviewing this information, the administration of the district, namely, the Assistant Superintendent and the Special Education Director, supported an initiative to create a change (personal communications, 2016).

Policymakers contended that mandates enacted by NCLB and the IDEA provided states

little direction in establishing regulations concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals (Breton, 2010; Carter, et al., 2009; Preston, 2015). Yet, states are required to comply with these mandates requiring paraprofessionals to be trained and supervised by highly qualified teachers in order to receive federal funding. Many states also marginally interpreted the federal mandates; therefore, the individual school districts were compelled to create a system for training and supervision of paraprofessionals with little guidance (Brock & Carter, 2015). Even when an adequate system for training paraprofessionals that complies with the federal laws was developed, district leaders often experienced barriers to the sustainability of the system (Preston, 2015). The researcher found these barriers existed in a suburban school district in southern Maine.

Therefore, the problem was a lack of a district-wide sustainable system that provided training and supervision that met the perceived needs and expectations of paraprofessionals, who supported students with disabilities, by highly qualified professionals in a suburban public school district in southern Maine. A secondary problem that related to the sustainability of the training and supervision system was providing staff development that supported various adult learning styles (Drago-Severson, 2011; Ramsey, 2013; Walker & Smith, 2015). As a special education teacher of students with severe and profound disabilities in southern Maine who supervises four to ten paraprofessionals per year, the researcher was invested in leading change. Thus, discovering recommendations for approaches to addressing the problem through documentation and analysis of the perspectives of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals employed in a public school in Maine was the purpose of the study.

Statement of the Purpose

The problem of practice was the paucity of training and supervision for paraprofessionals

by highly qualified professionals that met the perceived needs and expectations of the paraprofessionals who provided services to students with disabilities (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). According to research, this is a nationwide problem that many states and local school districts were striving to remedy (Preston, 2015). Although the case study school district was highly respected for its special education services (personal conversation, 2018), the researcher argued that there was a need for a district-wide system that ensured that a) highly qualified professionals trained and supervised paraprofessionals in order to comply with federal mandates, and b) the training and supervision met the perceived needs and expectations of diverse adult learners.

Consequently, the purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals as to the most effective methods of training and supervision by highly qualified professionals that met current federal mandates and provided a variety of mediums for adult learners. Hence, one objective of this study was to let the reader "hear" the voices of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals. The researcher used an appreciative inquiry philosophy to prompt the participants to discover "the best of what is" and envision a change process of training and supervision in their school district (Deuninck, 2015; Preston, 2015). In order to meet the objectives of this study, the researcher asked several pertinent questions detailed in the next section.

Research Questions

To illuminate the barriers and to discover constructive recommendations for a school district in southern Maine, concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals by highly qualified professionals that complies with legislative mandates and provides various mediums for adult learners, the researcher asked the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals working in special education concerning the current methods of training and supervision?
2. What methods do the special education teachers and paraprofessionals envision, as optimum, which will comply with legislative mandates, and will provide a variety of mediums for adult learners?

Conceptual Framework

Research indicates that one of the most significant factors in students' achievement is adult learning practices (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, Lapointe, & Terry Orr, 2009; Donaldson 2008, Fullan, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 2009, Wagner, 2007). Learning Forward (2011), previously known as The National Staff Development Council, claimed that, "professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes" (p. 43). One way to enhance education in schools is by designing learning experiences that expand adult understanding of their own ways of knowing (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 40). Consequently, the researcher used Kegan's adult learning theory adapted by Drago-Severson (2004), as the theoretical foundation for this study.

Drago-Severson's (2004) model was informed by Harvard psychologist Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory. Expanding on Kegan's (1982) theory in her research, Drago-Severson's (2004) originally labeled her conceptions of ways of knowing as the instrumental, socializing, and self-authoring. Later, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano added a four "ways of knowing," self-transforming, which reflected advancement in adult learning in current world environment. Additionally, Drago-Severson's (2016) theory added the

four pillars of practice to her learning model; namely teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry (CI), and mentoring (p. 41).

Based on previously collected data in October 2017, and the literature review (Berecin-Rascon, 2008; Preston, 2015), the researcher contended that understanding adult learning and various ways of knowing assisted the researcher in preparing the appropriate questions for the surveys and interviews for this study. It was also essential in categorizing training and supervising methods to measure diverse opportunities in staff development. According to Drago-Severson (2018), constructive-developmentalism was "one promising lens for understanding and seeing more deeply into ourselves, others, and the systems that surround and connect us" (p. 14). Therefore, Drago-Severson's adult learning model was a compelling fit for a qualitative research study concerning the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals on their visions of the optimum training and supervision methods. Figure 1 is a graphic organizer that demonstrates the concepts that guided this study's design.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Return Link (p. 23) (p. 35)

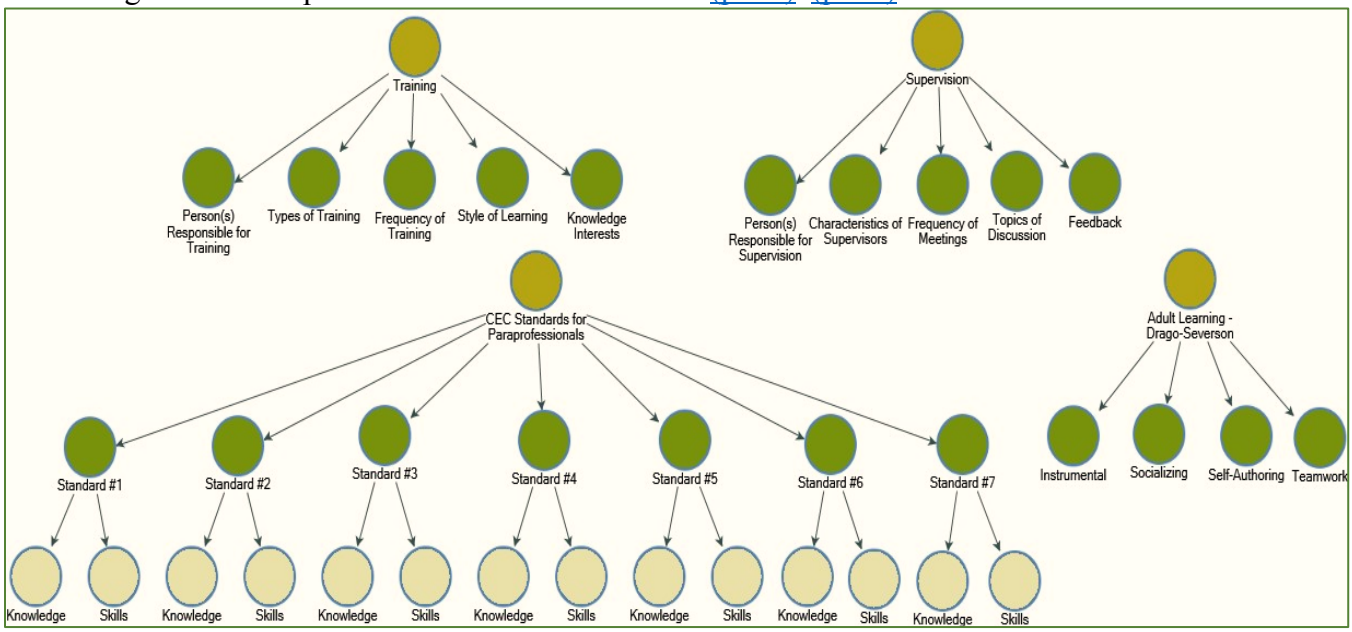

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework, by Catherine Stieg Date: Feb. 22, 2018

Philosophical Framework

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva (1987) was central to conducting this study. AI is both a philosophy and an approach to conducting an inquiry. The researcher incorporated AI based on a personal experience in the case study school district about the initiative for a change (personal communication, 2017). Appreciative inquiry allowed the participants to share stories about their best experiences, and therefore to build a positive connection to the research study and any future initiatives resulting from the recommendations provided from the study. An appreciative inquiry philosophy guided the design of the data instruments, and the trust level of the research interactions.

According to Cooperrider and Sekerka (2001), AI is a five-step process (5D Cycle): definition, discovery, dream, design, and destiny. The developers, David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva (1987), thought that always looking for the problem or the gaps to solve organizational problems obstructs any kind of collective improvement (p. 3). The developers suggested that positive new methods of inquiry would support new concepts and paradigms for organizations (p. 13).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a "strengths-based approach to goal visualization and realization operationalized through structured, positively framed inquiry" (Delgadillo, Palmer, & Goetz, 2016, p. 3). AI "deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality—their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties—their essential contributions and achievements" (Hammond & Royal, 2001, p. 12). AI suggests that, through telling their positive experiences, the group will find their organization's positive core; their values, visions, achievements, and best practices. According to Busche and Paranjpey (2014), AI was originally designed as a method of constructing generative outcomes in an

organizational setting. An essential feature of AI is asking questions that encourage individuals or groups to focus on strengths, visions, competencies, and shared beliefs (Bushe, 2012). Positive questioning promotes generative responses, advances positive discussion, thoughts, and vision related to the focus of the individual or group (Reed, 2007).

The researcher speculated that the positive aspects of the AI methods would increase the trust levels for the interviewees and increase a willingness of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals to participate in a change initiative concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the district. Additionally, since AI is firmly grounded in social constructionism, it was an appropriate epistemology for using the perceptions of the research participants as primary data in this study. According to Reed (2007), "Appreciative Inquiry is a form of social constructionism in action" (p. viii). Constructionists believe that "organizational destiny and social knowledge are intimately connected, and reality is a product of the social interaction of organizational members" (Singh & Reid, 2001, p. 2). The relationship to social constructionism is evident in the AI assumption that "The language we use creates our reality" (Hammond, 2013, p. 14).

Definitions of Terms

This section includes the terminology presented in this study and are used as is typical in the field of education. The section was organic and terms were added as the research developed.

ABA Methodology. Applied Behavior Analysis is the process of systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree, and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior (Sherwin, 2014).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Appreciative Inquiry (AI) takes place in four stages -

discovering, dreaming, designing, and delivering. *Discovering* is finding out the best and most positive experiences participants had in their organization. *Dreaming* is thinking creatively about the future. *Designing* is designing plans for the future, which reflects participants' views and visions of good practice. This phase involves producing provocative propositions, which are statements about what the participants want to achieve. *Delivering* is moving toward action planning, working out what will need to happen to realize the provocative propositions (Singh & Reid, 2001).

Assistive Technology. Assistive technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability ("Building a legacy," 2004).

Assumptions. Assumptions are the set of beliefs shared by a group that cause the group to think and act in certain ways (Reed, 2013, p. 10).

Cognitive Disabilities. Cognitive disabilities include impairments in sensing and processing information, recall of information, comprehension, problem solving, and the synthesis of information (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2006).

Constructionism. Organizational destiny and social knowledge are intimately connected, and reality is a product of the social interaction of organizational members (Singh & Reid, 2001).

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). FAPE is an individualized educational program that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and from which the child receives educational benefit, and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living (Hulett, 2009).

Generative. In relationship to AI, generative is the quest for new ideas, images, theories, and models that liberate a group's collective aspirations (Bushe, 2011, p. 30).

Individual Education Plan (IEP). The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services (Stanberry, 2014).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [20 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sec. 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Sec. 300.114.]

Paraprofessional Authorization in Maine. Paraprofessionals in Maine are titled *Education Technician III*. Maine requires Ed Tech III's to obtain and maintain authorization with the Maine Department of Education. They must document three years of postsecondary education or a combination equivalent to 90 hours of approved study in an educationally related field and pass successful background checks of criminal records, fingerprinting, and references (Maine Department of Education, 2015).

Qualifying Disabilities. The fourteen disabilities qualifying under IDEA for special services are as follows, specific learning disability (SLD), other health impairment, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), developmental delay, emotional disturbance, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, including blindness, deafness hearing impairment, deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairment, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury, multiple

disabilities. In order for a student to qualify for special services their disability must adversely affect the child's educational performance (Gluck, 2004).

Supervision. Supervision is the action of a person critically watching and directing (Webster, 2017). For the purpose of this study the definition refers to the act of being responsible for the proper work of another person.

Training. Training is the action of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behavior (Webster, 2017). For the purpose of this study the definition of training includes professional staff development.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

The researcher assumed, based on previously collected data, observations, and personal conversations, that the case study school district was experiencing similar challenges as other districts in Maine and the US in reference to paraprofessional professional development. In alignment with AI, the researcher also assumed that "the act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way" (Hammond, 2013, p.14). Additionally, it was also anticipated that the recommendations that were made will be implemented by the case study school district as change initiative and considered by other districts in Maine in the future.

There are limitations in any study. In this case, the number of surveys that were filled out and returned was limited, especially considering the research was conducted at the end of the school year. Additionally, those who completed the survey may not have read it carefully and/or understood all the questions. Therefore, "participants' level of articulation, perception, and cooperation may have varied and skewed some of the data" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 155). The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees, and the researcher's novice interview skills using AI methods may also have been interpreted as limitations. There was also

limitations to generalizability of the findings because this was a case study with a focus exclusively on one school district.

The scope of this research project was limited to special education programs in a suburban town in southern Maine. The participants did not include all stakeholders; therefore, the scope of the study was further limited. The scope of this study was bounded; it included six buildings, thirteen special education teachers and classrooms, and thirty-eight paraprofessionals (District, 2017).

Significance of the Study

In the absence of statewide standards that addressed paraprofessionals' training needs, identified required competencies, and suggested methods for training paraprofessionals, research was needed to fill this gap (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2012; Ramsey, 2013; Walker & Smith, 2015). According to Fisher and Pleasants (2012), "state education agencies (SEAs) are in need of data from local districts relative to current issues and concerns in the field" (p. 288). Bingham et al. (2007) also claimed, "research is needed to assist in understanding and overcoming the barriers to effectively training [paraprofessionals] in supporting students with severe disabilities" (p. 350). According to Biggs, Gilson, and Carter (2016), the "voices of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals are relatively scarce in the literature" (p. 257). In their study, using semi-structured interviews, Biggs et al. (2016) examined the perspectives of 22 educator teams regarding what influenced the quality of their professional relationships. The findings illustrated that all participants strongly emphasized the importance of this inquiry and were "eager for their voices to be heard" (p. 270).

The research will benefit not only the case study school district, but also other similar districts and agencies as the competency of paraprofessionals has a direct impact on students'

outcomes and the general success of the school (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). Thus, this study was immensely significant to the case study school district as professionals define, discover, dream, design, and prepare for optimum methods of training and supervision. The findings from this study will increase the "possibilities" of an initiative that will:

- improve student outcomes,
- create a unified training and supervising program across the district,
- provide diverse training options for paraprofessional with CEUs,
- boost confidence and competence for paraprofessionals & supervising special educations teachers,
- increase accountability across the district; perhaps disperse responsibilities or add a district/area position/consultant,
- comply with federal law (improve the system),
- improve practice in State of Maine (increase knowledge) share findings and possible training with other districts in the area (Sebago Alliance, Collaborative Districts),
- add to the knowledge of using AI for transformation in education.

Conclusion

Special education teachers and paraprofessionals consistently reported having inadequate training and supervision across various skill areas (Walker & Smith, 2015). The gap between research and the practice of training and supervising paraprofessionals is "especially concerning when considering the place and prominence of paraprofessionals in the delivery of special education services" (Brock & Carter, 2015, p. 39). According to Giangreco et al. (2010), the literature confirmed that this is a problem throughout the country. As indicated in previous data collected, this was at least partially true in the case study school district as training and

supervision was not clearly defined and inconsistent throughout the district. Furthermore, there was a desire by administration, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals for a change. Therefore, this researcher discovered the perspectives of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals on the current and potential future practices of training and supervision of paraprofessionals. Ultimately, the researcher used the findings to prepare recommendations to the district leaders on a system change. These recommendations will also be of interest to other similar school districts and agencies in the area that employ paraprofessionals to work with students and clients with disabilities.

In conclusion, this first chapter included a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, assumptions, limitations, and scope of the study. Furthermore, this chapter explained the framework and theories that will guide the study. It also included the significance of the study and a brief summary. In Chapter II, the author reviews literature concerning federal legislation, and the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals on training and supervision. In addition, Chapter II includes an introduction to the conceptual framework of adult learning theory and the utilization of appreciative inquiry as a guiding philosophy for the collection and analysis of the study's data. In Chapter III, the researcher presents the methodology of the study as a qualitative single case study. The adult learning theory developed by Kegan and adapted by Drago-Severson (2004) informed the conceptual framework. The appreciative inquiry philosophy, according to Cooperrider and Sekerka (2001), was used to organize and guide the surveys and interviews. In Chapter IV, the author displays the data. Finally, Chapter V includes the findings of the study, a research discussion, implications, limitations, recommendations, and a conclusion. The final pages of this dissertation include a reference, appendices, and tables.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a nationwide problem among many states struggling to meet federal mandates to ensure that all paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals. Part of the problem is a lack of clarity from the federal mandates on the definitions of training, supervision, and highly qualified professionals. Based on previously collected data using Google Forms in October of 2017, personal communication, and observation, the researcher argued that the case study school district at least partially exhibited this problem in that the practices of training and supervision were not clearly defined or consistent within the district. Furthermore, the practices did not always consider the perceptions of the special education teacher and the paraprofessionals of their perceived needs and expectations. Therefore, the problem was a lack of a district wide sustainable system that provided training and supervision that met the perceived needs and expectations of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals, who supported students with disabilities, in a suburban public school district in southern Maine.

Additionally, in that same survey from October 2017, special education teachers and paraprofessionals indicated a need for a variety of methods and styles in training and supervision to accommodate their diversity as learners. This highlighted a secondary problem related to the sustainability of the training and supervision system in providing staff development that supports various adult learning styles (Drago-Severson, 2011; Ramsey, 2013; Walker & Smith, 2015). The purpose of this study is to illuminate the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals within the school district being studied, with special emphasis on a vision of an optimum training and supervision system. With a focus on adult learning theory, as described by Drago-Severson (2004) and using the appreciative inquiry philosophy, according to Cooperrider

and Sekerka (2001), the researcher sought to elicit feedback from participants regarding an optimum system that would comply with federal mandates and meet the needs of adult learners.

This chapter reviews the literature concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. It includes a special education overview, a review of the legislation, an overview of paraprofessionals, and methods of training and supervision. It also includes a review of the literature specifically addressing the perceptions of paraprofessionals on their experiences with training and supervision. Furthermore, this chapter offers a literature review of the adult learning theory and appreciative inquiry. To begin, an understanding of the history and the legislation governing special education and the employment of paraprofessionals is essential to understanding their training and supervision needs.

Special Education Overview

Special education is an array of educational and social services offered by the public school systems and other educational institutions to students with disabilities who are between three and 21 years of age. Special education is intended to provide students with disabilities a free and appropriate public educational (FAPE) environment. FAPE allows them to be educated in the least restrictive way with their typical peers.

History of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals provide compulsory and cost-effective services in many educational venues (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Goe, 2014; McDonough, 2014; Sherwin, 2014). Remarkably, there is evidence dating back 200 years, of less skilled subordinates assisting with students with disabilities (French, 2003). However, paraprofessionals were first utilized in United States school settings

due to a shortage of certified teachers in the 1940s during World War II (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Berecin-Rascon, 2008).

During the 1950s, the Ford Foundation urged and assisted with funding school districts that hired local women who had at least attended college to meet the teacher shortage in public schools (Berecin-Rascon, 2008). These recruits had no formal professional training in teaching. Through the 1960s and 1970s, new federal programs prompted school districts to hire more paraprofessionals to work with students in a wide range of educational settings (Ramsey, 2013). Notably, it was also during this time that the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) became the leading employer of paraprofessionals. By 1965, it employed more than 25,000 paraprofessionals in community programs and more than 46,000 in Head Start programs (Ramsey, 2013). In the 1970s, school districts started to employ paraprofessionals to monitor the playground, hall areas, and lunchrooms, as well as supervise bus drop-off and pick-up. Often paraprofessionals also functioned in clerical or instructional roles to free up the regular classroom teacher (Preston, 2015).

Due to new federal legislation ensuring free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students, the roles, duties, and responsibilities of paraprofessionals developed even further in the 1990s. Paraprofessionals were devoting a significant part of their day working with small groups or individual students (Preston, 2015). According to French (2003), paraprofessionals in the 1990s assisted students with health care, personal needs, assignments, projects, and small group work.

The enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and Title 1 of the No Child Left Behind Act, which entitled all students to an education in the least restrictive environment

(LRE), made inclusive education a prominent initiative throughout the US (Sherwin, 2014). These laws meant that more students needed support in a wider number of educational settings, thereby increasing the necessity to hire more skilled special education paraprofessionals. All three of these acts were instrumental in defining the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Goe, 2014).

Legislation

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 transformed the federal government's role in education and unlocked educational opportunities for the most vulnerable students (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). The ESEA originally focused on concerns raised by civil rights activists regarding the equal treatment of students with disabilities. In effect, passage of ESEA facilitated the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). Congress often reauthorized ESEA in order to adjust allocated funds or clarify terms and definitions. Under President George W. Bush, ESEA became known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 [Public Law 107-110]. President Obama reauthorized NCLB on December 10, 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Biggs et al., 2016).

The ESSA, formally NCLB, consists of six titles. Title I is the most relevant to paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2010). The ratification of NCLB on January 8, 2002 introduced many changes intended to improve academic achievement. Guidelines and regulations developed under Title I addressed paraprofessionals' qualifications, professional development training, and a requirement for paraprofessionals to be supervised by highly qualified professionals. The Act stated:

> As of January 8, 2002, under Section 1119 of the NCLB, paraprofessionals shall have (a) completed two years of study at an institution of higher education, (b) obtained an

> associate's or higher degree, or (c) met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics, or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate. [NCLB: Title 1, Section 1119/b]

Paraprofessionals hired before 2002 were given time to comply. The new requirements were mandatory for everyone by January 2008, yet studies have indicated that many districts still minimally comply with these laws, by either providing limited training opportunities to paraprofessionals and/or failing to have the paraprofessionals supervised by highly qualified professionals (Biggs et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2016; Giangreco et al., 2010). To some extent, this gap was due to the non-regulatory features of the legislation, giving states autonomy in interpretation of some parts of these laws (Carter et al., 2016; DaFonte, 2013).

The definition of *highly qualified* is consigned to the individual states, as are the means for determining qualification (Berecin-Rascon, 2008). However, the United States Department of Education has issued some basic guidelines regarding paraprofessionals whose positions are funded under Title I of the federal legislation. According to the IDEA (2002), paraprofessionals provide instructional support, including:

- providing one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher,
- assisting with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials,
- providing instructional assistance in a computer laboratory,
- conducting parental involvement activities,
- providing instructional support in a library or media center,

- acting as a translator, or
- providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. (U.S. Department of Education, p. 118)

Furthermore, in conjunction with ESSA**,** IDEA guarantees that children with disabilities have access to and receive the same level of education as their nondisabled peers receive in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Biggs et al., 2016). This means that most students with disabilities attend a regular education classroom, but might still be entitled to special services. Because of the increased numbers of students needing these special services and the fact that all the students in a grade level are no longer housed in one classroom, school districts are hiring more paraprofessionals to assist students with disabilities. Policy makers have tried to align IDEA and ESSA regulations concerning training and supervision of paraprofessionals and to create guidelines for competency in the educational standards (Biggs et al., 2016). One successful effort was through the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), in collaboration with the National Paraeducator Resource Center (NPRC), as described in the next section.

Competency and Standards

Federal law does support the use of paraprofessionals to assist in the provision of special education services when they are, "appropriately trained and supervised" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004, Sec. 300.156). Therefore, states are encouraged to adopt guidelines for appropriate utilization of paraprofessionals (CEC, 2015; McKenzie, 2011). Much of the federal funding allocated to states is contingent on the state providing some guidelines and measurements of compliance to the local districts. Most guidelines emphasize two primary requirements: "(a) Paraprofessionals must be used to provide supplemental, not primary, instruction; and (b) paraprofessionals must receive ongoing support, direction, training,

and feedback from highly qualified [as defined by the state], certified special education teachers" (Biggs et al, 2016, p. 257).

There were two federally funded studies in 2006, the *Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under NCLB* (SSI-*NCLB*) and the *National Longitudinal Study of NCLB* (NLS-*NCLB*). In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education published a combined report of the finding from the two studies. The report described the progress that states, districts, and schools had made implementing the teacher and paraprofessional qualification provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act through 2004–05 (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The researchers reported that about two thirds of instructional paraprofessionals were considered qualified (as defined by the state) under *NCLB*, but nearly a third (28 percent) did not know their status or did not provide a response to the study questions. Most paraprofessionals reported working under the direct supervision of a teacher, but some instructional paraprofessionals indicated that they worked with students on their own without close supervision from a teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 121).

Other empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that properly trained paraprofessionals can play an important role in lessening the student achievement gap in special education classrooms, because students' progress is often contingent on the paraprofessionals' ability to effectively reinforce, remediate, and augment the special education teachers' lessons (McKenzie, 2011; Walker & Smith, 2015). However, numerous other studies have shown that paraprofessionals employed by many schools are expected to perform these duties for which they are not academically and/or professionally qualified (Biggs et al., 2016; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Stockall, 2014).

Hence, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), in collaboration with the National

Paraeducator Resource Center (NPRC), endorsed guidelines for use in training paraprofessionals to serve individuals with exceptionalities, referred to as a "specialty set" (CEC, 2015). In 2015, CEC aligned the paraprofessional specialty set with the seven standard areas for special education professionals, creating the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). CEC envisioned agencies using these guidelines to confirm that all paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities have "mastered the knowledge and skills outlined in the PCCG through constant, measurable, and continuing education with highly qualified teachers and training that are specifically targeted for paraprofessionals" (CEC, 2015, para. 4). These guidelines were part of the training and supervision conceptual framework for this study (See Figure 1).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The number of paraprofessionals employed in schools has increased in part because of the requirements for a student with a disability to be placed in the least restrictive environment. Paraprofessionals provide a wide variety of services in schools, ranging from small group instruction to minor medical procedures. They may be assigned to a variety of educational settings depending on the students with whom they are working. There is a typical hierarchy of the special education services provided in most public school. This hierarchy correlates with the level of restriction in the classroom environment (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Least Restrictive Environment

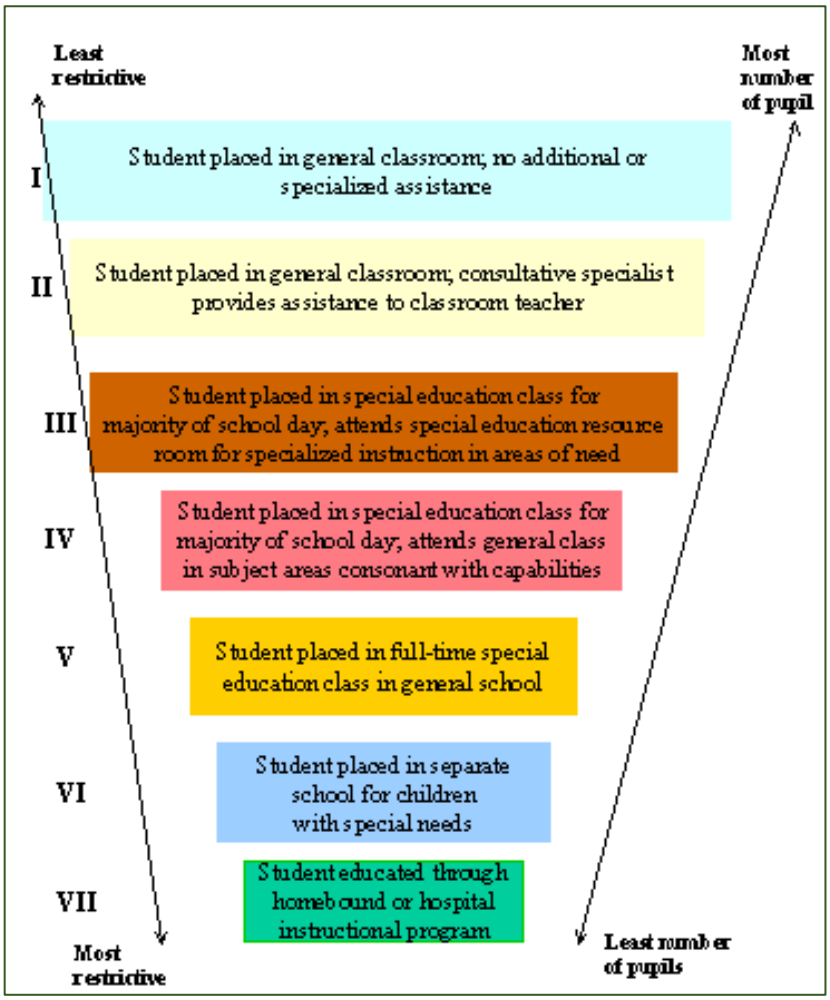

Figure 2. This illustration represents the special education continuum of services. Correia, M. and Martins, A. (2000). The state of the art of inclusion in Portugal. Retrieved from http://www.isec2000.org.uk/abstracts/ papersc/correia_1.htm

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

[20 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sec. 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Sec. 300.114.]

The actual setting depends on the individual needs of a student. When a student is determined to qualify to receive special services, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed by a team of professionals and the student's parents (Hulett, 2009). In the IEP the team decides the most appropriate educational setting (LRE) for that student. Sometimes it is determined by the IEP team that general education setting is inappropriate for the student even with supplementary aids and services and a special education classroom is recommended (Hulett, 2009). This recommendation is made only after the general education setting has been tried.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

The legal concept of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is defined in IDEA at 20 U. S. C. § 1401(9). FAPE is an individualized educational program that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and from which the child receives educational benefit, and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living (Hulett, 2009). Several reauthorizations of IDEA have extended the requirements on LRE, transitional services, qualifications of teachers, and the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The reauthorizing process now includes technology assessments and discipline restrictions. All of these elements are considered part of the free appropriate public education.

In providing free appropriate public education, states also are required to create a plan and set goals for each student receiving special services to meet (Hulett, 2009). A district failing to meet federal mandates is in jeopardy of federal sanctions, such as loss of funds. These increases in federal requirements have had a significant impact on the number of

paraprofessionals that are hired by school districts as they struggle to comply with the changes (Preston, 2015).

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A team develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) annually for each student who qualifies under IDEA for special services due to their disabilities (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). IDEA specifically identifies the aspects of the student's education that must be addressed in each IEP. The requirements are:

- A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum;
- A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals;
- A description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured, and when periodic progress reports will be provided;
- A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child;
- A statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children;
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic

activities;

- A statement of any individual accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and district wide assessments;
- If the IEP team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular State or district wide assessment of student achievement, the IEP must include a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child; and
- The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications. (Contents of an IEP, 2017).

Additionally, the IEP team must make post-secondary transition plans for students after the age of sixteen (Hulett, 2009).

In the State of Maine, many districts prepare the IEP document in a digital form using the software program Adori operated by Educational Data Management Solutions (2001). This system is used in collaboration with a neighboring states (NH, MA) to facilitate transitions of students from one district to another and to secure the documents. The IEP team includes an administrator (chairperson), special education teacher (case manager), any service provider (OT, PT, SPL, SW, and CT), nurse, parents, student, and any outside agencies that the parents care to invite. Sometimes, doctors, lawyers, or mediators are also invited. Every three years, students take standardized assessments to determine whether they continue to qualify for special services. The IEP is a legal document containing the educational program for a student with special needs (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). To be appropriate, education programs for students with

disabilities must be designed to meet their individual needs to the same extent that the needs of nondisabled students are met. An appropriate education may include regular or special education and related aids and services to accommodate the unique needs of individuals with disabilities (Hulett, 2009).

Types of Special Education Classrooms

The placement of students with disabilities is the responsibility of the IEP team which includes the input of staff and parents, yet the final consent rests with the parents. In order to accomplish this task the IEP team chooses from a variety of placements that range in level of restriction, including class size, student-teacher ratio, length of program, and degree of inclusion in regular education classrooms. Paraprofessionals provide services to students with disabilities in most of these settings. The settings are described in this section from least to most restrictive as offered in the case study school district.

Regular Education Classroom (Inclusion). Inclusion classroom placement involves the education of the student in a general education classroom supported by the presence of a special education teacher or a paraprofessional in addition to the regular education teacher. The second instructor often assists all students in the classroom and not exclusively the student(s) with disabilities (Pierrangelo & Giuliani, 2009).

Resource Room (RR). A resource room program is usually recommended for students who need supportive services but can successfully remain within the regular education classroom for the majority of the day. This is often referred to as "pullout" services, and the services are provide in a separate room. The student-teacher ratio in the resource room is usually 5:1 or less

(Pierrangelo & Giuliani, 2009). Additionally, students cannot exceed 50% of their school day in that environment.

Social Life Skills (SLS). Social Life Skills classrooms are often referred to as behavioral programs. Focus on the skills that children need to be eventually become successful and productive parts of their society. They are the kinds of interpersonal skills that allow students to develop meaningful relationships, as well as to develop more reflective skills that allow them to see their actions and responses critically and therefore become happier adults (Webster, 2017). Social life skills classroom are self-contained programs in which a student spends at least 65% of school day.

Academic Life Skills (ALS). The primary focus is on developing life skills through teaching functional academics and daily living skills with a strong concentration on social skills (Webster, 2017). Academic life skill classrooms are self-contained programs in which a student spends at least 65% of school day. Some districts with lower population of students needing special services often combine the programs of academic life skills with functional life skills.

Functional Life Skills Programs (FLS). FLS programs are usually for students with severe and profound disabilities. The students' goals and objectives are based on the most basic functional skills such as walking, self-feeding, self-toileting, and making simple requests. Most students in FLS programs receive support services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language theory. They often use assistive technology for communication. Students with developmental disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorders) and significant cognitive or multiple disabilities often need to have these skills taught through breaking them down, modeling them and the use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Additionally, Social Stories are often used to teach appropriate social behaviors (Webster, 2017).

Functional life skills classroom are self-contained programs in which a student spends at least 65% of school day.

Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals have numerous titles: paraprofessionals, teacher's aides, teacher assistants, education technicians, transition trainers, job coaches, therapy assistants, home visitors, instructional assistants, classroom assistants, school assistants, and aides (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; French, 2003; Goe, 2014; Holbrook, 2011). The federal definition of paraprofessionals is found in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005). However, all definitions agree a paraprofessional is a person employed by the school who is supervised by a licensed professional, responsible for student outcomes (Carter et al., 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; French, 2003; NCLB, 2001; Ramsey, 2013).

Demographics

The most current report from the Bureau of Labor statistics in 2016, claimed that there are 1,025,520 paraprofessionals working with special education teachers in public schools across the country. Interestingly, the Connecticut State Department of Education (2012) named the position of paraprofessionals as one of the fastest growing occupations in public schools. In 2017, Maine employed 750 paraprofessionals (education technicians) (Maine Department of Education, 2017). An estimated 70% of paraprofessionals work closely with students with disabilities, with many providing support throughout the entire school day (Biggs et al. 2016; Carter et al, 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012).

Paraprofessionals are on average about forty-five years old and have been working in education for six to seven years ("Teaching Assistants," n.d.). The majority work in the district

in which they live, thus usually having a similar cultural perspective as the students and their families. Depending on the state requirements, paraprofessionals have from a high school diploma through master's degrees. The majority are women, and choose this profession because of the convenience of a school schedule while raising children (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005; Breton, 2010).

Job Descriptions

Paraprofessionals are frequently employed to support students in special education settings. As their numbers are increasing, their job descriptions are a frequent topic in current literature, much of it concerning their training and supervision. Their most common roles described in the literature include providing one-on-one direct support, inclusion, personal care, literacy instruction, social skills instruction, community-based instruction, behavior modification, and clerical or non-instructional support (Goe, 2014; Holbrook, 2011; Saldivar-Parra, 2012; Sherwin, 2014; Walker & Smith, 2015). Paraprofessionals work with students with a variety of disabilities including, but not limited to, learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, schizophrenia, developmental disabilities, communication disorders, and physical impairments (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005).

In addition, paraprofessionals work in a variety of special education classrooms such as resource rooms, behavior classrooms, self-contained functional life skills programs, autism programs, and inclusion classrooms in many districts (Webster, 2017). Paraprofessionals often require specialized training in behavior management, de-escalation, personal-professional boundaries, and sometimes physical restraint (Preston, 2015). Some paraprofessionals' positions require them to program and facilitate communication with voice output devices, computers, switches, and other technology. While still others transfer students in and out of therapy

equipment, help feed a student by mouth or through a feeding tube, and assist students with toileting (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2005; Carter et al., 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; French, 2003; NCLB, 2001; Ramsey, 2013).

Due to the continual increase in responsibilities expected of paraprofessionals, leaders in the field have expressed concerns about the least trained staff supporting students with the greatest needs (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004). Paraprofessionals often assume responsibilities more appropriate for certified teachers with limited direct training and guidance from qualified professionals (Brock et al., 2015; Fisher & Pleasant, 2012). Indeed, "those who work closely with paraprofessionals suggest that role overload and role conflict are more often the rule than the exception" (Berger, 2013, p. 30). A 1999–2000 Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE, 2002) was a nationally representative study involving 888 special education paraprofessionals, although not recent, it has been cited in many other research studies due to the sample size (Ramsey, 2013). The study reported that paraprofessionals spent the majority of their time providing small group instructional support, delivering one-on-one instruction, modifying materials, implementing behavior management plans, monitoring hallways, meeting with teachers, collecting data, or providing personal care assistance.

As another example, French (2003) surveyed 321 special educators about the contributions paraprofessionals make to 30 job-related tasks. The findings revealed paraprofessionals generally assumed primary responsibility for personal care tasks (e.g., feeding, toileting); shared responsibilities for activity preparation (e.g., constructing instructional materials, observing student behavior), critical tasks (e.g., keeping attendance, grading papers), and other tasks (e.g., organizing classrooms); and limited responsibility for planning instruction (e.g., determining goals and objectives, deciding on behavior management strategies) and parent

communication (e.g., calling parents, writing progress reports) (French, 2003).

Giangreco and Broer (2005) also conducted a study. They queried 153 paraprofessionals about the extent to which they engaged in seven common tasks. Almost half the paraprofessionals reported that they spent much of their time (47%) delivering instruction, followed by providing behavior support (19%), engaging in self-directed activities (17%), and supervising students (7%). Additionally, many paraprofessionals spend considerable time working closely with students with severe disabilities. According Brock & Carter (2015), 75% percent of special education paraprofessionals report providing one-to-one support to students with low-incident disabilities either daily or weekly (p. 39).

Certifications

Ten states require certification for paraprofessionals. Other states require a contracted paraprofessional to pass an examination or to have completed credits at the college level (Preston, 2015). Yet still other states allow the local districts to develop their own assessments of competencies for paraprofessionals. Maine does not provide certification for paraprofessionals, but it does have a process through the Department of Education, that gives authorization for paraprofessionals.

Unfortunately, as of 2017, there was no job description for a paraprofessional listed on the Maine Department of Education web-site, only forms to apply for application, authorization, and to register for fingerprinting (Maine Department of Education, 2017). Maine's paraprofessional authorization exceeds the federal requirements. Yet, these guidelines do not guarantee that all school districts comply with the law in reference to training and supervision of paraprofessionals by highly qualified professionals (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Breton, 2010).

Wages

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' records of Occupational Employment Statistics, paraprofessionals earned an average salary of $25,270. Paraprofessionals in Maine earned on average $32,830 (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2015). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Maine had one of the highest wage rates in the U.S. for paraprofessionals. No other literature was found that indicated this data as fact, and was nothing was located that explained why Maine paraprofessionals were paid better than the U.S average.

Training of Paraprofessionals

The methods used to ensure a competent paraprofessional workforce vary from state to state and district to district. The major models used include (a) training, (b) observation or assessment, (c) involvement in an improvement process, (d) study groups, (e) inquiry/action research, (f) individually guided activities, and (g) mentoring (Berecin-Rascon, 2008). Other training methods for paraprofessionals included professional activities such as collaboration meetings, outside professional development courses at local universities, presentations on weekends, before, during, or after school; study groups; workshops; district-wide training, school-wide training; self-study; individualized skill sessions; and mentoring (Goe, 2014; Holbrook, 2011; McKenzie, 2011; Stockall, 2014). Though each method was considered acceptable, “on-the-job in-service training through school-based professional development activities may be one of the most common, effective, and efficient methods to improve job satisfaction” (Berecin-Rascon, 2008, p. 36).

Many studies agreed that the training must be (1) systematically planned, (2) ongoing, and (3) coordinated to build sequentially upon previous training (Chopra, et al., 2011). Additionally, activities planned after each session required paraprofessionals to reflect upon their learning process and note any changes they plan to make in their delivery of instruction. This

reflection has been shown to increase the probability that paraprofessionals maintain the acquired knowledge and skills increasing their competency (Nelson, 2015; Preston, 2015; Saldivar-Parra, 2012; Stockall, 2014; Walker & Smith, 2015).

States such as Minnesota, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin "have developed exemplary models for pre-service and in service training as well as for the supervision of paraprofessionals" (Breton, 2010, p. 35). Additionally, a number of states developed extensive, competency-based programs geared to paraprofessionals, and have even mandated that paraprofessionals complete a formal certification programs as a condition for licensure (Mohniki, 2013). Other states' standards were proven to be vague and not necessarily competency-based (Preston, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

Research indicated that one of the most significant factors in school age students' achievement is adult learning practices (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, Lapointe, & Terry Orr, 2009; Donaldson 2008, Fullan, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 2009, Wagner, 2007). Learning Forward (2011), previously known as The National Staff Develop Council, claimed that, "professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes" (p. 43). One way to enhance education in schools is by designing learning experiences that expands adult understanding of their own ways of knowing (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 40). Consequentially, the theoretical foundation to the conceptual framework for this study was an adult learning model as described by Drago-Severson (See Figure 1).

Drago-Severson's (2004) model was informed by Harvard psychologist Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory. Constructive-developmental theory was based on three central principles: constructivism, developmentalism, and subject-object balance

or meaning making system (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 39). Expanding on Kegan's (1982) theory in her research, Drago-Severson (2004) originally labeled her conceptions of ways of knowing as the *instrumental*, *socializing*, and *self-authoring*. Later, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano added a fourth way of knowing, *self-transforming*, which reflects advancement in adult learning theories in the current world environment. Additionally, Drago-Severson (2016) also added the four pillars of practices to her learning model; namely teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry (CI), and mentoring (p. 41).

Based on previously collected data and literature concerning professional development of paraprofessionals (Berecin-Rascon, 2008; Preston, 2015), the researcher contends that understanding adult learning and various ways of knowing assisted the researcher in preparing the appropriate questions for the surveys and interviews for this study. It would be beneficial in designing diverse training and supervising methods to include complementary "ways of knowing." According to Drago-Severson (2018), constructive-developmentalism is "one promising lens for understanding and seeing more deeply into ourselves, others, and the systems that surround and connect us" (p. 14). Therefore, Drago-Severson's adult learning model was a compelling fit for a qualitative research study concerning the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals on their visions of the optimum training and supervision methods.

Adult Learning Theory

Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory was an extension of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1936) cognitive development theory (Drago-Severson, 2016). According to Kegan and Lahey (2009), meaning-making is a lifelong activity that begins in earliest infancy and continues to evolve through a series of five stages encompassing childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Kegan's (1982) research, according to Drago-Severson (2016),

demonstrated that adults with the "appropriate developmental supports and challenges" (p. 66) can advance in the complexity of their ways of making meaning out of their life experiences. The three foundational principles of Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory are: (1) constructivism, (2) developmentalism, and (3) the subject–object balance, or meaning making system (Drago-Severson, 2016).

Constructivism is the theory that human beings actively construct or make sense of experiences every minute of the day, even while dreaming. An individual's interpretation of their experiences is what influences understandings and points of view (Drago-Severson, 2016). Developmentalism is the theory that adults can continuously build their internal capacity, therefore the way a person makes meaning of life's experiences can change over time (Drago-Severson, 2016). The subject–object relationship refers to a balance on the perspectives of the relationship between that which can be held (i.e. objects) and that which cannot be seen (i.e. relationships) but still experienced. According to Drago-Severson (2016) "the greater perspective that we can take on ourselves, others, our relationships and larger systems, the better we are able to manage complexity and also give back to others" (p. 67).

Ways of Knowing

Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental theory explained five stages of adult development. Additionally, Kegan's (1982) ways of knowing became a significant focus of Drago-Severson's (2004) future research studies. Drago-Severson (2004) asserted that each individual's way of knowing influences and shapes his or her understanding of learning. It also informs the types of supports and challenges that are needed for the individual to grow (Drago-Severson, 2011). According to Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), the common ways of knowing in adulthood are, "the instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-

transforming" (p. 25). These different ways of knowing are important to consider when developing adult learning systems concerning training and supervision of paraprofessionals.

Research indicated that a person's ways of knowing is not arbitrary, but consistent and reliable for a period of time. It reflects a coherent pattern of thinking that is typical of the individual's stage of development (Drago-Severson, 2016). "While context, of course, really matters, a way of knowing feels more like the way we are rather than something we have" (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 67). It is important to realize that the different ways of knowing have both developmental strengths and limitations and do not indicate intelligence (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). One way of knowing is not necessarily better than another, what is more critical is that an individual's way of knowing suits his or her current life experiences and the environment at any given time and place (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

The instrumental way of knowing: 'What is the right way to do this?' Adults who make meaning with an instrumental way of knowing usually understand their experiences in concrete terms and how it directly affects them (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). They believe that there is a right and a wrong way of doing things and suppose that others think, feel, and act the same way. Adults who make meaning with instrumental way of knowing respond positively to tangible examples (i.e. models, best practices, rubrics, and step-by-step directions); they enjoy constituency and fairness in coworkers and leaders, and are motivated by extrinsic rewards (public recognition, pay raises, high-evaluation ratings) (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). In order for instrumental knowers to grow professionally and to meet new challenges, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018) claimed that their professional learning experiences should offer an "intentional balance of structure and clarity, as well as safe, collaborative opportunities" (p. 68) in order to expose them to multiple perspectives.

The socializing way of knowing: 'Please tell me what you think I should do.' Adults with a socializing way of knowing have developed more complex (internal) capacities and tend to recognize other's feelings and actions (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). Therefore, their primarily focus is on others. They often consider the needs and opinions of others over their own. Socializing knowers are very sensitive to the opinions of their leaders, family, and friends. Relationship conflicts create high stress for them. Adults who make meaning in this way "tend to adopt the values, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives of people they care about and respect" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStafano, p. 28). When supporting the professional growth of socializing knowers, it would be beneficial to allow them the opportunities to voice their own opinions before assuming those of esteemed others.

The self-authoring way of knowing: 'Let me lead. Let me contribute.' Adults with a self-authoring way of knowing have developed the capacity to produce their own value and belief systems, and to create their own standards (Drago-Severson, 2016). They are able to prioritize and evaluate competing opinions and values for themselves. "Self-authoring knowers can assess other people's expectations, standards, and judgments, and then compare them to their own" (Drago-Severson, 2016, 41). Yet, they are so absorbed in their own perspectives they are not able to reflect on their own ideology. Self-authoring knowers can benefit by opportunities to lead, and challenges to let go off their own perspective and find some values in others' point of view (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 72).

Self-transforming knowers: 'How can we learn from and with each other to grow different parts of ourselves?' Some adults develop a way of knowing beyond the self-authoring, which Drago-Severson (2016) termed self-transforming way of knowing. These adults have developed, "the ability to understand their inner selves by seeing into and through

their multiple self-systems" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). Self-transforming knowers are less invested in their own ideologies and are continually opening up to new ideas and perspectives. They strive to understand what others think and feel about everyday experiences, along with complex world issues (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). The most challenging professional development for self-transforming knowers is accepting that it is appropriate to respond to others in their own way of knowing. For instance, it may be difficult for the self-transforming knower to tell people what to do, how to do it, and when to do it, when it goes against their perspective of how to treat others (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStafano, 2018). In other words, support others as they feel they want and need to be supported rather than how you believe they should be supported.

"Understanding that ways of knowing can grow more complex and sophisticated over time given the appropriate conditions" (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 67). This strengthens the significance of understanding and using adult learning theory as part of the conceptual framework in a qualitative research study that concerns training and supervision of paraprofessionals. According to Drago-Severson (2016), "Designing learning experiences that help adults to understand, identify, and grow their ways of knowing is one promising way to improve schools and school systems together" (p. 68).

Philosophical Framework

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva (1987) was central to the development of this research as a philosophical framework. The researcher chose to incorporate AI based on an experience and communication with several administrators in the school district about the initiative for a change in the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the district (personal communication, 2017). Appreciative inquiry allowed

the participants to share stories about their best experiences and therefore build a positive connection to the research study and any future initiatives resulting from the recommendation provided by the study. Appreciative inquiry design guided the design of the data instruments, and the atmosphere of the research interactions.

History of Appreciative Inquiry

According to Cooperrider and Sekerka (2001), AI is a five-step process (5D Cycle), definition, discovery, dream, design, and destiny. The developers, David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva (1987), thought always looking for the problem or the gaps to solve organizational problems obstructs any kind of collective improvement (p. 3). The developers suggested that positive new methods of inquiry would support the development of new concepts and paradigms for organizations (p. 13).

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a "strengths-based approach to goal visualization and realization operationalized through structured, positively framed inquiry" (Delgadillo, Palmer, & Goetz, 2016, p. 3). AI "deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality—their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties; their essential contributions and achievements" (Hammond & Royal, 2001, p. 12). AI suggests that through telling about their positive experiences, the group will find their organization's positive core; their values, visions, achievements, and best practices. According to Busche and Paranjpey (2014), AI was originally designed as a method of constructing generative outcomes in an organizational setting. An essential feature of AI is asking questions that encourage individuals or groups to focus on strengths, visions, competencies, and shared beliefs (Bushe, 2012). Positive questioning promotes generative responses, advances positive discussion, thoughts, and vision related to the focus of the individual or group (Reed, 2007).

The researcher suggests that the positive aspects of the AI methods increased the willingness of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals to offer their perspectives concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the district, and to participate in the future in a change initiative.

Appreciative inquiry developed over several decades. It began in a doctoral program in organizational behavior (OB) at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation (Bushe, 2012). In 1979, David Cooperrider was employed in a doctoral internship as part of a research project on physician leadership. While interviewing physician leaders from a partnership of over 300 doctors for his research, Cooperrider became more interested in the organizational processes and forms of governance. His advisor Suresh Srivastva noticed his passion and encouraged him to study the vitality of the organization. He changed his research to examine what gave life to an extraordinary system rather than what were the problems. Cooperrider called it an 'appreciative analysis' (Bushe, 2012, p. 9).

At that point, Cooperrider's interest shifted from issues of organization design and functioning to the nature of inquiry. He was influenced by Ken Gergen's (1978) philosophies on social research, and by Morgan's (1980) position on the power of metaphor to shape organizational theorizing (Bushe, 2012). Cooperrider initiated new metaphors that he thought would be more generative. According to Busche (2012), Cooperrider (1984) concluded that "organization as a mystery and miracle could provide a continuously generative metaphor" (p. 9). Cooperrider (1986) went on to do a survey-based, empirical study on the impact of inquiry on social systems, which solidified his views and became his doctoral dissertation.

Appreciative Inquiry

In the late 1990s the '4-D model' of Appreciative Inquiry surfaced and soon became what many in the field now refer to as AI (Bushe, 2012). As the method caught on, and started being used by many more practitioners, it focused on more practical concerns and issues in organizations. Provocative propositions morphed from the inspirational to more attainable. By 1997, the 4 D model was solidified (Bushe, 2012). The fifth stage in the 5Ds process distinguishes how the design is delivered, and how it becomes an essential part of groups, communities, and organizations. When appreciative inquiry was first developed, it was referred to as *delivery*, based on more traditional organizational development practice. The label *destiny* is more widely used now (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013). Figure 3 is a '5D model of Appreciative Inquiry' (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Figure 3: Appreciative Inquiry

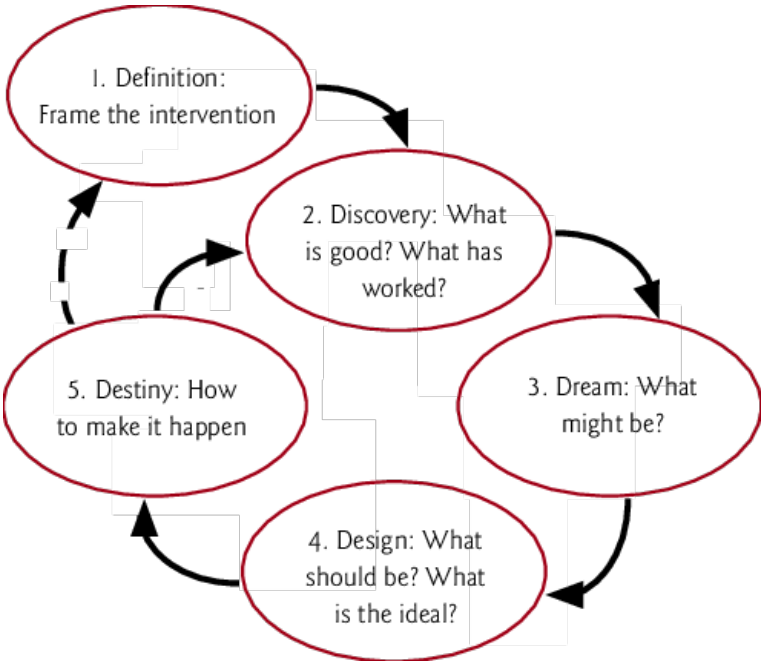

Figure 3. The appreciative inquiry '5-D' model. Cooperrider et al., 2003; Watkins and Mohr, 2001; Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003 Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/

The new millennium saw an upsurge in the application of AI. Books and articles on the topic were plentiful (Bushe, 2012). Cooperrider and his colleagues wrote several books between 2001 and 2003 on the theory and practice of AI covering important theoretical and practical statements (Cooperrider, Sorensen, Yeager and Whitney, 2001; Fry, Barrett, Seiling and Whitney, 2002; Ludema, Whitney, Mohr and Griffen, 2003; Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

Appreciative Inquiry Methods

Appreciative inquiry is a method that probes into, discovers, and develops the best of what is in organizations to create a better future. A primary assumption of AI is that "organizations move toward what they study" (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros, 2003, p. 29). Appreciative inquiry focuses on desired outcomes based on existing strengths and asks fundamental questions, such as, what will work for you? (Hammond, 2013). By focusing on strengths and asking questions that cause people to focus on good things that are happening, positive affect is fostered. AI fosters positive emotions by focusing on solutions, desired outcomes, and strengths that in turn lead to generative ideas and sustained change.

In relationship to AI, *generative* is the quest for new ideas, images, theories, and models that liberate a group's collective aspirations (Bushe, 2011, p. 30). Generativity is more complex than simple brainstorming to identify solution to a problem (Coghlan, Preskill, & Catsambas, 2003). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, generativity is "having the power or function of generating, originating, producing, or reproducing." Brainstorming is valuable for a group to create numerous ideas to address problems, but often lacks the intrinsic motivation to make them self-sustaining (Bushe & Paranjpey, 2014). A generative idea is one that inspires a group to continue the reflecting, discussion, and activities promoting the change. According to Cantore and Cooperrider (2013), the focus of the AI approach on positive feelings and optimism

has been compared to positive psychology with the strengths of each approach being complementary in terms of creating positive change. AI assumes that every group has a compilation of core strengths known in AI as the positive core which will furnish direction and energy for transformation. "AI is generative because it uses language: (a) to formulate thought-provoking questions, and (b) to choose words that bring an energizing and positive element to conversations" (Delgadillo et al., 2016).

Conclusion

In summary, the absence of statewide standards that addressed paraprofessionals' training and supervision needs, there was a need for research to support districts in the advancement of staff development plans (Sherwin, 2014). This chapter reviewed special education, legislation, paraprofessionals, and methods of training and supervision setting a backdrop for this study. Furthermore, the literature clearly indicated a need for school district leaders to discover ways to provide more sustainable training and supervision systems that reflects the perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals taking into consideration the lack of clear guidance from the federal and many state legislation.

Appreciative inquiry is one research method proven as a powerful way to discover a group's perceptions (Hammond, 2013). Additionally, adult learning methods provide an understanding of how adults differ in their ways of knowing. The review of this literature presented the researcher with a framework to guide the methods of this research. The methodology will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Since the 1990s, researchers have documented inadequacies in paraprofessional training and supervision. In addition, studies showed that the supervising special education teachers were not adequately prepared to train and supervise the paraprofessionals. According to Breton (2010), "often the least qualified persons are teaching the neediest students" (p. 35). However, research also indicated that paraprofessionals often assist in "increasing positive interactions between students, and providing a high quality of life for students with disabilities" (Bingham, Spooner, & Browder, 2007, p. 340). Therefore, an adequate paraprofessional training and supervision system is a vital function in improving the outcomes for students with disabilities (Marzano, 2001).

Federal mandates require that paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals. Additionally, research around adult learning theory, indicated that adults have various ways of knowing and, therefore it is beneficial to consider these ways when designing training and supervision programs. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a "strengths-based approach to goal visualization and realization operationalized through structured, positively framed inquiry" (Delgadillo, Palmer, & Goetz, 2016, p. 3). Consequently, this researcher discovered, using an appreciative inquiry philosophy, findings that led to recommendations for methods of training and supervision of paraprofessionals working in special education in a public school district in southern Maine. The researcher documented and analyzed the perspectives of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals employed in the case study district.

Specific Aims

The ultimate purpose of this study was to document special education teachers' and

paraprofessionals' perspectives on training and supervision. Recommendations from the findings will guide district leaders on the development of sustainable training and supervision methods in southern Maine. The recommendations may ensure that paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals thus complying with the federal mandates. Additionally, recommendations considered a variety of mediums for adult learners.

Research Questions

To illuminate the barriers and to discover constructive recommendations for a school district in southern Maine concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals by highly qualified professionals that complies with legislative mandates, and provides various mediums for adult learners, the researcher asked the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals working in special education concerning the current methods of training and supervision?
2. What methods do the special education teachers and paraprofessionals envision, as optimum, which will comply with legislative mandates, and will provide a variety of mediums for adult learners?

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

The researcher assumed, based on previously collected data, observations, and personal conversations, that the case study school district was experiencing similar challenges as other districts in Maine and the US in reference to paraprofessionals. In alignment with appreciative inquiry, the researcher also assumed that "the act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way" (Hammond, 2013, p. 14). Additionally, it was anticipated that the recommendations that were made will be implemented by the case study school district as a change initiative and considered by other districts in Maine in the future.

There are limitations in any study. In this case, the number of surveys filled out and returned was limited, especially considering the time of the year being near the end of school for the summer. Additionally, those completing the survey may not have read it carefully and/or understood all the questions. Therefore, "participants' level of articulation, perception, and cooperation varied and may have skewed some of the data" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 155). The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees, and the researcher's interview skills using AI methods being at an introductory level, may be interpreted as limitations. There were also limitations to generalization of the findings because this was a case study with a focus on one school district.

The participants did not include all stakeholders; therefore, the scope of the study was further limited. The scope of this study was bounded; it included six buildings, four grade phase levels, five types of special education programs, thirteen special education teachers and classrooms, and thirty-eight paraprofessionals (District, 2017).

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (Qualitative and Quantitative)

This was a qualitative single case study. The researcher created two surveys and used Survey Monkey as the platform. The questions were adapted from the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) endorsed by Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in collaboration with the National Paraeducator Resource Center for use in training paraprofessionals to serve individuals with exceptionalities and the Paraprofessional Survey of Expectations Tool (P-SET) developed by Angela Christenson (2013) from compilation of works from Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008; Iowa Department of Education, 2007; Pickett, Likins, & Wallace, 2003; Wallace, Bernhardt, Utermarck, 1999; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, & Stahl, 2001; Wallace, Stahl, & Johnson, 2003.

The surveys were sent to all special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the case study school district. The surveys were used to collect demographic information and responses to the research inquiry questions. The survey results were uploaded to NVivo 11 Pro software from which the researcher created narratives and descriptive statistics presented in tables.

Additionally, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, using an appreciative inquiry philosophy. The participants for the interviews were volunteers from the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals in the district. The volunteers represented all levels and types of special education programs available in the district. The researcher recorded the interviews using Zoom computer software and then send the recordings to a Rev.com professional transcribing service. The researcher then uploaded the transcriptions to NVivo 11 Pro to be analyzed and aggregated with the surveys' results. The researcher conducted a member check to validate the findings.

Procedures

The researcher received permission to conduct research in the case school study from the district administrator in March 2018 (See Appendix A). Special education teachers and paraprofessionals who provided special services to students K-12 were recruited from a suburban public school district in southern Maine. The researcher used online requests through the district's intranet services (See Appendix B). The researcher also visited department meetings to introduce the study and promote interest in participation. Additionally, the researcher exhibited a PowerPoint video illustrating the problem and purpose of the study at a district-wide professional development workshop.

Informed Consent

All survey participants received a study invitation and were asked to confirm their consent electronically within the survey. Interview participants also received a study invitation with a consent form through email prior to the interview (See Appendix D). The consent form were reviewed and signed at the beginning of each interview. All study invitations included the purpose of the study, research questions, procedures, confidentiality statement, lack of personal risk factors, the rights of participants, the note of compensation of $25.00 gift cards to interview participants, and contact information of the researcher and the lead advisor.

Provisions for Subject and Data Confidentiality

The principal researcher was the sole collector of the data to this study. The researcher collected data on individual schools in the district, but coded by grade levels and types of classrooms. The surveys were anonymous, and interview participants were coded by letters (i.e. Participant A, Participant B, etc.). These methods ensured anonymity of the settings and participants. The data was kept in Google Cloud with encrypted password only accessible by the principal researcher, with back-up on a password protected external drive was kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, along with field notes and reflections that were hand written. All identifiable data was omitted from the dissertation text and was removed from the researcher's files upon completion of the study.

Statement of Potential Research Risks to Subjects

All efforts were made by the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the participants, the individual classrooms, and the case study school district. The principal researcher was the only person who knows the identity of the interview participants and the surveys were anonymous. Although the information being collected did not appear to impose any risks or

hardships on the participants, there may be unintended outcomes. For example, while not encouraged, some negative information was disclosed. Additionally, some readers that are familiar with the study will deduce the name of the case study district. Therefore, the anonymous survey questions included information about past, current, and future practices, while interview questions focused on past positive experiences and future design questions. The researcher also aggregated the data grades K-5 and 6-12 in order to minimize the possibility of identifying particular classrooms.

Statement of Potential Research Benefits to Subjects

The findings from this study will benefit the subjects by increasing the possibilities of an initiative that will; improve student outcomes, create a unified training and supervising program across the district, provide diverse training options for paraprofessional with CEUs. This may also boost confidence and competence for paraprofessionals and supervising special educations teachers. It may improve practice in State of Maine, and add to the knowledge of using Appreciative Inquiry for transformational change in education in the district.

Conclusion

Special education teachers and paraprofessionals consistently reported having inadequate training and ability across various skill areas (Walker, 2015). The gap between research and practice of training and supervising paraprofessionals is "especially concerning when considering the place and prominence of paraprofessionals in the delivery of special education services" (Brock & Carter, 2015, p. 39). Therefore, using a qualitative single case study this research study aimed to discover; a) the past and current practices of training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the case study school district, and b) the perceptions of special education teachers and the paraprofessionals within the case study school district considering their envision

of an optimum sustainable training and supervising system. A special focus was on complying with federal mandates, and a variety of mediums for adult learners. Participants were volunteers selected by purposeful sample as described by Creswell (2013). Data collection and analysis for the surveys and interviews were conducted simultaneously with the aid of computer analysis software. All participants' rights and confidentiality were protected.

This chapter covered the methodology of the research study. It included the problem, purpose, design, setting, participants, analysis, participants' rights, assumptions, limitations, and scope of this qualitative case study concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. Chapter IV is a presentation of the study findings and Chapter IV includes the findings of the study, a research discussion, implications, limitations, recommendations, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Chapter IV presents the findings of this single case study. It includes a short introduction reaffirming the purpose of the study and restating the research questions. A description of the setting of the case study school district and the methods of data collection follows the introduction. The data is presented in five sections, including 1) participant demographics, 2) training and supervision, 3) standards for paraprofessionals, 4) adult learning theory, and 5) interview themes and findings. Each section begins with the survey data findings and is enriched by the open-ended responses in the survey. Section 5 includes the themes that are exclusive to the interviews' findings.

The purpose of this study was to document the most effective methods of training and supervision, as perceived by special education teachers and paraprofessionals in a suburban public school district in southern Maine. Emphasis was placed on training and supervision methods, services provided by highly qualified professionals, federal mandates, and the use of a variety of mediums for adult learners. Hence, one objective of this study was to document the voices of special education teachers and paraprofessionals. The researcher used an appreciative inquiry philosophy to prompt the participants to discover "the best of what is" and envision a change process of training and supervision in their school district (Deuninck, 2015; Preston, 2015). In order to meet the objectives of this study, the researcher framed the study around two main questions. These questions were:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals working in special education concerning the current methods of training and supervision?
2. What methods do the special education teachers and paraprofessionals envision, as

optimum, which will comply with legislative mandates, and will provide a variety of mediums for adult learners?

Setting

This bounded single case study was conducted in a suburban public school district in southern Maine. The district provides services to students from kindergarten through adult education. There are approximately 3,000 students enrolled in grades K-12. Over 95% of the student population is Caucasian with a 50/50 male to female ratio. Less than 15% of students receive free or reduced lunches. In addition, the district's schools are in the top 10% of Maine schools based on how its student body has performed on the state reading and math assessments. The student to teacher ratio is 13:1, which is significantly lower than the national average of 16:1 (StartClass, 2016). There are three primary neighborhood schools and three other buildings on a central campus.

Special Education Services

Fourteen percent of the students in the district receive special services. The services range from functional life skills self-contained programs to the monitoring of students who participate independently in mainstream classes. The district employs 28 special education teachers and 65 paraprofessionals that provide educational services for these students. Additionally, the district retains special education administrators, consulting teachers, special service providers such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, and school psychologists. There are also nurses, medical assistants, bus aides, behavior specialists, a teacher of the deaf, and administrative assistants working for the department of special services in the district. These statistics are typical of this size district in southern Maine.

Participants

Although all faculty and staff employed in the district's special education department are stakeholders in the training and supervision of paraprofessionals, this study was limited to the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Based on current federal and state laws paraprofessionals must be supervised by highly qualified professionals. The most direct training and supervision, according to the literature (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2012; Preston, 2015; Ramsey, 2013), is usually provided to paraprofessionals by special education teachers. Therefore, purposeful sampling, as described by Maxwell (2012), included all special education teachers and paraprofessionals from the special education services department in the district. All special education teachers and paraprofessionals received formal invitations describing the study and participants' rights.

Methodology

The researcher designed two surveys using Survey Monkey, and prepared two interview protocols (See Appendix E & F). Eighty-eight surveys were sent via email through the district's email service, 24 were sent to special education teachers and 64 were sent to paraprofessionals. Four special education teachers and one paraprofessional did not receive an invitation to participate due to email address mistakes or their transfer from the district. A full disclosure explaining the purpose of the research and participants' rights was included with the email (See Appendix D). After one week, a reminder to complete the survey was also emailed via the district's intranet service (See Appendix C). Thirteen of the 24 special education teachers participated in the survey. Seven of the 13 teachers completed 100% of the questions in the survey. Additionally, 38 of the 64 paraprofessionals also participated in the survey with 37 of

those 38 completing 100% of the questions in the survey, providing a combined 57% return rate on the surveys.

The study surveys included demographic questions and Likert scale inquiry questions adapted from other studies about training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The surveys also included questions about professional standards, personal learning styles, preferred supervision styles, and included an option for open-ended comments. In addition, the surveys included a section concerning adult learning theory as described by Drago-Severson (2015). Survey participants signed a consent as the first question within the surveys. Special education teachers spent an average of 24 minutes on the survey, while the paraprofessionals spent an average of 35 minutes to complete the task.

Twenty potential participants offered to be part of the interviews. A message was sent to these potential participants via district email inviting them to contact the researcher to schedule a convenient location and time for an interview, outside instructional hours. Thirteen of the 20 who volunteered responded within a few days. One participant had family and job commitments, which made it difficult to schedule an interview. The other seven volunteers did not respond to the request to make an appointment. The researcher determined that the 12 volunteers were a cross section representation of those in the district; therefore, 12 interviews was an adequate sample. The additional names were retained in the event the 12 interviews did not provide saturation on the topic.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews individually with each participant. The interviews were designed based on the theory of adult learning by Drago-Severson (2015), and the philosophy of appreciative inquiry, particularly the writing of Hammond (2013) and

Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, and Kaplin (2013). Questions were organized in related sections and aligned to the research questions.

Interviews were audio-recorded using Zoom, a web, and video conferencing software application. Five interviews were conducted remotely and the other seven were face to face. The recordings were then transcribed within a day by Rev.com, an online professional transcription agency. Participants received a $25.00 gift card of their choice.

A consent form was reviewed and signed before each interview. Each participant received a copy of their transcript to review for accuracy and to keep for their own records. The researcher sought to limit personal bias and maintained consistency by following a written interview protocol (Creswell, 2015). The interviews were conducted between May and July. The surveys were also available May through July. The researcher conducted a preliminary coding of all the transcripts according to Saldana's (2016) methods before uploading them into the computer software NVivo 11 Pro for further aggregation and coding.

Section Review

This section introduced Chapter IV. The purpose of the study and the study setting were reviewed. A brief description of the district's special services department along with an overview of the participants was also presented. Additionally, the methodology of the study was discussed in the introduction.

The next five sections of Chapter IV present the data from both the surveys and the interviews. Section 1 provides the self-reported demographics of the study's participants. Section 2 offers the views of the participants on various aspects of training and supervision of paraprofessionals. Section 3 reports the perspective of the participants on current training and future training needs of paraprofessionals in relationship to the Standards adopted by the Council

of Exceptional Children and the National Center for Paraeducators (2015). Section 4 is a review of the data relating to Drago-Severson's (2015) "ways of knowing." Finally, Section 5 includes data specific to the interviews. The narratives report the survey data by section averages and supporting comments from the written responses within the sections of the surveys. Tables representing the raw survey data are found in the Appendices. Each section concludes with a summary. A collective summary of the data is provided in the chapter conclusion.

Section 1: Demographics

Section 1 is a self-reported description of the special education teachers and the paraprofessional who participated in this case study. It includes the survey participants' age, education level, years of service in special education, their current teaching grade level, type of special service program in which they were employed, types of services they provided weekly, and the diagnosed disabilities of the students they worked with weekly. Section 1 also includes a brief description of the interviewees.

Teachers Responding to Survey

Thirteen teachers participated in the survey with seven completing 100% of the questions in the survey. Ten were female and three were male. The teachers' ages ranged from 35 to above 55 years of age with the largest number of participants ranging between 45 and 54 years old. Almost half of the teachers had earned a masters' degree plus addition credits. Three elementary teachers and ten teachers who teach grades six through 12 completed the survey. Nine of the 13 special education teachers had worked in special education for more than 16 years. Teachers for all levels of special services were represented by the survey with the most (seven) working in resource rooms. The number of paraprofessionals a teacher supervises often depends on the type of classroom they teach and the needs of students in any given year. Six of

the 13 special education teachers supervised one or two paraprofessionals, while one teacher often had more than six paraprofessionals to train and supervise.

Paraprofessionals Responding to Survey

Thirty-eight paraprofessionals returned the survey. Of those, 17 surveys were completed in their entirety. Of the 38 respondents, seven were male and 31 were female. The paraprofessionals ranged in age from 25 to above 55 years of age. Thirteen of the 38 were over 55 years old. Paraprofessionals (Education Technician III) are required by the State of Maine to have completed 90 college credits. It is notable that 26 of the 38 participants had earned more than bachelor's degree, with five of 38 having earned a masters' degree plus credits. Seventeen of the 38 paraprofessionals provided services to students in kindergarten through grade 5 and 2one of 38 worked with students in grades six through twelve. Additionally, 21 of the 38 participants worked in special services for more than 10 years.

Interview Participants

Three special education teachers and five paraprofessionals who provided special services to students in grades six through 12, participated in interviews. Additionally, one special education teacher and three paraprofessionals, who provided special services to students in kindergarten through grade five, participated in the interviews for the study. Of the interviewees, four worked in resource rooms, two in social life skills programs, two in academic life skills programs, and four in functional life skills classrooms.

Disability Categories

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA (2004), the U.S. Government recognizes 14 categories of disabilities as eligible for special services. In the teachers' survey, every category of disability was selected as taught by at least one teacher;

however, all of the teachers responding to the survey indicated that they worked with students with autism and with students with a diagnosis of emotional disturbance. Additionally, 12 out of 13 said they worked with students with specific learning disabilities.

Paraprofessionals reported similar experiences. Thirty-seven out of 38 worked with a student with autism and 30 out of 38 said they worked with a student with emotional disturbance.

Types of Special Education Services

The paraprofessionals in the district provided multiple types of services for students with disabilities. All teachers reported that the paraprofessionals whom they supervised worked in small group instruction and individual one on one instruction. Eleven out of 13 special education teachers said that the paraprofessionals collected data related to the students. Nine special education teachers reported that paraprofessionals prepared instructional material. One teacher also included paperwork and crisis intervention as types of services that he or she provided weekly.

Thirty-four paraprofessionals reported that they provided small group academic instruction weekly. Thirty-one of the 37 paraprofessionals also reported that they prepared instructional materials weekly. One paraprofessional added assessments, ensuring children's physical, emotional, and educational, and safety needs are being met at all times, home communication, and team communication to the list of services that were provided weekly.

Section Review

In summary, the case study school district employed 132 people in special services. Twenty-eight were special education teachers who worked in kindergarten through grade twelve. Sixty-five of the 132 employees were paraprofessionals, making up the largest subgroup in special services. Of the 24 special education teachers who received invitations, 13 participated

in the survey for this study. Four special education teachers were interviewed. Of the 64 paraprofessionals who received invitations, 38 participated in the survey for this study and eight were interviewed. A combination of 41 females and 10 males participated in the study. Although males were 16% of the total 132 special education employees, they represented 20% of study's participants. Thirty-nine of the participants had credits beyond a bachelor's degree. Twenty of the 51 participants provided services to students in kindergarten through grade 5, and 31 of the participants worked with students in grades six through twelve. Twenty-three of the 51 participants had more than 10 years of service in special education. The most prevalent special services in the case study school district were provided to students with autism and emotional disturbance. Participants reported that they most often provided small group or individual services to students.

This data was collected and averaged from the self-reported answers to the surveys and the information provided to the researcher in the interviews. The next section discusses the data on the perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals on the current practices, along with their desires for the future of training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the case study school district. See Tables 1-3 on demographics.

Section 2: Training and Supervision

The perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals concerning the current practices and the desired practices of training and supervision of paraprofessionals were the focus of the research questions posed in this study. In this section, the data is conveyed after each question. The data of the two surveys are combined to present a composite of the perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals. The statistics in the narrations are averages and observations of trends by the researcher. The percentages were

rounded to the nearest whole number. Additionally, it should be noted that the questions relate to conditions only within the case study school district. Tables representing the raw data are found in the appendices. In this chapter, the term teacher is used interchangeably with special education teacher, unless otherwise noted.

Training

The methods used to ensure a competent paraprofessional workforce vary from state to state and district to district. The responsibility of training also varies considerably. Sometimes, administrators such as the principal or assistant principal are responsible. A consulting teacher who acts as the special education department head may also be responsible. Alternatively, there are school districts that maintain a position, in which that person is responsible for all trainings and maintaining professional development records. The major models of professional development training for paraprofessionals include (a) training on specific tasks, (b) observation or assessment, (c) involvement in an improvement process, (d) study groups, (e) inquiry/action research, (f) individually guided activities, and (g) mentoring (Berecin-Rascon, 2008). Other training methods for paraprofessionals may include professional activities such as collaboration meetings, outside professional development courses at local universities, presentations on weekends, before, during, or after school; study groups; workshops; district-wide training, school-wide training; self-study; individualized skill sessions; and mentoring (Goe, 2014; Holbrook, 2011; McKenzie, 2011; Stockall, 2014). Henceforward are the opinions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals about the current and future training and supervision of paraprofessionals in their school district.

Who do teachers and paraprofessionals feel are responsible for training paraprofessionals? Eight of 13 teachers indicated that they considered special education

teachers responsible for the training of paraprofessionals, while three out of 13 teachers revealed they were not sure who is responsible for that training. Eighteen of 38 paraprofessionals also considered the special education teachers responsible for their training. Twelve of the 38 paraprofessionals specified that they did not know who is responsible for their training and six of the 38 responded that they trained themselves. Six paraprofessionals contributed comments to this question indicating that they had not received training from highly qualified supervising teachers. Most indicated they were self-taught.

Do teachers and paraprofessionals believe that paraprofessionals receive adequate training? Three of 13 teachers and seven of the paraprofessionals believed that the paraprofessionals are properly trained. In the opinion of 15 of 38 paraprofessionals, they were not adequately trained. Seven of the 38 paraprofessionals were unsure if their training was adequate and nine of them responded with text answers stating that they did not receive training in many situations. One respondent said that in the early 2000's there were trainings for paraprofessionals in some aspects of special education such as applied behavior analysis (ABA) and behavior modification.

Do teachers think they received training to supervise paraprofessionals? Eight out of 13 teachers reported that they received no formal training for supervising paraprofessionals. Four teachers said they learned to supervise others through professional development, and one teacher stated that he or she was taught in college teacher preparatory courses. Eight teachers added comments to this question reporting that they did not receive training on supervising paraprofessionals or much guidance in their practice. They professed to be self-taught through their job experiences.

What types of professional development training would teachers and

paraprofessionals be interested in receiving? How often? The teachers responding to the survey indicated that a wide variety of trainings would interest them. Nine of 11 teachers were inclined toward in-service training from within the district, and seven of 11 teachers felt that they would benefit from professional workshops. Four of 12 teachers mentioned that it would be beneficial to receive training on supervising paraprofessionals about twice a year, while seven teachers thought it should be more frequent.

The paraprofessionals had an overwhelming response to the types of trainings in which they would like to participate. Twenty-eight of 37 people revealed that they would enjoy in-service by the district and 27 of the 37 who answered said they would benefit from professional workshops. Twenty-two of the 28 paraprofessionals that responded said it would be optimum to receive training once a month or more. Eight respondents thought training should be continuously provided. Four paraprofessionals also commented that they thought training should be continuous and/or as needed. One respondent commented that the trainings should not to be mandatory and should have reasonable minimum requirements. One paraprofessional was concerned about the time of day the trainings might be offered.

How do teachers and paraprofessionals find out about professional development trainings? How often? While 10 of the 13 teachers found out about professional development either from the district website or from their supervisors, they heard of opportunities less than once a month. Two of 13 teachers indicated that they received no information about professional development trainings. The majority of teacher participants thought they would like to hear of opportunities through the district website and their supervisors.

Sixteen of 38 paraprofessionals expressed that they never heard of professional development training opportunities. Eleven of 38 paraprofessionals said that they heard of

professional development trainings through websites and email, while 10 reported receiving information of professional development opportunities through the district website. The majority of paraprofessionals thought they wanted to hear of opportunities through websites/email, the district website, and their supervisors. Six paraprofessionals added comments to these questions. Most noted that they only heard of mandatory training and not specific or individual opportunities. The paraprofessionals indicated that they would like to receive the same emails and flyers that the teachers received from the district's administration. See Tables 4-6 on training.

Supervision

Federal and state mandates require that paraprofessionals be supervised by highly qualified professionals. Highly qualified is not well defined within these mandates, yet there are some guidelines on this supervision. According to No Child Left Behind, a paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if, "(1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) if the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher" (White & Kempton, 2012, p. 9). Also within the literature, most paraprofessionals reported working under the direct supervision of a teacher, but some instructional paraprofessionals indicated that they worked with students on their own without close supervision from a teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 121). The following questions were asked in the surveys to discover the opinions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals on the matter of supervision for paraprofessionals in their district.

Who do special education teachers and paraprofessionals consider responsible for

the supervision of paraprofessionals? Ten of 13 teachers indicated that they believed special education teachers are responsible for the supervision of paraprofessionals that provide services to the students in their programs. Two of the 13 teachers reported that they were not sure who is responsible for the supervision of the paraprofessionals.

Thirty-three of 38 paraprofessionals felt that the special education teacher, who is the case manager of the special education program in which they were employed, was their supervisor. Three of the 38 paraprofessionals reported that they did not know who technically their supervisor was. One teacher and one paraprofessional identified the principal as the supervisor of paraprofessionals academically, but both felt that the principal did not have opportunity to observe the paraprofessionals' work regularly.

Do special education teachers and paraprofessionals believe that paraprofessionals receive adequate supervision? Nine of 13 teachers thought paraprofessionals were properly supervised. One of 13 was unsure. Twenty-six of 38 paraprofessionals said they were adequately supervised, while five paraprofessionals were unsure. One teacher believed that the paraprofessionals in his or her program were adequately supervised, but that it was informal and always spur-of-the moment. Two paraprofessionals commented; one said the teacher was too busy to supervise paraprofessionals adequately, and the other said it was unclear whom the supervisor was.

How often do special education teachers and paraprofessionals meet? Eleven of 13 teachers reported that they met at least once a week with paraprofessionals that are assigned to their programs. Eleven of the 38 paraprofessionals indicated that they met less than once a month with their supervising teacher. Eighteen of 38 paraprofessionals reported meeting with the supervising teacher more than once a month, while seven of the 38 said that they met daily

with a supervising teacher. Five paraprofessionals said that they never met with the supervising teacher. One teacher stated that he or she did not have enough time to meet with the paraprofessionals while another teacher said he or she met with a paraprofessional whenever a need developed. Four paraprofessionals commented; one said they met with a supervising teacher once annually and the other three reported that they met daily, but with no specific times and without any depth to the conversation.

How often do special education teachers and paraprofessionals think they should meet? Seven of 13 teachers thought that they should meet every day with the paraprofessionals in their program. Twenty-five of 38 paraprofessionals thought that it would be optimum to meet once a week or more with a supervising teacher. Seven of the 38 paraprofessionals agreed with the teachers and thought they should meet daily. Several people indicated that they meet, but it is informal and spontaneous. See Table 7 on supervision.

Section Review

Section 2 presented data concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. Participants were asked questions related to responsibilities, adequacy, information about professional development opportunities, and team collaboration. The majority of the participants completed 100% of this section of the survey.

Most of the 51 special education teachers and paraprofessionals that participated in this study indicated that they felt the special education teacher is responsible for training and supervision of paraprofessionals. Some, who stated that the special education teachers were not responsible for training and supervision practices, reported that they believed that the special education teacher should be the responsible person. Findings from this case study also indicated that most respondents perceived that they would be more prepared for their duties in special

services, with additional professional development opportunities through various training options. They also desired to receive notification of these options through more avenues and more often. Respondents also perceived that the hierarchy of supervision of paraprofessionals should be better defined by the school district. Participants also desired more opportunities to collaborate as an educational team both for training, and for the purpose of supervision.

The next section of Chapter IV addresses the self-reported knowledge and skill competencies of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals as described in the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) (2015). The researcher measured these competencies by asking participants to what level they were trained on each knowledge and skills category. The researcher documented whether the participants perceived these knowledge and skills to be relevant to the paraprofessionals' positions in special education, and if the topics were discussed by special education teams in the district. Data suggest that the participants felt a need or desire for more training on these subjects in special education.

Section 3: Standards for Paraprofessionals

Federal law supports the use of paraprofessionals to assist in the provision of special education services when they are, "appropriately trained and supervised" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004, Sec. 300.156). One objective of the research questions in this study was to record the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals as to current practices of training and supervision of paraprofessionals in relationship to the federal laws, specifically IDEA. The researcher used the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) as a benchmark to measure the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals on the current knowledge and skills of the paraprofessionals, and the need for further professional development in each standard.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), in collaboration with the National Paraeducator Resource Center (NPRC), endorsed guidelines for use in training paraprofessionals to serve individuals with exceptionalities, referred to as a "specialty set" (CEC, 2015). In 2015, CEC aligned the paraprofessional specialty set with the seven standard areas for special education professionals, creating the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). CEC envisions school districts using these guidelines to confirm that all paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities have "mastered the knowledge and skills outlined in the PCCG through constant, measurable, and continuing education with highly qualified teachers and training that are specifically targeted for paraprofessionals" (CEC, 2015, para. four).

This section presents a brief description of each standard followed by a narrative that presents the data. The data are averages of the responses from both special education teachers and paraprofessionals for the knowledge and the skills related to that standard. The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. In this section, the term *teacher* is interchangeable with special education teacher, except where noted. The term *job(s)* refers to employment within the case study school district. The raw data is located in tables found in the appendices.

Standard 1 - Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

"Special education paraprofessionals should understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities"(CEC, 2018). There were 13 knowledge categories and three skills in this standard for paraprofessionals. The data presented in the narratives are an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are 13 knowledge categories in Standard 1, the researcher

computed the average of the 13 selections under each column (i.e. received training, need/want more training), and these averages are the data presented in the narration.

Knowledge. An average of four of 11 teachers indicated that the knowledge in the 13 categories listed in Standard 1 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences* were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Three of 11 teachers believed that much of this knowledge was not needed by the paraprofessionals. Two of the 11 teachers reported that they were trained in many categories, and could train the paraprofessionals. Two of the 11 teachers desired more training for themselves in many of these knowledge categories. Two of the 11 teachers said that they discussed how exceptionalities might interact with development and learning of students with the paraprofessionals. One teacher stated that all of these things are needed by paraprofessionals and if the paraprofessionals in his or her program had questions then they discussed it.

An average of 20 of 31 of the paraprofessionals indicated that they were not trained on the knowledge in the 13 categories listed in Standard 1 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences.* Ten of the 31 respondents indicated that they felt most of this knowledge was needed for their jobs. Ten of the 31 paraprofessionals also desired more training in several categories. On average, one of the 31 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others in a few categories. An average of three paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how exceptionalities might interact with development and learning of students with their supervising teachers. Six paraprofessionals typed in comments. All of them related a need for more training in this knowledge category.

Skills. An average of two of 11 teachers indicated that the skills in the all three categories listed in Standard 1 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences* were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Four of the 11 teachers indicated that these skills were not needed by the paraprofessionals. On average, two teachers considered themselves trained in these skills and could train the paraprofessionals that they supervised. Most of the responding teachers did not desire more training in the skills to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities. Additionally, few teachers discussed these skills with the paraprofessionals. One teacher reported recommending several websites on the topic to the paraprofessionals on this knowledge category.

Sixteen of the 31 paraprofessionals indicated that they were moderately to highly skilled in the three skill categories listed in Standard 1 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences.* Whereas, on average, six of the 31 paraprofessionals reported that they had no skills or were new to most of these skills. Eight of 31 respondents believed that they needed these skills for their jobs, while an average of two paraprofessionals per skill believed these skills were not necessary for their job. Two of 31 paraprofessionals reported discussing the skills to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities with their supervising teacher. Five paraprofessionals wrote comments, one stated that he or she read information on Google; one felt these topics would be very interesting for workshops, and two mentioned that they had not received training in this area. See Tables 8-10 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 2: Learning Environments

"Special education paraprofessionals should create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination" (CEC, 2018). There are six knowledge categories and 19 skills associated with this standard. The data presented in the narrations were an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are six knowledge categories in Standard 2, the researcher computed the average of the six selections under each column (i.e. received training, need/want more training), and these averages are the data presented in the narration.

Knowledge. An average of two of eight teachers indicated that the knowledge in the six categories listed in Standard 2 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learning Environments* were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Three of eight teachers believed that much of this knowledge was not needed by the paraprofessionals. Two of the eight teachers reported that they were trained in many categories, and could train the paraprofessionals. Most of the teachers did not desire more training for themselves in many of these knowledge categories. On average, one of the eight teachers reported that they discussed how to create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments for students with exceptionalities with the paraprofessionals whom they supervised.

An average of eight of 31 of the paraprofessionals who responded to this section indicated that they were trained on the knowledge in the six categories listed in Standard 2 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learning Environments*. Eight of 31 also reported that they were not trained in this standard. Twenty-nine of the 31 respondents indicated that they felt most of this knowledge was needed for their jobs, while an average of one paraprofessional per category reported that this knowledge was not needed for their jobs. Five of

the 31 paraprofessionals desired more training in several categories. On average, two of the 31 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others in a few categories. An average of two paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how to create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments for students with exceptionalities with their supervising teacher.

Skills. An average of two of eight teachers indicated that the most of skills in the 19 categories listed in Standard 2 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Learning Environments* were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Three of the eight teachers indicated on average these skills were not needed by the paraprofessionals. On average, eight teachers considered themselves trained in each skill and could train the paraprofessionals whom they supervise. Three of the eight responding teachers desired more training in many of the skills to assist students in becoming active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination. Additionally, on average two of eight teachers discussed most of these skills with the paraprofessionals. One teacher expressed a need for training in these skills, but that the daily schedule did not provide time.

Fifteen of the 20 paraprofessionals responding to this section indicated they were moderately to highly skilled in the 19 skill categories listed in Standard 2 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Learning Environments*. An average of three of the 20 paraprofessionals reported they had no skills or were new to most of these skills. Five of the 20 respondents believed they needed these skills for their jobs. Three of 20 paraprofessionals reported discussing some of the skills to assist students in becoming active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination with their

supervising teacher. See Tables 11-14 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge

"Special education paraprofessionals should use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities" (CEC, 2018). There are two knowledge categories and five skills categories listed in this standard. The data presented in the narratives were an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are two knowledge categories in Standard 2, the researcher computed the average of the two selections under each column (i.e. received training, need/want more training), and these averages are the data presented in the narration.

Knowledge. An average of two of seven teachers indicated that the knowledge in the two categories listed in Standard three of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) Curricular Content Knowledge, were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Five of seven teachers believed much of this knowledge was not needed by the paraprofessionals. Of the seven teachers, none reported being trained in either of the two categories and could train the paraprofessionals. Additionally, all seven teachers reported they did not desire more training for themselves in either of the knowledge categories. On average, two of the seven teachers expressed that they discussed how to use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities with the paraprofessionals whom they supervised. One teacher said the strengths in the paraprofessionals' were in establishing a good rapport with the students.

An average of three of 18 of the paraprofessionals indicated that they were trained on the knowledge in the two categories listed in Standard 3 of the Paraeducator Common Core

Guidelines (PCCG) *Curricular Content Knowledge.* Seven of 18 on average reported they were not trained in this standard. Six of the 18 respondents indicated they felt both of these knowledge categories were needed for their jobs, while no one reported that this knowledge was not needed for their jobs. Five of the 18 paraprofessionals desired more training in these categories. None of the 18 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others. An average of five paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how to use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities with their supervising teacher. One paraprofessional commented that he or she had no influence on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), therefore indicating a lack of knowledge and skills on this subject.

Skills. In the five skill categories listed in Standard 3 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), Curricular Content Knowledge, an average of three of seven teachers per category believed the skill was needed by paraprofessionals in their program. An average of two of seven teachers per skill indicated the skill was not needed by the paraprofessionals. None of the seven teachers considered themselves trained enough in any skill to train paraprofessionals. Of the seven teachers, an average of one teacher per skill expressed a desire for more training in many of the skills to assist students in becoming active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination. Additionally, on average two of seven teachers discussed most of these skills with the paraprofessionals.

Eight of the 17 paraprofessionals indicated they were moderately to highly skilled in the five skill categories listed in Standard 3 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Curricular Content Knowledge*. An average of three of the 17 paraprofessionals reported they had no skills or were new to most of these skills. An average of five of the 17 respondents

believed they need these competencies for their jobs. Four of 17 paraprofessionals reported discussing some of the skills to assist students in becoming active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination with their supervising teacher. See Tables 15 and 16 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 4: Assessment

"Special education paraprofessionals should use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions" (CEC, 2018). There is one knowledge category and two skills categories assigned to Standard four of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), *Assessment*. The data presented in the narratives were an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are two skills categories in Standard 4, the researcher computed the average of the two selections under each column (i.e. no skill, not part of paras' job), and these averages are the data presented in the narrative. This standard was submitted in the IRB application, but unintentionally omitted from both Survey Monkey surveys. The researcher, therefore asked participants that were available from the same sample population, to complete this section of the survey using paper and pencil option. The surveys were anonymous.

Knowledge. An average of eight of eight teachers indicated that the knowledge in the one category listed in Standard 4 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) Assessment was needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Of the eight teachers, four reported being trained in this category and could train the paraprofessionals. Additionally, two of eight teachers on average reported that they desired more training for themselves in this knowledge category. Four of the eight teachers expressed that they discussed how to use

multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions with the paraprofessionals.

Two of 16 of the paraprofessionals indicated that they were trained on the knowledge in the one category listed in Standard 4 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Assessment*. Six of 16 reported they were not trained in this standard. Six of the 16 respondents indicated they felt this knowledge category was needed for their jobs. Four of the 16 paraprofessionals desired more training in these categories. None of the 16 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others. Two of the 16 paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how to use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions with their supervising teacher.

Skills. Of the two skills categories listed in Standard 4 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG), Assessment, eight of eight teachers believed that both the skills were needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Four of the eight teachers considered themselves trained in any skill and could train the paraprofessionals that they supervise. Of the eight teachers, two teachers per skill expressed a desire for more training in each of the skills to use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions. Additionally, on average, four of eight teachers reported discussing these skills with the paraprofessionals who worked in their programs.

All of the 16 paraprofessionals responding to this section indicated that they were moderately to highly skilled in the two skills categories listed in Standard 4 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Assessment*. Ten of the 16 respondents believed that they needed both of these competencies for their jobs. Eight of 16 paraprofessionals reported discussing the skills to use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making

educational decisions with their supervising teacher. See Table 17 & 18 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies

"Special education paraprofessionals should select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities" (CEC. 2018). There is one knowledge category and 20 skills categories related to Standard 5 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Instructional Planning and Strategies*. The data presented in the narratives are an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are 20 skills categories in Standard 5, the researcher computed the average of the 20 selections under each column (i.e. no skill, not part of paras job), and these averages were the data presented in the narration. The knowledge category in this standard was submitted in the IRB application, but unintentionally omitted from both surveys, the researcher, therefore asked participants that were available from the same sample population, to complete this section of the survey using paper and pencil option. The surveys were anonymous.

Knowledge. An average of eight of eight teachers indicated that the knowledge in the one categories listed in Standard 5 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Instructional Planning and Strategies* was needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Of the eight teachers, four reported being trained in this category and could train the paraprofessionals. Additionally, two of eight teachers, on average, reported that they desired more training for themselves in this knowledge category. Four of the eight teachers expressed that they discussed how to select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities with the paraprofessionals whom they supervised.

Three of 16 of the paraprofessionals who responded to this section indicated that they were trained on the knowledge in the one category listed in Standard 5 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Instructional Planning and Strategies*. Four of 16 reported that they were not trained in this standard. Eight of the 16 respondents indicated that they felt this knowledge category was needed for their jobs. Two of the 16 paraprofessionals desired more training in these categories. None of the 16 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others. Six of the 16 paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how to select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities with their supervising teacher.

Skills. In the 20 skill categories listed in Standard 5 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) Instructional Planning and Strategies, an average of two of seven teachers per category believed the skill was needed by paraprofessionals in their program. An average of two of seven teachers per skill indicated the skill was not needed by the paraprofessionals. On average, one of the seven teachers per skill considered himself or herself trained in that skill and could train the paraprofessionals. Of the seven teachers, an average of one teacher per skill expressed a desire for more training in many of the skills in selecting, adapting, and using a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities. Additionally, on average two teachers discussed most of these skills with the paraprofessionals. One teacher commented that training on these skills often happened incidentally.

Thirteen of the 17 paraprofessionals responding to this section indicated they were moderately to highly skilled in some of the 20 skill categories listed in Standard 5 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Instructional Planning and Strategies*. An

average of two of the 17 paraprofessionals reported they had no skills or were new to most of these skills. An average of six of the 17 respondents believed they needed these competencies for their jobs. Five of 17 paraprofessionals reported discussing some of the skills in selecting, adapting, and using a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities with their supervising teacher. See Tables 19-22 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

"Special education paraprofessionals should use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession" (CEC, 2018). There are four knowledge categories and 10 skills categories associated with this standard. The data presented in the narratives are an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are 10 skills categories in Standard 6, the researcher computed the average of the 10 selections under each column (i.e. no skill, not part of paras job), and these averages are the data presented in the narratives.

Knowledge. An average of four of seven teachers indicated that the knowledge in the four categories listed in Standard 6 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice* was needed by paraprofessionals in their program. Two of seven teachers believed that much of this knowledge was not needed by the paraprofessionals. None of the seven teachers reported being trained enough in any of the four categories to train the paraprofessionals. Additionally, two of seven teachers on average reported they desired more training for themselves in several of the knowledge categories. One of the seven teachers in most knowledge categories, expressed that they discussed how to use

foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession with the paraprofessionals whom they supervised.

An average of six of 18 of the paraprofessionals who responded to this section indicated they were trained on the knowledge in the four categories listed in Standard 6 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.* Six of 18 on average reported they were not trained in this standard. Seven of the 18 respondents indicated they felt most of these knowledge categories were needed for their jobs, while no one reported that this knowledge was not needed for their jobs. Five of the 18 paraprofessionals desired more training in these categories. None of the 18 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others. An average of three paraprofessionals reported that they discussed how to use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession with their supervising teacher. One paraprofessional indicated that he or she was partially trained through the district's mandatory Protraxx and Safety Care training for many teachers and paraprofessionals whom worked in the special education department.

Skills. In the one skill category listed in Standard 6 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*, an average of one of seven teachers per category believed that the skill was needed by paraprofessionals. An average of six of seven teachers per skill indicated the skill was not needed by the paraprofessionals. None of the seven teachers considered himself or herself trained enough in any of the skills to train the paraprofessionals. Of the seven teachers, an average of one teacher per skill expressed a desire

for more training in many of the skills for using foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession. Additionally, on average, two teachers reported discussing most of these skills with the paraprofessionals. One teacher wrote a comment describing a situation in which the paraprofessional obviously needed more training, because he or she left students unattended.

Thirteen of the 37 paraprofessionals responding to this section indicated they are moderately to highly skilled in some of the one skill category listed in Standard 6 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*. On average, one of the 37 paraprofessionals reported not having these skills or being new to them. An average of six of the 37 respondents believed they need these competencies for their jobs. Three of 37 paraprofessionals reported discussing some of the skills for using foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession with their supervising teacher. It was mentioned by one paraprofessional that some of these skills are learned through the district's mandated Protraxx and Safety Care. See Tables 23-25 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Standard 7: Collaboration

"Special education paraprofessionals should collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences" (CEC, 2018). There are two knowledge categories and seven skills categories related to this standard for paraprofessionals. The data presented in the

narratives are an average of the knowledge and the skills categories for every standard. For example, there are seven skills categories in Standard 7, the researcher computed the average of the seven selections under each column (i.e. no skill, not part of para's job), and these averages are presented in the narration.

Knowledge. An average of four of seven teachers indicated that the knowledge in the two categories listed in Standard 7 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Collaboration* was needed by paraprofessionals. Four of seven teachers believed much of this knowledge was not needed by the paraprofessionals, while an average of one teacher per knowledge category thought it was part of the paraprofessionals' job. Of the seven teachers, none reported being trained enough in either of the two categories to train the paraprofessionals. Additionally, none of the teachers reported they desired more training for themselves in these knowledge categories. Three of the seven teachers in both knowledge categories, expressed that they discussed how to collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences with the paraprofessionals whom they supervised. One teacher felt that clarification on the roles and relationships of paraprofessionals would be beneficial to all.

An average of six of 37 of the paraprofessionals indicated they were trained on the knowledge in the two categories listed in Standard 7 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Collaboration.* Nine of 37 paraprofessionals on average reported they were not trained in this standard. Six of the 37 respondents indicated they felt both of these knowledge categories were needed for their jobs, while no one reported this knowledge was not needed for paraprofessionals' jobs. Five of the 37 paraprofessionals desired more training in

these categories. None of the 37 paraprofessionals believed he or she had mastered the knowledge enough to teach others. An average of four of 37 respondents reported that they discuss how to collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences with their supervising teacher.

Skills. In the seven skill categories listed in Standard 7 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Collaboration*, an average of one of seven teachers per category believe the skill was needed by paraprofessionals. An average of four of seven teachers per skill indicated the skill was not needed by the paraprofessionals. None of the seven teachers considered himself or herself trained enough in the skills to train the paraprofessionals. None of the teachers expressed a desire for more training in many of the skills to collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences. Additionally, on average, two teachers discussed most of these skills with the paraprofessionals.

Twelve of the 17 paraprofessionals indicated that they were moderately to highly skilled in some of the seven skills categories listed in Standard 7 of the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG) *Collaboration*. On average, one of the 17 paraprofessionals report not having these skills or being new to them. An average of six of the 17 respondents believed they needed these competencies for their jobs. Four of 17 paraprofessionals reported discussing many of the skills to collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to

address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences with their supervising teacher. See Tables 26 and 27 for raw data that includes all knowledge and skills for this standard.

Section Review

Section 3 of Chapter IV presented most of the data from the two surveys related to the standards for paraprofessionals' guidelines in the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). CEC envisions school districts using these guidelines to confirm that all paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities have "mastered the knowledge and skills outlined in the PCCG through constant, measurable, and continuing education with highly qualified teachers and training that are specifically targeted for paraprofessionals" (CEC, 2015, para. four).

An overall average of eight teachers answered the standards' knowledge categories in the survey. Fourteen percent of the teachers indicated they needed or wanted more training in the knowledge identified in all the standards. Forty-five percent of the teachers reported that they believed this knowledge was critical to the paraprofessionals' jobs, while 27% did not feel the paraprofessionals needed this knowledge to work with the students in special services. Twenty-two percent of the teachers stated they discussed the topics in the knowledge categories of the standards with the paraprofessionals who they supervised. Twenty percent of the teachers conveyed they were trained in the knowledge of the standards, and could train others.

An overall average of 20 paraprofessionals answered the standards' knowledge categories in the survey. Twenty-one percent of the paraprofessionals indicated they had received training on the topics related to the knowledge categories overall the standards. Forty-three percent of the paraprofessionals reported they did not receive training in the knowledge categories listed in

the standards. Twenty-three percent of the paraprofessionals believed they needed or wanted more training in the knowledge categories. Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported that this knowledge was relevant to their positions in the district, while four percent reported this knowledge was not needed to do their job. Fifteen percent of the paraprofessionals stated that they discussed the topics in the knowledge categories of the standards with their supervising teacher. Six percent of the paraprofessionals conveyed that they were trained enough in the knowledge of the standards to train others.

An overall average of eight teachers answered the standards' skills categories in the survey. Twelve percent of the teachers indicated they needed or wanted more training in the skills identified in all the standards. Forty-six percent reported they believed these skills were essential to the paraprofessionals' jobs, while twenty-nine percent did not feel the paraprofessionals needed these skills to work with the students in special services. Thirty-two percent of the teachers stated they discussed the topics in the skill categories of the standards with the paraprofessionals. Twenty percent of the teacher conveyed they were trained enough in the knowledge of the standards, to train others.

An overall average of 18 paraprofessionals answered the standards' skill categories in the survey. Thirty-six percent reported they believed these skills were essential to the paraprofessionals' jobs, while three percent did not feel the paraprofessionals needed these skills to work with the students in special services. Seventy percent of the paraprofessionals indicated they were moderately to highly skilled in most of the skills categories related to the standards for paraprofessionals' guidelines in the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). Twelve percent of respondents reported they did not have these skills or the skills were new to them. Twenty-four percent of the paraprofessionals stated they discussed the topics in the skill

categories of the standards with their supervising teachers. Twenty percent of the teachers conveyed they were trained enough in the knowledge of the standards to train others.

The findings in Section 3 indicate that many special education teachers and paraprofessionals felt they were lacking training in some of the standards for paraprofessionals' guidelines in the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). They reported a desire for more training in several areas. Generally, twenty percent of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals related that overall, they discussed the standards with each other.

The next section in Chapter IV presents the findings related to adult learning as described by Drago-Severson (2015) designed after Kegan's (1982, 1994, 2000) constructive-developmental theory (Drago-Severson, 2016). According to Kegan and Lahey (2009), meaning making is a lifelong activity that begins in earliest infancy and continues to evolve through a series of five stages encompassing childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Kegan's (1982) research, according to Drago-Severson (2016), demonstrates that adults with the "appropriate developmental supports and challenges" (p. 66) can advance in the complexity of their ways of making meaning out of their life experiences. According to Drago-Severson (2016), "Designing learning experiences that help adults to understand, identify, and grow their 'ways of knowing' is one promising way to improve schools and school systems together" (p. 68).

Section 4: Adult learning

Kegan's Theory of Adult Learning (1982) was foundational to Drago-Severson's (2004) research studies. Drago-Severson (2004) asserted that each individual's ways of knowing influences and shapes his or her understanding of learning. It also informs the types of supports and challenges that are needed for the individual to grow (Drago-Severson, 2011). According to

Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), the common ways of knowing in adulthood are, "the instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming" (p. 25). These different ways of knowing might be considered when developing adult learning systems concerning training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The researcher used Drago-Severson's descriptions of each way of knowing to measure the current meaning making levels of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals in the case study school district. There were no vignettes available in the literature to measure self-transforming ways of knowing. Therefore, it was not described in this section. However, the researcher chose to consider team development as an additional measure that aligns with Drago-Severson's (2016) "four pillars of practices," namely; teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry (CI), and mentoring" (p. 41).

Within the surveys that were completed by the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals, there were five questions (categories) related to Drago-Severson's "ways of knowing." They included the participants' perspectives on working together, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, and communication skills. In each question, the respondent indicated his or her degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement that represented a level of "ways of knowing." It was possible for participants to identify with different levels in several categories. Most of the teachers and paraprofessionals appeared to be in between the socializing and self-authoring categories of adult learning, as indicated by the average of the responses for each category. The researcher considered the number of respondents that selected agree or strongly agree for each question to be in that given ways of knowing category.

Perspective on Working Together

Three teachers of seven and nine of the 17 paraprofessionals agreed or strongly agreed that the best way to work together was if everyone just did their job and did it the right way. According to Drago-Severson, this mindset illustrated an instrumental "ways of knowing." Three of seven teachers and 13 of the 17 paraprofessionals portrayed socializing ways of knowing by agreeing and strongly agreeing with the idea that forming a group identity with a common, shared goal that everyone was in agreement with was the best way to work together. Four of the seven teachers and nine of the 17 paraprofessionals agreed or strongly agreed that a complex network of people with differing values, opinions, experiences, and perspectives joining together for a common purpose was the best way to work together. This concept signified a self-authorizing "ways of knowing," according to Drago-Severson (2015). None of the seven teachers and one of the 17 paraprofessionals reported discussing this topic with other team members. Five of the seven teachers and 17 of the 17 paraprofessionals indicated their special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on working together.

Decision-making Skills

Two of the seven teachers and one of the 17 paraprofessionals suggested that decisions had right or wrong aspects with no in-between or gray area. They felt there was a right way and wrong way to do things. According to Drago-Severson (2015), this response implied that they have an instrumental "ways of knowing." Four of the seven teachers and 11 of the 17 paraprofessionals revealed signs of socializing ways of knowing by agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was essential that decisions are a group consensus or agreement. Additionally, five of the seven teachers and 14 of the 17 paraprofessionals indicated that they thought decisions had many possible paths; making decisions was an exploration of many options. There was not necessarily

one best decision, but many possible decisions, each one with pros and cons. This reveals a self-authorizing ways of knowing about decision-making skills. No respondents reported discussing this topic with their team. Three of the seven teachers and nine of the 17 paraprofessionals stated their special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on decision-making skills.

Interpersonal Skills

None of the seven teachers and two of the 17 paraprofessionals suggested that cooperation was arguing or persuading others to agree to the right thing to do and the right way to do it. The right way was dictated by the rules. According to Drago-Severson's (2015) theory, these ways of knowing would be identified as instrumental. Five out of seven teachers and nine out of 17 paraprofessionals expressed that their perception of cooperation was trying to build agreement. It was essential to minimize conflict, disagreement, and differences. This concept illustrated a socializing way of knowing, according to Drago-Severson (2015). Six of the seven teachers and 15 of the 17 paraprofessionals exhibited self-authorizing "ways of knowing," according to Drago-Severson (2015) by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the opinion that cooperation was ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, regardless of their opinions; celebrated differences and made room for all perspectives. The goal was to work toward fair and reasonable compromise. None of the seven teachers and two of the 17 paraprofessionals reported that they discussed this topic with their team. Four of the seven teachers and eight of the 17 paraprofessionals proposed their special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on interpersonal skills.

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

None of the seven teachers and one of the 17 paraprofessionals implied that the focus in conflict resolution should be on concrete identification and definition of the conflict, usually on who is right and who is wrong. This notion would represent an instrumental "ways of knowing," according to Drago-Severson (2015). Three of seven teachers and 12 of 17 paraprofessionals thought the focus in conflict resolution should be on acknowledging the existence of and identifying the nature of the conflict, and attending to others' feelings about it. These ideas indicated socializing "ways of knowing." Six of seven teachers and 14 of 17 paraprofessionals appeared as self-authorizing by agreeing or strongly agreeing that the focus in conflict resolution should be on emphasizing the potentially useful nature of the conflict and clarifying an issue that might lead to better communication and relationship. None of the seven teachers and two of the 17 paraprofessionals reported that they discussed this topic with their team. Five of the seven teachers and seven of the 17 paraprofessionals indicated their special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on conflict resolution and negotiation.

Communication Skills

None of the seven teachers and three of the 17 paraprofessionals reported they believed communication was stating rules, opinions, concrete goals, and facts. It was not concerned with theories, philosophies, or other people's feelings except for how they had an impact on getting the job done. According to Drago-Severson (2015), this represented instrumental "ways of knowing." Three of seven teachers and 11 of 17 paraprofessionals agreed or strongly agreed that communication was about feelings and a concern and sense of responsibility for others' feelings and experience. It is about making sure everyone understands and agrees with each other. According to Drago-Severson's (2015) theory, this concept represented a socializing way of

knowing. Five of the seven teachers and 16 of the 17 paraprofessionals appeared to have self-authorizing ways of knowing about communication skills. They all stated that communication was about feelings, ideas, and philosophies in attempt to express one's view within larger group, to explain and understand differences, similarities, and complexities of everyone's perspective. One of the seven teachers and none of the 17 paraprofessionals reported that they discussed this topic with their team. Three of seven teachers and 11 of 17 paraprofessionals trusted their special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on communication skills.

Section Review

In Section 4 of Chapter IV, the researcher presented the findings related to adult learning as described by Drago-Severson (2015) designed after Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental theory (Drago-Severson, 2016). Using Drago-Severson's (2004) ways of knowing could help inform the types of training and supervision that are needed for paraprofessionals to experience professional growth (Drago-Severson, 2011). According to Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), the common ways of knowing in adulthood are, "the instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming" (p. 25). Within the surveys, the researcher measured participants' perspectives on working together, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, and communication skills through examples of concepts that illustrated Drago-Severson's (2004) "ways of knowing." The researcher assessed most of the teachers and paraprofessionals to be in between the socializing and self-authoring categories of adult learning, as indicated by the average of the responses for each category. The types of training and supervision that would be most effective for socializing knowers, according to Kegan and Drago-Severson (2009), "attend to capacity for abstract

thinking and generalization and their interest in pleasing, and create opportunities to reflect on, consider, debate and critique different perspectives in a safe environment" (p. 66). Additionally Drago-Severson (2009) advised that, "socializing knowers do generate some goals internally. If voiced, supervisors should acknowledge them as goals that they should pursue" (p. 18). Likewise, according to Kegan and Drago-Severson (2009), "affirming the person's view of self as generator of ideas, insights and creations, and providing opportunities to reflect on and consider process and paradoxes" (p. 67), should be included in the methods of training and supervision for self-authorizing knowers. Furthermore, Drago-Severson advised that giving practical support to self-authoring knowers should include, "offering feedback and critique on goals and engaging in joint inquiry around the process for selecting them" (p. 18). See Tables 28-32 for raw data that includes all questions used to measure the ways of knowing through the surveys.

While section 3 and section 4 were a review of the data collected from the two surveys, section 5 presents the themes and findings discovered by the researcher's examination of the 12 interview transcripts. It includes the perceptions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals who participated in interviews about the training and supervision of paraprofessionals.

Section 5: Themes and Findings of the Interviews

This section offers the themes that the researcher observed from the 12 interviews. Three special education teachers and five paraprofessionals, who provided special services to students in grades six through 12, participated in interviews. Additionally, one special education teacher and three paraprofessionals, who provide special services to students in kindergarten through grade five, participated in the interviews for the study.

Many of the interviewees reported that the high point in their career within the case study school district was a result of a student's success. Realizing they are a significant factor in students' success was what made coming to work worthwhile. Some participants reported that it was also the success or progress of students that energized and renewed them.

From the introductions to the interviews, the researcher concluded that most special education teachers and paraprofessionals had a fundamental connection with their students and a passion for teaching. Another finding from this study was that many of the participants indicated they were on very strong and supportive professional teams and that made going to work each day enjoyable. The participants stated that cohesive teams with common goals and values that represented a strong work ethic and a quality of care were some of the things they admired most about their school district. The special education teachers and paraprofessionals also expressed an appreciation for the positive learning environment, variety of special education programs, the abundance of resources and support from the administration.

Training

The findings from the study indicated that many of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceived that the current training and supervision system should be improved. They reported that a variety of professional development trainings would be beneficial to their professional growth. Many participants believed training should be provided prior to any new assignment and should be continuous, possibly meeting at least once a month. The participants felt strongly that the professional development training also be relevant to their current position in special education. Many of the interviewees expressed frustration with the lack of training opportunities and a weariness for attending trainings that had little significance to their individual practice. Additionally, both special education teachers and paraprofessionals

indicated that it was unclear who was responsible for the training of paraprofessionals, although most perceived that the special education teacher who is the case manager of the program was responsible for the trainings. Nevertheless, most participants perceived that training from multiple sources would be extremely constructive to their increase in knowledge and skills. Most participants perceived a written handbook providing basic special education information, resources, and general understanding of roles and responsibilities of each position would improve faculty and staff's professional growth.

Style of Learning. The majority of interviewees expressed that they acquired new knowledge and skills best by a mixture of lecture, reading, sharing experiences followed by interactive activities. Although many respondents conveyed their discomfort in role-playing and small group problem solving, they also admitted that this combination was the most effective training strategy for them. Furthermore, most participants agreed that frequent reviews of the knowledge and the practice of the skills are necessary to maintain a level of proficiency and competence. Some interviewees mentioned using video for modeling and analyzing teaching and behavior/social coaching methods.

Types of Professional Development. Most special education teachers and paraprofessionals expressed a strong desire for more avenues for professional growth. Some participants felt handbooks or training packs that are specific to each type of special education program would be a good start to the development of a training system in the district. Many respondents conveyed and interest in in-service trainings by the district personal and outside agencies. Several individuals reported that going off campus to workshops was informative, and a very enjoyable experience. They appreciated making connections with other educators and a break in the regular routine of work.

Special education teachers and paraprofessionals indicated there were many professional development topics which could improve their confidence and competence in their work. These topics included team building, communication skills, self-reflection, curriculum building, behavior modification, social skills, and teaching strategies. The most important features of training, in the opinion of the participants, were to keep it current, continuous, exciting, relevant, and accessible to both teachers (special education and regular education) and paraprofessionals.

Special Education Topics of Interest. The researcher asked the interviewees to list some of the topics in the field of special education that interested them and they would like to learn more about, even if it did not pertain to their current position in the district. Some of the topics participants named were: adaptive equipment, applied behavior analysis (ABA), hard skills in literacy at various levels, teaching math to students with specific disabilities, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), information about various disabilities, evaluation of data, and performance-based education (PBE). Additionally, some respondents were interested in knowing more about picture exchange communication (PEC), federal and state laws, special education news, motivation (how to), and Care Philosophy.

Supervision

The supervision of paraprofessionals was also an element of the interview questions in this study. Many of the interviewees believed that the special education teachers who case manage the students actually supervise the paraprofessionals, although the district leaders implied that building administrators were the supervisors. Many participants perceived this as confusing. They indicated a clear description of the hierarchy within the district and particularly related to special services would be valuable. Regardless of this confusion, most interviewees revealed they have a good relationship with their perceived supervisor. Most of the special

education teachers and paraprofessionals conveyed a desire for supervision meetings to be more often and more formal. They reported, although supervisory meetings do occur regularly, these meetings are informal, impromptu, and often lack depth. Many stated that once a day to check in, and once a week for a more formal scheduled time, would be optimum. Others felt that supervisory meetings should be as needed or once a month. Most participants perceived the pattern of lack of formal supervision as a program-scheduling problem rather than an absence of supervisory skills on the part of the special education teachers.

Characteristics of Supervisor. The perception of the optimum supervision experience was also a facet of the research questions for this study. The interviewees described a dream supervisor as being someone that possessed many fine qualities, but was also down to Earth. Among the qualities many participants perceived a distinguished supervisor portrays are honesty, kindness, respectfulness, availability, and flexibility. The interviewees also felt a remarkable supervisor would possess superior communication and listening skills, and additionally, be supportive, involved, easy going, appreciative, and approachable. This person would also be patient, understanding, and compassionate. An outstanding supervisor, according to the respondents, would also have a positive attitude, high expectations of staff, provide respectful but honest feedback, and would share new ideas. Along with a sense of humor, an exceptional supervisor would exhibit effective management skills, tremendous work ethic, and be an overall dedicated mentor.

Discussions with Supervisor

The researcher also asked interviewees what they would most like to discuss with each other in supervisory meetings. Most of the participants reported they would most enjoy discussing both the positive and negative events that had occurred within the program during that

time. These events might have included academics, students' behavior, students' goals and objectives, motivating students, and any other unique situation. Additionally, both special education teachers and paraprofessionals wanted time to discuss topics that are more global. These global topics included: special education philosophy, special education laws, interacting with teachers and students in regular education, personal goals and values, and professional development opportunities and plans.

Feedback

The findings of this study indicated that special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceived that feedback was a critical aspect of supervision. The participants shared that, in their judgment, feedback was best received individually and in person, as soon as possible after an event or as soon as someone perceived a need for a change. Many also believed that a written description of the feedback should follow the conversation for the purposes of clarification. Participants should also maintain proper records. In most respondents' view, feedback was best delivered in a non-judgmental approach with the intention to provide guidance and to improve professional skills. Some interviewees mentioned following a three to one ratio of positive to negative feedback within an advisory encounter. Some participants also expressed a desire to understand how to offer feedback to their supervisors and/or how to express a grievance. Many indicated that feedback training would be a beneficial topic to incorporate in any new training and supervision initiative that the district might embrace.

Section Review

Section 5 of Chapter IV was a narrative description of the findings from the interviews in this study related to the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The findings indicated that most special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceived that they are a member of a

strong educational team in special services. They agreed they are supported by their colleagues and administration and have ample resources available to them. Many reported that they enjoyed going to work most days.

Although there appears to be many professional advantages offered in the case study school district, most participants reported that an initiative to improve the training and supervision of paraprofessionals was warranted. When queried, the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals stated that the optimum training and supervision system for their district might include professional development opportunities that are ongoing and accessible to all faculty and staff. The participants also indicated that the optimum system would include a variety of professional development venues. Participants of the study believed that knowledge and skills obtained through any trainings might be reinforced by scheduled review and practice in an organized manner. Some participants requested a closer connection with administration, so that evaluations of paraprofessionals were completed by someone who knows the participants' level of competence. Many of the study participants also specified that a better mentoring system for both teachers and paraprofessionals would be an advantageous component to any new training and supervision initiative within the school district. Figure X found in the appendices section illustrates a concept map of the themes extracted from the interviews.

Conclusion of Chapter IV

Chapter IV presented the findings of a single case study concerned with the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in a suburban school district in southern Maine. The purposes of the study and the research questions were reaffirmed. A description of the setting and the methods of data collection were also provided. The data was presented in five sections

including; 1) demographics of the participants, 2) training and supervision, 3) standards for paraprofessionals, 4) adult learning theory, and 5) interview themes and findings.

The purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals as to the most effective methods of training and supervision. The following perceptions of special education teachers and the paraprofessionals that participated in the study are listed below. Participants were found to value:

- a passion for children's education,
- a strong work ethic,
- quality of care,
- a positive learning environment,
- a variety of special education programs,
- the abundance of resources in the district, and
- support from the administration.

Participants indicated that they needed professional development in order to meet the majority of the standards that are recommended by the CEC and NRPC for paraprofessionals. The special education teachers and paraprofessionals indicated that they would like this professional development to include,

- a handbook that presents specific job descriptions, in addition to the hierarchy of special education services,
- orientation training for all new assignments,
- opportunities that relate to their own work and their own interests,
- opportunities in various venues that are accessible to all faculty and staff.

Participants self-reported being at the socializing and/or self-authoring level of "ways of knowing." They perceived that they would benefit from training and supervision in which their level of meaning making was considered. Participants also indicated that discussing supports and challenges for different levels of meaning making would be constructive for their educational teams.

Participants perceived that the special education teachers are responsible for the training of paraprofessionals. They also reported there was seldom time to provide this training. They perceived that they would benefit from shared responsibility for trainings within the district and outside agencies.

Participants perceived that the special education teachers are responsible for the supervision of paraprofessionals, but do not always have time to provide quality supervision. The special education teachers and paraprofessionals expressed a desire for:

- professional time for collaboration to be often and structured,
- a supervisor who displays many positive qualities,
- feedback from a supervisor to be face to face and immediately followed by written notice,
- supervisors who are strong mentors,
- a stronger connection to administration.

Participants perceived that they were very strong professional relationships on the special education teams within the district. They indicated a desire for:

- team building workshops for special education teachers with paraprofessionals
- time for collaboration between phases levels
- time to discuss standards, students, and global special education issues

- role-playing and small group problem solving.

While Chapter IV presented both the survey data in a narrative and quantitative form, and a narrative description of the themes and findings discovered in the interviews, Chapter V will be an in-depth discussion of these data and themes. Chapter V will also include the limitations of the study, the implications for practice, recommendations for the case study district and other interested teams, which provide services to students and clients with disabilities. Chapter V will also include recommendations for future research and a conclusion.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to examine and describe the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals regarding the current practices and their desires for the future of training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The study had an emphasis on federal and state mandates in relationship to the training and supervision of paraprofessionals by highly qualified professionals, and adult learning. The research approach and the specific data collected in this study were guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals working in special education concerning the current methods of training and supervision?
2. What methods do the special education teachers and paraprofessionals envision, as optimum, which will comply with legislative mandates, and will provide a variety of mediums for adult learners?

The review of the literature identified numerous studies that indicated that many paraprofessionals perceived that their training and supervision did not meet the federal regulations set forth in IDEA and NCLB (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Goe, 2014; McDonough, 2014; Sherwin, 2014). In addition, the literature also indicated that many paraprofessionals desired professional development opportunities that provide flexibility, variety, and were directly related to their positions in special education (Ramsey, 2013; Walker & Smith, 2015). The literature on adult learning theories indicated that adults have different ways of knowing, and that any type of professional development should embrace these differences. According to Drago-Severson

(2016), "Designing learning experiences that help adults to understand, identify, and grow their ways of knowing is one promising way to improve schools and school systems together" (p. 68).

Some states require paraprofessionals to complete courses and to pass assessments in order to be certified to work in special education. Other states have far fewer requirements. The State of Maine requires paraprofessionals to have earned college credits depending on the position for which they are applying. Additionally, paraprofessionals in Maine must pass a fingerprinting background check. Two studies completed in Maine indicated that paraprofessionals perceived that they were not properly trained and supervised for their positions in special education (Breton, 2010; Goessling, 1998). The results of this study partially agreed with those findings.

Many advocates for students with disabilities have lobbied for standards for paraprofessionals. In 2015, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in collaboration with the National Paraeducator Resource Center (NPRC), aligned their paraprofessional guidelines with the seven standard areas for special education professionals, creating the Paraeducator Common Core Guidelines (PCCG). According to the literature, several states have also created similar standards for paraprofessionals (Breton, 2010; Mohniki, 2013; Preston, 2015). This study examined the perceptions of special education teachers and paraprofessionals on the degree of knowledge and skills of the CEC Standards that paraprofessionals possessed. Additionally, the researcher questioned the participants about whether they perceived that these knowledge and skills were required for a paraprofessional to provide services to students with disabilities. Paraprofessionals were also asked if they desired more training on the standards.

In order to determine special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' perspectives, two surveys, and 12 interviews were conducted to gather data. These instruments were used to

document their perspectives on the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in their school district. The research was framed using the CEC Standards and adult learning theory. Additionally, the researcher applied an appreciative inquiry philosophy to the methodology of the study.

Interpretation of Findings

The survey and interview questions were designed to gather special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' perspectives on the training and supervision practices in their district in order to gain insight on ways to optimize these practices. The researcher thematically analyzed and coded the data using NVivo software. The findings were similar to those discovered in previous studies that many paraprofessionals perceived that they required additional training and supervision to meet the federal mandates outlined in IDEA and NCLB (Breton, 2010; Goessling, 1998). Additionally, the findings suggest that most special education teachers and paraprofessionals desired professional development that addresses their direct professional needs and individual interests. Furthermore, the data showed that the special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceive that trainings that have flexibility, variety, and multiple modalities would be of most benefit to them. They also felt that supervision should be scheduled and more formal. Fifty-one surveys and 12 interviews provided the data for this study. The interpretations of the findings are presented by the responses of both special education teachers and paraprofessionals to each inquiry.

Research Question One: What are the perceptions of the teachers and paraprofessionals working in special education concerning the current methods of their training and supervision?

These data were collected from the responses of 38 paraprofessionals and 13 special education teachers who participated in an anonymous survey. In addition, the findings reflect the perceptions of eight paraprofessionals and four special education teachers who participated in interviews. The researcher was the sole interpreter of the data.

Special Education Teachers

Training for special education teachers. According to the data, most special education teachers who participated in the study reported that they were not provided with training on methods of training and supervising paraprofessionals either within the case study school district or in pre-service college courses. One survey respondent wrote, "It is something I have learned over the years as I have become more responsible for that duty." Another answered, "No training at all, it is an assumed role with zero guidelines." A third special education teacher reported that he or she had, "no training except on-the-job experience."

Training for paraprofessionals. More than half of the special education teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they felt responsible for training the paraprofessionals in their program. Contrastingly, almost a quarter of the special education teachers were not sure who was actually responsible for the training of paraprofessionals in their district. In either case, most participants agreed that paraprofessionals in the district were not always adequately trained for their positions in special services. Interviewees also agreed that responsibility of training the paraprofessionals was a daunting task. One interviewee said, "There are so many different abilities in the students and with the Ed Techs [paraprofessionals], so you're kind of trying to fit what goes where," so the right training is often difficult to anticipate. Another special education teacher agreed that training was an enormous undertaking. She stated, "We're responsible for the programming from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. Getting their

[paraprofessionals'] feedback. Getting their [paraprofessionals'] input, seeing how we can all come together with all our strengths, and put together the best program for the day." The special education teachers reported training paraprofessionals to be a challenge. One participant questioned, "If special education teachers are supposed to be in a supervisory role, why are we not given training?"

CEC Standards. When asked in the surveys about the knowledge and skills standards created by CEC and the NPRC, most special education teachers indicated that these standards were critical to the positions held by paraprofessionals in their district. Some participants also indicated that they were knowledgeable on these standards and could therefore train paraprofessionals or other teachers, yet less than half of the special education teachers reported discussing the topics with paraprofessionals. The study data showed that most special education teachers perceived that the biggest barrier to the proper training of paraprofessionals on the CEC standards was time. One special education teacher wrote, "I don't think there is enough time in the day to really delve into these concepts but they are important." Another participant penned, "There's no time scheduled for a meeting time to train Ed Techs [paraprofessionals]." "The need is there, but time is lacking in our daily schedule for common planning time," was another comment written in the survey. Yet another respondent wrote, "I don't always have time to teach these skills. It happens incidentally."

Surprisingly however, a percentage of special education teachers did not feel the knowledge and skills recommended by the CEC Standards were essential for the paraprofessionals in order to provide services with students with disabilities. However, it should be noted, that some special education teachers reported that paraprofessionals needed training in other areas, which appeared to parallel the standards. One special education teacher wrote,

"There needs to be more training related to how to deal with students with deficits in attention and how to react to those type of students." Another wrote, "Probing and delving [into] incorrect responses is something the Ed Tech [paraprofessional]and I need to work on rather than "jumping" to showing the student the answer." These tasks seemed to parallel Standard 1 Knowledge 3, "understand educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities," and Standard 2 Skill 4, "provide least intrusive level of support based on the demands of the learning environment as determined by the instructional team."

Supervision. The majority of special education teachers who participated in the study perceived that special education teachers are responsible for supervising paraprofessionals in the case study district. Most of them also perceived that paraprofessionals are in fact adequately supervised by highly qualified professionals. The special education teachers also agreed with the paraprofessionals in the study that the supervision methods should be improved.

Frequency of supervisory meetings and discussion topics. Many participants also reported that the supervision of paraprofessionals was less frequent and formal than was optimum. Most supervising special education teachers reported that they met with paraprofessionals at least once a week, many met daily with paraprofessionals. Special education teachers reported discussing the daily activities concerns about the students, and lesson plans if necessary with the paraprofessionals. However, they reported that the meetings were not structured and very few communications were recorded.

Paraprofessionals

Trainings. Results showed that many paraprofessionals in the case study school district viewed their current training practices to be inadequate for the special education services they provided to students with disabilities. Particularly, the data indicated that the paraprofessionals

did not feel they receive enough training prior to starting a new position in special services. As expressed by one participant, "I really, really, really would have valued that [training] in the beginning instead of learning everything the hard way." Many participants reported either receiving training from other paraprofessionals or acquiring skills incidentally on the job. One respondent wrote that he or she learned skills by "myself: asking questions, observing peers." Another participant reported [I], "figured most of it out on my own."

Professional development. Most paraprofessionals reported attending very few if any professional development trainings other than those required by the district. One paraprofessional wrote, "It appears, we as techs, get notified when the district requires a training, but do not get many notices of other opportunities from the district. Any I have attended have been offered by other agencies or researched and attended by myself." Another survey respondent wrote, "[I] have sought most of my training independently, other than the yearly ones mandated by the system and state such as CPR, etc."

Some respondents indicated that the district's method of professional development training (PLT) and additional special education meetings were useful, yet many felt that the topics discussed were not always relevant to their position as paraprofessionals in special services. One paraprofessional, who participated in an interview, stated that the yearlong PLTs were something that she valued about working in the case study district. Contrastingly, another interviewee reported he attends meetings about, "Google Docs, when we are exhausted after how many [student] meltdowns and how many boogers we've got wiped on our shirts."

Learning styles. Most paraprofessionals that are required to attend Safety Care Training reported that this topic and method of lecture, reading, and practice was beneficial to their learning styles. For example, when asked "how you learn best," one paraprofessional stated, "I

learn best by doing… role-playing and having it interactive… For instance, how we do safety care, that's the way, I am able to learn it so much faster." Paraprofessionals also indicated that having the Safety Care Trainings during off school hours for which they were paid was ideal. Some respondents also conveyed that the required Protraxx trainings through online modules concerning such things as bloodborne pathogens, gender equity, bullying, hazardous materials, sexual harassment, among others, are also valuable ways of learning.

Types of disabilities. The paraprofessionals who participated in this study indicated that they provided services to students with various disabilities. They also indicated that they usually provide one on one or small group instruction. A majority of the paraprofessionals reported they create and/or modify the instructions that they provide to the students. However, according to IDEA, preparing educational materials should be the responsibility of the supervising special education teachers (Biggs et al, 2016).

CEC Standards. When questioned about the standards for paraprofessionals designed by the CEC and NPRC, many paraprofessionals perceived that they were trained in many of the knowledge and skills of these standards, but through self-training or other agencies. Although most paraprofessionals indicated that they needed to have this knowledge and skills, several respondents reported that in their current assigned roles some of the CEC standards were not necessary for them to master in order to provide services. According to CEC and many state expectations, the knowledge and skills in these standards should be part of all paraprofessionals' competencies (CEC, 2015: McKenzie, 2011). There are no specific written standards as competence requirements for paraprofessionals in Maine or the case study school district. As discovered about other trainings reviewed in this study, most paraprofessionals perceived that they have not received adequate training within the case school district on these standards from

highly qualified professionals. Many paraprofessionals reported that they attained the knowledge and skills related to the standards mostly through experience, if at all. "I have learned everything on the job. There is no formal training," said one respondent. Another answered, "I have some of these skills, which I have obtained on my own." A third participant wrote, "I usually Google information."

Supervision. In contrast to the data collected in this study regarding trainings, the research study showed that more than half of the paraprofessionals felt they were adequately supervised. Many paraprofessionals described having a supportive supervising special education teacher. One interviewee said of her supervisor, "[Teacher] is definitely one of the best supervisors I've ever had… I really valued [teacher's] patience and understanding with what I was still learning. It made me feel really, I guess, confident." Another participant said, "My supervisors in [district] have always been available, whenever I needed them."

Supervisory meetings. Many of the participating paraprofessionals also reported being comfortable discussing most topics with their supervising special education teachers, although they rarely had time to have scheduled meetings that had a specific agenda. One paraprofessional stated that meetings with a supervising teacher were, "ongoing...no specific times, briefly each day. Nothing in depth." Another respondent reported, "We speak daily concerning students, but not in a formal meeting setting." Yet a third paraprofessional revealed, "We discuss on the fly, if we have time." Many paraprofessionals answering the surveys reported that they did not specifically discuss the knowledge and skills from the CEC Standards with their supervising teachers.

On the other hand, some paraprofessionals did not perceive that they were properly supervised. Unfortunately, some paraprofessionals also indicated that they were not sure who

was responsible for their supervision. One respondent wrote, "As a first year Ed Tech [paraprofessional] in [district], it has been very unclear for me as to who my supervisor has been or my support system."

Research Question Two: What methods do special education teachers and paraprofessionals envision, as optimum, which will comply with the legislative mandates, and will provide a variety of mediums for adult learners?

These data were collected from the responses of 38 paraprofessionals and 13 special education teachers who participated in an anonymous survey. In addition, the findings reflect the perceptions of eight paraprofessionals and four special education teachers who participated in interviews. The researcher was the sole interpreter of the data.

Special Education Teachers

Desired training. The research data showed that most special education teachers that participated in the study perceived that adequate training and supervision of the paraprofessionals in the case study school district would benefit the students and all other stakeholders in the district. Several participating special education teachers also desired training for themselves in supervising. One respondent thought it would be advantageous for a "training through professional development, and supervision by all teachers who work with the Ed Techs [paraprofessionals]." Another survey participant wrote that it would be beneficial, "to provide in-service training and specific documentation around evaluation." A third special education teacher commented that the district should, "provide time in the day and resources… don't assume people know how to supervise. It takes really good communication skills."

Desired teamwork. The respondents were clear that they also desired trainings that were conducted with the paraprofessionals. Teamwork was a significant theme throughout the

interviews. One special education teacher wrote that the all team members would benefit from, "team building experiences, professional training in curriculum materials and behavior plans." Another survey respondent penned that, "professional development together with Ed Techs [paraprofessionals] and teachers," would be the best solution. A third participant wrote, "working in small groups on specific concerns that Ed Techs [paraprofessionals] have," would be an optimum training experience.

Desire for shared responsibility of training. Although, special education teachers reported that they perceive themselves as responsible for the trainings of paraprofessionals, most respondents agreed that it is a daunting task with many barriers. The most significant barriers, according to the research study data, were time and training as a supervisor. Therefore, several participants felt that an optimum training solution for the paraprofessionals would be a shared responsibility throughout the district. Many special education teachers indicated that additional trainings from administration and outside agencies would benefit the district and help progress the professional growth of the paraprofessionals. One respondent wrote, "I think that administrative and/or lead teacher training (or outside approved provider) should be given." Another survey respondent commented, "Hire qualified people who care deeply about the well-being of students with effective communication and teaching skills. Provide daily time for supervision."

Adult learning theory. In addition to the special education teachers and paraprofessionals' perceptions on training and supervision, the researcher used Drago-Severson's (2004) adult learning theories to explore the participants' "ways of knowing." According to Drago-Severson (2011), professional growth can be enhanced by using this knowledge to develop diverse professional development plans and/or for supervising methods. According to

Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), the common ways of knowing in adulthood are, "the instrument, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming" (p. 25). The researcher used Drago-Severson's description of each way of knowing to measure the self-reported meaning making levels of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals who participated in the study. The majority of special education teachers and paraprofessionals self-reported to be in between the socializing and self-authoring categories of "ways of knowing," according to Drago-Severson's (2004) adult learning theory. The four categories used in the study to measure ways of knowing were: perspectives on working together, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, and communication skills. These categories were also embedded in other inquiries within the study more directly relating to training and supervision of paraprofessionals, therefore providing the perceptions of the participants.

Due to a lack of vignettes available in the literature to measure the self-transforming "ways of knowing," the researcher chose to consider team development as an additional measure that aligns with Drago-Severson's (2016) four pillars of practices. This option provided further data on the perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals, thus more recommendations toward the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the case study district.

Despite the research data from this study that indicated a lack in training of paraprofessionals, and a need for improvement in the supervision methods, special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the case study school district overwhelmingly reported that they were on very strong educational teams. These comments from interviewees in the case study demonstrated the teamwork perceived in the school district:

- "We have a very cohesive unit…. that works well together. We share a common goal and [know] how to get there."
- "We have an administration that sets the tone for a really positive learning environment."
- "Everybody kind of had everybody else's back"
- "The team I have right now is why I get up every day and go to work." We have a really unique team. I think we were put in situations that were pretty difficult, and we have been successful at the end of the day, and I think a lot of it was against our odds."
- "We were really good at just intuiting what the kids needed and what we needed to do…. we all could jump in and make it work."
- "We all get along very well and we're always there to cover each other's backs, help out in any way with different suggestions. So it's always great to come to work."
- "We have a ton of respect for each other. And, I want to highlight that communication piece, I think we do that quite well…I think that's what makes us pretty strong."
- "We all had totally twisted senses of humor, which worked well because you need to have a sense of humor if you're working in SPED or you will cry all the time. So we had that."

Adult learning theory is an effective way for professional development facilitators to understand that all adults learn differently (Drago-Severson, 2015). Tailored learning for adults can be possible when district leaders understand and focus on individual strengths for learning, which is critical to the effectiveness of any new professional development system. The survey

data from this study indicated levels of ways of learning described by Drago-Severson (2011) of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals could inform types of supports and challenges that are optimum for professional development growth.

Paraprofessionals

Training. Resoundingly, the findings from this study indicated that paraprofessionals perceived that training should be provided for paraprofessionals before they begin any new position with students in special services. One participant said, "I didn't have a clue…. [paraprofessionals need] a little foundational understanding of what is an IEP and just what are the workings." Another reported, "orientation to special ed [education] overall if you will," would be helpful to all new paraprofessionals.

Desired frequency of training. Data also revealed that paraprofessionals thought training should be offered by the district as on going and in various modalities in order to accommodate adult learners. Many studies agreed that the training must be (1) systematically planned, (2) ongoing, and (3) coordinated to build sequentially upon previous training (Chopra, et al., 2011). When asked what would make trainings optimum, one respondent said, "Well, number one, we need to have them. I'm sorry to be rude, but that's how I feel." Another paraprofessional responded, "I would love the continuous option to be available but not mandatory, and with reasonable minimum requirements."

Desire to receive notification of PD options. Paraprofessionals in this study indicated that they often found their own information about professional development being offered through from peers, books, or internet resources. Consequently, respondents reported a desire to receive regular notices about professional training opportunities, and be offered the opportunity to attend these trainings. Some paraprofessionals indicated that it would be valuable to receive

the same notices as the special education teachers about professional development opportunities in special education field. One survey respondent wrote, "Put the same mailings and flyers in our mailboxes as the ones faculty receive so we can know of the same opportunities."

Desired topics for PD options. Paraprofessionals in the study also indicated that they were interested in various topics related to special education. One of the most important aspects to the paraprofessionals seemed to be that the trainings were relevant to their own work. One interviewee stated, "Having trainings that are focused towards those groups of people [in the training] instead very broad." Another paraprofessional said, "Any type of workshops that have to do with our students, and their disabilities," would be welcome. Many of the paraprofessionals indicated their interest. Some included,

- "I want to know what it feels like to have certain disabilities."
- "What is happening in the world of special education?"
- "I've always been fascinated with assistive technology."
- "I don't think I have a ton of knowledge about adaptive equipment and technology."
- "I would like to know more about applied behavior analysis."

Desired methods of PD. The majority of paraprofessionals who responded to the survey indicated that in-service workshops provided by the district would be the most beneficial to their professional growth. Several participants also indicated that they enjoyed the opportunity to spend a day off campus at a workshop. One participant said, "It gave me an opportunity to go somewhere, which was exciting to me." One respondent asked, "Is there a way to bring information into a database where Ed Techs [paraprofessionals] can have access to what's happening in special education? Whether it's instructional, or whether it's law, or all these things that are emerging."

The data from this study showed that most paraprofessionals in the district desired additional trainings in many various topics and through a variety of venues. The most significant finding was that most paraprofessionals felt that the trainings they received should be relevant to their position in special services and to their personal interest. Most paraprofessionals indicated that they are interested in a district professional development system that is designed for them.

Studies have consistently demonstrated that properly trained paraprofessionals can play an important role in lessening the student achievement gap in special education classrooms, because students' progress is often contingent on the paraprofessionals' ability to reinforce, remediate effectively, and augment the special education teachers' lessons (McKenzie, 2011; Walker & Smith, 2015). Paraprofessionals are a valuable part of services provided to students with disabilities; their training and supervision is an essential part of the educational system.

Supervision. The data from this study shows that the majority of paraprofessionals in the case study school district perceived that they were adequately supervised by highly qualified professionals. Most respondents also indicated that they would welcome improvements in the system. Participants indicated a desire for clearer job descriptions.

Responsibility for supervision. Most paraprofessionals indicated that there is not a clear description of the hierarchy of special education within the district. It was assumed by most paraprofessionals that the special education teacher was their supervisor, yet several paraprofessionals believed that the district administration views it differently. Therefore, paraprofessionals indicated that a clear review of the responsibilities and the job descriptions in special education services in the district would be a benefit to all. One interviewee said, "Having really clear kind of a hierarchy of who needs to do what… that everybody understands and can access." Another interviewee indicated that she thought it would be good to know, "within a

specific building, who reports to whom… an understanding of case managers."

Desired characteristics of a supervisor. One theme that was enthusiastically discussed within the study was the characteristics of an effective supervisor. The paraprofessionals mentioned multiple positive qualities that they perceived to be most important for a supervisor to possess. Some of these qualities included,

- approachable
- collaborative
- communication skills
- compassionate
- constructive feedback
- delegate tasks
- efficient
- empathetic
- flexible
- high expectations
- humor
- lead by example
- non-judgmental
- positive attitude
- supportive
- trustworthy
- understanding
- willing to do all

When discussing traits of a desired supervisor one paraprofessional indicated a "tremendous work ethic to model to staff." Another respondent thought it was important for a supervisor to be, "helping another person grow in their career." A third participant said he or she thought a supervisor should provide "respectful but honest feedback about my teaching, my instructional strategies, and my classroom management." Finally, another paraprofessional agreed that a supervisor should be an "overall great mentor."

Desired frequency of supervisory meetings and topics of discussion. The research study also investigated paraprofessionals' perceptions on the optimum frequency of meetings, along with the topics of discussions they desired to have with their supervising special education teachers. The majority of the paraprofessionals indicated they believed meeting at least once a week with their supervising teacher would be optimum. One survey respondent wrote, "A few times a week under normal circumstances, and more frequently if necessary. It needs to be

determined by the needs of the staff and students as opposed to arbitrary dates set on a calendar." Most of the paraprofessionals wanted to discuss the events of the day or week with their supervising special education teacher. They indicated that discussions around students' goals and objectives, and behavior plans would be the most beneficially. "What's going well, and what I'm struggling with, what my concerns are, what I need help with, what resources could make me more effective, what sort of training I feel like I am short on, might need, and those types of things," said one paraprofessional. Another paraprofessional expressed, "I would like to discuss the… highs and the lows of the day. Just picking each other's brains as well, and speaking about each day." A third respondent agreed, "I would like to discuss how students are achieving goals and how to best support students. And if that means academics or about behavior, whatever it is."

Additionally, some paraprofessionals were interested in discussing more global special education issues, such as current changes in legislation, aspects of disabilities, medical advances, and even educational philosophy. One interviewee said she is interested in discussing, "what's going on the state and national levels, I mean, there just seems to be a whole special ed [education] world." Another respondent agreed and said she was interested in, "what's happening in the world of special education." Still another participant indicated an interest in philosophy, she stated, "I am always curious as to why people do what they do and why things happen."

Desired types of feedback from supervisors. Another theme of supervision discovered in the interviews was the type of feedback that paraprofessionals valued and thus desired from supervisors. Most paraprofessionals agreed that constructive feedback from their supervisors was best received face to face as soon as possible, followed by a written description of the

discussion in order to have clear expectations. One paraprofessional said, "I think it is best for a supervisor to give feedback verbally, and then written after there's been a verbal communication about it." Another participant expressed that he felt feedback should be presented, "in a non-judgmental situation… wanting just to help my situation out as opposed to judging what I do." A third paraprofessional stated, "The best way, in my opinion, or how I prefer it, would be have a discussion. Not over the phone, not over email, anything like that. Just face-to-face. I find that to be the best way to relay any sort of information."

Additionally, paraprofessionals believed it is critical to receive positive feedback often from their supervisors. One respondent appreciated a supervisor saying, "I like the way you are handling this." Another participant communicated, "I think everybody likes to be appreciated and feel like they're bringing something valuable to the table." A third paraprofessional agreed that supervisor should often offer positive feedback. He or she said, "I think carving a little bit of time to sit down with somebody to express the good things they are doing."

Section Review

This section was an interpretation of the findings of this qualitative single case study. The researcher used two research questions in this study to discover and document perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals on training and supervision in the case study school district. In addition, the researcher measured the self-reported levels of ways of knowing of the study participants. The findings aligned with most literature that was reviewed for the study, as they suggest that special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the case study school district perceived the training of paraprofessionals to be inadequate for their positions in special services. Additionally, the findings indicate that most special education teachers and paraprofessionals who participated in the study perceived the supervision of

paraprofessionals to be adequate, but most participants also desired improvements to the supervisory methods.

Implications

The findings in this study supported similar studies about the perspectives of special education teachers and paraprofessionals concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. The data showed that special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceived the training of paraprofessionals to provide services to students with disabilities to be inadequate. Although most participants reported that paraprofessionals were supervised by highly qualified professionals, most respondents also indicated that they believe supervision methods should be improved. This data will be used to inform district leaders about the types of professional development that special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the district perceived as optimum.

Concrete definitions of training and supervision have not been established on the federal or state level, and were not discussed in this study. However, using the CEC Standards as a measurement of training conditions aided in the discovery of the future training needs and desires of the study participants. According to the perceptions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals, the case study school district partially complied with the federal mandates that all paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals.

The findings of this single case study will be significant to the special service department in the case study school district, along with other similar school districts, and agencies that provide services to students and clients with disabilities. This study provided a description of the current training conditions within the district to guide future professional development plans, and

a positive affirmation of educational team relationship, supervision, and the outlook of the future of special services in the case school district.

Limitations

This research was a qualitative single case study. The purpose of the study was to gather data about the case study school district, which limits the generalization of the findings. The timing of the study at the end of a school year with the demands of closing up grades and graduation may have also been a limitation. Another limitation seemed to be the length and style of the survey instruments, as evidenced by the completion rates. One, shorter, more succinct survey tool may have provided greater completion rate while still providing the same information. Likewise, one interview protocol would have aligned the data between the special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' answers, and therefore, would have been sufficient. Additionally, the language and terms in the surveys seemed confusing to some participants. It is also important to note that the researcher was a supervising special education teacher and there was a potential for bias while interviewing. However, consistent responses reinforced the interpretations of the findings regardless of the potential limitations. Consistent categories and themes emerged from both the surveys and the interview data.

Findings Related to Literature

A review of the literature for this study indicated a nationwide problem as school districts struggle to meet the federal mandates to ensure that all paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals. Since the 1990s, research has emphasized inadequacies in paraprofessional training and supervision (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004; Carter et al., 2009; Fisher & Pleasants, 2012; Goe, 2014; McDonough, 2014; Sherwin, 2014). In addition, studies show that the supervising special education teachers are not adequately prepared to train

and supervise the paraprofessionals (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2012; Preston, 2015; Ramsey, 2013).

Researchers agreed that paraprofessionals' voices would improve the outcomes for improvement in training and supervision practices (Breton, 2010; Fisher & Pleasants, 2010). Yet, according to Biggs, Gilson, and Carter (2016), the "voices of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals are relatively scarce in the literature" (p. 257). Consequently, this study documented the perceptions of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals in a suburban public school district in southern Maine supporting students with disabilities. Those perceptions were used to recommend the most effective methods of training and supervision by highly qualified professionals that will meet current federal mandates and provide a variety of mediums for adult learners.

Two studies, Goessling (1998) and Breton (2010), indicated that paraprofessionals in Maine perceived their training and supervision as lacking. Additionally, special education teachers and paraprofessionals consistently report having inadequate training and supervision across various skill areas (Walker & Smith, 2015). Using the CEC Standards to measure the degree of perceived knowledge and skills of the paraprofessionals, the findings in this study align with this literature.

Policymakers contend that mandates enacted by NCLB and the IDEA provided states little direction in establishing regulations concerning the training and supervision of paraprofessionals (Breton, 2010; Carter, et al., 2009; Preston, 2015). Although this study did not directly question this claim, the researcher recognized that the measurements of training in the study were well defined by the CEC Standards, yet the definition of supervision within the study had no concrete measurement. The researcher therefore deduced that this study aligned with the literature and concludes that adequate supervision is not in place.

The literature reviewed for this study also indicated that one of the most significant factors in students' achievement is adult learning practices (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, Lapointe, & Terry Orr, 2009; Donaldson 2008, Fullan, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 2009, Wagner, 2007). This finding agreed with other research that suggested, "designing and facilitating professional learning should take into account adults' different ways of knowing" (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 40). In this study, participants self-reported their ways of making meaning of things or their "ways of knowing," according to Drago-Severson (2004). This data may offer guidance for future professional development plans in the case study school district.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a "strengths-based approach to goal visualization and realization operationalized through structured, positively framed inquiry (Delgadillo, Palmer, & Goetz, 20onesix, p. three). According to Cooperrider and Sekerka (2001), "positive new methods of inquiry would support new concepts and paradigms for organizations" (p. 13). Using an appreciate inquiry philosophy, the researcher noticed that interviewees seemed comfortable sharing their stories and imagining there perception of an optimum professional development system. The rich narratives collected through the interviews showed agreement with the literature reviewed on the positive aspects of an appreciative inquiry approach.

In Chapter I, the researcher argued that the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the case study school agreed with the studies that the training and supervision of paraprofessionals in the case study school district was not in complete compliance with the federal mandates. This study data agreed that, according to the perceptions of the special education teachers and the paraprofessionals in the case study school district, the training of paraprofessionals was lacking. Additionally, the data partially agreed with the literature on supervision methods, as most study participants perceived their supervision to be adequate, yet

needing improvement. The literature confirmed that this is typical in many school districts. Studies indicate that many districts are minimally complying with laws, by either providing limited training opportunities to paraprofessionals and/or failing to have the paraprofessionals supervised by highly qualified professionals (Biggs et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2016; Giangreco et al., 2010).

Recommendation for Action

The purpose of this study was to discover and document special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' perceptions concerning training and supervision of paraprofessionals in suburban school district located in southern Maine. An emphasis was placed on the federal mandates that all paraprofessionals are trained and supervised by highly qualified professionals. Additionally, adult learning theories that promoted a variety of training options was considered. Special education teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and all other stakeholders of the case study school district will potentially benefit from the data collected as the findings can inform a design for future professional development system in special services within the school district.

Considering the data collected in this study, the researcher offers several recommendations for actions by the case study school district. Professional development is recommended to increase special education teachers' knowledge and understanding of the training and supervision of adult learners, specifically paraprofessionals in special education positions. Team building workshops for special education teachers and paraprofessionals is also recommended. However, most significantly, a professional development system specifically designed for paraprofessionals in special services is recommended. The findings from this study indicated that paraprofessionals in the case study school district have several desires. For trainings, they desired:

- pre-service trainings for all new positions,
- written job descriptions and responsibilities for all positions in special services,
- notifications of professional development options, other than those required by the district,
- more opportunities to attend professional development trainings on and off campus,
- a variety of on-going trainings that relate to paraprofessionals work in special services or their personal interests.

For supervision, they desired:

- scheduled and pre-designed meeting with supervising special education teachers, and more interaction with administrative staff who provide evaluations.

An awareness and knowledge of adult learning theories and appreciative inquiry approaches to developing future initiatives by those facilitating the change would also be advantageous to the school district. The researcher also recommends that the district adopt the CEC Standards as guidelines for the competency trainings for paraprofessionals. A district-wide written definition of what constitutes adequate training and supervision is also recommended based on the findings in this study. General knowledge about federal, state, and local mandates is needed by all stakeholders.

The results of this study will be shared with all study participants. To promote the current initiative regarding professional development for paraprofessionals the results will be also be shared with the Director of Special Services and the Assistant Superintendent. Furthermore, if deemed necessary by administrators, the results will be shared with the Board of Education in order to procure funds for any new initiatives or professional development opportunities. Leaders from Learning Forward (2011), previously known as The National Staff Development Council, claimed that, "professional learning that increases educator effectiveness

and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes" (p. 43).

Recommendations for Further Study

The gap between research and the practice of training and supervising paraprofessionals is "especially concerning when considering the place and prominence of paraprofessionals in the delivery of special education services" (Brock & Carter, 2015, p. 39). According to Giangreco et al. (2010), the literature confirms that this gap is a problem throughout the country. Therefore, additional research is recommended that would identify specific training and supervision methods that districts could use as models. A study that examined the use of a dedicated special education trainer employed by the district would be especially recommended by this researcher. Moreover, a study designed to identify the definitions of both training and supervision most appropriate for paraprofessionals who work in special education could create a baseline for global conversation on the subject. However, the researcher acknowledges that global definitions may not be a reality, in which case discovering individual district-wide definitions would behoove any school system.

This study showed consistent data regarding the perceived lack of adequate training and supervision of paraprofessionals who provided services to students with disabilities. Currently, an abundance of research studies confirms this data. Action research exploring adult learning theories could also be of interest to school district leaders responsible for training of paraprofessionals. Furthermore, a professional development system designed by a district using the appreciative inquiry approach would also be highly recommend by this researcher.

The position of paraprofessional is one of the fastest growing occupations in public schools. Research that measures student outcomes based on paraprofessionals' competencies

would also be ideal. As this trend grows, future studies are needed to identify the most effective methods to ensure that all paraprofessionals working with individuals with disabilities have "mastered the knowledge and skills [needed] through constant, measurable, and continuing education with highly qualified teachers and training that are specifically targeted for paraprofessionals" (CEC, 2015, para. four).

Conclusion

Paraprofessionals are essential members to special services in all Maine school districts. As the number of students identified with disabilities continues to rise, along with the pedagogy of inclusive education, the number of paraprofessionals employed in Maine public schools is increasing exponentially. Due to the continual increase in responsibilities expected of paraprofessionals, leaders in the field have expressed concerns about the least trained staff supporting students with the greatest needs (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2004). They are right to be concerned, as paraprofessionals often assume responsibilities more appropriate for certified teachers, even though they have limited direct training and guidance from qualified professionals (Brock et al., 2015; Fisher & Pleasant, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discover and document special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' perceptions concerning training and supervision of paraprofessionals in suburban school district located in southern Maine.

The findings of this study indicated that paraprofessionals perceived that the optimum professional training system in their school district would include pre-service training before any new assignment. Pre-service training would also include an introduction to special education terminology, the basic concepts of special education law, and training that was specific to the paraprofessionals' new position in special services. The paraprofessionals also indicated that they felt trainings should include information about the buildings and the special service

department in their district, specifically the roles and responsibilities of all members. According to the paraprofessionals' perceptions, they needed further training on the knowledge and skills written in the standards that is recommended by the CEC and the NCPC. Consequently, paraprofessionals reported a desire for variety of on-going professional development opportunities both on and off campus.

Special education teachers have multifaceted jobs that compel them to bear the responsibility of providing excellent instruction to students on differing academic and behavioral levels and often in various locations at the same time. These circumstances require special education teachers to rely on the support of paraprofessionals throughout the school day. In addition to providing appropriately modified instruction, special education teachers are also responsible for a special education records and many meetings, all of which takes time. Furthermore, the special education teachers are usually trained in pre-service courses for most of the tasks of this position; however, few receive training in supervision. This study confirmed that most of the special education teachers in the case study school district perceived that the paraprofessionals were not adequately trained. In addition, they indicated that although they perceived that paraprofessionals were supervised by highly qualified professionals, there was room for improvement. The data showed that the special education teachers in the case study school district perceived that the two most significant barriers to adequate training and supervision of paraprofessionals were time and the training of special education teachers to supervise.

One way to enhance education in schools is by designing learning experiences that expands adult understanding of their own ways of knowing (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 40). The data in this study revealed the average self-reported level of meaning making for the participants.

It is recommended that the case study school district reflect on this data as it prepares any transformational initiative for the training and supervision of paraprofessionals. This study's findings will provide generous data for a change. Recommendations for school leaders also include applying an appreciative inquiry approach to designing any district-wide transformational change.

Overall, this study found that special education teachers and paraprofessionals perceived themselves to be on very strong academic teams. The paraprofessionals reported that they found special education teachers to possess many fine supervisory traits. Both special education teachers and paraprofessionals reported that they enjoyed coming to work and appreciated the educational environment of the district. Most remarkable, however, is that the students' successes, no matter how small, are what energized the participants and kept them motivated. Although, the results presented a need for change, this was a positive and worthwhile project.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Permission to Conduct Research from the School District

[redacted]

Permission to conduct research from the Case Study School District

[redacted] Public Schools

[redacted]

MAINE

[redacted] Assistant
Superintendent of Schools

March 15, 2018

To Whom it May Concern:

[redacted] Public Schools [redacted] is aware of the project that UNE doctoral student, Catherine Stieg, has presented to the Administers in the school district. With such, [redacted] Public Schools gives permission to Ms. Stieg to carry out her analysis with some of the staff (Educational Technicians and teachers) of [redacted] in an effort complete her dissertation.

It is our understanding that her survey results will be anonymous and confidential and that the staff , schools and district will not be identified in her dissertation .

[redacted] Public Schools fully support the efforts of Ms. Stieg and have great confidence in her success.

Sincerely,

[redacted] Jo Anne Sizemore

[redacted] Jo Anne Sizemore
Assistant Superintendent, [redacted] Public Schools

[redacted]

Appendix B

Email Invitation to Participate in Study

Project Title: Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals in Special Education:
A Qualitative Case Study
Principal Investigator: Catherine Stieg, Researcher (207) 632-8277 or [redacted]
Faculty Advisor: Michelle Collay, Ph.D. (207) 602-2010 or mcollay@une.edu

Dear Colleagues,

This is Cathy Stieg. I am the high school functional life skills teacher. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I am conducting in our school district. I am currently in a doctorate program at the University of New England. My vision is to design a variety of trainings and staff development that can provide professional growth on the topics that each person needs most to work with their students and each other. The only limitation is our imaginations.

There will be surveys sent out to all the special education teachers and the education technicians in the district. They will take about 25 to 30 minutes to complete. It is bit long, but it will give me the tools to make awesome recommendations. It is totally anonymous. No one will know your name or your school. You are welcome to quit at any time. I will keep the data confidential and secure by using pseudonyms and encrypting the saved data on Goggle Cloud. I will share it with everyone when I am done.

In addition to the surveys, I would like to invite **you** to a personal interview. It will be in the place of your choice or online. In this interview, I will ask you questions about our ***future*** training and supervision plans and how you think we can make it the ***best*** it can be! The interview should take about 45 minutes to an hour and will be recorded then transcribed by a professional service. Again it will be totally confidential and secure. I will not use your name or school. When I get the transcription back from your interview you may read it to check for accuracy.

I would ideally like to have 8 to 12 volunteers, a few people from each of the type of special education classrooms (i.e. RR, FLS, ASL, SLS). I will be giving all interviewees a $25 gift certificate of their choice. My goal is to have all the surveys and most of the interviews completed before school closes. Although some interviews could be conducted over the summer on-line, if we make a date and time prior to school release.

I look forward to starting the actual research process and hearing from all of you! If you have any questions, please call or email me, you are also welcome to contact my lead advisor, Dr. M. Collay at UNE. Let's do this!

Best,

Catherine Stieg

Catherine Stieg
Doctoral Candidate, University of New England

Appendix C

Follow Up Email (s)

Project Title: Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals in Special Education:
A Qualitative Case Study
Principal Investigator: Catherine Stieg, Researcher (207) 632-8277 or [redacted]
Faculty Advisor: Michelle Collay, Ph.D. (207) 602-2010 or mcollay@une.edu

Dear Colleagues,

This is Cathy Stieg again. Last week I sent a Survey Monkey out to all of you concerning the training and supervision of education technicians in our district. I want to thank all of you who have already responded and to remind those of you who would still like to participate that it would be awesome if it was completed in the next few weeks before our Summer break begins!! I truly appreciate your attention to this, as the more responses I receive, the better we will understand your needs and desires as we design the training and supervision for special education teachers and education technicians. Also, I am still looking for volunteers to do interviews. I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you.

Best,

Cathy Stieg
Catherine Stieg
Doctoral Candidate, University of New England
[redacted]

[redacted]

(207) 632-82

Appendix D

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

CONSENT FOR PARTCIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals in Special Education Programs: A Qualitative Case Study with an Appreciative Inquiry Philosophy

Principal Investigator:
Catherine D. Stieg
University of New England
Email: cjordan1@une.edu
Cell Phone: 207-632-8277

Advisor:
Dr. Michelle Collay
University of New England
Email: mcollay@une.edu
Phone: 207-602-2010

Introduction:

General requirement language:

- Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision.

- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

- The purpose of this study is to discover *various* types of training and supervision methods that special education teachers and education technicians in our district think would be the best way to make sure that education technicians receive both pre-service and continuous training that is relative to their position and that will ensure that education technicians are supervision by highly qualified teachers.

Who will be in this study?

- I will invite all of the twenty eight special education teachers and sixty-five education technicians who work with students with disabilities in our district to participate in this study. I hope to interview 8 – 12 volunteers, at least one or two people from each type of special education setting (i.e. FLS Classrooms, Resources Rooms, etc.) in order to get an overall understanding of the needs and desires of the special education teachers and education technicians in our district. This data will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used.

What will I be asked to do?

- You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview. I hope to interview 8 – 12 volunteers, at least one or two people from each type of special education setting (i.e. FLS Classrooms, Resources Rooms, etc.) in order to get an overall understanding of the needs and desires of the special education teachers and education technicians in our district. The interviews will focus on future designs for training and supervision of education technicians. This data will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used.

- I will use an Appreciative Inquiry philosophy for the interview questions. This is a positive philosophy with a focus on "the best of what is" rather than what is currently wrong or what has been wrong in the past. In the interview, I will ask you to help dream about and design the optimum training and supervision program for our district. I will only ask about your positive past or current experiences in the interviews. The interviews will each take between 45 – 60 minutes. Interview participants will be offered a $25.00 gift card of their choice.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

- There are no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

You and many others in the district may benefit from this study. The findings will increase the *possibilities* of a district initiative dealing with training and supervision that will:

- improve student outcomes,

- create a unified training and supervising program across the district,

- provide diverse training options for education technicians with CEUs,

- boost confidence and competence for educational technicians and supervising special educations teachers,

- increase accountability across the district; perhaps disperse responsibilities or create a recommendation for a district/area position/consultant,

- comply with NCLB/ESSA federal mandates that education technicians are supervised by highly qualified professionals (improve the system),

- improve practice in State of Maine (increase knowledge) by sharing findings and possible training with other districts in the area (Sebago Alliance, Collaborative Districts),

- add to the knowledge of using Appreciative Inquiry (positive) philosophy for transformation in education.

What will it cost me?

- As a participant, you will not incur any costs.

How will my privacy be protected?

- The surveys that will be emailed to the special education teachers and education technicians will be anonymous. They will be sent through our district intranet.
- Although demographic information will be collected, I will group the data for grade K-5 and 6-12 together in order to keep the identity of the schools and the individual special education classrooms confidential.
- The interviews will be conducted in a quiet and private location on school campus, a place of the interviewee's choosing, or may be conducted on-line if that is more convenient for you.
- The results will be shared with the University of New England research committee, our administration, any member of the district who is interested, and will be placed on a University share site called DUNE.
- There may be information collected that might be of interest to other researchers. For example, another researcher may ask the question, "Do more men or women work in functional life skills special education classrooms versus resource classrooms?" We are, therefore adding to the bank of educational research by doing this study. Your names, classrooms, and the district will not be in the report. Obviously, readers who are familiar with the study, will know it is our district, but all the information will be anonymous.

How will my data be kept confidential?

- This study is designed to be anonymous, this means that no one, can link the data you provide to you, or identify you as a participant.
    - NOTE: anonymous means that no one can link data to an individual. However, I cannot promise *absolute* anonymity.
- The data will be kept in Google Cloud, encrypted using industry standards, only accessible by me as the principal researcher. I will also be making a back-up on a password protected external drive that will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the my home, along with any field notes and reflections that will be hand written. All identifiable data will be omitted from the dissertation text and removed from my files upon completion of the study.

General requirement language:

- Please note that the Institutional Review Board may review the research records

General requirement language:

- I will keep a digital copy of interviewee's signed consent form encrypted on Google Cloud with a backup copy also encrypted on an external hard drive for at least 3 years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. I will be the only person with access to the copy and it will not be kept with other documents related to this study.

- The interviews will be recorded using computer software and sent to a professional transcription service. The recordings will also be secured with data encryption. This means the data is translated into another form, or code, so that only people with access to a password can read it. Currently, encryption is one of the most popular and effective data security methods used by organizations. I will be the only person with the passwords. The recordings of interviews will be erased/destroyed after the research study is completed.

- You will have an opportunity to review the transcription to ensure that it is accurate. Your name and identifying information will not be used in the report.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future position in our school district.

- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.

- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- My name is Cathy Stieg and I am the only researcher for this study. I am the functional life skills teacher at the high school. You may contact me at any time for questions about this study.

- My school email is [redacted]

- My school number is [redacted]

- My cell number is [redacted] I accept text.

- If you have questions or would like more information concerning this research, you may contact my advisor.
- Dr. Michelle Collay

  University of New England
  Email: mcollay@une.edu
  Phone: 207-602-2010
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Olgun Guvench, M.D. Ph.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4171 or irb@une.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?
General requirement language:

- You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

Participant's signature or Legally authorized representative — Date

Printed name

Researcher's Statement

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

Researcher's signature — Date

Printed name

Appendix E

Training and Supervision Interview Protocol for Paraprofessionals

Heading: *Training and Supervision Interview Protocol for Paraprofessionals*
Name of Interviewer: Catherine Stieg
Name of Interviewee:
Location of Interview:
Date of Interview:

Opening: Good afternoon XXX. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to discuss the training and supervision of education technicians in our district. As you know, I am currently enrolled in doctoral program at the University of New England and this interview is part of my dissertation research project. I asked you for this interview because you represent education technicians working with students with disabilities. I respect your skills and would be interested in your perspective on the topic. This interview will last between 45 minutes and an hour. In addition to gaining knowledge about training and supervision of Ed Techs, I will also gain experience as a researcher with collecting data using an interview. With your permission, I would like to record this session and then it will be professionally transcribed. Recording the interview will ensure that I have our exact communication exchanges. I will give you the opportunity to read the transcription of the interview so you can confirm its accuracy. The data will used first for the purposes of my dissertation. I hope that the findings of my research will also help us design a district wide training and supervision system that will offer abundant opportunities for professional growth through multiple methods. I will remove all identifying information for confidentiality purposes, keep the data encrypted on my laptop with a backup copy also encrypted and locked in a file at my house. This interview is voluntary; please feel free to decline to answer any questions. Do I have your permission to proceed with the recording? Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Introduction: My vision for this project is to facilitate an ongoing supervision and training program in our district for both teachers and education technicians. The district leadership currently supports this plan. We realize that everyone is at a different skills levels and has a variety of learning styles, in addition to being very busy, therefore, we are hoping to develop a wide variety of resources and training materials to support this diversity. We are hoping to begin this process within a year and have it be a system that is flexible, current, and owned by all members. Research indicates maintaining sustainable training and supervision systems this is a statewide issue. My vision is for us become a model for other districts in the State of Maine. One thing that I discovered and really enjoyed researching in preparation for this interview was Appreciate Inquiry philosophy. This is a method of asking question in a positive way. Instead of asking what has or is going wrong, I would like to hear your stories about your best working experiences so that we can recreate that for all of us in the district. Therefore, I would like to ask your opinion on some of these topics in relationship to your position as an education technician. Are you comfortable with this?

Okay, let's begin. I am now recording.
Question: Briefly, what do you do in this district?
Notes:
Question: What attracted you to working as an education technician in special education?
Notes:
Question: Without being humble, describe what you value most about yourself, your work, and our district.
Notes:
Follow up: Thank you for helping me know you better. Ask any positive probing questions and affirmation.
Notes:
Question: Now…Think back through your career in this district. Locate a moment that was a high point, when you felt most effective and engaged. Describe how you felt, and what made the situation possible.
Notes:
Follow-up: Thank you for sharing. Ask any positive probing questions and affirmation.
Notes:
Question: Tell me about the *best* supervisor you have experienced or you have observed. What did that person do that made a difference? How did that person make you feel? How much time did that person spend collaborating with you about your work?
Follow-up: What do you think would be the optimum amount of time for a supervisor to collaborate with you? How often? And when? What would you most like to discuss with the supervisor?
Questions: Tell me about a time that you received constructive feedback from a supervisor that you felt was valuable? How did the supervisor present the feedback? How did it make you feel?
Follow-up: What do you think would be the best way to receive feedback from a supervisor?
Question: Describe a working team that you have either experienced or would like to experience that made coming to work enjoyable? What about this team made the difference for you?
Follow-up: Would you enjoy participating in workshops or staff development opportunities to enhance working teams? Describe what they would be like?
Question: Imagine you are working for the *best* supervisor that ever existed in special education. Describe three things that make this person the *best* supervisor!
Continuous learning creates an exciting work environment full of creative possibilities. It stimulates people to go beyond the usual to discover and create better and more effective ways of doing things.
Question: Tell me about the most challenging and exciting training or staff development opportunity you have experienced. It doesn't have to have been in this job. What was it? Why did you decide on it? What made it challenging and exciting? How did you benefit? How did your job benefit?
Notes:
Question: Describe how you stay professionally affirmed, renewed, energized, enthusiastic, and inspired?
Notes:
Questions: How do you learn best? What types of training or staff development do you find valuable? How often would you like to participate in staff development and enrichment? When would be the best time for you?

Notes:
Question: Tell me about the work experience in which you learned the most. Tell me about the situation. Who else was involved, and what did they do? What did you do to foster your own development? What made this a high point learning experience?
Follow up:
Notes:
Question: What are some things you would like to learn about in your field: things you're curious about, that you would like to learn more about, that will help you feel most fulfilled in this job.
Notes:
Question: If I had a magic wand and could make anything happen, what would be your three wishes for the future of training and supervision of education technicians in our district?
Notes:
Follow up:
Notes:
Closing: That is the end of my questions for now. Thank you so much, for you time and insight. I appreciate all that you do in this district. Do you have any questions for me? Is there any other information you would like to share?

I will be in touch with you as soon as the interview is transcribe so that you can confirm its accuracy. Remember that your identity will be keep confidential and that you may choose to quit the study at any time. Thanks again.

Appendix F

Training and Supervision Interview Protocol for Special Education Teachers

Heading: *Training and Supervision Interview Protocol for Special Education Teachers*
Name of Interviewer: Catherine Stieg
Name of Interviewee:
Location of Interview:
Date of Interview:

Opening: Good afternoon XXX. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to discuss the training and supervision of education technicians in our district. As you know, I am currently enrolled in doctoral program at the University of New England and this interview is part of my dissertation research project. I asked you for this interview because you represent special education teachers working with students with disabilities. I respect your skills and would be interested in your perspective on the topic. This interview will last between 45 minutes and an hour. In addition to gaining knowledge about training and supervision of Ed Techs, I will also gain experience as a researcher with collecting data using an interview. With your permission, I would like to record this session and then it will be professionally transcribed. Recording the interview will ensure that I have our exact communication exchanges. I will give you the opportunity to read the transcription of the interview so you can confirm its accuracy. The data will used first for the purposes of my dissertation. I hope that the findings of my research will also help us design a district wide training and supervision system that will offer abundant opportunities for professional growth through multiple methods. I will remove all identifying information for confidentiality purposes, keep the data encrypted on my laptop with a backup copy also encrypted and locked in a file at my house. This interview is voluntary; please feel free to decline to answer any questions. Do I have your permission to proceed with the recording? Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Introduction: My vision for this project is to facilitate an ongoing supervision and training program in our district for both teachers and education technicians. The district leadership currently supports this plan. We realize that everyone is at a different skills levels and has a variety of learning styles, in addition to being very busy, therefore, we are hoping to develop a wide variety of resources and training materials to support this diversity. We are hoping to begin this process within a year and have it be a system that is flexible, current, and owned by all members. Research indicates maintaining sustainable training and supervision systems this is a statewide issue. My vision is for us become a model for other districts in the State of Maine. One thing that I discovered and really enjoyed researching in preparation for this interview was Appreciate Inquiry philosophy. This is a method of asking question in a positive way. Instead of asking what has or is going wrong, I would like to hear your stories about your best working experiences so that we can recreate that for all of us in the district. Therefore, I would like to ask your opinion on some of these topics in relationship to your position as an education technician. Are you comfortable with this?
Okay, let's begin. I am now recording.
Question: Briefly, what do you do in this district?
Notes:
Question: What attracted you to working as a teacher in special education?
Notes:

Question: Without being humble, describe what you value most about yourself, your work, and our district.
Notes:
Follow up: Thank you for helping me know you better. Ask any positive probing questions and affirmation.
Notes:
Question: Now…Think back through your career in this district. Locate a moment that was a high point, when you felt most effective and engaged. Describe how you felt, and what made the situation possible.
Notes:
Follow-up: Thank you for sharing. Ask any positive probing questions and affirmation.
Notes:
Question: Tell me about an excellent supervising experience you have experienced or you have observed either as the supervisor or the supervised person. What made a difference? How did make you feel? How much time did you spend collaborating about your work?
Notes:
Follow-up: What do you think would be the optimum amount of time for you as a supervisor to collaborate with education technicians? How often? And when? What would you most like to discuss with the education technicians?
Notes:
Questions: Tell me about a time that you gave constructive feedback that you felt was valuable? How did you present the feedback? How did it make you feel?
Notes:
Follow-up: What do you think would be the best way to give feedback to an education technician? Describe how you would design staff development for yourself or others in the district about giving feedback.
Notes:
Question: Describe a working team that you have either experienced or would like to experience that made coming to work enjoyable? What about this team made the difference for you?
Notes:
Follow-up: Would you enjoy participating in workshops or staff development opportunities with education technicians to enhance working teams? Describe what they would be like?
Notes:
Question: Describe any other staff development that you would design for supervising education technicians?
Notes:
Question: As a special education teacher supervising education technicians, can you tell me what type of training you think would be optimum for the education technicians? How often do you think it should be? What types of training would you recommend? Who do you think would be best to do the training?
Question: How do you learn best? What types of training or staff development do you find valuable? How often would you like to participate in staff development and enrichment? When would be the best time for you?
Notes:
Question: Imagine you are working with the *best* team that ever existed in special education. Describe three things that make this the *best* team!
Notes:

Question: Describe how you stay professionally affirmed, renewed, energized, enthusiastic, and inspired?
Notes:
Question: What are some things you would like to learn about in your field: things you're curious about, that you would like to learn more about, that will help you feel most fulfilled in this job.
Notes:
Question: If I had a magic wand and could make anything happen, what would be your three wishes for the future of training and supervision of education technicians in our district?
Notes:
Follow up:
Notes:
Closing: That is the end of my questions for now. Thank you so much, for you time and insight. I appreciate all that you do in this district. Do you have any questions for me? Is there any other information you would like to share?

I will be in touch with you as soon as the interview is transcribe so that you can confirm its accuracy. Remember that your identity will be keep confidential and that you may choose to quit the study at any time. Thanks again.

TABLES

Table 1- Demographics of Survey Participants

Demographics of Survey Particpants																	
Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Sex**		**Age**				**Education**					**Teaching Grade**		**Years of Service**			
	M	F	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	AS	BS	BS+	MS	MS+	K-5	6-12	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Teachers -13	3	10		2	7	4			3	4	6	3	10		1	3	9
Paras - 38	7	31	9	8	8	13	2	10	17	4	5	17	21	8	9	10	11

Table 2 - Demographics of Survey Participants 2

Demographics of Participants									
Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Setting**					**# Paras in Program**			
	Inclusision	**Resource Rm**	**Social Life Skills**	**Academic Life Skills**	**Functional Life Skills**	**1-2**	**3-4**	**5-6**	**6+**
Teachers - 13		8	3	1	1	6	5	1	1
Paras - 38	4	15	3	4	10				

Table 3 - Demographics of Survey Participants 2

Demographics of Interview Particpants				
	Sex		**Teaching Grade**	
	M	F	K-5	6-12
Teachers - 4	0	4	1	3
Paras - 8	4	4	3	5

Table 4 - Paraprofessionals Training

Paraprofessionals Training				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Teachers -13**		**Paras - 37**	
Perception of who is responsible for training paras				
Regular Education Teacher	0%	0	3%	1
Special Education Teacher	62%	8	47%	18
Title 1 Teacher	0%	0	0%	0
Principal	8%	1	3%	1
Assistant Principal	8%	1	0%	0
Superintendent	0%	0	0%	0
School Nurse	0%	0	0%	0
I don't know	23%	3	32%	12
Perception on if paras are adequately trained				
Yes	23%	3	18%	7
No	46%	6	39%	15
Unsure	23%	3	18%	7

Table 5 - Types of Professional Development Training Desired

Types of Professional Development Training Desired						
Title & Number of Respondents per question	Teachers -11				Paras -37	
	Current		Desired		Desired	
Pre-service (before any new assignment)	0%	0	27%	3	59%	22
In-service conducted by your school district	23%	3	82%	9	76%	28
Staff development classes with the mentor	8%	1	36%	4	57%	21
Professional development workshops	15%	2	64%	7	73%	27
College courses	8%	1	0%	0	24%	9
Conferences sponsored by outside professional agencies (i.e. Autism Society)	15%	2	18%	2	59%	22
Working with a mentor					30%	11
Observation of exemplary programs	0%	0	36%	4	49%	18
On-line modules	0%	0	18%	2	16%	6
Professional Learning Teams (with yearly goals)	31%	4	55%	6	22%	8
None (I am proficiently trained)	62%	8	18%	2		

Table 6 - Amount of Desired Time for PD Training

Amount of Desired Time for PD Training				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	Teachers -12		Paras - 38	
Continuously	8%	1	18%	7
About once a week	0%	0	3%	1
A few times a month	25%	3	11%	4
Once a month	8%	1	26%	10
Every other month	0%	0	8%	3
Quarterly	17%	2	29%	11
Twice a year	33%	4	3%	1
Other (please specify)	8%	1	11%	4

Table 7 – Paraprofessionals' Supervision

Paraprofessionals Supervision				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	Teachers -13		Paras - 38	
Perception on who supervises paras				
Regular Education Teacher	0%	0	0%	0
Special Education Teacher	77%	10	87%	33
Title 1 Teacher	8%	1	0%	0
Principal	0%	0	0%	0
Assistant Principal	0%	0	3%	1
Superintendent	0%	0	0%	0
School Nurse	15%	2	0%	0
I don't know	23%	3	8%	3
Perception on if paras are adequately supervised				
Yes	69%	9	68%	26
No	15%	2	13%	5
Unsure	8%	1	13%	5

Table 8 - Standard #1 Knowledge - Learner Development and Individual Differences 1

Standard #1 Knowledge *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences*														
1.K1 Typical and atypical human growth and development														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					9%	1	27%	3	36%	4	0%	0	27%	3
Paras - 31	6%	2	65%	20	29%	9	45%	14	13%	4	13%	4	0%	0
1.K2 Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptionalities and among individuals with exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					0%	0	45%	5	18%	2	0%	0	55%	6
Paras -31	10%	3	65%	20	29%	9	39%	12	6%	2	13%	4	6%	2
1.K3 Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					0%	2	55%	6	9%	1	36%	4	18%	2
Paras - 31	6%	2	61%	19	32%	10	42%	13	3%	1	6%	2	6%	2
1.K4 Family systems and the role of families in supporting development														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					0%	0	30%	3	30%	3	10%	1	30%	3
Paras - 30	3%	1	67%	20	23%	7	30%	3	7%	2	10%	3	3%	1
1.K5 Role of families in the educational process														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers					0%	0	50%	5	20%	2	20%	2	30%	3
Paras - 30	7%	2	63%	19	23%	7	27%	8	7%	2	17%	5	3%	1
1.K6 Effect of exceptionalities on individuals, families, and society														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					18%	2%	36%	4	18%	2	18%	2	18%	2
Paras -30	7%	2	63%	19	30%	9%	30%	9	3%	1	20%	6	3%	1
1.K7 Common concerns of families of individuals with exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					18%	2	18%	2	27%	3	27%	3	9	1
Paras - 30	0%	0	67%	20	27%	8	30%	9	3%	1	23%	7	3%	1

Table 9 - Standard #1 Knowledge - Learner Development and Individual Differences 2

Standard #1 Knowledge *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences*																
1.K8 Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related																
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					36%	4	36%	4	36%	4	9%	1	0%	0
Paras	3%	1	70%	21	30%	9	30%	9	10%	3	10%	3	3%	1
1.K9 Effect of culture and the contributions of culturally diverse groups																
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					18%	2	36%	4	27%	3	18%	2	0%	0
Paras	3%	1	70%	21	30%	9	30%	9	13%	4	0%	0	0%	0
1.K10 Characteristics of one's own culture and use of language, and how these may differ from individuals																
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 10					30%	3	30%	3	30%	3	10%	1	0%	0
Paras	3%	1	70%	21	27%	8	23%	7	10%	3	3%	1	3%	1
1.K11 Effect of speech and language development on academic and nonacademic learning of individuals with																
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					27%	3	45%	5	9%	1	18%	2	18%	2
Paras	10%	3	58%	18	42%	13	39%	12	3%	1	10%	3	3%	1
1.K12 Implications of language levels for individuals with exceptionalities learning the dominant language																
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					27%	3	36%	4	27%	3	9%	1	9%	1
Paras	3%	1	66%	19	41%	12	28%	8	10%	3	0%	0	0%	0
1.K13 Implications of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication																
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11					27%	3	27%	3	36%	4	18%	2	0%	0
Paras	3%	1	66%	19	41%	12	28%	8	10%	3	0%	0	0%	0

Table 10 - Standard #1 Skills - Learner Development and Individual Differences

Standard #1 Skills *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences*																				
1.S1 Demonstrate respect and appreciation for differences in values, languages, and customs among home, school, and community																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11									10%	1	60%	6	20%	2	0%	0	10%	1%
Paras - 30	0%	0	3%	1	40%	12	33%	10	30%	9	7%	2	7%	2				
1.S2 Implement concepts associated with disability rights, normalization, and inclusive practices																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 11									9%	1	27%	3	36%	4	0%	0	27%	3
Paras - 30	10%	3	20%	6	40%	12	13%	4	27%	8	7%	2	7%	2				
1.S3 Access credible resources to extend and expand understanding of exceptionalities																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers -11									55%	6	9%	1	18%	2	18%	2	36%	4
Paras - 29	14%	4	21%	6	24%	7	17%	5	21%	6	7%	2	10%	3				

Table 11 - Standard #2 Knowledge - Learning Environments

Standard #2 Knowledge *Learning Environments*														
2.K1 Purposes of supports and services for individuals with exceptionalities														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					0%	0	38%	3	38%	3	13%	1	25%	2
Paras - 20	40%	8	45%	9	25%	5	40%	8	0%	0	20%	4	10%	2
2.K2 Rights and responsibilities of individuals with exceptionalities and other stakeholders related to exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					0%	0	25%	2	50%	4	13%	1	25%	2
Paras - 19	37%	7	53%	10	21%	4	32%	6	0%	0	5%	1	5%	1
2.K3 Eligibility categories for special education and supports and services typically associated with each category														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					13%	1	25%	2	50%	0.04	13%	0.01	13%	1
Paras - 19	21%	4	63%	12	26%	5	32%	6	5%	1	5%	1	5%	1
2.K4 Rules and procedural safeguards regarding behavioral support of individuals with exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					25%	2	50%	4	25%	2	13%	1	13%	1
Paras - 20	50%	10	35%	7	25%	5	45%	9	0%	0	0%	0	15%	3
2.K5 Communicative intent of behaviors														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					25%	2	50%	4	25%	2	13%	1	13%	1
Paras - 17	59%	10	29%	5	29%	5	41%	7	0%	0	0%	0	12%	2
2.K6 Importance of the paraprofessional serving as a positive model for individuals with exceptionalities														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					25%	2	38%	3	25%	2	25%	2	13%	1
Paras - 20	50%	10	30%	6	10%	2	30%	6	0%	0	15%	3	10%	2

Table 12 - Standard #2 Skills – Learning Environments 1

Standard #2 Skills Learning Environments																				
2.S1 Facilitate the integration of individuals with exceptionalities into various settings as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									38%	3	25%	2	13%	1	13%	1	25%	2
Paras - 20	0%	0	10%	2	55%	11	20%	4	25%	5	0%	0	15%	3				
2.S2 Facilitate friendships as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									13%	1	50%	4	13%	1	0%	0	38%	3
Paras - 20	0%	0	20%	4	45%	9	20%	4	20%	4	0%	0	15%	3				
2.S3 Use knowledge of individual's strengths and interests to encourage engagement in varied school and community activities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									25%	2	38%	3	13%	1	0%	0	38%	3
Paras - 20	0%	0	10%	2	65%	13	15%	3	20%	4	0%	0	10%	2				
2.S4 Provide least intrusive level of support based on the demands of the learning environment as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									38%	3	38%	3	25%	2	13%	1	25%	2
Paras - 20	10%	2	5%	1	50%	10	20%	4	25%	5	0%	0	15%	3				
2.S5 Use routines and procedures to facilitate transitions as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									13%	1	50%	4	13%	1	13%	1	13%	1
Paras - 20	5%	1	10%	2	40%	8	35%	7	20%	4	0%	0	10%	2				
2.S6 Promote choice and voice of individuals with exceptionalities in building classroom communities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers -7									14%	1	43%	3	14%	1	14%	1	12%	1
Paras - 19	0%	0	5%	1	47%	9	26%	5	26%	5	5%	1	21%	4				
2.S7 Support safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environments in which diversities are valued as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	57%	4	14%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	0%	0	37%	7	42%	8	26%	5	0%	0	21%	4				
2.S8 Establish and maintain rapport with learners																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	0%	0	37%	7	47%	9	26%	5	0%	0	11%	2				

Table 13 - Standard #2 Skills – Learning Environments 2

Standard #2 Skills *Learning Environments*																				
2.S9 Adapt physical environment to provide optimal learning opportunities as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	5%	1	11%	2	37%	7	42%	8	32%	6	0%	0	16%	3				
2.S10 Implement individualized reinforcement systems and environmental modifications at levels equal to the intensity of the behavior as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers -7									14%	1	42%	3	14%	1	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 19	0%	0	16%	3	21%	4	47%	9	26%	5	0%	0	21%	4				
2.S11 Promote self-advocacy and independence as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers -7									14%	1	43%	3	14%	1	14%	1	12%	1
Paras - 19	0%	0	5%	1	47%	9	26%	5	26%	5	5%	1	21%	4				
2.S12 Use universal precautions to assist in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	57%	4	14%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	0%	0	37%	7	42%	8	26%	5	0%	0	21%	4				
2.S13 Protect the health and safety of individuals with exceptionalities																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	0%	0	37%	7	47%	9	26%	5	0%	0	11%	2				
2.S14 Support individuals with exceptionalities by modeling and facilitating the use of collaborative problem solving and conflict management																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	5%	1	11%	2	37%	7	42%	8	32%	6	0%	0	16%	3				

Table 14 - Standard #2 Skills – Learning Environments 3

Standard #2 Skills *Learning Environments*																				
2.S15 Implement active supervision when responsible for non-instructional groups as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	42%	3	14%	1	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 19	0%	0	16%	3	21%	4	47%	9	26%	5	0%	0	21%					
2.S16 Use strategies as determined by the instructional team in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	5%	1	47%	9	26%	5	26%	5	5%	1	21%					
2.S17 Support individuals with exceptionalities in following prescribed classroom routines as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0	29%	2
Paras - 19	0%	0	5%	1	42%	8	42%	8	42%	0	0%	0.26	5					
2.S18 Use strategies that promote successful transitions for individuals with exceptionalities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	3	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras -19	0%	0	5%	1	37%	7	37%	7	37%	7	0%	0	26%					
2.S19 Use a variety of positive behavioral supports to enhance an individual's active participation in activities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 19	0%	0	11%	2	32%	6	47%	9	42%	8	0%	0	21%					

Table 15 - Standard #3 Knowledge - Curricular Knowledge

Standard #3 Knowledge *Curricular Content Knowledge*														
3.K1 Individual learner characteristics as the primary basis for instructional decision making, rather than disability categories or educational placement														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					0%	0	29%	2	57%	4	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	11%	2%	44%	8	22%	400%	39%	7	0%	0%	0%	0	28%	5
3.K2 Purpose of individual plans relative to general education curriculum														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					0%	0	14%	1	71%	5	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 18	22%	4	33%	6	28%	5	28%	5	0%	0	0%	0	28%	5

Table 16 - Standard #3 Skills - Curricular Knowledge

Standard #3 Skills *Curricular Content Knowledge*																				
3.S1 Demonstrate proficiency in academics including oral and written communication, literacy, and mathematical skills appropriate to the assignment																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	57%	4	0%	0	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	2	36%	6	29%	5	29%	5	12%	2	12%	2				
3.S2 Use basic educational terminology																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 17	12%	2	12%	2	41%	7	18%	3	29%	5	6%	1	24%	4				
3.S3 Use knowledge of individual's strengths and interests to encourage engagement in varied school and community activities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									42%	3	14%	1	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	13%	2	6%	1	44%	7	25%	4	31%	5	0%	0%	25%	4				
3.S3 Implement levels of support appropriate to academic and social-emotional needs of individuals with exceptionalities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		Need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	14%	1	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 16	13%	2	6%	1	44%	7	25%	4	31%	5	0%	0	25%	4				
3.S4 Adapt instructional strategies and materials as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	14%	1	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	2	53%	9	29%	5	35%	6	0%	0	18%	3				
3.S5 Make responsive adjustments to instruction consistent with professional development guidelines as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									57%	4	0%	0	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	18%	3	47%	8	18%	3	29%	5	0%	0	24%	4				

Table 17 - Standard #4 Knowledge - Assessment

Standard #4 *Assessment*														
4.K1 Purposes of assessment														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8					0%	0	100%	8	0%	0	50%	4	50%	4
Paras - 16	13%	2	38	6	25%	4	38%	6	13%	2	13%	2	0%	0

Table 28 - Standard #4 Skills - Assessment

Standard #4 Skills *Assessment*																
4.S1 Record information in various formats as determined by the instructional team																
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers -8									100%	8	0%	0	50%	4	25%	2	50%	4
Paras - 16	13%	2	0%	0	50%	8	50%	8	63%	10	0%	0	50%	8				
4.S2 Assist in collecting and providing objective, accurate information for the instructional team																
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 8									100%	8	0%	0	50%	4	25%	2	50%	4
Paras - 16	13%	2	0%	0	50%	8	50%	8	63%	10	0%	0	50%	8				

Table 39 - Standard #5 Knowledge – Instructional Planning and Strategies

Standard #5 Knowledge *Instructional Planning and Strategies*														
5.K1 Concept of evidence-based practice														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train other	
Teachers - 8					50%	4	50%	4	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Paras -16	19%	3	25%	4	13%	2	50%	8	0%	0	38%	6	0%	0

Table 20 - Standard #5 Skills - Instructional Planning and Strategies 1

Standard #5 Skills *Instructional Planning and Strategies*																				
5.S1 Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		Need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	24%	4	47%	8	41%	7	0%	0	35%	6				
5.S2 Prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	47%	8	35%	6	41%	7	0%	0	0%	3				
5.S3 Use instructional strategies and materials as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									42%	3	14%	1	29%	2	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	35%	6	41%	7	47%	8	0%	0	29%	5				
5.S4 Match communication methods to individual's language proficiency as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	14%	1	43%	3	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	2	47%	8	24%	4	41%	7	0%	0	29%	5				
5.S5 Use age- and ability-appropriate instructional strategies, technology, and materials for individuals with exceptionalities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	14%	1	43%	3	0%	0	14%	3
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	53%	9	29%	5	41%	7	0%	0	29%	5				
5.S6 Use instructional time effectively																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0	14%	3
Paras - 16	6%	1	0%	0	31%	5	50%	8	38%	6	0%	0	19%	3				
5.S7 Modify pace of instruction and provide organizational cues as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	0.02	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	2	41%	7	35%	6	29%	5	0%	0	24%	4				
5.S8 Support the use of learning strategies and study skills to promote acquisition of academic content as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	65%	11	18%	3	29%	5	6%	1	29%	5				

Table 21 - Standard #5 Skills - Instructional Planning and Strategies 2

Standard #5 Skills *Instructional Planning and Strategies*																				
5.S9 Reteach and reinforce essential concepts and content across the general education curriculum as determined by the																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	29%	2	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	47%	8	29%	5	29%	5	12%	2	29%	5				
5.S10 As determined by the instructional team, use strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	14%	1	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	65%	11	24%	0.04	29%	0.05	0%	0.29	29%	5				
5.S11 Use an individual's responses and errors, especially a pattern of errors, to guide next instructional steps and provide ongoing feedback as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									57%	4	14%	1	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0	22%	4	50%	9	22%	4	33%	6	6%	1	28%	5				
5.S12 Support individuals with exceptionalities' use of self-assessment, problem-solving, and other cognitive strategies as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 6									67%	4	17%	1	0%	0	17%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	6%	1	17%	3	39%	7	17%	3	28%	5	11%	2	28%	5				
5.S13 Use strategies to promote the individual's positive sense of identity, self-control, and self- reliance as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	43%	3	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0	17%	3	33%	5	33%	6	33%	6	0%	0	28%	5				
5.S14 Support the development of oral and written communication by reinforcing language and speech skills of individuals with exceptionalities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	12%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0	17%	3	44%	8	22%	4	28%	5	6%	1	28%	5				

Table 22 - Standard #5 Skills - Instructional Planning and Strategies 3

Standard #5 Skills *Instructional Planning and Strategies*																				
5.S15 Support individuals with exceptionalities in the effective use of vocabulary in multiple environments as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	17%	3%	44%	8	22%	4%	28%	5%	6%	1%	28%	5				
5.S16 Support the use of strategies with individuals with exceptionalities to remember verbal and written directions as																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	6%	1	61%	11	17%	3	39%	7	0%	0%	28%	5				
5.S17 Support the acquisition and use of learning strategies to enhance literacy of individuals with exceptionalities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	11%	2	50%	9	22%	4	22%	4	17%	3	28%	5				
5.S18 Support individuals with exceptionalities in the maintenance and generalization of strategies for effective oral and written communication across environments as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	11%	2	44%	8	33%	6	17%	3	11%	2	28%	5				
5.S19 Support individuals with exceptionalities in their use of augmentative and alternative communication skills and other assistive technology as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	57%	4	0%	0	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	17%	3	39%	7	22%	4	22%	4	11%	2	39%	7				
5.S20 Use and maintain educational and assistive technology for individuals with exception- alities as determined by the instructional team																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	43%	3	14%	1	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0%	17%	3	44%	8	28%	5	28%	5	6%	1	28%	5				

Table 23 - Standard #6 Knowledge – Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

Standard #6 Knowledge *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*														
6.K1 Roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessionals related to instruction, intervention, and direct service														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					0%	0	57%	4	0%	9	29%	2	14%	1
Paras - 18	39%	7	33%	6	11%	2	44%	8	6%	1	22%	4	0%	0
6.K2 Personal and cultural biases and differences that affect one's practice														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					14%	1	43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	22%	4	50%	9	17%	3	28%	5	0%	0	17%	3	0%	0
6.K3 Principles that guide ethical practice														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					0%	0	29%	2	57%	4	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 17	29%	5	41%	7	12%	2	35%	6	0%	0	18%	3	0%	0
6.K4 Professional growth opportunities for continued learning														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					29%	2	71%	5	14%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 18	39%	7	17%	3	28%	5	44%	8	0%	0	11%	2	0%	0

Table 24 - Standard #6 Skills – Professional Learning and Ethical Practice 1

Standard #6 Skills *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*																				
6.S1 Practice within the limits of the defined paraprofessionals role																				
Title & Number of Respondents	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0	6%	1	50%	9	33%	6	33%	6	0%	0	17%	3				
6.S2 Practice within one's skill limits and obtain assistance as needed																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras -18	0%	0	6%	1	44%	8	44%	8	33%	6	0%	0	11%	2				
6.S3 Practice with competence, integrity, and sound judgment																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 18	0%	0	6%	1	28%	5	61%	11	33%	6	0%	0	11%	2				
6.S4 Maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all individuals with exceptionalities, families, and school employees																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras -18	0%	0	0%	0	39%	7	56%	10	33%	6	0%	0	11%	2				
6.S5 Use local policies for confidential communication about team practices																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Paras 18	0%	0	0%	0	28%	5	56%	10	44%	8	6%	1	17%	3				
6.S6 Conduct activities in compliance with applicable laws and policies																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									0%	0	71%	5	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 17	6%	1	12%	2	24%	4	41%	7	35%	6	0%	0	18%	3				

Table 25 - Standard #6 Skills – Professional Learning and Ethical Practice 2

Standard #6 Skills *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*																				
6.S7 Implement legal and ethical practices in behavioral interventions as determined by the instructional team																				
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									0%	0	71%	5	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras 17	0%	0	12%	2	35%	6	29%	5	35%	6	12%	2	18%	3				
6.S8 Report suspected child abuse, suicidal ideation, and dangerous behaviors as required by law, policies, and local procedures																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0	14%	1
Paras - 17	6%	1	6%	1	29%	5	41%	7	41%	7	0%	0	18%	3				
6.S9 Reflect on one's performance to improve practice																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras 17	6%	1	18%	3	24%	4	35%	6	35%	6	0%	0	24%	4				
6.S10 Request and use feedback from supervising professionals																				
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									43%	3	29%	2	14%	1	14%	1	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	2	29%	5	24%	4	29%	5	0%	0	35%	6				

Table 26 - Standard #7 Knowledge - Collaboration

Standard #7 Knowledge *Collaboration*														
7.K1 Purposes of collaborative teams														
Title & Number of Respondents per question	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					0%	0	14%	1	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0
Paras - 17	18%	3	59%	10	24%	4	35%	6	6%	1	18%	3	0%	0
7.K2 Roles and relationships of paraprofessionals and other stakeholders on the instructional team														
	received training		no training		need/want more training		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7					14%	1	29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	0%	0
Paras - 17	24%	4	47%	8	29%	5	35%	6	0%	0	24%	4	0%	0

Table 47 - Standard #7 Skills - Collaboration

Standard #7 Skills *Collaboration*																		
7.S1 Recognize the role of the teacher as leader of the instructional team																		
Title & Number of Respondents per question	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	24%	4	47%	8	35%	6	0%	0	18%	3				
7.S2 Follow chain of command to address policy questions, system issues, and personnel practices																		
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	24%	4	35%	6	29%	5	0%	0	29%	5				
7.S3 Respect role differences of teachers, paraprofessionals, and other professional practitioners																		
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									29%	2	43%	3	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	24%	4	47%	8	29%	5	0%	0	24%	4				
7.S4 Forge respectful relationships with teachers, colleagues, and family members																		
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	24%	4	47%	8	29%	5	0%	0	24%	4				
7.S5 Communicate effectively with stakeholders as determined by the instructional team																		
	No skill		New to skill		Moderat e skill		Highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 16	0%	0	0%	0	56%	9	19%	3	44%	7	0%	0	19%	3				
7.S6 Provide accurate and timely information about individuals with exceptionalities to individuals who have the need and the right to know as determined by the instructional team																		
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	35%	6	35%	6	47%	8	6%	1	29%	5				
7.S7 Participate actively in conferences and team meetings																		
	no skill		new to skill		moderate skill		highly skilled		part of paras job		not part of paras job		teacher & paras discuss it		need/want more training		trained/can train others	
Teachers - 7									14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	35%	6	29%	5	35%	6	12%	2	24%	4				

Table 58 - Perspectives on Working Together (Drago-Severson)

Drago-Seversons' Ways of Knowing	Perspectives on Working Together											
Instrumental	The best way to work together is if everyone just did their job and did it the right way.											
	Title & Number of Respondents per question	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss it with team	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	14%	1	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	24%	4	24%	4	41%	7	12%	2	0%	0
Socializing	Forming a group identity with a common, shared goal that everyone is in agreement with is the best way to work together.											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss it with team	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	14%	1	14%	1	43%	3	0%	0	14%	1
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0	0	24%	4	29%	5	47%	8	0%	0
Self-authorizing	A complex network of people with differing values, opinions, experiences, and perspectives joining together for a common purpose is the best way to work together.											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss it with team	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	0%	0	43%	3	43%	3	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0	1	29%	5	29%	5	24%	4	0%	0
Team Development	My special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on working together.											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss it with team	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	29%	2	0%	0	43%	3	29%	2	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0	2	18%	3	29%	5	35%	6	6%	1

Table 69 - Perspectives on Decision Making (Drago-Severson)

Drago-Seversons' Ways of Knowing	Prespectives on Decision Making											
Instrumental	Decisions have right or wrong aspects with no in-between or gray area there is a right way and wrong way to do things											
	Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it withteam**	
	Teachers - 7	29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 17	12%	2	53%	9	29%	5	6%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Socializing	It is essential that decisions are a group consensus or agreement.												
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it withteam**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	29%	2	43%	3	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	1	29%	5	53%	9	12%	2	0%	0
Self-authorizing	Decisions have many possible paths. Making decisions is an exploration of many options. There is not necessarily one "best “decision, but many possible decisions each one with pros and cons												
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it withteam**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	0%	0	29%	2	43%	3	29%	2	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	18%	3	58%	10	24%	4	0%	0
Team Development	My special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development in decision making												
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it withteam**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	14%	1	71%	5	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	18%	3	24%	4	35%	6	18%	3	6%	1

Table 30 - Perspectives on Interpersonal Skills (Drago-Severson)

Drago-Seversons' Ways of Knowing	Perspectives on Interpersonal Skills											
Instrumental	Cooperation is arguing or persuading others to agree to the right thing to-do and the right way to do it. The right way is dictated by the rules.											
	Title & Number of Respondents per question	Strongly Desagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss with team	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	57%	4	29%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 17	29%	5	47%	8	12%	2	12%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Socializing	Cooperation is trying to build agreement. It is essential to minimize conflict, disagreement, and differences.											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss with team	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	29%	2	0%	0	57%	4	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 16	6%	1	6%	1	31%	5	38%	6	19%	3	0%	0
Self-authorizing	Cooperation is ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, regardless their opinions. Celebrates differences and makes room for all perspectives. The goal is to work toward fair and reasonable compromise.											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss with team	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	0%	0	14%	1	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	12%	2	47%	8	41%	7	0%	0
Team Development	My special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on interpersonal skills											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agee		Discuss with team	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	29%	2	57%	4	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 16	12%	0	18%	2	18%	4	29%	6	18%	2	0%	2

Table 31 - Perspectives on Conflict Resolution and Negotiation (Drago-Severson)

Drago-Seversons' Ways of Knowing	Perspectives on Conflict Resolution and Negotiation											
Instrumental	The focus in conflict resolution should be on concrete identification and definition of the conflict, usually only who is right and who is wrong.											
	Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Strongly Desagree**		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss with team**	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 17	41%	7	29%	5	24%	4	6%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Socializing	The focus in conflict resolution should be on acknowledging the existence of and identifying the nature of the conflict and attending to others' feelings about it.											
		Strongly Desagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss with team**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	0%	0	57%	4	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	12%	1	24%	4	47%	8	24%	4	6%	1
Self-authorizing	The focus in conflict resolution should be on emphasizing the potentially useful nature of the conflict and clarifying an issue that will lead to better communication and relationship.											
		Strongly Desagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss with team**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	0%	0	43%	3	43%	3	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	6%	1	58%	10	24%	4	6%	1
Team Development	My special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development in conflict resolution and negotiation.											
		Strongly Desagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss with team**	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	0%	0	14%	1	71%	5	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	41%	7	35%	6	6%	1	12%	2

Table 32 - Perspectives on Communication Skills (Drago-Severson)

Drago-Seversons' Ways of Knowing	Perspectives on Communication Skills											
Instrumental	Communication is stating rules, opinions, concrete goals, and facts. It is not concerned with theories, philosophies, or other people's feelings accepts they have an impact on getting the job done.											
	Title & Number of Respondents per question	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it with team**	
	Teachers - 7	14%	1	71%	5	14%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
	Paras - 17	24%	4	41%	7	18%	3	18%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Socializing	Communication is about feelings and a concern and sense of responsibility for others feelings and experience. It's about makings sure everyone understands and agrees with each other.											
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it with team**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	29%	2	43%	3	0%	0	14%	1
	Paras - 17	0%	0	18%	3	18%	3	65%	11	0%	0	0%	0
Self-authorizing	Communication is about feelings, ideas, and philosophies in attempt to express one's view within larger group, to explain and understand differences, similarities, and complexities of everyone's perspective.											
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it with team**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	14%	1	14%	1	29%	2	43%	3	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	65%	11	29%	5	0%	0
Team Development	My special education team (supervising teacher/staff & education technicians) would benefit from more staff development on communication skills.											
		Strongly Disagree		**Disagree**		**Neutral**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agee**		**Discuss it with team**	
	Teachers - 7	0%	0	29%	2	14%	1	29%	2	14%	1	0%	0
	Paras - 17	0%	0	6%	1	29%	5	53%	9	12%	2	0%	0