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PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001  
ON PARAPROFESSIONALS

by

Heather G. Nelson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Brigham Young University

August 2005

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Heather G. Nelson

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Betty Y. Ashbaker, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn K. Wilder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott E. Ferrin

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Heather G. Nelson in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, table, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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Date

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Betty Y. Ashbaker  
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

---

Tina T. Dyches  
Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

---

K. Richard Young  
Dean, McKay School of Education

## ABSTRACT

### PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 ON PARAPROFESSIONALS

Heather G. Nelson

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Master of Science

Using the states' paraprofessional requirements, this study explored the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) on the paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction as seen through the perceptions of paraprofessional and teacher teams. The literature review discloses data regarding the implementation of NCLB paraprofessional requirements into the accountability plans of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Tables synthesize the assessments used by states to meet NCLB paraprofessional requirements. The Council for Exceptional Children performance-based standards for paraeducators provides the framework for the development of two survey instruments, which measured the perceptions of paraprofessionals and cooperating teachers on the training, knowledge, and skills utilized during instruction.

Two survey instruments were developed to gain insight into the perceptions of paraprofessional and supervising teacher teams. The perceptions of the teams were compared to those among the paraprofessionals themselves. There were significant statistical differences

between both the teams and the paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education or those with a high school diploma or equivalency.

The differences between the paraprofessionals and the teachers suggested that supervising teachers perceived both groups of paraprofessionals were lacking in training, knowledge, and skills. Paraprofessionals with higher education perceived a similar lack in their own abilities. However, paraprofessionals with high school diplomas perceived their ability as greater than that perceived by the teachers.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Public Law 107-110 or the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is the first time that the federal government has set hiring requirements for paraprofessionals working in federally funded schools (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003). The qualifications of NCLB dictate that all instructional paraprofessionals, except those working in translating or parent involvement positions, have at least two years of higher education, have obtained an associates degree or higher, or have demonstrated through an academic assessment, the knowledge and ability to assist in the readiness or the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics by 2006. These qualifications and general requirements have established the federal requirements for paraprofessionals.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Although the federal government has set these requirements, it is the states' responsibility to develop and to implement a plan of accountability, which certifies the intersection of federal and state standards. Documentation of compliance with the new federal requirements is to be a written notice from principals of schools operating a program under NCLB (2001) sec. 1114 and 1115. The U.S. Office of Education collects these data. However, this methodology of data collection only measures compliance, and lacks crucial elements that indicate whether compliance with NCLB paraprofessional requirements (PR) adequately prepares paraprofessionals to assist in instruction. Congress acknowledges the insufficient data for the requirement. The Executive Summary- 21st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2003) stated:

lack of accurate data adversely affects the capacity of SEA [State Education Agencies] and LEA [Local Education Agencies] to plan and implement policies and systems to

improve the quality of paraeducator performance and to develop comprehensive cost-effective education programs for their paraeducator workforce that recognize the similarities in the skills required by all paraeducators (sec. III).

There is a need for research into whether NCLB (2001) PR has influenced the paraprofessional's "knowledge and ability to assist in instruction" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.). This study outlines the states' paraprofessional requirements and surveys the perceptions of paraprofessionals and supervising teachers on the impact that NCLB PR has on the paraprofessional's ability to assist in instruction.

### *Statement of Purpose*

Since there is little pertinent research in the area of NCLB (2001) paraprofessional requirements (PR), the literature review is based on NCLB, Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA, 1997), Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEIA or IDEA, 2004), and the states' implementation of the law into their own accountability plans. Preliminary research on these plans outlines the states' use of NCLB, the No Child Left Behind Non-Regulatory Guidance (2004), and assessments (see Appendix A).

The literature review established a foundation of the states' compliance to NCLB (2001) "highly qualified" paraprofessional requirements. The study then surveyed paraprofessionals and supervising teachers. This explored their perceptions of compliance with NCLB PR the paraprofessional's ability to assist in instruction and the teacher's perception of the paraprofessional's ability in providing instructional support.

The identified variables, defined in the literature review, facilitated exploration into NCLB PR and how it influences the paraprofessional's "knowledge and ability to assist in instructing" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.). The setting is a random sample of Utah Title I school-wide programs. Participants at selected school sites were a paraprofessional and

supervising teacher who work with students with disabilities in a special education setting (resource, self-contained, inclusion, or general education). Two surveys were developed based upon the Council for Exceptional Children Performance-Based Standards for Paraeducators.

### *Research Questions*

Surveys were paired to allow an analysis of the perception data for the research questions.

1. Are there significant differences between the paired paraprofessionals' perceptions and the supervising teacher's perceptions of the paraprofessionals' knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?
2. Are there significant differences between the perceptions of paraprofessionals with a high school diploma/equivalency and the perceptions of paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education on their knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Definition of Paraprofessional Requirements*

The topic of paraprofessional qualification in NCLB is new to the educational literature. Due to lack of research, this literature review outlines the integration of federal laws (No Child Left Behind Act of, Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997, and Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act of 2004) into state paraprofessional requirements (PR). To understand the similarities in each state's interpretation of NCLB PR, a table of the laws cited and the assessments chosen were summarized.

The similarities in the states' interpretation of NCLB (2001) PR brought forth the question if compliance with NCLB PR facilitated the paraprofessional's "knowledge and ability to assist in instructing" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.). No information relative to this question was available within the literature. Therefore, a foundation was created through the development, dissemination, and analysis of a survey based upon four of the ten performance standards developed by the Council for Exceptional Children. The ten performance-based standards were overviewed and four were utilized to create the surveys.

#### *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) amended Title I, in the largest educational quality improvement effort in American history, by setting high standards for paraprofessionals. This was due to their critical role in education (Student Achievement and School Accountability Conference, 2002). The general requirements for paraprofessionals are to be consistent with the following responsibilities: one-on-one tutoring, assist with classroom management, assist in computer lab, parental involvement activities, translator, support in library or media center, and provide instructional services to students under direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher

(NCLB, 2001). NCLB further outlined that all instructional paraprofessionals, except those working in translating or parent involvement positions, had either: (a) two years of higher education or an associate degree or higher, or (b) a high school diploma/equivalency and pass a rigorous assessment. In theory, the rigorous assessment measures the paraprofessional's knowledge and ability to assist in the readiness or the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics.

In addition to the NCLB (2001) paraprofessional requirements, a compliance timeline was implemented. Paraprofessionals working in Title I programs had two timelines: one for newly hired paraprofessionals and another for currently employed paraprofessionals. Requirements for newly hired paraprofessionals in the Title I program began on January 8, 2002, while existing paraprofessionals had four years, until 2006. Again, the exceptions are paraprofessionals who work in translation or parental involvement activities. Paraprofessionals currently working are required to have a high school diploma or the equivalent (NCLB). Explaining the requirements, Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., the director of Compensatory Education Programs, wrote the following:

All paraprofessionals hired after January 8 must have (1) completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; (2) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or (3) 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, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness). Paraprofessionals hired before January 8 and working in a program supported with Title I funds must meet these requirements in four years. Our policy is not finalized, but our current thinking is (J.F. Johnson, personal communication, April 20, 2002).



Despite the finality in the prior statement, the Department of Education announced an extension of the January 8, 2006 timeline. The extension was granted because rural schools and new Title I programs had difficulties in meeting the NCLB (2001) paraprofessional qualifications. The new timeline grants paraprofessionals an extra semester (end of the academic 2005-2006 school year) to meet NCLB PR (A. Brownstein, personal communication, June 15, 2005).

#### *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*

Following the passage of NCLB (2001), Congress worked to reauthorize IDEA (1997) to accommodate individuals with disabilities more fully into NCLB requirements. Previously, IDEA outlined that “a state may allow paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained and supervised under state standards to assist in the provision of special education and related services” (IDEA, sec. 186(f)). In the 108<sup>th</sup> session of the House of Representatives, Congress passed the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act of 2003 (H.R. 1350) which mirrors IDEA with only a few changes in defining compliance. State standards shall “allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State Law, regulations, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities under this part.” (HR 1350, 14, B (iii)). On May 13, 2004, the Senate resolved to pass H.R. 1350 with amendments. The legislation, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA or IDEA '04), did not affect the terminology used to define state standards regarding paraprofessionals in H.R. 1350. With the preservation of the language in the final reauthorization, there is a congruent flow on the federal level between NCLB and IDEA '04 concerning PR. Thus, the change from IDEA '97 to IDEA '04 had little effect on state compliance with the NCLB PR outlined in their accountability plans.

### *State Implementation*

It is the states' responsibility, in a single accountability plan, to show the progress of all local educational agencies in accordance with the new federal requirements (NCLB, 2001). The accountability plan is a system that is "tied directly to a state's standards and assessments. All schools and districts were included in the system and were identified as a high performing or low performing school" (Minnesota powerpoint, 2003, p. 4). Once the state's system illustrates a functional flow of accountability between State Education Agencies (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEA), the U.S. Department of Education reviews and sanctions the plan. The U.S. Department of Education approves states to operate under their current accountability plan. However, with the approval, most state superintendents received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education outlining further action before they receive final approval (Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals, 2004). During the stage of interpretation and finalization, states looked to other resources to define PR. One resource made available by the U.S. Department of Education was the No Child Left Behind Non-Regulatory Guidance (2002).

*No Child Left Behind Non-Regulatory Guidance.* The development and implementation of the paraprofessional standards and assessments for most states originated from the NCLB Title 1 Paraprofessionals Non-Regulatory Guidance (NCBL-NRG, 2002). NCLB-NRG assisted states in the interpretation of NCLB as they incorporated the PR into their accountability plans. NCLB-NRG was written to answer frequently asked questions in five categories: Section A, General Information; Section B, Requirements for Paraprofessionals; Section C, Paraprofessional Assessment; Section D, Related Issues; and Section E, Funding Issues. The questions and subsequent answers in each section were numbered for easy reference. For example, section A-1 asks the question "Title I, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act,

has new requirements for paraprofessionals. Why is this important?” (NCLB-NRG, p. 2). The United States Department of Education gave their interpretation of the law for answers.

As of February 26, 2005, 49 states and the District of Columbia responded to inquiries regarding paraprofessional credentialing state standards. Vermont did not respond. Of the 50 States that responded, 43 directly cited or interpreted various sections of the NCLB-NRG into their accountability plans (see Appendix A for information on each state’s incorporation of NCLB (2001) and NCLB-NRG into their accountability plans). Forty-three states referenced some or all of NCLB-NRG’s five categories. Twenty-four states referenced NCLB, while one state cited the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

States utilized the NCLB-NRG to clarify NCLB (2001) and bring validity to their accountability plans. The questions and answers found in sections B-1, B-2 and C-5 of the NCLB-NRG were referenced more frequently within states’ accountability plans than the actual body of the guidance. Section B-1 (“What are the requirements for Title I paraprofessionals?” p.2) had 32 state references. There were 31 state references for section B-2, (“The statutory language refers to ‘two years of study at an institution of higher education.’ What does ‘two years mean’?” p.2) In addition, 28 states referenced the question C-2, (“Will the U.S. Department of Education approve proposed State or local assessments?” p. 2).

Adopting NCLB (2001) and NCLB-NRG regulations into the states’ accountability plans delineates paraprofessionals into two requirement groups. Group One paraprofessionals includes paraprofessionals who have a high school diploma/equivalency and have taken the state rigorous assessment. Group Two includes paraprofessionals who have two years or more of higher education.

*Assessments.* According to NCLB (2001), employing paraprofessionals with at least an associate degree is the desired standard for highly qualified criteria. However, lawmakers

seemed aware that it was unlikely that every paraprofessional would meet the higher education standard (NCLB). Therefore, they created the option of a rigorous assessment to measure a paraprofessional's knowledge and skill base. According to the NCLB and NCLB-NRG, each SEA and LEA needed an assessment that was valid and reliable. At that point, the SEA chose to either require an assessment for all the paraprofessionals or allow the LEA to adopt their own assessment. Regardless of who made the decision, the requirements of NCLB needed to be met. NCLB did not require a paper and pencil test, only that the assessment be valid and reliable.

There were four paper and pencil assessments (WorkKeys, ParaEducator, Praxis I, and ParaPro) created by testing services. Many states adopted some or all of these assessments as their measure of competency (see Appendix A to match state and assessment). Each assessment will be briefly explained. However, the ParaPro is the assessment cited by the majority of states.

American College Testing Program (ACT) created the WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants as an assessment/job profiling. This has a broad skill base suited for career and educational decisions. The key components assessed are reading for information, writing or business writing, and applied mathematics. Unique to WorkKeys (2005) is the option to have a structured observation that is completed onsite by a "knowledgeable observer" who assesses the paraprofessional's instructional skills (WorkKeys).

The ParaEducator, created by the Master Teacher ParaEducator Learning Network (2005), consists of two modules. Module 1 contains training and assessment and Module 2 (optional) contains course work that can be downloaded from a computer and placed into a portfolio. Module 1 is comprised of two components: (1) instructional support and (2) knowledge and application. Instructional support contains 30 questions measuring the concepts of reading, writing, and math. The knowledge and application portion of the test contains 75

questions measuring reading, writing, basic math, fractions/decimal/percents, algebra, and geometry (Master Teacher).

Educational Testing Services (ETS) created both the Praxis I and the ParaPro. The Praxis I assessment measures reading, writing, and mathematics skills on a general basis and is designed for college students. However, the ParaPro assessment is a test created specifically for paraprofessionals to meet the NCLB paraprofessional requirements (see Table 1). It measures six content categories, which represent either the paraprofessional's knowledge base of the skills - reading, writing, or math - or the paraprofessional's ability to implement the above skills in an instructional setting. The core content knowledge questions represent an approximate 60% of the exam while the implementation of instruction represents approximately 39% (Educational Testing Services, 2004).

Thirty-seven states, counties, and/or school districts adopted the ParaPro Assessment (see Table 2). Each state then established a minimum score (NCLB-NRG, 2002). Texas' Region 19 school district has the highest required score of 467, while Louisiana has the lowest required score of 450.

A majority of SEA and LEA utilized the assessments created by testing services and a few states developed their own assessments to measure paraprofessional competency.

Table 1

*ParaPro Content*

Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate % of Examination
Reading Skills and Knowledge	18	20%
Application of Reading Skills and Knowledge of Classroom Instruction	12	13%
Mathematics Skills and Knowledge	18	20%
Application of Mathematics Skills and Knowledge of Classroom Instruction	12	13%
Writing Skills and Knowledge	18	20%
Application of Writing Skills and Knowledge of Classroom Instruction	12	13%

From Education Testing Services. Retrieved February 23, 2004 from

<http://www.ets.org/parapro/index.html>

Table 2

*State Adoption of the ParaPro Assessment*

State, City, County, District	Required score	State reference for assessments
Arizona	459	NCLB sec. 1119 C,D
Arkansas	457	None
California, Ventura County	458*	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Colorado	460	NCLB-NRG
Connecticut	457	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Delaware	459	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Florida, Consortium	464*	NCLB-NRG
Georgia	456	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Hawaii	459	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Idaho	460	NCLB-NRG
Illinois	460	NCLB-NRG
Indiana	460	NCLB-NRG
Kansas	455	NCLB sec. 1119
Louisiana	450	None
Maine	459	NCLB-NRG
Maryland	455	NCLB sec. 1119
Massachusetts	464	NCLB-NRG
Minnesota	460	None
Missouri	458	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Nebraska	456	NCLB-NRG
Nevada	460	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
<i>New Jersey</i>	456	NCLB

Table 2 (Continued)

*State Adoption of the ParaPro Assessment*

State (City, County, District)	Required score	State reference for assessments
Minnesota	460	None
New Mexico	457	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
North Dakota	464	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Ohio	456	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Oregon	455	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Rhode Island	461	NCLB-NRG
South Carolina	456	NCLB-NRG
South Dakota	461	NCLB-NRG
Tennessee	456	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Texas Region 19	467*	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Texas, Fort Worth Independence School District	461	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Texas N.E. Independence School District	465	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Utah	460	NCLB-NRG
Virginia	455	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG
Washington	461	NCLB sec. 1119/NCLB-NRG ESEA 2113c
<i>Wyoming</i>	462	None

Note: \*Verify scores with individual school districts. (Educational Testing Services, 2004).



*Other Interpretations.* Three states cited interpretations unique to their own states' measure of paraprofessional standards: Florida referenced the Florida Teacher Certification Examination Knowledge Test (FTCE); Kentucky referenced its' paraprofessional assessment - the Kentucky Paraprofessional Assessment (KPA); Michigan referenced the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification – Basic Skills (MTTC), and Oklahoma referenced the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET) (see Appendix A for other interpretations).

Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Utah chose the option to represent the knowledge and instructional abilities of current paraprofessionals through an alternative assessment of a portfolio that allows paraprofessionals to display, through permanent products, their knowledge base and their ability to assist in instruction. NCLB allowed states to utilize this criterion as a rigorous measurement of a paraprofessional's knowledge and skill level. SEA and LEA who implemented portfolios developed and used standardized guidelines to ensure fairness.

#### *CEC Performance Based Standards*

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recognizes the need for uniform guidelines. In conjunction with the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, CEC developed, validated, and approved the first set of national paraprofessional standards. Many states used this as a guideline for portfolios. The ten CEC performance-based standards (which refer to paraprofessionals as paraeducators) were validated through samples of paraprofessionals from professional organizations: CEC, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers (CEC, 2004).

Each standard outlines the knowledge, content, and skill applications needed for paraprofessionals to (a) assist in the instruction of students with exceptionalities, and (b) work with instructional team members (teachers, therapists, consultants, and administrators). The

standards focus on the foundation of the state core curriculum along with the development and characteristics of learners, individual learning differences, instructional strategies, learning environments/social interactions, language, instructional planning, assessment, and professional and ethical practices (see Table 3).

Each standard lists one or two key concepts in the content knowledge with specific skill objectives for paraprofessionals to implement. Although all ten standards were viewed as important for paraprofessionals, Standards 1 (Knowledge foundation), 4 (Instructional strategies), 5 (Learning environment/social interactions), and 7 (Instructional planning) concentrate on the knowledge and skills paraprofessionals need to possess in order to effectively assist a teacher in instruction.

These four standards were consistent with the outline of paraprofessional responsibilities in NCLB (2001): one-on-one tutor, assist with classroom management, and provide instructional services to students under direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. Validated CEC performance-based standards create the foundation upon which this study compares the effects of the different NCLB paths to PR to the paraprofessional's ability to assist in instruction.

Table 3

*CEC Performance-Based Standards for Paraeducators*

Standard 1: Foundations	
Knowledge	Skills
1. Purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs	1. None in addition to the Common Core
2. Basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities	
Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners	
Knowledge	Skills
1. Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life	1. None in addition to the Common Core
Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences	
Knowledge	Skills
1. Rights and responsibilities of families and children as they relate to individuals learning needs	1. Demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of individuals and families
2. Indicators of abuse and neglect	
Standard 4: Instructional Strategies	
<i>Knowledge</i>	Skills
<i>1. Basic instructional and remedial strategies and materials</i>	1. Use strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives
<i>2. Basic technologies appropriate to individuals with exceptional learning needs</i>	2. Assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials as directed
	3. Use strategies as directed to facilitate effective integration into various settings
	4. Use strategies that promote the learner's independence as directed
	5. Use strategies as directed to increase the individuals' independence and confidence

Table 3 (Continued)

*CEC Performance-Based Standards for Paraeducators***Standard 5: Learning Environments/Social Interactions**

Knowledge	Skills
1. Demands of various learning environments	1. Establish and maintain rapport with learners.
2. Rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs	2. Use universal precautions and assist in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment. 3. Use strategies for managing behavior as directed. 4. Use strategies as directed, in a variety of settings, to assist in the development of social skills.

**Standard 6: Language**

Knowledge	Skills
1. Characteristics of appropriate communication with stakeholders	1. None in addition to Common Core

**Standard 7: Instructional Planning**

Knowledge	Skills
1. Non in addition to Common Core	1. Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed. 2. Prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning as directed.

**Standard 8: Assessment**

<i>Knowledge</i>	Skills
<i>1. Rationale for assessment</i>	1. Demonstrate basic collection techniques as directed. 2. Make and document objective observation as directed.

Table 3 (Continued)

*CEC Performance-based Standards for Paraeducators*

## Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice

Knowledge	Skills
1. Ethical practices for confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs	1. Perform responsibilities as directed in a manner consistent with laws and policies.
2. Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's ability to work with others	2. Follow instructions of the professional.
	3. Demonstrate problem-solving, flexible thinking, conflict management techniques, and analysis of personal strengths and preferences.
	4. Act as a role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
	5. Demonstrate commitment of assisting learners in achieving their highest potential.

## Standard 10: Collaboration

Knowledge	Skills
1. Common concerns of families of individuals with exceptional learning needs	1. Assist in collecting and providing objective, accurate information to professionals.
2. Roles of stakeholders in planning an individual program	2. Collaborate with stakeholders as directed.
	3. Foster respectful and beneficial relationships.
	4. Participate as directed in conferences as members of the educational team.
	5. Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and those of professionals.

(Council for Exceptional Children, 2004).

### *Summary*

The lack of literature on NCLB (2001) PR created a need to develop foundational information. The integration of NCLB PR into the states' accountability plans shows similarities across the nation in each state's implementation. Most states utilized the NCLB-NRG to understand and to implement NCLB PR. In addition, most require a standardized test for all paraprofessionals. However, a few states opt to use a portfolio to measure paraprofessionals' knowledge and skills. The Council for Exceptional Children performance-based standards for paraeducators set the accepted knowledge and skills necessary to assist in instruction.

With no prior study instruments available, two survey instruments were created. The content of the survey instruments were based upon the outlined information within the literature review. A study was conducted to create a base for future study into NCLB PR and the paraprofessionals' "knowledge and ability to assist in instructing" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### *Design*

The outlined information within the literature review facilitated the need for a study regarding PR. Without a valid instrument to measure the paraprofessionals' knowledge and ability to assist in instruction, the researcher created two survey instruments. The surveys were based upon 4 out of the 10 validated CEC performance-based standards: Foundations; Instructional Strategies; Learning Environments/Social Interactions; and Instructional Planning. Each of the four standards focused on instruction. Utilizing these standards allowed the researcher to gain insight into the paraprofessionals' "knowledge and ability to assist in instructing" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.).

Each survey collected data on the paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction. The data consisted of demographic, compliance, and instructional information. The paraprofessional survey instrument collected data on the perceptions of paraprofessionals regarding their compliance with NCLB (2001) PR and their ability to assist in instruction. The teacher survey instrument collected data on the teachers' perception of the paraprofessional and their compliance with NCLB PR and their ability to assist in instruction. The surveys were designed to facilitate two comparisons: (1) the perceptions of the paraprofessional and the supervising teacher and (2) the two NCLB PR pathways: paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education compared with paraprofessionals who had a high school diploma or equivalency.

A *t*-test explored whether there were differences between perceptions of the paraprofessional and the teachers regarding the paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction. In addition, an analysis was done to explore the significant differences between the

paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education and the paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency.

### *Participants*

#### *Paraprofessional Participants*

Participants were selected for the study based upon their instructional role with students with disabilities. The participants involved in this study included 2 male and 13 female with varying educational emphases, years of experience, and training backgrounds. Initially it was anticipated that there were three paraprofessional participants and three teacher participants at each site to meet an  $n=72$ . However, the random sample of schools placed a majority the schools in rural settings. Only one school met the anticipated number of participants. The other sites filled out surveys based upon the number of paraprofessionals working within the desired educational setting. This oversight in the selection of participants limited the study to  $n=30$  (15 teachers and 15 paraprofessionals).

The paraprofessionals who participated in the study were delineated into two sub-groups: Group One was paraprofessionals who had a high school diploma/equivalency. Group Two were paraprofessionals who had at least two years of higher education (48 credit hours) or have an associate degree. Table 4 gives the details of the demographics of the 15 participating paraprofessionals.

The demographics of the paraprofessionals indicated paraprofessionals were predominately Caucasian females. A majority of the paraprofessionals were in the age range of 46 years or older. Dividing the paraprofessionals by NCLB PR, nine paraprofessionals had a high school diploma or equivalency and six paraprofessionals had an associate degree or higher.



Table 4

*Paraprofessional Demographic Information*

Demographics	Number of Respondents
Gender	
Male	2
Female	13
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	14
African American	0
Asian	0
Native American	0
Other (Hispanic)	1
Age range	
18-25 years of age	1
26-35 years of age	3
36-45 years of age	2
46-55 years of age	5
56 years or older	4
Level of education	
High School diploma/Equivalency	9
2 year of high education (48 credit hours)	2
Associate Degree	1
Bachelor degree or higher	3
Emphasis of degree	
Early Childhood Education	1
Elementary Education	1
Business Law	1
Ballet	1
Years of paraprofessional experience	
0-2 years	4
3-5 years	3
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	4
16 + years	2

Table 4 (Continued)

<i>Paraprofessional Demographic Information</i>	
Demographics	Number of Respondents
Classroom setting in which a majority of time is spent	
Special education resource	6
Special education self-contained	6
Inclusion classes	2
General education	1
In-service training per school year	
0-5 hours	3
6-10 hours	1
11-15 hours	6
16-20 hours	2
21 + hours	3
School setting	
High School	1
Jr. High/Middle School	9
Elementary	4
Early Childhood	0
Combination of Schools	1
Number of students paraprofessionals working with	
1 student	1
2-4 students	0
5-10 students	6
11-15 students	7
16-20 students	0
21 + students	1
Membership in professional organizations	
National Education Association	2
Council for Exceptional Children	0
National Resource Center of Paraeducators	0
<i>State/Local organizations</i>	2

Those paraprofessionals with higher education included: one paraprofessional with an associate degree in early childhood education; one paraprofessional had a Bachelor degree in Elementary Education; and two paraprofessionals had Masters degrees in Business Law and Ballet, respectively.

Interestingly, there were a higher number of respondents from the Secondary schools than there were from the Elementary schools. Nine of the participants were from the Junior High/Middle School setting. The majority of the paraprofessional participants worked in special education classroom with two outliers who worked either individually with students or in a class size of 21 or more. The number of students that paraprofessionals worked with ranged between 5 and 15.

The years of experience were rather evenly dispersed among the categories. Four paraprofessionals were new to the profession, while two paraprofessionals had been working in their positions for over 16 years. All the paraprofessionals felt they had received some training. The perception of training hours ranged; however, most paraprofessionals felt they had received 11 training hours or more. Due to the low number of paraprofessionals who belong to professional organizations, the training received must have come through the supervising teacher, the school, or the district.

#### *Teacher Participants*

Since paraprofessionals “may not provide any instructional services to students unless the paraprofessional is working under the direct supervision of a teacher consistent with NCLB section 1119” (NCLB sec. 1119 g. 3. A.), pairing with supervising teachers was needed to compare the two perceptions. The demographics of the participating supervising teacher are shown below in Table 5.

Table 5

*Supervising Teacher Demographic Information*

Demographics	Number of Respondents
Gender	
Male	2
Female	13
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	15
African American	0
Asian	0
Native American	0
Other (Hispanic)	0
Age range	
18-25 years of age	2
26-35 years of age	5
36-45 years of age	3
46-55 years of age	4
56 years or older	1
Level of education	
Bachelor Degree	10
Masters Degree	5
Doctorate Degree	0
Emphasis of degree	
Child Development and Special Education	3
Elementary Education and Special Education	4
Special Education	5
Social Science and Special Education	3
Years of teaching experience	
0-2 years	2
3-5 years	4
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	0
16 + years	6

Table 5 (Continued)

<i>Supervising Teacher Demographic Information</i>	
Demographics	Number of Respondents
Classroom setting in which a majority of time is spent	
Special education resource	7
Special education self-contained	7
Inclusion classes	0
General education	1
Previous supervisor training of paraprofessionals	
Yes	13
No	2
School setting	
High School	0
Jr. High/Middle School	9
Elementary	4
Early Childhood	0
Combination of Schools	1
Class size	
Individual	0
2-4 students	0
5-10 students	7
11-15 students	0
16-20 students	5
21 + students	3
Membership to professional organizations	
National Education Association	8
Council for Exceptional Children	6
National Resource Center of Paraeducators	0
<i>State/Local organizations</i>	8

In comparison to the paraprofessional demographics, teachers were similar in ethnicity and gender. The teachers also were similar in their classroom setting and the average number of students with whom they worked. Their age range differed in that the majority of teachers were younger than 45 years of age. A comparison of the age of the teachers with their years of experience and education was done. The teachers with more years of experience had a bachelor degree, while the teachers with fewer years of experience had a Masters degree. Most of the paraprofessionals, 13 out of 15, had previous supervisor experience.

Unlike the paraprofessionals, many of the teachers belonged to multiple professional organizations. Only four paraprofessionals belonged organizations.

### *Setting*

The researcher obtained a list of Title I schools from the Utah State Office of Education (K. Wilkins, personal communication, March 16, 2005). Within the 40 school districts in the State of Utah, 225 schools meet the state and federal standards for Title I school-wide programs (TI-SWP). In order to qualify as a TI-SWP in Utah, forty percent or more of the students enrolled in the school must qualify to receive free or reduced school lunch (Title I, sec. 1114). Within a TI-SWP, all students (regardless of socio-economic family status) are eligible for services.

The defined setting was a stratified random sample of six TI-SWP elementary schools and six TI-SWP secondary schools. Within the twelve schools, the setting was narrowed to special education programs utilizing paraprofessionals. Special education programs, as defined by this study, were educational settings in which students with special needs receive instruction (resource, self-contained, inclusion, or general education classes).

## *Instrumentation*

### *Development*

Two instruments were used for this study. The survey instruments collected data on the demographics, the compliance, and the instructional ability of paraprofessionals (see Appendices B and C). Each instrument contained 38 questions/statements and had three sections: demographic information, defining highly qualified paraprofessionals, and defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals. Section 1 required the respondents to a circle the letter that most accurately indicated their answer. However, both Section 2 and Section 3 differ because the respondents were asked to mark the box that corresponded with their level of agreement or disagreement on a 4-point Likert scale.

Section 1 of the surveys was designed to gather demographic information from the paraprofessionals and supervising teachers which included; age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, years of experience, classroom and school setting, classroom size, and enrollment in professional organizations (see Table 4 and 5).

Section 2 contained questions that measured participants' understanding of and compliance with NCLB (2001) PR. If respondents did not comply with the NCLB PR, they circled the items on which they were working to meet compliance. One question asked respondents if they belonged to any of the following professional organizations: National Education Association, Council for Exceptional Children, National Resource Center for Paraeducators, and state/local organizations. This question allowed the researcher to see if paraprofessionals and teachers had access to information from professional organizations.

Section 3 contained "I" statements based upon the knowledge and skills previously presented under the CEC performance based Standards 1, 4, 5, and 7. The respondent checked

the level of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale that consisted of “1” Agree, “2” Partially Agree, “3” Partially Disagree, and “4” Disagree. The statements measured the perception of training, instructional knowledge, and applied skills. All statements were posed in two different ways, except for the statements on training. This attempted to measure agreement within the participants’ response. In the paraprofessional survey, the questions were stated as “I have the skills to apply behavioral strategies in managing student behavior.” In the teacher survey, questions mirrored the paraprofessionals with the adaptation of “The paraprofessionals I supervise have the skills to apply behavioral strategies in managing student behavior.”

Each instrument was field-tested. First, the initial draft was given to four paraprofessionals and four supervising teachers who were not involved in the study but varied in years of experience. Paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers were asked to critically assess the survey on clarity of instruction, questions, and statements. In addition, they were asked if questions and statements were easy to answer in relationship to the options given.

The paraprofessionals who met the highly qualified requirements opined that marking questions 14, 15, and 16 was redundant and did not need to be answered since they already meet NCLB (2001) PR. Therefore, in the study, paraprofessionals who answered “yes” to question 13 were asked to skip questions 14, 15, and 16.

After the respondents answered the questions, the researcher compared each survey answer to see if the responses were the same for similar questions. A comparison was also drawn between the responses of the paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers. Both comparisons were used to measure agreement in the response within the survey and between the teacher and paraprofessional on the paraprofessional training, knowledge, and ability. With an agreement of 70% within responses for the similar questions and 70% agreement between the responses of



paraprofessionals and their supervising teacher, a second field-test was administered. (Agreement was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the total number of agreements and disagreements then multiplying by 100 to equal the percent of agreement.) However, due to time and budget constraints, the survey was not checked for validity and reliability.

The second field-test was given to another set of four paraprofessionals and four supervising teachers. The paraprofessionals and supervising teachers were not involved in the study and varied in years of experience and NCLB (2001) PR compliance. Their participation was timed to measure a quick and efficient survey completion time. The average survey completion was eight minutes. After response time was measured, the participants were asked about the clarity of the questions and ease of survey.

### *Instrumentation Results*

After the collecting the data, the researcher analyzed each section of the survey instrument to determine whether the instruments were effective during the study. Section 1: Demographic information was analyzed and discussed under *Participants*. Section 2: Defining highly qualified, and Section 3: Defining roles and responsibilities, were analyzed to measure the agreement within the participants' responses and between the responses of the paraprofessionals and their supervising teacher.

*Section 2.* Section 2 of the survey instruments determined the paraprofessionals' perception of "highly qualified" or compliance to NCLB PR. Paraprofessionals were categorized into groups. Group One contained paraprofessionals with a high school diploma/equivalency. Group Two contained paraprofessionals with 2 years or more of higher

education or an associate degree. The supervising teachers were paired with the paraprofessionals they supervised.

The five questions within the survey instruments measured the perception of the definition of highly qualified. In a “yes” or “no” response, paraprofessionals indicated whether they understood NCLB (2001) PR, with “yes” marking number “1” and “no” number “2”. The mean was 1.4 (see Table 6). Paraprofessionals were asked if they viewed themselves as highly qualified; 1.46 was the mean. Interestingly, 53% of the paraprofessionals view themselves as highly qualified when according to their demographic information only 40% of paraprofessionals were highly qualified (see Table 7 and 8). However, 80% of paraprofessionals and their supervising teacher agreed that the paraprofessional was highly qualified.

Table 6

*Question 12 - Understand NCLB PR for Highly Qualified*

	Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency	Supervising Teacher	Paraprofessionals 2 years or higher education	Supervising Teacher
1 - Yes	4	6	5	4
2 - No	5	3	1	2
<i>Total</i>	9	9	6	6

Table 7

*Question 13 – Paraprofessional is Highly Qualified*

	Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency	Supervising Teacher	Paraprofessionals 2 years or higher education	Supervising Teacher
0 – No response	0	1	0	0
1 - Yes	3	3	5	4
2 - No	6	5	1	2
<i>Total</i>	9	9	6	6

Questions 14, 15, and 16 measured whether paraprofessionals were working toward NCLB (2001) PR and if they agreed with having to meet the NCLB PR. As shown in table 8, of the nine paraprofessionals, three of the paraprofessionals agreed that they were working toward compliance with NCLB PB, while one partially disagreed.

Table 8

*Question 14 - If not Highly Qualified, are Paraprofessionals working toward NCLB PR*

	Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency	Supervising Teacher
0 – No response	3	3
1 – Agree	5	4
2 – Partially agree	0	1
3 – Partially disagree	1	1
4 – Disagree	0	0
<i>Total</i>	9	9

Three teacher and three paraprofessionals failed to respond on whether or not they agreed or disagreed with NCLB PR therefore the results of question 15 were skewed (see Table 9).

However, the trend showed that of the supervising teachers 83% partially agreed with NCLB PR.

Table 9

*Question 15 - Agree/disagree with NCLB PR*

	Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency	Supervising Teacher
0 – No response	3	3
1 - Agree	1	0
2 – Partially agree	3	5
3 – Partially disagree	1	0
4 - Disagree	1	1
<i>Total</i>	9	9

In the state of Utah Accountability Plan, portfolios were approved as a form of rigorous assessment. Four paraprofessionals in the study had chosen this option to meet the NCLB PR. Two paraprofessionals were working on taking the ParaPro by ETS and two paraprofessionals were working toward 2 years of post secondary education. There is a 77% agreement between paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers in what each paraprofessional was working on to meet NCLB PR. There appeared to be more teacher awareness for those paraprofessionals who were working on their portfolios.

Table 10

*Question 16 Paraprofessional working on NCLB PR*

	Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency	Supervising Teacher
0 – No response	1	3
1 – Para Pro	2	1
2 – Portfolio	4	4
3 – Associate degree or 2 yrs. higher education	2	1
<i>Total</i>	9	9

*Section 3.* The results of section 3, Defining Roles and Responsibilities, were analyzed for agreement within individual responses and within groups of responses. The percentage of agreement was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the total number of agreements and disagreements then multiplying by 100 to equal the percent of agreement. The agreement within the survey instruments ranged from 73% to 93%, suggesting agreement within individual responses and within groups' responses (see table 11). However, when checking for agreement across the sample, the agreement drops to a range between 53% and 86%. In the case of paraprofessional agreement and teacher agreement, agreement was 73% or above which meets the generally accepted standard of agreement.

Table 11

<i>Response Agreement</i>			
Survey Questions Measuring CEC Standards	Paraprofessional Agreement	Teacher Agreement	Sample Agreement
Standard 1: Foundation			
Question 21 & Question 27	86 %	80 %	53 %
Standard 4: Instructional strategies			
Question 31 & Question 19	80 %	80 %	46 %
Question 35 & Question 24	93 %	86 %	60 %
Standard 5: Learning environments/social interactions			
Question 33 & Question 37	86 %	86 %	46 %
Question 34 & Question 29	73 %	73 %	66 %
Standard 7: Instructional planning			
Question 18 & Question 36	93 %	73 %	66 %
Question 23 & Question 28	93 %	93 %	86 %

To measure agreement between the paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers, the responses were paired. The paired agreement for each question ranged from 33% to 80%. Table 12 illustrates the percent of paired agreement in connection with the CEC standard-based survey questions.

When paraprofessionals were paired with their supervising teachers, six of the survey questions met the standard of agreement. The questions in Standard 1 failed to meet the study's 70% standard of agreement. All three questions were similar in percentage, suggesting stability in the participants' answers. In Standard 4, question 19 meets the Standard with 73%. However,

Table 12

*Paired Agreement*

Survey Questions and CEC Standards	Paired agreement
Standard 1: Foundation	
17. Training on how to implement curriculum programs and instructional activities	60 %
21. Knowledge of subject matter	60 %
27. Knowledge of curriculum	66 %
Standard 4: Instructional strategies	
22. Training in basic instructional and remedial strategies	33%
26. Use instructional strategies to integrate the instructional objectives into various settings.	46 %
31. Use instructional strategies to promote learner independence	33 %
19. Use instructional strategies to increase learner independence	73 %*
35. Use instructional/ remedial strategies to adapt instructional objective	66 %
24. Assist in adapting instructional strategies	60 %
Standard 5: Learning environments/social interactions	
32. Training on implementing strategies to assist in the development of social skills	53 %
30. Training on the rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors	26 %
33. Promote social skills	73 %*
37. Use strategies to develop social skills	73 %*
34. Implement behavioral strategies	60 %
29. Apply behavioral strategies	40 %
Standard 7: Instructional planning	
25. Trained in how to follow lesson plans and how to prepare and organize materials	60 %
18. Implement lesson plans with guidance of a teacher	80 %*
36. Follow written lesson plans and seek clarification	66 %
23. Prepare and organize teaching materials	80 %*
28. <i>Plan and arrange lesson materials</i>	73 %*

\* meets the study standard of 70% agreement

question 31, technically the same question, had a paired agreement of only 33%, possible indicating an inconsistency in the interpretation of “use instructional strategies to promote/increase learner independence.” Question 22, training on instructional strategies, and question 31, use of instructional strategies, match in the agreement. Each question demonstrated consistency between the perceived training and the perceived use of instructional strategies. Questions 24 and 35, both based on adapting instructional strategies, had only a 6% difference in the paired agreement, suggesting that both paraprofessionals and supervising teachers closely agree on the paraprofessionals’ skills in adapting instructional strategies.

Standard 5, Learning Environment and Social Interactions, had two questions that meet agreement. The questions on social skills, questions 33 and 37, had a paired agreement of 73%, despite the agreed 53% on training. In addition, the paired agreement of the other questions within standard 5 was inconsistent, suggesting the need for more training in area of behavior management and strategies.

Instructional planning, standard 7, is similar to standard 1. Three out of the five questions were above the 70% agreement. Paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers agreed that paraprofessionals had the skills to plan, organize, and prepare lesson materials.

### *Procedures*

University Internal Review Board (IRB) permission was obtained through the specified University procedures. After which, the Utah State Office of Education generated a list of 225 Title I School-Wide Programs (TI-SWP) (Wilkins, personal communication, March 16, 2005). The list was stratified into elementary TI-SWP and secondary TI-SWP. A computer generated randomized sampling of six elementary schools and six secondary schools was selected. The

districts were first contacted by phone, then emailed the survey packet for approval according to the districts individual review.

Initially the random sample consisted of the 12 schools within eight schools districts. However, three school districts declined to participate in the study based upon their concerns of undue burden upon faculty at the end of the school year. Therefore, another stratified random sample of Utah TI-SWP was taken to replace the schools that were unable to participate. The second stratified random sample represented six school districts with six elementary schools and six secondary schools (three Middle/Jr. High Schools and three High Schools).

Once district permission was obtained, the researcher phoned and emailed the principals of each TI-SWP and obtained on-site permission. A survey packet was emailed to each principal for distribution to paraprofessionals and supervising teachers. The packet contained survey instructions, an informed consent letter, and two surveys. The survey instructions (see Appendix B) explained the purpose of the study along with the definition of the participants and setting. The informed consent letter (see Appendix C) explained the research and the conditions of participation. Each paraprofessional and supervising teacher, who agreed to participate, acknowledged that agreement by signing the informed consent and filling out the survey.

The principals were asked to make duplicate copies of the informed consent and surveys for each participant. Originally, the intent was for each site to contain six participants, three paraprofessionals and three supervising teachers. However, due to the student population and remote locations of the participating schools, the number of paraprofessionals and supervising teachers that participated varied at each site.

Principals had the option of either mailing or faxing the completed surveys and informed consent forms. As each pair of surveys were returned the individual names were deleted and



assigned a number. The same number was given to the paired paraprofessional and teacher surveys. Numbers were assigned to promote privacy and confidentiality.

A follow up phone call and/or email was sent to the principals after a week with another attached survey packet. Of the 12 participating schools, 30 surveys were received (15 from teachers, and 15 from paraprofessionals). Nine schools had two participants at each site and three schools had four participants at each site.

### *Data Analysis Procedures*

The data collected in this study were gathered from surveys rated on a Likert scale. The lettered responses in section 1, the demographic information, were assigned a number: A “1,” B “2,” C “3,” D “4,” E “5,” and F “6.” The checked responses in section 2 and 3 were also assigned a number. The box identifying the level of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale consisted of “1” Agree, “2” Partially Agree, “3” Partially Disagree, and “4” Disagree. All statements were assigned a number based upon this except for questions 12, 13 ( yes “1” and no “2” ) and 16 (ParaPro “1,” portfolio “2,” associate degree/2 yrs. of higher education “3”). The original survey instruments were revised to contain a 4-point Likert scale instead of a 5-point Likert scale. This forced participants to rate either on the positive or negative side rather than simply rating 3, which are in the middle of the scale.

In accordance with IRB procedures, all raw data remained confidential with no identifying information. All data, including surveys were kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research had access to them. After the research was completed, the surveys were destroyed.

### *Social Validity*

Questions contained in the survey addressed social validity. Paraprofessionals and supervising teachers responded to questions and statements regarding their beliefs/feelings about compliance with NCLB PR and their ability to assist in instruction.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The following questions were used to guide the study.

1. Are there significant difference between the paraprofessionals' perceptions and the supervising teachers' perceptions of the paraprofessionals' knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?
2. Are there significant differences between the perceptions of paraprofessionals with a high school diploma/equivalency and the perceptions of paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education on their knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?

#### *Analysis of Study Questions*

The study operated on the hypothesis that there were no differences between the perceptions of paraprofessionals and the perceptions of their supervising teachers on the paraprofessionals' "knowledge and ability to assist with instruction" (NCLB sec.1119 c. 1. C. i & ii.). In addition, it was hypothesized that their were no differences between the perceptions of paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency and perceptions of paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education.

Two survey instruments were administered to a random sample of 30 participants in Title I school-wide programs; 15 paraprofessionals, and 15 cooperating teachers. Each participant involved in the study completed the survey. The data collect was assigned a number based upon the 4-point Likert scale: "1" Agree, "2" Partially Agree, "3" Partially Disagree, and "4" Disagree. The statistical analysis was calculated.

### *Research Question 1*

*Are there significant differences between the paraprofessionals' perceptions and the supervising teachers' perceptions of the paraprofessionals' knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?* To analyze the data and answer the question a *t*-test: paired two samples for means was used. The *t*-score measured whether significant differences existed between the paraprofessionals and the supervising teachers. The *t*-scores were calculated with an alpha of .05 (see Tables 13 and 14).

Questions with no *t*-score indicate that both the paraprofessionals and teachers agree, a mean of 1.00, in their perception of the paraprofessionals' knowledge and understanding of curriculum and instruction. Both paraprofessionals and teachers agree in their perceptions that paraprofessionals possessed the ability to prepare and organize teaching materials, plan and arrange lesson materials, and implement lesson plans. In addition, on questions 32, 33, 35, and 37 both the paraprofessionals and the teachers matched in their mean for each question. Therefore, those questions have a 0 *t*-score. The negative *t*-scores indicated the mean of the teachers was greater than the mean of the paraprofessionals.

Significant differences were found on four of the survey questions. Questions 22 and 30, *t*-score of -3.16, asked whether paraprofessionals received training in the use of instructional strategies and the rules and procedural safeguards used in behavior management. Questions 26 and 31, *t*-score of -2.23, asked whether paraprofessionals possessed the skills to use instructional strategies. All the significant differences indicated the supervising teachers differed in their perceptions of the paraprofessionals' knowledge and skills.

Table 13

*Comparison of Perceptions between Paraprofessional with a H.S. Diploma/ Equivalency and their Supervising Teacher*

Questions	Paraprofessional Mean	Teacher Mean	<i>t</i>
17. Training on curriculum and instruction	1.00	1.16	-1.00
18. Implement lesson plans	1.00	1.00	
19. Use instructional strategies to increase learner independence	1.00	1.16	-1.00
20. Understanding of programs and instruction	1.00	1.00	
21. Knowledge of subject matter	1.00	1.16	-1.00
22. Training in instructional/remedial strategies	1.00	1.66	-3.16*
23. Prepare and organize teaching materials	1.00	1.00	
24. Assist in adapting instructional strategies	1.00	1.33	-1.58
25. Trained to follow lesson plans and prepare materials	1.00	1.16	-1.00
26. Use instructional strategies across settings	1.00	1.5	-2.23*
27. Knowledge of curriculum	1.00	1.00	
28. Plan and arrange lesson materials	1.00	1.00	
29. Apply behavioral strategies	1.16	1.50	-1.58
30. Training on rules and procedural safeguards for behavior management	1.00	1.66	-3.16*
31. Use instructional strategies to promote learner independence	1.00	1.50	-2.23*
32. Training on implementing strategies to develop social skills	1.33	1.33	0.00
33. Promote social skills	1.33	1.33	0.00
34. Implement behavioral strategies	1.33	1.50	-0.50
35. Use instructional/ remedial strategies to adapt instructional objective	1.16	1.16	0.00
36. Follow written lesson plans	1.00	1.16	-1.00
37. Use strategies to develop social skills	1.16	1.16	0.00

\*significant with a t-score alpha at .05

Table 14

*Comparison of Perceptions between Paraprofessionals with an Associate Degree or 2 years or more Higher Education and their Supervising Teachers*

Questions	Paraprofessional Mean	Teacher Mean	<i>t</i>
17. Training on curriculum and instruction	1.50	1.83	-0.54
18. Implement lesson plans	1.16	1.66	-0.88
19. Use instructional strategies to increase learner independence	1.33	1.50	-1.00
20. Understanding of programs and instruction	1.33	1.16	0.54
21. Knowledge of subject matter	1.16	1.33	-0.54
22. Training in instructional/remedial strategies	1.50	1.66	-0.34
23. Prepare and organize teaching materials	1.33	1.66	-0.50
24. Assist in adapting instructional strategies	1.16	1.66	-0.88
25. Trained to follow lesson plans and prepare materials	1.50	1.50	0.00
26. Use instructional strategies across settings	1.16	1.83	-1.34
27. Knowledge of curriculum	1.50	1.50	0.00
28. Plan and arrange lesson materials	1.16	1.66	-0.88
29. Apply behavioral strategies	1.16	1.66	-1.46
30. Training on rules and procedural safeguards for behavior management	1.50	1.66	-0.30
31. Use instructional strategies to promote learner independence	1.33	1.50	-1.00
32. Training on implementing strategies to develop social skills	1.33	1.33	0.00
33. Promote social skills	1.50	1.33	0.54
34. Implement behavioral strategies	1.33	1.50	-1.00
35. Use instructional/ remedial strategies to adapt instructional objective	1.16	1.66	-0.88
36. Follow written lesson plans	1.33	1.33	0.00
37. Use strategies to develop social skills	1.16	1.50	-0.79

Contrary to the significant differences of perceptions found between the paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency and their supervising teachers, there were no significant difference between paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education and their supervising teachers (see table 14). However, the means for both the paraprofessionals with 2 or more years of higher education and their teachers were lower.

### *Research Question 2*

*Are there significant statistical differences between the perceptions of paraprofessionals with a high school diploma/equivalency and the perceptions of paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education on their knowledge and ability to assist in instruction?* Using a hypothesized mean difference of zero, a t-test: Two-sample assuming unequal variance was used to determine if there were any statistical differences between groups of paraprofessionals under the two NCLB qualification standards.

According to the means, the perceptions of the paraprofessionals differed based upon their NCLB PR groups. However, there were no significant differences with a *t*-score alpha of .05. However, the *t*-scores were all negative indicating the mean of the Group Two was greater than the mean of the Group One.

Table 15

*Difference between the Perceptions of the Paraprofessionals with a High School Diploma or Equivalency and Paraprofessionals with a Associate Degree or 2 yrs. or more Higher Education*

Questions	Group One Paraprofessionals H.S. Diploma or Equivalency	Group Two Paraprofessionals 2 years or higher education	t-stat
17. Training on curriculum and instruction	1.11	1.50	-1.55
18. Implement lesson plans	1.11	1.16	-0.27
19. Use instructional strategies to increase learner independence	1.11	1.33	-0.93
20. Understanding of programs and instruction	1.11	1.33	-0.93
21. Knowledge of subject matter	1.22	1.16	0.25
22. Training in instructional/remedial strategies	1.22	1.50	-0.74
23. Prepare and organize teaching materials	1.11	1.33	0.27
24. Assist in adapting instructional strategies	1.11	1.16	-0.27
25. Trained to follow lesson plans and prepare materials	1.33	1.50	-0.40
26. Use instructional strategies across settings	1.11	1.16	-0.27
27. Knowledge of curriculum	1.11	1.5	-1.08
28. Plan and arrange lesson materials	1.11	1.16	-0.27
29. Apply behavioral strategies	1.33	1.16	0.70
30. Training on rules and procedural safeguards for behavior management	1.11	1.50	-1.55
31. Use instructional strategies to promote learner independence	1.11	1.33	-0.93
32. Training on implementing strategies to develop social skills	1.33	1.33	0.00
33. Promote social skills	1.33	1.50	0.33
34. Implement behavioral strategies	1.22	1.33	-0.43
35. Use instructional/ remedial strategies to adapt instructional objective	1.22	1.16	0.25
36. Follow written lesson plans	1.11	1.33	-0.93
37. Use strategies to develop social skills	1.22	1.16	0.25



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### *Comparison of NCLB Pathways*

The implementation of NCLB PR has left paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency unsure of what “highly qualified” means. In the demographic information, five out of nine paraprofessionals with high school diplomas did not understand the requirements needed to be “highly qualified” according to NCLB PR. In comparison, five out of six paraprofessionals with two years or more of higher education did understand the NCLB PR. According to the teachers, eight out of nine teachers who supervised paraprofessionals with a high school diploma understood NCLB PR and four out of six teachers who supervised paraprofessionals with two years or more of higher education understood NCLB PR.

This suggests that paraprofessionals who need to meet NCBL PR do not understand what is required of them. The lack of understanding may imply why paraprofessionals only partially agree with the need for NCLB PR. In contrast, the paraprofessionals’ supervising teachers understand and agree with NCLB PR. This creates a disparity between the teachers’ perception and the paraprofessionals’ perceptions, suggesting that teachers are not sharing their understanding of NCLB PR with their paraprofessionals. The lack of communication between paraprofessionals and their teachers is a common theme within the study results. The study further suggests a lack of communication between teachers and paraprofessionals on the knowledge and skills needed to assist in instruction.

One possibility may be as the results hinted that paraprofessionals’ are not seeking clarification from their supervising teachers. The perceptions of paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers, suggests that paraprofessionals possess the ability to prepare and to

organize lesson materials. However, teachers were of the opinion that paraprofessionals did not seek clarification on implementing lesson plans.

This study suggests supervising teachers perceived that all paraprofessionals may be deficient in the training, knowledge, and skills used to assist in instruction. In comparison, Group 1 (paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency) perceived no lack in knowledge and skills while Group 2 (paraprofessionals with two or more years of higher education) perceived a similar lack, consistent with the teacher's perception.

The significant differences in the area of instructional strategies and behavior management suggest that Group 1 paraprofessionals believed they possessed the training, the knowledge, and the skills needed to implement these strategies in a classroom. This implies a disconnection between the perceptions of Group 1 and the perceptions of their teachers. Paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency perceived their abilities beyond what their supervising teacher felt they possessed, holding the possibility that the paraprofessionals had a limited or unrealistic understanding of the knowledge and skills utilized during instruction. In addition, the significant differences suggests that teachers view paraprofessionals as not having adequate training in the rules and procedural safeguards used in behavior management but teachers believed paraprofessionals capable of implementing behavior management.

The differences of perceptions between the paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency and their supervising teachers may suggest the perceptions of the paraprofessionals skills varies according to the knowledge paraprofessionals possess. On one hand, the paraprofessionals with two years or more of higher education understand that there is more to learn than what they currently know. The higher level of education they possessed has

possibly created a similar outlook between paraprofessional and teacher. This suggests that paraprofessionals with higher education may have a greater respect for the knowledge and skills that the teachers possesses. Paraprofessionals with higher education do not perceive themselves as possessing the same knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the paraprofessionals with a high school diploma were not aware that they lack in knowledge and skill or they felt they possessed the knowledge and skills due to their preparation for rigorous assessment required by NCLB. This holds the possibility that the paraprofessionals with a high school diploma or equivalency feel more confident in their understanding of the knowledge and skills utilized in instruction.

Teachers perceived that all paraprofessionals needed more training in instructional and behavioral strategies and the rules and procedural safeguards. However, this holds the possibility that supervising teachers lacked guidelines to measure the paraprofessionals' knowledge and skills used to assist in instruction. Instead, teachers may have used their own experience as a certified teacher as their measure. If this were the case, then the teachers' expectation for paraprofessionals was unrealistic.

Looking back at the demographics, 13 out of the 15 teachers had previous supervisor experience. The teachers also had extended years of experience and education. In addition, most teachers had memberships in professional organizations through which they would receive information regarding the use of paraprofessionals. Thus, it would be safe to assume that teachers hold a realistic perception of the paraprofessional's ability. In contrast, only two paraprofessionals belong to professional organizations: the National Education Association and a state/local professional organization. Both paraprofessionals have two years or more of higher education and are "highly qualified" by NCLB PR. The contrast between teachers and

paraprofessionals on their memberships to professional organizations holds the possibility that paraprofessionals are not receiving the information they need. Therefore, paraprofessionals seem deficient in their understanding and implementation of in NCLB PR.

The knowledge and skills needed for NCLB PR in paraprofessional training has not been adequately disseminated from professional organizations, state education agencies (SEA), and local education agencies (LEA), to the paraprofessionals. The possible lack of communication may be compounded by the lack understanding the SEA and LEA procedures in implementing NCLB (2001) PR. Even though the SEA and LEA has a plan to meet NCLB PR, paraprofessionals may not have been informed of the guidelines or know where to access them to assist in meeting NCLB PR.

Adding to the lack of disseminated information to paraprofessionals, some SEAs and LEAs, in an effort to meet NCLB (2001) PR, may only require training for paraprofessionals not possessing two or more years of education. This approach to training allows paraprofessionals with higher education to work as “highly qualified” without the knowledge and ability needed to assist in instruction.

### *Recommendations*

Under the allocation of local funds, NCLB (2001) allows for professional development. All paraprofessionals have the opportunity to learn “effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills” (NCLB, sec. 2123(3)(A)(ii)). Paraprofessionals also have access to “training in how to teach and address the needs of students with different learning styles particularly students with disabilities” (NCLB, sec. 2123(3)(B)(ii)). Training and professional development gives paraprofessionals the opportunity to learn and improve effective instructional practices and improve “student behavior[s] in the classroom” by “identifying early and appropriate

interventions to help students described in clause (ii) learn” (NCLB, sec. 2123(3)(B)(ii)). It is recommended that SEA and LEA utilize the allocated NCLB funds to develop and implement guidelines for training and observations to measure the effectiveness of the paraprofessional’s application of knowledge and skills during instruction.

### *Limitations*

Since this study was the first attempt to investigate the impact NCLB (2001) PR had on the teachers’ and paraprofessionals’ perceptions of the paraprofessionals’ ability to assist in instruction, there were several limitations. Due to the SEA and LEA lack of paraprofessional data, it was difficult to determine the average number of participants at each site prior to the sampling. In addition, the stratified random sample placed a majority of the schools in rural communities creating a relatively homogenous sample instead of the desired diverse sample. With a rural population, the sample size was decreased to  $n = 30$ . Statistically the sample size was not large enough to make true inferences within the sample or replicate the finding to other populations.

It was extremely difficult to account for the confounding variables such as hours of training and years of experiences prior to the study because of the lack of available data on paraprofessionals. The limitations within this study reemphasize the findings of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report to Congress (2003). The report acknowledged how the lack of data negatively affects SEA and LEA’ ability to improve paraprofessionals’ skills to assist in instruction.

The survey instrument was a limitation in the study. Field-testing the survey instrument was adequate, but did not validate the instrument. The instruments needed to be validated and checked for reliability to ensure accurate data. However, due to time and budget constraints, this was not done for the study.

### *Implications for Further Research*

Despite the limitations, this study created a foundation for future research that was unavailable within the current literature. While the study gave many indicators of significant differences on the impact that NCLB (2001) PR had on paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction, other research is still needed. The following suggested areas would further the insight on the impact NCLB PR has on paraprofessionals.

1. Research what teachers agree with and what paraprofessionals disagree with in NCLB PR.
2. Research whether paraprofessionals understand and use educational terminology.
3. Research to validate and to check for reliability within the survey instruments used in the study.
4. Research on whether the paraprofessional associate degree has an effect on ability to assist with instruction.
5. Research on measuring paraprofessional understanding of the knowledge and skills acquired during training.

Paraprofessionals have been providing support in the educational setting for decades, and there is no reason to believe they will not do so in the future. This seminal study adds to the paraprofessional research and suggests further work in this area.

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

State Comparison to NCLB Title I Paraprofessional Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance																																					
States	A				B																C					D				E		Other Interpretations/NC LB cited					
	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3		4	1	2		
Alabama		x	x	i																																<i>Other Interpretations NCLB cited</i>	
Alaska			x	x																																1119 C & D	
Arizona																																				1111, 1119 C & D ParaPro	
Arkansas																																				1119 C & D ParaPro	
California			x											x																					ParaPro (Ventura)		
Colorado			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x																			1119 ParaPro	
Connecticut			i	x																																ParaPro	
Delaware				x																																1119 C & D ParaPro	
District of Columbia			x																																	1119 C & D ParaPro	
Florida			x	x																																ParaPro Praxis I FTCE	
Georgia			x	x																																ParaPro	
Hawaii				x																																1119 C & D ParaPro	
Idaho			x		i																															ParaPro	
Illinois			x	i																																ParaPro WorkKeys	
Indiana			x																																	ParaPro	
Iowa				i	i																																
Kansas				x																																	1119 C & D ParaPro ParaEducator WorkKeys
Kentucky			x	x	x																																KPA

**State Comparison to NCLB Title I Paraprofessional Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance**

States	A				B																C					D				E		Other Interpretations/NC LB cited				
	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3		4	1	2	
Louisiana																																				ParaPro
Maine			x	x																																1119 C & D Portfolio ParaPro
Maryland																																			Included all NCLB ParaPro	
Massachusetts			x	x																															1119 C & D Portfolio (MTC) ParaPro	
Michigan					x																														Portfolio WorkKeys	
Minnesota																																			ParaPro	
Missouri			x	i																															1119 C & D ParaPro	
Mississippi			x	x																															WorkKeys	
Montana			x	i																															i	
Nebraska			x	i																															ParaEducator ParaPro WorkKeys	
Nevada																																			1119 C & D ParaPro	
New Hampshire			x																																Praxis I	
New Jersey																																			1119 C & D ParaPro Portfolio	
New Mexico																																			Portfolio ParaPro	
New York			x	i																															i i x i	
North Carolina			x	i																															WorkKeys	
North Dakota			x																																i	
Ohio			x	x																															1119 C & D ParaPro	

### State Comparison to NCLB Title I Paraprofessional Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance

States	A		B																		C					D				E		Other Interpretations/NC LB cited			
	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3		4	1	2
Oklahoma				i																															1119 OGET
Oregon			x																															1119 C & D ParaPro	
Pennsylvania			x	x	x	x	x								x	x	x							x	x	x	x	x							
Rhode Island				i																														ParaPro	
South Carolina				i																														ParaPro WorkKeys	
South Dakota			i	i	i																													ParaPro	
Tennessee				x	i																													1119 C & D ParaPro	
Texas				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1119 C & D ParaPro (various districts)	
Utah				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	ParaPro Portfolio	
Virginia					x																													1119 C & D ParaPro	
Vermont																																			
Washington			x	x																														1119 C & D, ESEA 2113c ParaPro	
Wisconsin				x	i																													1119	
West Virginia				x																															
Wyoming																																		ParaPro	

Note: (x) indicates the state directly cited NCLB Title I Paraprofessional Draft Non-Regulatory, while (i) indicates the state has interpreted specific sections. In other interpretations, information is reduced. The meanings are: 1119 is the NCLB section 1119; ParaPro is the ParaPro Assessment; ESEA is the Elementary Secondary Education Act; FTCE is the Florida Teacher Certification Examination Knowledge Test; KPA is the Kentucky paraprofessional Assessment; MTTC is the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification-Basic Skills. For citation information, see references according to state name.

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## APPENDIX B

## Survey Instructions

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for willingness to volunteer as a participant in this research study. Your school has been randomly selected to participate in a statewide survey because of the schools Title I status. There will be approximately four participants at this site.

The purpose of this survey is to acquire information about the paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction in relation to the paraprofessional requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The paraprofessionals and the supervising teachers participating in this study should be working in an instructional setting with student with disabilities (i.e. special education resource, special education self-contained, inclusion classes, or general education classes).

Attached are copies of the informed consent and the surveys. Please print out a copy for each participant. Each participant should read the informed consent. Three paraprofessionals should fill out the paraprofessional survey. The supervising teacher of each paraprofessional should then fill out the teacher survey.

The surveys will take less than 10 minutes. Circle the appropriate responses for question 1 through question 11. For questions, 12 through 37 please check the appropriate box.

Please complete the surveys by April 29, 2005. Fax or mail the completed surveys to:

Heather Nelson  
339 W. 3950 N.  
Provo, Utah 84604  
Fax: (801) 434-4128

If you have any questions please call me at (801) 636-6882 cell, (801) 798-4052 work or email me at [heather.nelson@nebo.edu](mailto:heather.nelson@nebo.edu).

Sincerely,  
Heather Nelson

Attachments:  
Informed consent  
Teacher survey  
Paraprofessional survey

## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

#### Introduction

Heather Nelson, a graduate student from the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education at Brigham Young University is conducting a research study on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Your school has been randomly selected to participate in a statewide survey because of the schools Title I status. There will be approximately four participants at this site.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this survey is to receive information about paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction in relation to the paraprofessional requirements of the No Child Left behind Act of 2001.

#### Procedures

You will be asked to complete a survey. The survey consists of 37 questions and takes approximately 10 minutes. Questions include details about you knowledge of instructional strategies and you ability to assist in instruction.

#### Risks/Discomforts

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. However, you may feel emotional discomfort when answering questions about personal beliefs.

#### Benefits

There may not be any direct benefit to you for participation. However, it is hoped that through your participation the researcher will learn more about the relationship of the paraprofessional requirements of No Child Left Behind to the paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction.

#### Confidentiality

All information provided will remain confidential and will only be reported as group data with no identifying information. All data, including questionnaires will be kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires will be destroyed.

#### Participation

Involvement in this research survey is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or refuse to participate entirely.

#### Questions about the Research

If you have any questions or research related problems, you may contact Heather Nelson at (801) 636-6882 or [heather.nelson@nebo.edu](mailto:heather.nelson@nebo.edu).

#### IRB Approval Statement

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research projects, you may contact Dr. Renes Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects, 422 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; phone, (801) 422-3873; email, [renea\\_beckstrand@byu.edu](mailto:renea_beckstrand@byu.edu).

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will and volition to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

**Teacher Survey**

This survey contains 37 questions and takes 10 minutes to complete. Please take the survey independently and answer the questions honestly. Answer all questions as they relate to the participating paraprofessional. Taking this survey signifies that I understand my response to this survey is voluntary and that my opinions will be used in research to measure the relationship of paraprofessional requirements to paraprofessional instruction.

**Section I - Demographic Information**

*Circle the desired response.*

1. Gender of respondent:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. Ethnicity
  - a. Caucasian
  - b. African American
  - c. Asian
  - d. Native American
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age range of respondent:
  - a. 18-25 years of age
  - b. 26-35 years of age
  - c. 36-45 years of age
  - d. 46-55 years of age
  - e. 56 years or older
4. Respondent's highest level of education received:
  - a. Bachelor degree
  - b. Masters degree
  - c. Doctorate degree
5. What is the emphasis of your degree(s)?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you been working as a teacher?
  - a. 0 – 2 years
  - b. 3 – 5 years
  - c. 6 -10 years
  - d. 11 - 15 years
  - e. 16 + years
7. Classroom setting in which a majority of time is spent:
  - a. Special education resource
  - b. Special education self-contained
  - c. Inclusion classes
  - d. General education
8. Do you have previous supervisor training of paraprofessionals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. School setting located:
  - a. High School
  - b. Jr. High School/Middle School
  - c. Elementary (K- 6)
  - d. Early Childhood
  - e. Combination of Schools
10. How many students do you work with?
  - a. Individual
  - b. 2 – 4 students
  - c. 5 – 10 students
  - d. 11 – 15 students
  - e. 16 – 20 students
  - f. 21 + students
11. Do you belong to any of the following professional organizations? *Circle all that apply.*
  - a. National Education Association
  - b. Council for Exceptional Children
  - c. National Resource Center for Paraeducators
  - d. State/local organizations

Mark the box that corresponds with your response. Please only mark one box per question.

<b>Section II – Defining highly qualified paraprofessionals</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		
12. Do you understand the requirements for paraprofessionals to be considered highly qualified as according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?				
13. Are the paraprofessionals you supervise highly qualified according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (If you answered YES to question #13 skip questions #14, #15, and #16.)	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partial Agree</b>	<b>Partial Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
14. If No, are they working on meeting the highly qualified requirements according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?				
15. I _____ with No Child Left Behind’s paraprofessional requirements? Mark the box that fills in the blank.				
16. Which of the following areas are they working on to meet the No Child Left Behind paraprofessional requirements?	<b>ParaPro</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Associate Degree/ 2 Years Higher Education</b>	

<b>Section III - Defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partial Agree</b>	<b>Partial Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
17. The paraprofessional I supervise has received training in how to implement curriculum programs and instructional activities for students with exceptional needs.				
18. The paraprofessional I supervise implements lesson plans with the guidance of a teacher.				
19. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to use instructional strategies to increase the individuals’ independence and confidence.				
20. The paraprofessional I supervise has a basic understanding of the educational programs and instructional activities utilized during instruction.				
21. The paraprofessional I supervise has adequate knowledge of the subject matter to assist in instruction.				
22. The paraprofessional I supervise has received training in basic instructional and remedial strategies, materials, and technologies to assist in the instruction of students.				
23. The paraprofessional I supervise prepares and organizes materials to support teaching and learning as directed by a teacher.				
24. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials as directed by a teacher.				
25. The paraprofessional I supervise has been trained in how to follow lesson plans and how to prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning.				
26. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to use instructional strategies to integrate the instructional objectives into various settings.				
27. The paraprofessional I supervise has adequate knowledge of the curriculum to assist in instruction.				
28. The paraprofessional I supervise plans and arranges lesson materials as directed by a teacher.				

Section III - Defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals	Agree	Partial Agree	Partial Disagree	Disagree
29. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to apply behavioral strategies in managing student's behavior.				
30. The paraprofessional I supervise has received training on the rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs.				
31. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to use instructional strategies that promote the learner's independence.				
32. The paraprofessional I supervise has received training on implementing strategies to assist in the development of social skills in various learning environments.				
33. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to promote social skills in a variety of settings.				
34. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to implement behavioral strategies to maintain a safe, healthy learning environment for students.				
35. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to use instructional/remedial strategies in adapting instructional objectives as directed by a teacher.				
36. The paraprofessional I supervise follows written lesson plans and seeks clarification from a teacher as needed.				
37. The paraprofessional I supervise has the skills to use strategies in a variety of settings and to assist in the development of social skills as directed by a teacher.				



## APPENDIX E

**Paraprofessional Survey**

This survey contains 37 questions and takes 10 minutes to complete. Please take the survey independently and answer the questions honestly. Taking this survey signifies that I understand my response to this survey is voluntary and that my opinions will be used in research to measure the relationship of paraprofessional requirements to paraprofessional instruction. Circle the desired answer or mark the appropriate box.

**Section I - Demographic Information** *Circle the desired response.*

1. Gender of respondent:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. Ethnicity
  - a. Caucasian
  - b. African American
  - c. Asian
  - d. Native American
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age range of respondent:
  - a. 18-25 years of age
  - b. 26-35 years of age
  - c. 36-45 years of age
  - d. 46-55 years of age
  - e. 56 years or older
4. Respondents highest level of education received:
  - a. High school diploma or High school equivalency
  - b. 2 years of higher education (48 credit hours)
  - c. Associate degree
  - d. Bachelor degree or higher
5. If an Associate degree or higher, what is the emphasis of your degree?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you been working as a paraprofessional?
  - a. 0 – 2 years
  - b. 3 – 5 years
  - c. 6 -10 years
  - d. 11 - 15 years
  - e. 16 + years
7. Classroom setting in which a majority of time is spent:
  - a. Special education resource
  - b. Special education self-contained
  - c. Inclusion classes
  - d. General education
8. Hours of in-service training per school year:
  - a. 0 – 5 hours
  - b. 6 – 10 hours
  - c. 11 – 15 hours
  - d. 16 – 20 hours
  - e. 21 + hours
9. School setting located:
  - a. High School
  - b. Jr. High School/Middle School
  - c. Elementary (K-6)
  - d. Early Childhood
  - e. Combination of Schools
10. How many students do you work with?
  - a. Individual
  - b. 2 – 4 students
  - c. 5 – 10 students
  - d. 11 – 15 students
  - e. 16 – 20 students
  - f. 21 + students
11. Do you belong to any of the following professional organizations? **Circle all that apply.**
  - a. National Education Association
  - b. Council for Exceptional Children
  - c. National Resource Center for Paraeducators
  - d. State/ local organizations

Mark the box that corresponds with your response. Please only mark one box per question.

Section II – Defining highly qualified paraprofessionals			Yes	No
12. I understand the requirements for me to be considered highly qualified as a paraprofessional according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?				
13. I am highly qualified according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001? (If you answered YES to question #13 skip questions #14, #15, and #16.)				
	Agree	Partial Agree	Partial Disagree	Disagree
14. If No, I am working on meeting the highly qualified requirements according to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?				
15. I _____ with No Child Left Behind’s paraprofessional requirements? Mark the box that fills in the blank.				
16. I am working on to the following requirements meet the No Child Left Behind paraprofessional requirements.			ParaPro	Portfolio
			Associate Degree/ 2 Years	Higher Education

Section III - Defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals				Agree	Partial Agree	Partial Disagree	Disagree
17. I have received training in how to implement curriculum programs and instructional activities for students with special needs.							
18. I implement lesson plans with the guidance of a teacher.							
19. I have the skills to use instructional strategies to increase the individuals’ independence and confidence.							
20. I have a basic understanding of the educational programs and instructional activities utilized during instruction.							
21. I feel that I have adequate knowledge of the subject matter to assist in instruction.							
22. I have received training in basic instructional and remedial strategies, materials, and technologies to assist in the instruction of students.							
23. I prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning as directed by a teacher.							
24. I have the skills to assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials as directed by a teacher.							
25. I have been trained in how to follow lesson plans and how to prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning?							
26. I have the skills to use instructional strategies to integrate the instructional objectives into various settings.							
27. I have adequate knowledge of the curriculum to assist in instruction.							
28. I plan and arrange lesson materials as directed by a teacher.							
29. I have the skills to apply behavioral strategies in managing student behavior.							
30. I have received training on the rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs.							

<b>Section III - Defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Partial Agree</b>	<b>Partial Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
31. I have the skills to use instructional strategies that promote the learner's independence.				
32. I have received training on implementing strategies to assist in the development of social skills in various learning environments?				
33. I have the skills to promote social skills in a variety of settings.				
34. I have the skills to implement behavioral strategies to maintain a safe, healthy learning environment for students.				
35. I have the skills to use instructional/remedial strategies in adapting instructional objectives as directed by a teacher?				
36. I follow written lesson plans and seek clarifications from a teacher as needed.				
37. I have the skills to use strategies in a variety of settings, to assist in the development of social skills as directed by a teacher.				