
A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

Human Resources in Special Education

PARAPROFESSIONALS,
VOLUNTEERS,
AND PEER TUTORS

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**Paraprofessionals, Volunteers,
and Peer Tutors**

Michael J. Fimian

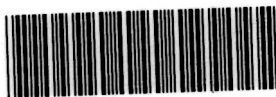
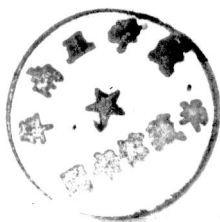
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*To all the resource workers
who assist teachers each day
in the educational service of
exceptional children and youth*

MJF
MBF
KWH

To Jeanie Fimian
MJF

To Joseph S. Kaplan
KWH

Preface

Each day in special education programs throughout the nation a wide variety of individuals are assisting special education professionals in the delivery of educational services to handicapped students. Whether paraprofessionals, volunteers, or peer tutors, these human resource workers have become a vital part of educational delivery to handicapped students. However, it is only recently that professionals in special education have recognized the untapped potential of these human resource workers toward increasing the effectiveness of the delivery of instruction in special education. To this end, this book is about the effective use of human resource workers in special education settings.

The book has been written for those teaching professionals who desire to use this valuable resource more effectively by developing a Human Resources Program (HRP) in their school or district. Chapters 1 through 3 and 5 through 11 are written primarily for teachers or teacher groups interested in developing and using an HRP in the classroom or on a school-wide basis. Chapters 1 through 3, which provide background information concerning the use of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peer tutors, are for both teachers and administrators. Though the focus of the book is on using additional human resources in special education settings, school and other educational personnel will find the information, tables, figures, and procedures outlined in this book pertinent to regular and mainstream education settings as well.

Chapter 4 presents an administrative overview of the structure and development of the HRP on either a district- or school-wide basis.

The book also stresses the more managerial aspects of working with resource workers in the classroom. Many local school districts are acknowledging the changing roles of professionals: administrators are increasingly becoming in-

volved in staff and paraprofessional training, and classroom teachers are expected to be instructors, consultants, program planners, and, in some cases, administrators, managers, and/or supervisors. In what fashion and how well the information is used will depend largely upon the professional's ability to accept change in his or her role. From our perspective, such change can be challenging, exciting, and rewarding.

This book can be used in a number of ways, in a variety of sites, and for a number of purposes. Since few teacher-training programs formally address the use of paraprofessionals, volunteers, or peer tutors within their curricula, the book—particularly Chapters 1 through 3—serves as a primary or supplemental resource to such courses as they become established. Section Two, Human Resources Program Implementation, can be used by staff trainers, resource worker trainers, teachers, ancillary personnel, practicum students, and interns faced with the prospect of bringing additional help into the special education setting. Finally, many of the figures, forms, and tables can be adopted or adapted for human resources program use, or for the preservice or inservice training of professionals and nonprofessionals alike.

Addressing a general audience of special education teachers, the ethics and procedures for the use of human resource workers are outlined and discussed. The content of the book focuses on both necessary background information on human resource workers and the recruitment, selection, assignment, orientation, and training procedures necessary for program implementation. While the intent of the book is to discuss the many roles human resource workers play in the field of special education, its major thrust is to focus upon their instructional role within the classroom. Therefore, while clerical and organizational tasks are mentioned, instructional tasks are emphasized.

Organizationally, the book stresses methodology common across the three groups of human resource workers: paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peers. The major assumption underlying this common methodological approach to working with human resource workers is that certain aspects of the methodology employed with one group (i.e., volunteers) are similar to those used with the others (i.e., paraprofessionals and peers). Despite the methodological similarities that occur across groups of human resource workers, however, it is recognized that each group remains a discrete entity. Each group reflects different concerns, types of interactions, and responsibilities, while posing various problems that require specific and unique solutions. In light of this, this book provides first general and then specific guidelines and procedural analyses.

This book is neither a "bible" nor a "cookbook." It is, however, a resource book, a guide book, and an idea book. The most efficient use of the ideas presented in the following chapters may well be the degree to which they can be modified for a given situation or particular special education site. The concepts and much of the methodology presented are derived not only from special education but also from regular education. Much of the book, however, is derived directly

from the various special education programs that use human resource workers on a daily basis.

Finally, due to the extensiveness of human resource utilization and the diversity of various program structures, philosophies, and procedures in the field of special education, some topics are highlighted in only a general fashion. In each case, however, the reader is directed to readings that provide more specific and comprehensive information that is beyond the scope of this book.

We wish to express our appreciation to the many people who contributed to the preparation of this book. Without their contributions, reviews, critical comments, and technical assistance, this book would not have been possible. To the following resource persons who provided us with samples, pamphlets, brochures, training manuals, and other materials, we extend our thanks: Deborah May and Donald Marozas of the State University College of Arts and Science at Genesee, New York; Sharyl Wieseler, Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs for the Handicapped, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Pierre, South Dakota; Patricia Hall, Administrative Assistant of Special Education, Arizona State Department of Education; C. Vannessa Spinner, Assistant for Program Development, Public Schools of the District of Columbia; John Hill, Specialist in Professional Development for the Alabama State Department of Education; Diane Peterson, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Arizona Department of Education; Sarah Webb, Reading Specialist, Oklahoma State Department of Education; Stephen Krasner, Eleanor Russel, Betty Rodes, Shirley Sinisgalli, and Martha Wilkinson of the Special Education Resource Center, Hartford, Connecticut; Helen Polnick, Volunteer Services Coordinator, Arizona Training Program, Phoenix, Arizona; Amy Toole, Ellen Boehm, and Yvonne Margau, Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Preschool Program, Yorktown Heights, New York; Rob Rutherford, Department of Special Education, Arizona State University; Louise Leonard, Executive Director, Governor's Council on Voluntary Action, Hartford, Connecticut; Louis J. Chaney, Assistant Director for Special Education, National School Volunteer Program, Alexandria, Virginia; Melvyn Reich, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut; and Marijke Thamm-Foster, Willimantic Public Schools, Willimantic, Connecticut.

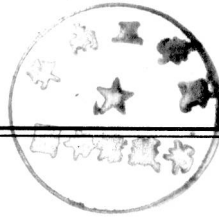
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Background

In order to use human resource workers effectively, it is necessary to understand both the rationale for using human resource workers and the historical development of their use in special education. Section One of this book deals with this basic background information. Chapter 1 addresses the fundamental issues underlying the use of human resource workers. Who are human resource workers? Why are they used or not used? And how many are being used in special education? These are all questions that are answered while establishing a sound rationale for advocating the use of resource workers in special education. In essence, Chapter 1 is the motivational foundation for the remainder of the book.

A brief historical perspective is presented in Chapter 2. The development of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peer tutors in both regular and special education is presented not only to demonstrate the tremendous growth human resource workers have experienced but also to provide the historical support for their continued growth. The historical perspective highlights the changes in utilization that human resource workers have undergone over time. While at present there are professionals who may advocate restricting the instructional role that human resource workers can have in special education, the historical information clearly demonstrates the antiquity of that opinion.

A number of loosely related yet vital topics, each of which can maximize the professional's use of human resource workers in special education instructional settings, are presented in Chapter 3. Among these discussions is the matter of professional training, ethical considerations for using resource workers, assignment procedures and guidelines, and an overview of the resource worker as a deliverer of instruction. Additionally, resource worker motivation and learning and worker-manipulated instructional variables are reviewed. How the resource worker can best fit into the instructional team is the focus of this chapter.

2 *Background*

The development and organization of a human resources program is not something that is easily done or that occurs overnight. It takes planning and coordination on the part of both teachers and their administrators. "Planning and coordination" are translated into a number of organizational activities that are briefly outlined in Chapter 4.

The topics discussed in Section One are the motivational set for advocating the use of human resource workers as a critical part of the delivery of services to exceptional children and youth. Understanding the historical development and the rationale for the use of resource workers provides a solid platform for using the strategies for effective program development. It is the integration of the information provided in Section One with the remainder of the book that sets the stage for increasing the effectiveness of using human resource workers in special education settings.

Human Resources in Special Education

During the 1970s, a number of events occurred that exerted extensive pressure on professionals to deliver promised services to handicapped children, youth, and adults. With the passage of Public Law 94-142, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and legislative mandates in most states, much had been done by the end of the 1970s to modify the nature of services offered to handicapped students in our public schools. This legislation has increased teachers' and administrators' responsibilities by mandating the provision of a free and appropriate public education to all students, and required that this be done within the framework of a predetermined timetable. In addition, these services are to be delivered to a greater number of individuals than has ever been done before (Boomer, 1980; Kaplan, 1978; Smokoski, 1978).

During the late 1970s, these responsibilities were being met through the training of additional professionals in special education and a number of allied fields, and, to an extent, the inservice training and retraining of regular classroom teachers. Hutson (1979) and Platt and Platt (1980) both noted that such procedures often proved expensive and required a number of years to implement. Also, they were done so with varied degrees of success.

In a decade in which special education personnel are required not only to provide more services on limited budgets and resources, but to do so faster, more efficiently, and better than ever before, school systems have become increasingly aware of the difficulties involved in meeting legislative mandates and in providing the breadth of services that would meet the needs of every handicapped student. One partial solution to this dilemma has been found in the increased use of para-professionals, volunteers, and peer tutors in the instruction of exceptional children. The use of various nonprofessional¹ human resource workers to improve

service delivery in the schools is not a new idea. Since the mid-1950s, para-professionals have been responsible for a number of clerical activities in the schools. Also, since the early 1960s, dramatic growth in the volunteer movement has seen the entry of uncounted numbers of community resource workers into special education classrooms. At or about the same time, a number of teachers started experimenting with, and advocating for, the use of peer and cross-age tutors in the instruction of special students. While not a new idea, the use of human resource workers did receive a good deal of attention and refinement throughout the 1970s (Buffer, 1980; Cuninggim and Mulligan, 1979; Fafard and Kelly, 1980; Reid and Reid, 1974; Saettler, 1976; Volunteer, 1980). Indeed, one of the more critical issues to be faced by special education preparation personnel during the 1980s may well be "the rapidly developing need for better trained [resource workers]² to work with handicapped children in many new and developing roles and responsibilities in educational programs and settings" (Pickett, 1979, p. 3).

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER "PLUS"

Why Use Additional Human Resource Workers?

During the past decade, special education's growing acceptance and accelerating use of human resource workers can only be described as phenomenal. These individuals increase the teacher's effectiveness, facilitate the pupils' cognitive and emotional development, and serve as a link between classroom and community; thus their participation in the special education classroom is often nothing less than a necessity. This is particularly the case in light of special students' unique educational needs, many of which may even necessitate one-to-one assistance in the classroom.

The need for resource workers in the classroom is often a function of the population of children with whom the teacher is working. In regular elementary and secondary classrooms it is possible to maintain a high ratio of students to teachers—sometimes as much as thirty to one—and still effectively deliver instruction. In special education classrooms, however, students require a much smaller teacher-pupil ratio. Characteristically, class numbers are small and more staff on a per-pupil basis are employed. The severity of a child's handicap also dictates small staff-pupil ratios, as is evident by comparing classrooms of high-functioning versus low-functioning handicapped individuals. With older and/or higher functioning students, it is not unusually difficult to provide for individualized instruction. These students often are capable of working in moderate-sized groups, have relatively rapid acquisition rates, and exhibit fewer behavior problems than do younger and/or more seriously involved students. Additionally, commercially prepared materials are often geared for higher functioning children, allowing the student some autonomy in terms of pacing, self-correction, and self-monitoring.

With the lower functioning, younger, or more severely handicapped child, however, the problems of instruction become greater. Often this means providing a one-to-one teacher-pupil ratio while structuring, presenting, and developing materials. In many of these cases the use of human resource workers becomes essential. This is particularly true when children with extensive needs are placed in the classrooms of public schools. If special education teachers are to do the job that is now expected of them and do it well, additional assistance in the form of resource worker input is requisite.

The need for resource workers in the classroom is also evident when one looks critically at how teacher time is often spent. Structured observations indicate that many teachers inevitably perform simple maintenance tasks, lunchroom and playground supervision, and clerical tasks (Robb, 1969). Some studies indicate that, based on a typical weekly teacher workload of fifty hours, 20 percent or more of this time consists of activities that have little or nothing to do with teaching *per se* (Williams, 1966). Add to this any time spent in preparation, planning, Individualized Education Plan development, and the various other responsibilities commonly assumed by special education teachers, and it comes as little surprise that actual instructional time often becomes shortchanged. With the inclusion of resource workers in both instructional and noninstructional activities, the portion of teacher time spent on noninstructional responsibilities would sizeably decrease. If coordinated correctly, the amount of instructional time offered to special students could even increase!

The need for additional human resources in the classroom is no minor matter. Logic suggests and data confirm that the more time spent directly instructing a child, the more that child will learn. In fact, the ability to maximize instructional time is considered one of the most important abilities a teacher of handicapped students could have (Fredericks et al., 1977b). The realities of the classroom, however, can greatly limit this ability. Take, for example, a class of ten moderately handicapped children in which the teacher attempts to teach basic language concepts. If it takes fifteen to thirty minutes of daily one-to-one instruction to teach each child one concept, and this instructional time is multiplied by a factor of ten pupils, the net result is a minimum of two and one-half to five hours of individual instruction per concept per day. Assuming that some of these students are capable of working in small groups, both the time factor and total instructional time may be somewhat reduced. However, many basic skills require active participation and cannot be learned only by watching and/or listening to others. Since small group instruction is advantageous only if each group member actively participates more than he or she would have in the larger group, assurances must be taken to provide such options as frequently as possible.

In terms of instruction, it has often been observed that while handicapped students are capable of adequately performing tasks for their teachers, they often have a problem generalizing the same behaviors to others. This problem can be alleviated in part by providing a number of persons as instructors, each teaching the same objective to the same student (Barrett and McCormack, 1973). Similarly,