Professional Learning for Paraprofessionals Working in Special Education

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Creative Statement

- Focused on Professional Learning paraprofessionals working in Special Education need and receive to maximize knowledge and understanding regarding student’s individualized needs.
- Needs assessment survey was given to current paraprofessionals and teachers working in Special Education to analyze what professional learning has previously been offered as well as possible future topics.

Introduction

Research has stated...

- "paraprofessionals hold a significant place in the education of students with disabilities; assisting in maintaining and generalizing specific learning skills throughout multiple environments" (Stockall, 2014, p. 204)
- "very often paraprofessionals in Special Education do not receive the same level of professional learning given to other service providers" (Mckenzie, 2011, p.38).

Methods

- Qualitative Research
- Preschool-5th grade teachers and paraprofessionals working in Special Education classrooms.
- Self-contained program in an urban Mid-Western Elementary school.
- Distributed to 19 participants with 13 returned within a two week time; five teachers and eight paraprofessionals responded.
- Survey about professional training for paraprofessionals.
- Format for survey was Yes/No questions with options for responses
- Narrative responses including specific topics paraprofessionals have already received and/or would like to receive in the future.

Results/Discussion

- Multiple commonalities from teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Data showed there was no real professional learning/training offered within the last school year to paraprofessionals.
- All areas: academics/cognitive, behavioral, medical, language/communication, and self-help/functional would be necessary and meaningful.
- 100% of teachers and paraprofessionals perceive professional learning would help meet the needs of students receiving Special Education services.

References


Conclusion

- Teachers and paraprofessionals BELIEVE and are WILLING to work towards ALL paraprofessionals receiving needed professional learning to increase knowledge and understanding regarding students’ needs.