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Training Needs of the Paraprofessional

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TRAINING NEEDS OF THE PARAPROFSSIONAL

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Introduction

With the advent of the 70's came a new movement in the area of training and use of paraprofessionals. This movement in the human service profession began in the 60's and blossomed in the 70's.

Gartner and Riessman (1974) identified five major reasons instrumental in the movement's development: (a) consumer awareness of the inadequacies of traditional service delivery, (b) recognition of the barriers preventing the poor from achieving professional status, (c) acceptance by professionals of paraprofessionals, in part to serve as bridges to minority communities, (d) the need for jobs, and (e) the shortage of personnel for human service work.

A survey conducted by Gartner in 1971 revealed that paraprofessionals can successfully conduct direct service work in education, health care and social services.

The use of paraprofessionals has afforded increased individuals attention to the handicapped person, allotted preparation/planning time for the professional with an overall result of improved services.

Early in the use of paraprofessionals the question arose "as to just what can we trust them to do?" Presently the focus is concentrated toward that of two professionals working together to provide effective service.

Training periods vary from a two-year associate degree at a community college to short-term in-service training.

Paraprofessionals Are Employed In The Areas Of:

1. Teacher Aide/Interpreter
2. Interpreter
3. Counselor Aide (Vocational Rehabilitation)
4. Rehabilitation Aide (Agency)
5. Dormitory Counselor/Houseparent

Requirements:

Minimum entrance requirements are a high school diploma or GED.

General Competencies To Be Developed During Training Are:

1. Sign Language (ASL and Signed English)
2. Foundations in Deafness
 - a. etiology
 - b. deaf community
 - c. history of deaf education
 - d. onset
 - e. associative terminology
 - f. support services
 - g. organizations
 - h. language development
 - i. communication systems
 - j. psychosocial development
3. General Studies
 - a. English
 - b. Interpersonal Relations
4. Wide Range of Life Experiences

To determine the specific competencies one would expect of a paraprofessional in the area of deafness, a task analysis becomes useful.

A. Primary Skills

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- B. Supportive Skills
- C. Characteristics of Individual
- D. Work Environment
- E. Work Conditions
- F. Standards of Performance
(degree of success)

Definition:

- A. *Primary Skills* — those skills which are an integral part of the task, i.e., manual communication.
 - B. *Supportive Skills* — those skills which are not specifically related to the task but increase work efficiency, i.e., English skills.
 - C. *Characteristics of Individual* — the personal and social attributes of the individual which either encourages, help or hinder performance on the job.
 - D. *Work Environment* — the successful integration of the individual into the general work situation.
 - E. *Work Conditions* — the usage of learned skills appropriate to the work conditions.
 - F. *Standards of Performance* — the performance meets with the expected outcome.
- I. Teacher Aide/Interpreter
- A. Employment Areas
 - 1. elementary school (including pre-school)
 - 2. junior high school
 - 3. high school
 - 4. residential school
 - 5. private programs
 - B. Competency Areas
 - 1. Behavior Management
 - a. one to one
 - b. small group
 - c. whole class
 - 2. Media
 - a. classroom machines
 - 1. projectors
 - 2. overhead
 - 3. opaque
 - 4. filmstrip, etc.
 - b. production equipment
 - 1. video tape
 - 2. thermofax
 - 3. dry mount press
 - 4. laminator, etc.

- c. materials production
 - 1. charts
 - 2. worksheets
 - 3. bulletin boards
 - 4. filmstrips
 - 3. Office Skills
 - a. typing
 - b. filing
 - c. record keeping
 - 4. Instructional Skills
 - a. application of knowledge
 - 1. language development
 - 2. emotional development
 - 3. physical development
 - 5. Sign Language
 - a. Signed English
 - b. Ameslan
 - c. interpreting skill
 - 1. expressive
 - 2. receptive
 - 6. English
 - a. write
 - b. speak
 - c. read
 - C. Characteristics
 - 1. Takes orders — often from a younger individual
 - 2. Works independently
 - 3. Flexible in assignment
 - 4. Not overly sensitive
 - 5. Demonstrates maturity
 - 6. Emotionally stable
 - 7. Separate work from outside activities
 - 8. Paternalism
 - D. Performance
 - 1. Evaluation
 - a. on going — from day to day
 - b. if performance is not adequate, then it will be noticed by all those involved
 - c. formal evaluation
 - 1. once a year
 - 2. done by supervisor or principal
- II. Interpreter (working in areas other than elementary or secondary classrooms)
- A. Possible areas of employment are:
 - 1. college interpreting (academic)

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2. post-secondary education and training (vocational and technical)
3. vocational rehabilitation
4. legal
5. medical
6. religious
7. mental health

In most cases, full-time employment for interpreters exists only in the first two of these areas.

- B. Specific skills needed for interpreting are determined by the deaf person's needs—either “interpreting” from English to ASL and ASL to English, or “transliterating” between spoken English and signed English.

1. Transliterating
 - a. Primary Skills
 1. Skill in signed English
 2. Speed in transliteration (with clarity and accuracy)
 3. Sufficient English vocabulary for the assignment
 - b. Supportive Skills
 1. Ameslan communication skills
 2. Strong academic background

The transliterator is limited to situations where the deaf person is known to be very proficient in English. The most likely source of employment is an academic college program.

2. Interpreter
 - a. Primary skills
 1. ASL skills
 2. Speed in interpreting (with accuracy and clarity)
 3. Ability to assess and adapt to the deaf persons's preferred mode of communication, e.g., continuum: ASL - English
 4. Knowledge of specific technical terms and jargon related to the particular field—in both ASL and English
 - b. Supportive Skills
 1. Strong skills in English
 2. Interpersonal relations skills
 3. Flexibility
 4. Ability to describe interpreting

process without demeaning the deaf person

- C. Characteristics
 1. Non-paternal (must have worked through pitying stage)
 2. Ability to “turn off” appropriate level of personal involvement
 3. Secure in his/her role
 4. Internalization of a code of ethics
- D. Working Conditions
 1. Ability to function independently
 2. Evaluated by feedback from consumers
- E. The majority of students entering a paraprofessional program will not be able to develop sufficient skill in ASL to allow them to become “interpreters” by the end of the training period. Those who emerge from such a program as interpreters are usually persons who had some ASL communications skills previous to entering the training program.

- III. Counselor Aide (working with a counselor who specializes in working with deaf people)

- A. Fields of Employment
 1. DVR
 2. Community Service Programs
 3. Welfare Agencies
- B. Specific Skills Needed
 1. Primary Skills
 - a. manual communications skills — ASL (not necessarily interpreting skills)
 - b. knowledge of agency practices and procedures
 - c. interviewing techniques
 - d. case recording skills
 - e. TTY skills
 - f. other skills, depending on type of position, e.g., aide/secretary, aide/clerk
 2. Supportive Skills
 - a. interpersonal relations
 - b. typing
 - c. knowledge of community resources
- C. Functions of Counselor Aide

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1. Work as an extension of the counselor
2. Should *not* be used to go out with the clients as interpreters
3. For clients with minimal language skills or little previous experience in handling their own affairs, the aide should be available to accompany the client (in addition to an interpreter) to assist in the following ways:
 - a. keep client aware of his/her rights
 - b. "coach" client to make responses appropriate to the situation
 - c. report to counselor for follow-upThese services are needed by some clients, but they should not be assigned to (or assumed by) the interpreter. The counselor aide fills the gap and allows the interpreter to be professional and ethical.

IV. Rehabilitation Aide

A. Fields of Employment

1. rehabilitation centers - day
2. rehabilitation center - residential
3. multiply handicapped project
4. sheltered workshops
5. speech or hearing centers
6. mental health

B. Skills Needed

1. Primary Skills
 - a. manual communication skills — ASL (not necessarily interpreting skills)
 - b. knowledge of agency practices and procedures
 - c. interviewing techniques
 - d. case recording skills

- e. TTY skills
 - f. other skills, depending on type of position, e.g., aide/secretary, aide/clerk
 - g. knowledge of medical disabilities and terminology
 - h. theoretical knowledge
2. Supportive Skills
 - a. interpersonal relations
 - b. typing
 - c. knowledge of community resources

C. Functions of Rehabilitation Aide

1. Extension of counselor
2. Teach aids to daily living
3. "Wherever necessary"

V. Dormitory Worker

A. Fields of employment

1. Residential worker
2. Halfway house
3. Camps: adult, children

B. Skills Needed

1. Child oriented activities
2. Leadership
3. Organization
4. Recreation planning
5. Behavior management
6. Tutoring
7. "Coping" ability
8. Some paternalistic qualities

C. Functions

An extension of the parent, friend, cook, counselor, etc. all rolled into one.

Needs

1. Formal Listing of Programs
2. Sharing of Information
3. Certification

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