

# The Paraprofessional's Role in Creating Inclusive Learning Environments

Heartland Coalition Paraprofessional Workshop

August 5-6, 2010

Mount Carmel Area Elementary School

# Types of Paraprofessionals

What types of paraprofessionals work in schools?

What are the responsibilities of each job?

# Types of Paraprofessionals

- Personal Care Assistant
- Instructional Assistant (Special Education)
- Instructional Assistant (Title 1)

# Personal Care Assistant: Roles and Responsibilities

- Collaborate with teacher and medical professionals to provide student specific care
- Work towards physical therapy or occupational therapy goals
- Work towards academic goals
- Feeding
- Toileting
- Transportation
- Journaling to communicate daily activities to parents or other service providers
- Attending meetings to provide input on student needs/progress

# Title 1 Instructional Assistant: Roles and Responsibilities

- Work toward general, school-wide academic goals
- Focus on students who display a need for support
- Answer individual student questions
- Re-read/explain directions
- Read testing materials aloud to students
- Work 1:1 to support struggling readers
- Collaborate with regular education teachers

# Special Education Instructional Assistant: Roles and Responsibilities

- Work toward general, school-wide academic goals
- Work toward IEP goals
- Focus on students receiving special education services
- Answer individual student questions
- Re-read/explain directions
- Read testing materials aloud to students
- Work 1:1 to support struggling readers
- Collect documentation on progress towards IEP goals
- Collaborate with special education and regular education teachers

# Least Restrictive Environment

The paraprofessionals role in providing accommodations and modifications

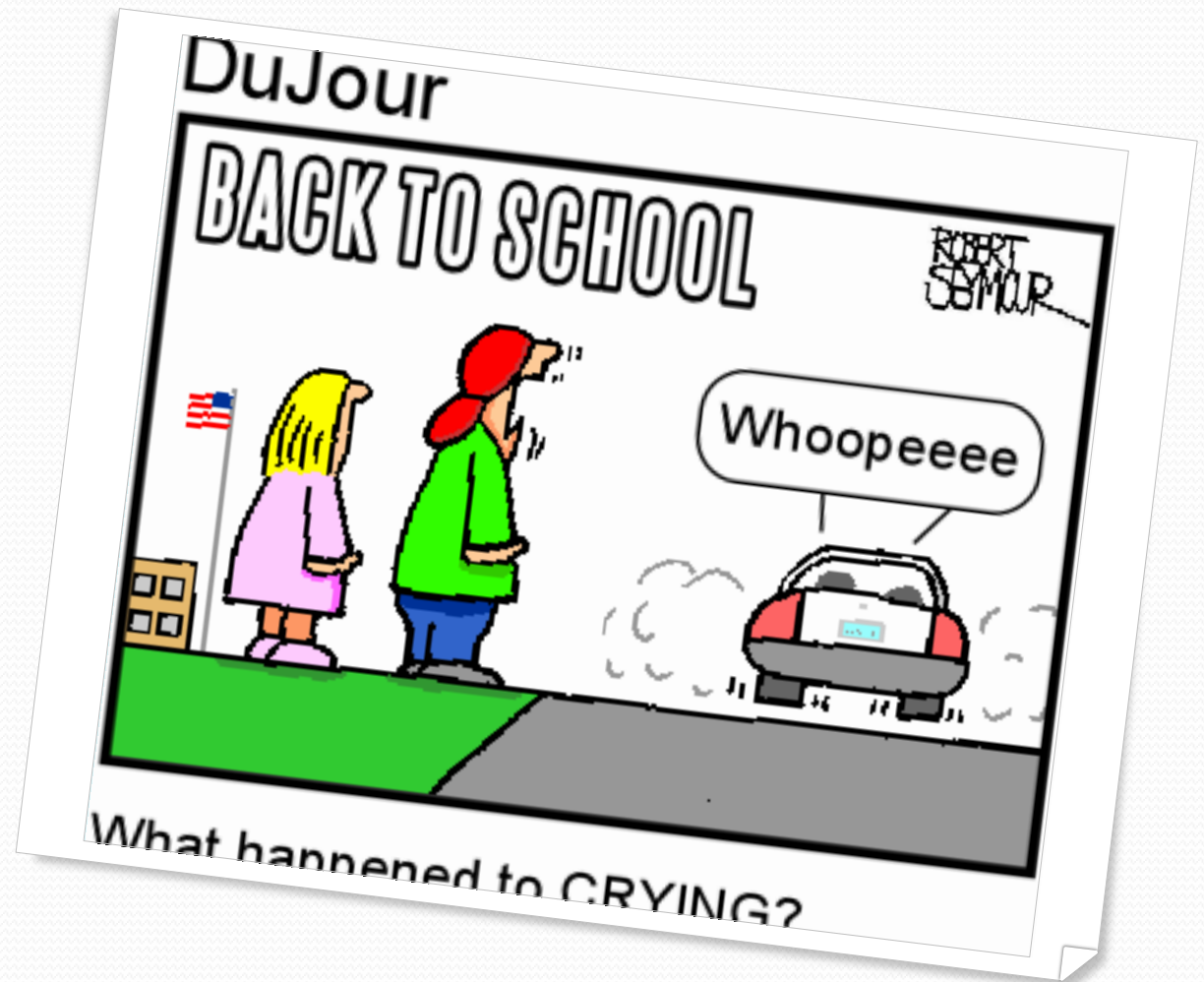
**One last look back  
at the summer...**

Share a special  
moment from the  
summer with  
someone sitting  
next to you.





And thinking  
toward the start of  
the school year...



# Session Overview

- Reflection on the role of the Paraprofessional
- Least Restrictive Environment

What is LRE?

Why is it so important?

- The Paraprofessional's role in LRE

Accommodations and modifications – what are they, what is the difference?

# Reflection

How has your role as a paraprofessional changed from the beginning of your career ?

I used to...

But now I...

Pat DeVier

# Least Restrictive Environment

What is Least Restrictive Environment?

Why is Least Restrictive Environment so important?

# Least Restrictive Environment

Everyone Starts as  
Part of the Whole



Everyone  
Is  
Welcome

# LRE: General Premise

100% of the time with  
nondisabled peers in  
general education



Start here  
then move along the continuum,  
based upon the student's individual need

0% of the time  
with nondisabled  
peers

# Why LRE is important

- **Most students in special education have been classified as having a learning disability or cognitive impairment with the aid of an intelligence test.**
  - **IQ test scores, under optimal test conditions, account for 40 % to 50% of current expected achievement.**
  - **Thus, 50% to 60 % of student achievement is related to variables “beyond intelligence” for any given IQ score:**
  - **Research (Madon et al, 1997) indicates that teacher expectations and effective instruction accounts for “beyond intelligence” results.**



Why LRE is important

**When we hold students  
to high expectations  
achievement rises.**



# Accommodations and Modifications

What is the difference between accommodation and modification?

What are examples of how accommodations and modifications are used?

Best Practices Video Resources

# Accommodations and Modifications

## Accommodations

- Changes that provide access to the **same content** given to regular education students.

## Examples

- Slower Pacing
- Seating
- Materials & Equipment/  
Assistive Technology
- Reinforcement and Follow-Through
- Time

# Accommodations and Modifications

## Modifications

- Changes that provide for challenging expectations appropriate for the child; **content is altered.**

## Examples

- Length and/or focus of assignments
- Modifications made to testing format or content
- Grading procedures

# Accommodations and Modifications

## Best Practice Video Series

Accommodations and Modifications  
At Work

# Key

## Connection

Your ability to provide accommodations and modifications **are the key** to students learning in the least restrictive environment.



# Reflection

What accommodations and modifications are you responsible for with your students? Are there things you would like to try this year that you have never tried? Any new ideas that came to you over the summer?

# Importance of work as a Paraprofessional

## Best Practice Video Series

Pat DeVier

# Strategies for providing accommodations and modifications

- ❑ BEFORE reading strategies
- ❑ DURING reading strategies
- ❑ AFTER reading strategies



# BEFORE reading strategies

Establishing an essential question

Activating Prior Knowledge

Building Relationships with Students

THIEVES

# The importance of activating prior knowledge...

“ The background knowledge we bring to our reading colors every aspect of our learning and understanding. If readers have nothing to hook new information to, it’s pretty hard to construct meaning. When we have a lot of background knowledge in a topic, we are much more likely to understand the text(92).”

- from *Strategies that Work* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis

# How do we build relationships with our students?

- Greet kids at the door
- Know their sports, hobbies and other extracurricular activities
- Talk informally with students before and after class
- Walk, talk and WATCH in the hallway and cafeteria
- Invite students to eat lunch with you
- Pay attention to books, magazines or other reading material
- Pay attention to websites they may be visiting in the lab

# How do we build relationships with our students?

## Trade an accusation

- Where is your homework?
- We're not having a day like we did yesterday.

## For an opportunity to help

- You have a few minutes before the bell. Is there anything I can help you finish?
- Today is a new day! I bet you are looking forward to...

# How do we build relationships with our students?

Connect the topic to what you know about the student. You can't build connections unless you know the kid!

# BEFORE reading strategies

- THIEVES

Title

Headings

Introduction

Every first sentence of a paragraph

Visuals and vocabulary

End of Chapter Questions

Summary

# DURING reading strategies

- ❑ Chunking
- ❑ Coding Text

# DURING reading strategies

## Chunking

- Break text into manageable pieces so students do not feel overwhelmed



# DURING reading strategies

## Coding

- Allows students to **ACTIVELY** engage with reading
- Provides reference points for discussion or re-teaching/clarification

# AFTER reading strategies

- Use “! Codes” to answer the essential question

# YOU make a difference!

