

SUPERVISING PARAPROFESSIONALS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: A  
DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

by

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# Supervising Paraprofessionals in Middle School Classrooms: A Descriptive Case Study

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how teachers provide supervision to paraprofessionals in middle school classrooms. The numbers of paraprofessionals in school settings have continued to increase thus causing roles for both teachers and paraprofessionals to evolve. Teachers and paraprofessionals perceive the teacher's supervisory role differently (D'Aquanni, 1997; Milner, 1998; Mueller, 1997). Consequently, this descriptive case study examines how teachers provide supervision to paraprofessionals in middle school classrooms. Questions regarding the teacher's role as a supervisor are derived from Pickett's (1999) supervisory framework, which addresses five areas: planning, task delegating, role clarifying, performance monitoring, and on-the-job training and mentoring. The results of this study both supported Pickett's (1999) framework and added additional information that can enhance effective paraprofessional supervision in middle school classrooms. Results indicated that planning, formal or informal, does not exist, as it should, between teacher and paraprofessional teams in middle school classrooms. In addition, this study supported the notion that teachers are often uncomfortable delegating tasks to paraprofessionals. It also determined that roles remain unclear for both teachers and paraprofessionals. Many paraprofessionals feel they are not monitored at all by teachers, possibly due to the lack of role clarification. Finally, this study found that training for both paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers is minimal.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Brian, who is the reason I began this program in the first place. He has continued to encourage and support me throughout my time at Virginia Tech and in all other aspects of my life. I cannot thank him enough for the numerous backpacking trips he has taken that have enabled me to have uninterrupted writing time!

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