The purpose of this study was to develop and field-test an employment screening instrument for paraprofessionals. The developed instrument demonstrated good reliability and concurrent validity. The instrument shows promise for helping administrators identify effective paraprofessional staff members for school classrooms.

**The role Paraprofessionals play in schools and their selection**

In recent years, American schools have seen a growth in the number of special education paraprofessionals employed to serve our special education students as well as a growth in the roles these individuals are expected to play in schools. In addition, with passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, school districts have also become increasingly concerned about the quality of individuals filling these paraprofessional positions. Despite this heightened concern, little research has been completed concerning the selection process and in particular, the employment interview, which is the primary data collection strategy used to make the employment decision. The purpose of this study was to identify the major job components of paraprofessionals, to translate these standards into an interview instrument that could assist school officials in the selection process, and to field test that instrument.

The Increasing Importance of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals were first used in the post-war period of the 1950s as the United States experienced a shortage of teachers. Their initial role was to perform clerical tasks and monitor students, with the goal of allowing teachers to spend more time on instruction (Shkodriani, 2004). Legislation, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Head Start, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and Bilingual Education Act have since created conditions that have increased the need for qualified paraprofessionals. In addition, with an ever-growing number of special education students across the country, schools are facing the challenges of supplying special education teachers and paraprofessionals who can meet the needs of these students. The number of paraeducators employed in U.S. schools increased dramatically during the 1990s, at a national average of

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48% with some western states reporting as much as a 94% increase. To put the growth in perspective, during that same time period, the student population increased by only 13% and the number of teachers increased by 18% (French, 2003). Likins (2003) estimates there are more than 525,000 people serving as paraprofessionals in the United States.

In recent years, schools have not only seen a growth in the number of paraprofessionals but also in the roles these individuals are expected to play. In fact, paraprofessionals have become the central means of supporting students in special education inclusion settings (French and Pickett, 1997, Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, and McFarland, 1997). With recent legislation, paraprofessionals are being assigned increasing responsibility. For example, NCLB’s language allows paraeducators to take on more responsibility in the classroom; they are now expected to provide one-on-one tutoring, assist with classroom management, provide instructional assistance in computer labs, conduct parental involvement activities, provide support in a library media center, act as a translator, or provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

**Competencies Needed by Paraprofessionals**

Although an increasing number of states and organizations are defining needed paraprofessional competencies with more legislation dictating educational qualifications, the actual and appropriate role of the paraprofessional continues to evolve. In general, the professional literature (French, 2003; Killoran, Templeton, Peters, and Udell, 2001; Mueller, 1997; Pearman, Suhr and Gibson, 1993; Forbush and Morgan, 2004; Morgan, Forbush, and Nelson, 2004, and Riggs, 2001) indicates paraprofessionals should be competent in the following areas:

- Understanding specific disabilities
- Understanding and following team plans for instruction
- Engaging in appropriate behavior management
- Communicating with students
- Understanding the social-emotional, physical, and communication development in children
- Understanding the impact of learning styles and characteristics of human learning
- Understanding and implementing instructional techniques for students of varying abilities
- Understanding current issues in inclusion
- Understanding and implementing assistive technology
- Promoting social acceptance of children with disabilities
- Implementing individual and small-group instruction
- Working with adults
- Understanding special education process and laws
- Developing and using an IEP

Minondo, Meyer, and Xin (2001) suggest these qualities may be grouped into four areas: (1) serving as a member of a school support team (2) connecting students with adults and other students (3) providing individual instruction and (4) giving care and support. One or more of these themes is supported by others including Clarke, 2001, Chopra, 2002, Downing, Ryndak, and Clark, French, 2003, French and Chopra, 1999, Giangreco, 2003, Kamps, 1996, Marks, Schrader, and Levine, 1999, McIntyre, 1999, Storey, Smith, and Strain, 1993; Trautman, 2004, 2000, Werts et al., 2004, and Young, Simpson, Smith-Myles, and Kotkin, 1998.
**Paraprofessional Standards**

With increasing legislation and expanding roles of paraprofessionals, many states are considering the development of guidelines for paraprofessionals and professional organizations, such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, Inc.; these groups continue to advocate for the development of comprehensive standards for paraprofessionals. Despite this recent interest, only a few states have actually developed paraprofessional standards beyond the requirements listed in NCLB. Competencies identified in these developmental efforts can usually be divided into four areas: (1) Content Knowledge, (2) Thinking Skills, (3) Interpersonal Relations/Human Relations, and (4) Personal Qualities (Beale, 2001, p. 2). Currently, 13 states have mandated certification or credentialing requirements for paraprofessionals, yet 7 of these states have not changed their standards since 1970. Thirty-one states have minimal standards, and many others have employment guidelines (Shkodriani, 2004). However, these standards vary widely.

**The Employment Interview Process for Paraprofessional Staff**

Historically, the personal interview has been the foundation and most common tool utilized within the hiring process in education as well as other fields (Castetter and Young, 2000; Eder, 1999). Because of the popularity of and importance placed upon the interview in the selection process, much research has been conducted over the past few decades to investigate the effectiveness of the employment interview. There have been a number of meta-analyses of interview validity (e.g., Huffcutt and Arthur, 1994; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, and Maurer, 1994; Wiesner and Cronshaw, 1988; Wright, Lichtenfels, and Pursell, 1989) and of interview reliability (Conway, Jako, and Goodman, 1995). As a whole, these studies suggest that employment interviews do have potential to help predict job performance (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, and Stone, 2001) when the interviews are structured.

Much of the research, however, does not support the psychometric qualities of interviewing approaches that have traditionally been utilized in the school setting (Emley and Ebmeier, 1997; Harvey and Struzziero, 2000). Thayer (1978) indicates criticisms of the typical interview include weaknesses in the way the information is gathered, judgment bias, and errors in decision-making. For example, interviewers may inadvertently influence responses through nonverbal behavior, ask questions not based on specific and precise job skills, fail to control the interview session by talking too much or by not following up when appropriate, and/or make employment decisions early in the interview prior to all data being collected and evaluated. However, despite its limitations, the interview is likely to remain a popular tool for employee selection (Carlson, Thayer, Mayfield, and Peterson, 1971; Murray, 1990).

Interviewing practices for paraprofessionals introduce additional concerns surrounding the efficacy of the interview process. First, carefully conceived and field tested questions usually do not exist, and if they do, the questions may not have been developed based on specific job analysis, and typically do not include reliable scoring systems to help interviewers evaluate the quality of the responses. Often, these questions are very generic in nature and typically consist of questions used for candidates seeking classroom teaching positions. Second, principals and other administrative staff responsible for the selection task rarely understand the role of the paraprofessional, and many do not fully understand the attributes necessary to be successful in this role. For example, Wallace et al. (2001) conducted a study using 92 administrators, 266 teachers, and 211 paraprofessionals and found that a common understanding about the job descriptions and duties of paraprofessionals is not present across the three groups. Likewise, there is limited research regarding the paraprofessional interviewing process, with a review of the extant literature revealing only two articles relating to the process (Blalock, 1991; and, Carroll, 2001).

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2 Meet a standard of quality that demonstrates, through formal state or local assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics or in readiness activities for reading, writing or mathematics.

Have completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education.

Have obtained an associate’s or higher degree.
Needed Research and the Present Study

Given the increasing numbers of professionals employed in the school systems and their significant educational responsibilities, it seems important that schools carefully define appropriate job responsibilities for paraprofessionals and then translate these job responsibilities into interview questions appropriate for use in employment screening instruments with the goal of identifying good candidates.

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The present study identified the major components of the job of paraprofessional from the extant literature, state department documents, studies completed by professional organizations, and job descriptions, and then translated these job responsibilities into interview questions that served as the basis of an employment interview. After the interview questions and scoring rubrics were constructed, they were field-tested. This was done by stratifying the paraprofessionals in one large suburban school district according to past evaluations and grade level then interviewing each of the individuals using the developed instrument. The scores obtained on the interview instrument were then compared to ratings by the paraprofessionals’ supervisors. In addition, paraprofessional background characteristics were collected to determine whether demographic factors might have biased the interview outcomes.

Instrument Development

Questions were formed from a review of documents derived from professional organizations (CEC), state standards (Idaho, Washington, Alaska in particular), and past research efforts (French, 2003; Killoran, Templeton, Peters, and Udell, 2001; Mueller, 1997; Pearman, Suhr and Gibson, 1993; Forbush and Morgan, 2004; Morgan, Forbush, and Nelson, 2004, Riggs, 2001; Minondo, Meyer, and Yin, 2001; Trautman, 2004; Giangreco, 2003; Downing, Ryndak, and Clark, 2000; Marks, Schrader, and Levine, 1999; Chopra and French 2004; Chopra et al., 2004; Werts et al., 2004; Storey, Smith, and Strain, 1993; Young, Simpson, and Smith-Myles, and Kamps, 1996). A grounded theory approach was taken in the creation of the interview instrument. In particular, the data, which included job descriptions, state and national standards, and current job responsibilities given in the literature were (1) coded into a data display matrix; (2) codes were examined for overlap and redundancy; and (3) the codes were collapsed into broad themes. To be included in the theme category, each suggested competency must have appeared in the majority of publications from the sources referenced above. A summary matrix of the competencies was constructed and can be found in Table 1. Descriptors of the major themes were also developed and were translated into twenty-seven interview questions that a school administrator or personnel officer might ask to assess the quality of a paraprofessional candidate. Themes for these questions based on the literature were (1) Knowledge of student learning processes and human development; (2) Knowledge and use of communication techniques with students, colleagues, and community; (3) Knowledge of the needs of diverse learners; (4) Understanding of the impact of the educational environment; and (5) Ability to implement teacher-designed instructional plans. After the questions were constructed, a three-point scoring rubric (Level 3 = very effective response, Level 2 = effective response, and Level 1 = ineffective response) was created for each question.

Participants and Procedure

The participants for this study included elementary, middle, and secondary school paraprofessionals, who work with special education students in both self-contained and inclusion classrooms, in a large mid-western school district with approximately 30,000 students. Participant paraprofessionals were chosen using a disproportionate stratified random sample. The participants were stratified according to their organizational level and then according to past evaluation ratings. This procedure was done to ensure sample diversity both in terms of grade level and quality of paraprofessional and was done by an individual other than the authors in order to prevent potential bias.

After stratification by school levels and ratings, a sample size of 15 from each school level (elementary, middle, and high school) was randomly selected to represent varying levels of job performance quality. All selected paraprofessionals were then contacted and asked for their voluntary

3 One additional paraprofessional from the middle school level was interviewed, for a total of 46, due to confusion in scheduling.
participation in the simulation of a paraprofessional interview. Participants were randomly selected from the stratified pool of paraprofessionals until 15 agreed to participate from each level. To ensure that each participant would receive the same set of instructions regarding the nature and purpose of the research project, a standardized introductory letter was developed. Participants were not made aware of the others who were participating in the research project nor were they aware of their “rated” status.

Forty-six interviews were conducted by one of the authors of the study over the telephone during a time period of two months. Interviews ranged from 45 to 55 minutes in length and followed the same procedure for each interview. After the interview, the paraprofessional’s supervisor was asked to rate the participant on a Likert scale from 1-4 where a 4 represented a high quality employee and a 1 represented an employment error.\(^4\)

In addition to responses to the interview instrument, personal demographic information regarding age, gender, ethnicity, highest educational level achieved, educational work level (elementary, middle school, or high school), and years of paraprofessional experience were also obtained.

**Instrument Face Validity**

To determine the face validity of the five instrument themes, expert checking\(^5\) was conducted by both the Director of Special Education for the identified district and the four attendance area special education directors of the district. All of those involved in expert checking were former special education teachers who worked very closely with paraprofessionals and who currently supervise them. Based on this initial feedback, the themes appear to have face validity as determined by the evaluation of the themes of these five currently-practicing special education administrators. Member checking\(^6\) also occurred by sending potential questions to twenty-five paraprofessionals randomly chosen from across the school district asking for feedback about the appropriateness of the questions.

**Instrument Internal Reliability**

Cronbach’s Alpha statistic was calculated to determine the internal reliability of the instrument used in this study. Cronbach’s Alpha estimates how well a set of variables measures a single unidimensional construct. The subscores in this study had relatively good alpha reliabilities: Knowledge of Student Learning Processes and Human Development (\(a = 0.899\)); Knowledge and Use of Communication Techniques with Students, Colleagues; and Community (\(a = 0.797\)); Knowledge of the Needs of Diverse Learners (\(a = 0.822\)); Understanding the Impact of the Educational Environment (\(a = 0.822\)); Ability to Implement Teacher-Designed Instructional Plans (\(a = 0.790\)), and Total Score (\(a = 0.958\)).

**Instrument Concurrent Validity**

The concurrent validity of the instrument was estimated by correlating the score obtained via the developed interview instrument and the principals’ rating of their paraprofessionals. The results of the Pearson \(r\) analyses found in Table 2 indicate that all the correlations between the rating on the developed instrument and the principals’ evaluation of the paraprofessionals were statistically significant. Overall, the interview instrument statistically demonstrated an excellent ability to differentiate between paraprofessionals rated as excellent, average or less than average by their supervisor. Examination of the inter-scale correlations also indicated a high relationship between scores on the different scales which is predictable. Obviously they do not measure orthogonal concepts.

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\(^4\) 4 = This paraprofessional is one of our best. We would not want to lose this employee at any cost. 3 = This paraprofessional is an asset to our staff. He/she does not rank among the best we have ever had, but he/she is a contributing member of our staff. 2 = This paraprofessional needs to improve in key areas of his/her job performance. 1 = This paraprofessional should not have been hired.

\(^5\) A process where experts in the field review the questions and themes for congruence and linkage to known standards

\(^6\) A process where practitioners were asked to review the questions and rubrics to see if they indeed matched their job responsibilities and work expectations.
Table 2 Correlations Among Research Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Subscale 1</th>
<th>Subscale 2</th>
<th>Subscale 3</th>
<th>Subscale 4</th>
<th>Subscale 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Rating</td>
<td>.81***</td>
<td>.81***</td>
<td>.77***</td>
<td>.72***</td>
<td>.75***</td>
<td>.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>.95***</td>
<td>.94***</td>
<td>.92**</td>
<td>.94***</td>
<td>.93***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.87***</td>
<td>.82***</td>
<td>.86***</td>
<td>.87***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.84***</td>
<td>.87***</td>
<td>.81***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.84***</td>
<td>.88***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.84***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note, n=46, ***p < .001

Subscale 1 = Knowledge of Student Learning Processes and Human Development

Subscale 2 = Knowledge and Use of Communication Techniques with Students, Colleagues, and Community

Subscale 3 = Knowledge of the Needs of Diverse Learners

Subscale 4 = Understanding of the Impact of the Educational Environment

Subscale 5 = Ability to Implement Teacher-Designed Instructional Plans

WHAT WAS LEARNED ABOUT THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

The purpose of the development of this interview instrument was to provide a tool administrators could use to identify paraprofessional candidates deemed effective. To that end, the instrument seems very suited (A sample of the interview can be found in Table 3). The validity correlations were very high for selection instruments. Indeed, the correlations were higher than common standardized tests used for admission into colleges and various post-graduate professional schools. These findings are supported by prior work of Shirk (1999), Evans (2004), Allshouse (2004), Longenecker (2005), Cowens (1999), Emly and Ebmeier (1997), and Ebmeier and Ng (2006) who used similar approaches to interviewing classroom teachers with excellent results. Collectively, these studies combined with the present study support the

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notion that selection instruments based upon job-related criteria and containing clear scoring rubrics can be very useful.

Although good results were obtained from this study, the correlation estimates probably underestimate the true concurrent validity of the instrument for two reasons. First, there was unavoidably some error variance introduced by the lack of precise definitions of paraprofessional effectiveness employed by the administrators from the various schools when rating the paraprofessionals. Supervisors may have completed the ratings inconsistently based on a variety of factors such as limited knowledge of the paraprofessional standards of practice as assessed on the rating scales, or lack of opportunity to observe the paraprofessionals utilizing every skill set assessed. Although they all possessed advanced degrees in education, no effort was undertaken to ensure they all used the same criteria to rate the paraprofessionals in their schools. This lack of training provided to the evaluators probably served to decrease inter-rater reliability and the correlations subsequently obtained.

Second, there was an unavoidable sampling ceiling effect when the paraprofessionals were selected. Paraprofessionals who failed the initial employment process or were released for poor performance were not included in the sample. Because paraprofessionals voluntarily participated in the study and were currently employed in the position, it is likely that the sample contained a heavier concentration of school paraprofessionals who possessed higher, versus lower, levels of competency. Typically, individuals concerned about their own level of expertise may be reluctant to participate in an activity in which they feel their lack of knowledge or skill might become evident. Thus, the study participants may not fairly represent the full range of skill level found in the field of practitioners in general. In addition, all the participants in the study were employed by one large suburban school district and were largely female and Caucasian. These situations either introduced undesirable error variance or limited variability, which likely dampened the correlations and possibly limit generalizability. Similar problems haunt statisticians working with the LSAT, GRE and, GMAT.

There were several other limitations inherent in the study. One was the manner which the data were collected. All 46 of the school paraprofessionals were interviewed by one of the authors of this study, who possessed an advanced degree and had extensive experience working with paraprofessionals, extensive experience in the field, and had constructed the questions and rubrics. If less qualified individuals or those not familiar with the questions and scoring rubrics found on the instrument were to have collected the data for this study, the correlations discovered likely would have been lower. The extent and degree to which training is required to accurately use the developed instrument is at this point unknown. Indeed, if building administrators are to effectively use the instrument developed in this study, substantial training and practice would be necessary. This training and familiarization with the roles of school paraprofessionals necessary to understand the questions and scoring rubrics could produce a very positive outcome: a much clearer understanding of the role of the school paraprofessional and a more discriminating employment selection process. Experience using other similar interview tools indicates that without training but with good questions and clear rubrics a 70%-75% accuracy rate from a known standard can be expected. With several hours of training, the accuracy rate usually increases to 95%. Clearly, this is one area that deserves additional research.

Second, the results obtained in this study were obtained primarily derived from an examination of paraprofessionals serving special education students. While the instrument can clearly distinguish among paraprofessionals evaluated by their supervisors as excellent, average, and poor, less is known about the discriminating power of the instrument with specific subgroups of paraprofessionals such as those serving students in communication/behavior disorders, developmental disabilities, and resource programs. Effective paraprofessionals in these specialized programs might display different score patterns on the various subscales. For example paraprofessionals serving behavior disorder students might systematically score higher on the Knowledge of the Needs of Diverse Learners scale than paraprofessionals serving students in resource rooms. Insufficient experience with the instrument precludes estimations at this point concerning subscale scoring patterns of effective paraprofessionals in specific assignments.

While the instrument described in this paper is effective in identifying superior and average school paraprofessionals, it is probably too long to be used in the normal employment interview situation. As such,
shorter versions of the basic instrument have been created for use in school systems. These shorter versions require from 15-30 minutes of administration time and are computer-based, in which the responses of the candidate are recorded and summary results produced. Based on statistical estimates (Spearman-Brown formula), these shorter versions are still reliable (0.70-0.90) yet considerably more user and candidate friendly.

From examination of the demographic data collected during the interview, the instrument appears to be slightly biased in favor of younger candidates. Obviously, care needs to be taken when interpreting scores from older school paraprofessional candidates. The instrument, however, seems relatively bias-free in terms of years of experience, gender, level of education, and educational work level (elementary, middle school, or high school). None of these analyses yielded correlations above the chance levels. In addition to precautions about possible age bias, one must also be cognizant of the purpose of the instrument. It was designed to identify school paraprofessionals who are considered effective by their supervisors. It was not constructed to predict other possible definitions of effectiveness such as residual gain on standardized tests, parent satisfaction, student satisfaction, or career longevity.

Lastly, it is not suggested that the process for selecting school paraprofessionals be reduced to a single, 27-question structured interview (or the shorter versions from AASPA). On the contrary, what was examined was a piece of a very complex puzzle. All of the data about an applicant should be considered within the context of the merit of each piece of the application puzzle. This effort was designed to improve the quality of one piece of the applicant’s portfolio of information so that, taken in total, a clear picture of his/her competence can be fairly and accurately assessed. The employment interview described in this paper seems to possess good reliability and validity estimates; however, it should be only one piece of information upon which employment decisions are made.

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Allshouse, T. (2003). Construct validity of the knowledge of content scale from the AASPA Interactive Computer Interview Instrument, unpublished dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.


8 Versions designed for use in schools can be obtained from the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (www.aaspa.org). University based researchers can obtain versions of the instrument useful for additional investigations from howard@ku.edu.


Evans, L. (2004). Construct validity of the working with others scale from the AASPA Interactive Computer Interview Instrument, unpublished dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.


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Table 1 Matrix of the Relationship Between Various State and National Standards and the Subscales on the Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of student learning processes and human development</th>
<th>Knowledge and use of communication techniques with students, colleagues, and community</th>
<th>Knowledge of the needs of diverse learners</th>
<th>Understanding of the impact of the educational environment</th>
<th>Ability to implement teacher-designed instructional plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alaska – Principle 3</strong> A paraprofessional understands how students learn and develop and how to assist in providing opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 6</strong> – The paraprofessional uses a variety of communication techniques including verbal, nonverbal, and media in and beyond the classroom.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 3</strong> – The paraprofessional knows that students differ in their approaches to learning and assists in creating instructional opportunities that are adapted to students with diverse needs.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 5</strong> – The paraprofessional understands the impact of the educational environment on student learning, self-motivation and positive social interaction and assists in creating a positive learning environment.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 1</strong> The paraprofessional has a basic knowledge of the discipline(s) taught and supports the teacher/provider in creating learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 2</strong> – The paraprofessional has a basic knowledge of how students learn and develop and assists in providing opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 13</strong> – Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 1</strong> – Understanding the value of providing instructional and other direct services to all children and youth with disabilities.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 6</strong> – Ability to provide positive behavioral support and management.</td>
<td><strong>CEC – Principle 4</strong> Knowledge of instructional practice and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 3</strong> – Knowledge of patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages, and risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development.</td>
<td><strong>Alaska – Principle 8</strong> – A paraprofessional utilizes technology to assist and enhance teaching and learning.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 8</strong> – Awareness of diversity among the children, youth, families, and colleagues with whom they work.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 11</strong> – Ability to motivate and assist children and youth.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 7</strong> – The paraprofessional implements teacher/provider designed instructional plans based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alaska – Principle 2</strong> – A paraprofessional understands how students learn and develop and how to assist in providing opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.</td>
<td><strong>Idaho – Principle 10</strong> – The paraprofessional interacts in a professional, effective manner with colleagues, parents, and other members of the community to support students’ learning and well-being.</td>
<td><strong>CEC – Principle 3</strong> – Knowledge of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation of diverse learners.</td>
<td><strong>Alaska – Principle 4</strong> – A paraprofessional motivates and assists children and youth to build self-esteem, develop interpersonal skills and strengthen abilities to become more successful.</td>
<td><strong>Washington – Principle 9</strong> – Knowledge and application of the elements of effective instruction to assist teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC – Principle 2 – Knowledge of the characteristics of learners.</td>
<td>Washington – Principle 4 – Ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct, including the requirements of confidentiality.</td>
<td>Research competency – Knowledge about instructional techniques for students of varying abilities.</td>
<td>CEC – Principle 5 – Supporting the teaching and learning environment.</td>
<td>Washington – Principle 10 – Ability to utilize appropriate strategies and techniques to provide instructional support in teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research competency – Knowledge of specific disabilities.</td>
<td>Washington – Principle 5 – Ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions, and use problem solving and other skills that will enable the Para educator to work as an effective member of the instructional team.</td>
<td>Research Competency – Instructor (one-to-one and instructional)</td>
<td>CEC – Principle 6 – Managing student behavior and social interaction skills.</td>
<td>Idaho – Principle 8 – The paraprofessional supports the teacher/provider in evaluating the intellectual, social and physical development of the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research competency – Knowledge of learning styles and characteristics of human learning.</td>
<td>Alaska – Principle 1 – A paraprofessional practices ethical and professional standards of conduct and continues professional improvement.</td>
<td>Research competency – Care Giver (physical and emotional support and guidance)</td>
<td>Alaska – Principle 5 – A paraprofessional understands the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation.</td>
<td>Research competency – Understanding of assistive technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research competency – Instructor (one-to-one and instructional)</td>
<td>Alaska – Principle 5 – A paraprofessional adheres to communication protocol with colleagues, community members and parents.</td>
<td>Alaska – Principle 6 – A paraprofessional observes the rights of students and families to information, participation, and protection from discrimination.</td>
<td>Research competency – Ability to work with individuals and small-group instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC – Principle 7 – Communication and collaborative partnerships.</td>
<td>Research competency – Team member (school support)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC – Principle 8 – Professionalism and ethical practices.</td>
<td>Research competency – Connector (liaison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research competency – Communicating with students.</td>
<td>Research competency – Instructor (one-to-one and instructional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research competency – Understanding of rationale and current issues in inclusion, special education process and laws, and development and use of an IEP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research competency – Team member (school support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research competency – Connector (liaison)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 Sample Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Sample Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Student Learning Processes and Human Development</td>
<td>If a student with whom you are working is not mastering the content being taught, what would you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Use of Communication Techniques with Students, Colleagues, and Community</td>
<td>While working with a student, a teacher with whom you work suggests you try a different technique. How do you respond to the teacher?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the Needs of Diverse Learners</td>
<td>What do you feel is important for you to know about the students with whom you work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the Impact of the Educational Environment</td>
<td>How would you deal with a student who frequently disrupts a class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Implement Teacher-Designed Instructional Plans</td>
<td>How will you make decisions about the daily plans for a student with whom you work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>