

Developing Efficient Training for Paraprofessionals Who Serve Students with Severe Disabilities

Dr. Matt Brock and Mary Barczak

What are we training paraprofessionals to do?

- We are training paraprofessionals to use two simple prompting strategies that could be used to target basic academic skills (e.g., word reading, math computation, or definitions of vocabulary words) or adaptive skills (e.g., buttoning a shirt, brushing teeth, or making a phone call). Both strategies are evidence-based practices.
- First, paraprofessionals use a strategy called errorless teaching. This involves prompting the student to the correct response before they have a chance to make a mistake.
- Next, paraprofessionals fade their support using least-to-most prompting. This involves systematically fading out adult support to build student independence.

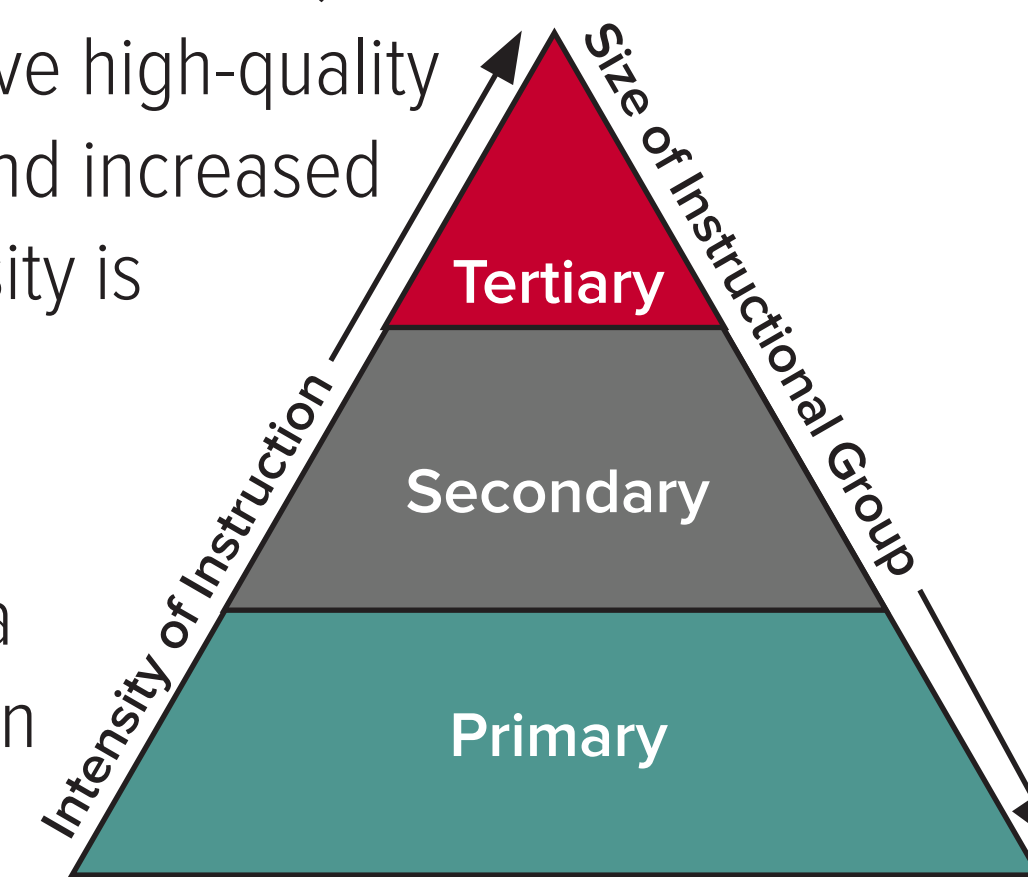


How are we training paraprofessionals?

- We focus on training that involves modeling, performance feedback, and self-monitoring.
- We provide feedback by having paraprofessional record their teaching on a tablet, and then sharing the recording during the training.
- We are testing these strategies in large-group, small-group, and one-to-one coaching contexts.

What are the major goals of the project?

- We are developing and optimizing training approaches to improve paraprofessional instruction and student progress.
- We are developing a tiered model, in which all paraprofessionals receive high-quality low-intensity training, and increased training of higher-intensity is provided as needed.
- This tiered model is conceptually similar to a Response to Intervention (RTI) model



What have we learned so far?

- It is both feasible and effective to deliver a large-group training to paraprofessionals. In a pilot study with nine paraprofessionals, all nine improved their instruction, and six met criterion levels of implementation. All students made progress on individualized goals.
- Paraprofessionals can improve their own instruction by watching a colleague receive feedback on the same type of instruction. However, they make more rapid progress when receiving feedback on their own instruction.
- Video-based feedback is a feasible and effective way to enable paraprofessionals to rapidly improve their instruction.

Who can participate in future studies?

- For Fall 2017, we are looking for 30 paraprofessionals who provide instruction to one or more students who qualify for Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.

What will participants do?

- We will observe each paraprofessional five times teaching a student with a severe disability
- We will invite some paraprofessionals to attend four 1-hour training sessions.
- We will hold the trainings within participating school districts to limit the travel distance.
- Paraprofessionals who are not initially invited to receive training will have the opportunity receive training in Spring 2018.
- We will provide \$100 gift cards to paraprofessionals.

What will participants do?

- We must have a letter from district administration on file with our Institutional Review Board.
- We would ask special education administrators to distribute a flier, and then we would follow-up by meeting with staff individually to share details.
- We must have consent from a paraprofessional, permission from a student's parent, and assent from the student before proceeding.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

For more information, please contact Matt Brock at brock.184@osu.edu or 614-688-1421

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