

Paraeducators' Roles in Facilitating Friendships Between Secondary Students With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorders or Developmental Disabilities

Zachary S. Rossetti and Deborah P. Goessling

In the cafeteria at East High School the two larger, circular tables to the left were apparently the tables informally designated for the students labeled with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Joshua sat in his wheelchair at one of the tables with another young man in a wheelchair, one male student and one female student each with Down syndrome, and three other students. Two paraeducators sat at the next table over watching the students closely. The nearest students without disabilities were a few tables away. There seemed to be a barrier of empty or mostly empty tables between the two groups of students. Stephanie was the only student without a disability to venture close to the tables, high-fiving Joshua and telling him that she would see him after her next class. The students labeled with intellectual and developmental disabilities had all finished their lunches and waited quietly for the bell. The other students moved constantly, throwing food, laughing, smiling, and running by in pairs or small groups.

Stephanie later explained this apparent divide:

They [students without disabilities] see that they [students labeled with intellectual and developmental disabilities] are different and they feel threatened by them or scared when they are around them because they don't know what to do and stuff. They [students labeled with intellectual and developmental disabilities] are usually alone at lunch at their own table all the time and everyone knows it so they stay away and just talk about them. It would be better if they could just eat with all of us and make it not so weird.

Like others their age, teenagers labeled with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or other developmental disabilities (DD) want friends in their lives, yet this rarely happens. Researchers and people with disabilities through autobiographies and memoirs report that many people labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities are lonely (Amado, 2004; Causton-Theoharis, Ashby, & Cosier, 2009; Jobling, Moni, & Nolan, 2000; McVilly, Stancliffe, Parmenter, & Burton-Smith,

2006a, 2006b), that the only people in their lives are paid to be there (Jorgensen, Schuh, & Nisbet, 2006; Strully & Strully, 1985), and that what they want most of all is a friend (Biklen, 2005; Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Gillingham & McClennen, 2003). Much of the literature suggests that friendships and social interactions between students labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities and students without disabilities are more prevalent during the elementary years than in secondary school settings (Carter & Hughes, 2005; Cutts & Sigafoos, 2001; Staub, 1998; Strully & Strully, 1984, 1985). How can educators help students achieve friendships in today's inclusive high schools? Who is responsible for and available to help facilitate friendships between high school students with and without ASD or other developmental disabilities?

Much has been written on the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators in inclusive classrooms related to instruction (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007; Patterson, 2006), behavioral support (Marks, Schrader, & Levine, 1999), and their

supervision by general and special educators (Carnhan, Williamson, Clarke, & Sorenson, 2009; Pickett, 2008; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, & Stahl, 2001). Paraeducators are defined as school support staff who work under the direction of a certified teacher and assist students with instruction, social/emotional/behavioral skills, and sometimes, personal care. Paraeducators are also known by terms such as teacher assistant, aide, and paraprofessional (Pickett, 2008). Few authors have focused primarily on the specific opportunities for paraeducators to help facilitate friendships between students without disabilities and students labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities, especially at the high school level. Goessling (2002) in a review of "teacher assistant of the year nominations" from principals and teachers, found that paraeducators who supplied treats from McDonald's, brought cakes to school, and made costumes were most frequently nominated, whereas only 2 out of 65 mentioned peer interactions.

The concept of physical proximity has been identified as an important ingredient in the development of friendships between peers with and without disabilities (Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997). Recent legal decisions uphold the dangers of proximity, stressing that if the presence of a paraeducator resulted in a negative impact on potential social benefits, then requests for one-to-one assistance would be denied (Etscheidt, 2005). Causton-Theoharis and Malmgren (2005a, 2005b) discussed general strategies to help paraprofessionals increase the interactions between elementary school students with severe disabilities and their typical peers. However, multiple strategies and specific implementation techniques are necessary to assist paraeducators in this important role at the high school level.

Why are paraeducators uniquely qualified to facilitate friendships? This should be the responsibility of both general educators and special educators, especially if the student has a



social goal with short-term objectives or benchmarks to address functional needs in social skills on his or her individualized education program (IEP). However, in inclusive high schools many students interact with six to eight teachers in a day, making it difficult for one teacher to know all of the social dynamics of each classroom, the culture of transitions between classes, and the various ways that groups of students interact. High schools are largely structured without much time for students to direct their own interactions (Milner, 2004). Therefore, the tendency is for quick, informal interactions between high school students during their school days. For example, two students may whisper or subtly motion to meet after class during a lecture when the teacher turns to face the Smartboard. Others may pass a note or text message. In her qualitative study, Schnorr (1997) found that the peak times for social interactions in secondary school settings were before and

between classes, during the beginning of class, during seatwork following a lesson, during breaks and transitions, and during work on shared activities. Based on our qualitative observations, we would include lunch and shared free periods as well.

Paraeducators are uniquely "placed" to facilitate friendships. They often spend the most time with the student labeled with ASD or developmental disabilities, especially during the socially rich time of hallway transitions and lunch. Paraeducators are often more familiar with the culture of each classroom and the opportunities for both academic and social interactions within them. Paraeducators often work directly with students without disabilities and are sometimes seen as more approachable by students than general educators or special educators.

Secondary paraeducators who work with students with ASD and other developmental disabilities have many responsibilities. These include academic

support, social and behavioral support, data collection, and collaboration with other educators. None of these roles are in conflict with friendship facilitation. The roles of paraeducators continually overlap—for example, a cooperative history project may be the best opportunity of the week for friendship facilitation. An IEP objective with benchmark data on the use of social stories to enhance peer interactions clearly overlaps with friendship goals.

Paraeducators can play an important role in friendship facilitation and maintenance as many students labeled with autism or other developmental disabilities look to them for that specific assistance. Broer, Doyle, and Giangreco (2005) interviewed postsecondary students with intellectual disabilities about their experiences with paraeducators. The students identified four roles of paraeducators—mother, friend, protector, and primary teacher. The researchers saw all these roles as problematic in the effort to help these students develop friendships. Most of the participants interviewed felt that the roles of friend and mother, especially,

Paraeducators can play an important role in friendship facilitation, but they can also present barriers to friendships and inclusive education.

reduced their self-esteem and isolated and stigmatized them. Paraeducators can play an important role in friendship facilitation, but they can also present barriers to friendships and inclusive education.

This article reviews several strategies and specific considerations for their systematic implementation that were observed by the authors and used successfully by paraeducators in multiple high school settings. Through qualitative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) of conversations with high school students with and without disabilities, as well as hundreds of hours of observations in high schools, we identified several important paraeducator strategies to help facilitate and/or maintain friendships.

Strategies and Implementation Techniques

Three strategies stood out during our observations and interviews:

- Adults fade back
- Prompt to be social
- Connect with peers

The strategies were implemented by paraeducators primarily providing full-time one-to-one support to students labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities with functional goals focusing on social skills, social interactions, or friendships on their IEPs. Recognizing that, “Effective adult support requires finesse, subtlety, and elegance” (Causton-Theoharis, 2009, p. 37), each strategy includes several specific implementation techniques or considerations to enhance possibilities for success.

Adults Fade Back

Because the immediate presence of a paraeducator by the side of a student labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities can be a barrier to social

interactions, an effective strategy to facilitate friendships is for the paraeducator to strategically back away from the student when other classmates are near (Causton-Theoharis & Malmgren, 2005a, 2005b). The goal is to replicate findings by Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland (1997) that when adults back away from a student, classmates fill that space. However, social interactions and friendships do not just happen! Thus, the particular manner in which this strategy is enacted or implemented becomes crucial to its level of success.

One implementation technique for this strategy is that the paraeducator create a *fictional task* when he or she notices a potential or impending social interaction:

The science class (HS seniors) worked in the library’s computer lab for a research project. Shaffer, a young man with autism, read a list of article abstracts on the computer. Mariah, sitting to Shaffer’s right, looked over at what he was doing, ignoring her own work. Shaffer’s one-to-one paraeducator Mrs. Garcia, sitting to Shaffer’s left, stood up and started walking down the aisle toward the door. She turned back to explain what she was doing, “I just have to get something out of my bag. I’ll be right back.” Mariah then asked Shaffer, “Which one do you think will be good?” Mrs. Garcia stood by her bag with her hands inside it, but she did not pull anything out.

Additional examples of the fictional task technique include checking the printer for printed material, photocopying something, and speaking with a colleague. All of these can be done in full view of the students if that is a concern.

The second implementation technique for this strategy is that the paraeducator *prepare the student ahead of time* for a social interaction with a nondisabled peer:

Before a science field trip to the creek behind the school, Erik’s paraeducator Mr. Hextall said, “Erik, you’re going to be hanging out with Brody and his friend during the field trip, okay? I am going to hang back a bit, so you should hang out with them as much as possible.”

This technique allows the adult to fade before the actual interaction takes place, which preserves the spontaneity of interactions between peers. It is effective to incorporate social stories (Gray, 2000; Gray & Garand, 1993), sentence starters, and other visual supports into this technique.

The third implementation technique for this strategy is that the paraeducator *pulls in nondisabled peers* as he or she fades back:

During a pumpkin carving party in Mrs. Smith’s room, Shane, a young man with autism, stood quietly on his own while others

were talking to each other and getting started on their pumpkins. He started talking to himself a little louder and twirling his hands a bit. Shane's paraeducator Mr. Lee immediately walked over to him, put his hand on Shane's shoulder and said, "Here, you can sit here, Shane." He showed him his seat and then turned to two female students nearby and said, "Do you guys know Shane?" They did not, so Mr. Lee introduced them and then walked away so they could talk.

This technique involves intentional facilitation by the paraeducator as he or she directly pulls peers without disabilities into the interaction. It is important to recognize that this technique tends to be easier for more outgoing personalities.

Prompt to Be Social

One afternoon in history class, Megan's teacher handed out large manila envelopes containing all of the students' homework to date and a cumulative grade. The students looked immediately to find their grades. Megan's one-to-one paraeducator immediately put her envelope in her bag even though she had not yet looked at it. Other students complained and cheered respectively. Students asked each other about their grades until the teacher began to review for the exam 30 seconds later.

Inherent to this strategy is that the paraeducator looks for any and all opportunities for the student with ASD or other developmental disabilities to interact socially with peers. This example was a perfect opportunity for Megan to converse socially with her classmates about their grades. It was quick, but she could have received acknowledgment for her grade, which actually was one of the highest in the class and could have been a form of social capital. However, her paraeducator put the envelope away, and within seconds the teacher had called the class to order. Thus, a rare social opportunity during the high school day

was missed. In addition, Megan may have wanted to view her grades.

This strategy actually has two parts: (1) Look for any and all social opportunities, and (2) prompt the student to engage successfully in the social opportunity.

When the bell rang, Kaya walked out with Carlos. She stopped at her locker and said, "Bye, Carlos." Carlos replied, "Bye," but very quietly [as he tended to do], and she did not hear him. His one-to-one paraeducator, Ms. Farmer, whispered to him, "Say it louder." Carlos said a little louder, "Bye, Kaya." She smiled and then turned back to her locker.

The prompt for a louder good-bye in this scenario allowed the interaction to continue past an abrupt ending to an appropriate ending that was both typical and reciprocal. Paraeducators can and should prompt students labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities to speak more loudly or more clearly, to greet someone, to use a communication board or device to have a social conversation, to maintain a conversation for a longer amount of time, to listen to a communication partner, to talk about what a communication partner wants to talk about, to raise his or her hand in class to answer a question, to ask someone to sit together at lunch or play at recess, and so many more:

On one of the last days of school, Mrs. Garcia and I watched the seniors leave the cafeteria together for an end of the school year assembly in the auditorium, arm in arm, hooting and hollering, armed with confetti and streamers. Shaffer slowed down near us as he walked by with Mariah and other classmates, but then Mrs. Garcia waved him on, imploring him with her eyes to stay with them, and he did.

Connect with Peers

One effective strategy to increase social interactions between students with and without severe disabilities has been for special educators to formally develop

peer supports as an alternative to paraeducator support (Carter, Sisco, Melekoglu, & Kurkowski, 2007). In the absence of a formal peer support program, paraeducators can implement individualized strategies to connect peers who may not naturally connect on their own, resulting in informal peer supports and greater potential for friendships.

One of the paraeducators who was focused on facilitating social interactions and friendships suggested one technique for connecting students:

The one thing that I can think of is just, if Todd was in a club or something and there was another kid in the club instead of an adult going with him, wouldn't it be nice for that student to come to Todd at the end of the day here and say, "Come on, Todd. We're going to whatever club." . . . Because they know we work with him and we're with him all the time, but wouldn't it be nice not to be there?

Extended beyond this specific example, this technique involves students without disabilities providing supports that paraeducators might typically provide such as pushing a wheelchair or helping someone collect water samples from the stream behind the school.

The second implementation technique for connecting peers who may not naturally connect on their own is to brainstorm specific strategies around *proximity and similarity*. Among children and young adolescents, the most important preconditions for friendship are proximity and familiarity (Staub, 1998; Thompson & Grace, 2001). Mutual activities become important in friendships during early school years and remain essential to friendships through adolescence (Clark & Ayers, 1993). Early adolescents appear to be similar to their friends in their orientation toward school and toward contemporary teen culture (Berndt, 1982; Rubin, 1985).

The general decision to join a school club would be an example of a strategy focusing on both increasing time near classmates and time spent

with those who share interests. Strategically scheduling two students during the same homeroom or free period would be a strategy focusing on proximity. Explaining to classmates without disabilities that Erik also plays chess or that Todd loves the Red Sox reflects an attempt to help peers recognize common interests or a common orientation to peer culture.

Paraeducators can play crucial roles in this technique. They can offer crucial input to the brainstorming session, and they will be the ones to inform classmates without disabilities about similarity to peers labeled with ASD or developmental disabilities.

The third implementation technique is similar to the fictional task technique described earlier. By making a *purposeful error*, a paraeducator can effectively connect two students out of supposed necessity. Purposeful errors are inconsequential slips that require students to either share materials or work together to solve them. They can include “forgetting” a pencil or a worksheet need-

By making a purposeful error, a paraeducator can effectively connect two students out of supposed necessity.

ed for a lesson, leaving one’s sweatshirt in the gym locker room, forgetting a book in the library, and any other variation on these. The result is that students who may not have interacted on their own may lend each other materials or walk together through the halls.

Purposeful errors, like the other strategies, do not lead directly to friendships, but they increase social interactions during the high school day, which maintains—and sometimes increases—the potential for friendship.

Considerations for Implementation

The example at the beginning of this article clearly demonstrates one way that paraeducators can become literal barriers to interactions between high school students with and without ASD or other developmental disabilities. That example reflects the proximity issue that has been well-documented

in past research as stated earlier. It also reflects possible role confusion in that the paraeducators sitting one or two tables over seemed to act as if their goal was to control or to protect “their students” rather than to support them to be independent, to work toward a social goal on the IEP, or to make a friend. Making this distinction can clarify the paraeducator role of facilitating friendships and social interactions. As with providing specific academic supports, collecting data, or other roles, it is crucial to identify individualized social goals and to describe in detail the ways that paraeducators may support students to achieve them.

In order to avoid implementing strategies within an inherently flawed structure, it is helpful to consider the following beliefs and strategies before attempting to facilitate friendships:

- Recognize that the student wants to have a friend.
- Believe that the student would make a great friend.

- Focus on the specific social times of the high school day.
- Be aware of your (the paraeducator’s) influence on student social interactions.

Recognize That the Student Wants to Have a Friend

Especially for students labeled with ASD who are diagnostically defined as having a “qualitative impairment in social interaction” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 607), paraeducators (and general and special educators) may not believe that friendship is possible or desirable to the student. However, numerous authors with ASD report an “awareness of isolation and longing for social interaction and friendship” (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009, p. 88). It is imperative that paraeducators and educators alike do not misinterpret avoidance and difficulties with social interactions for a definitive lack of understanding or interest

in them. Even in a situation with a lack of evidence, it is most helpful to students for paraeducators and educators alike to make the least dangerous assumption (Donnellan & Leary, 1995) that students would want to interact socially with their peers and to develop friends. However, Jackson (2002), a young man with Asperger syndrome (AS), points out that some students with AS and autism may feel more comfortable on their own, with just one friend, or with fewer social interactions. Thus, it is appropriate to talk to students and their families about the types of friendships and social interactions that they do desire.

Believe That the Student Would Make a Great Friend

Central to the development of friendships between students labeled with disabilities and students without disabilities is the idea of reciprocity or mutual benefits (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; Staub, 1998). Friendships are reciprocal relationships in which both individuals give and receive support (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; Kunc, 1992; Kunc & Van der Klift, 1995; Martin, Tashie, Nisbet, & Samson, 1996; Peck, Donaldson & Pezzoli, 1990; Snell & Janney, 2000; Strully & Strully, 1989, 1992). In order for the preceding strategies to be successful, their implementation must be firmly rooted in the belief that the individual labeled with ASD or other developmental disabilities not only can engage in a reciprocal relationship but would make a



wonderful friend. Otherwise, the resulting interactions will likely lead to benevolent or one-way relationships (Van der Klift & Kunc, 2002), which are different than friendships.

Focus on the Specific Social Times of the High School Day

Again, the social times in high schools tend to occur before and between classes, during the beginning of class, during seatwork following a lesson, during breaks and transitions, during work on shared activities, and especially during lunch and any shared free periods. The most effective strategies take advantage of these times. There are some additional considerations during these times. Some students may require the full lunch period just to eat their food. Other students may find the cafeteria and/or the hallways too loud and stressful. Educators and paraeducators may feel that the hallways are too crowded for certain students to safely navigate. These are all important issues to consider if the team is serious about facilitating social interactions and friendships. Compromises about traveling in crowded hallways or where to eat lunch may be necessary to take advantage of these crucial social times in the high school day.

Be Aware of Your (the Paraeducator's) Influence on Student Social Interactions

Finally, it is crucial to take notice of one's influence as a paraeducator on the students. Many high school stu-

dents without disabilities report that they and their classmates without disabilities view paraeducators as models for how to interact with students labeled with ASD or developmental disabilities. Speaking to the student respectfully, age-appropriately, and as if he or she understands are important starting points. Inherent to many of the strategies is extending beyond the student labeled with ASD or developmental disabilities so that the paraeducator is interacting with and pulling in peers without disabilities. Peers without disabilities will more frequently approach paraeducators who seem friendlier, which increases the opportunities for implementing the strategies discussed earlier. However, paraeducators who interact and converse with students without disabilities themselves rather than fading back will create barriers to friendships. Paraeducators who speak about students in front of them convey that the student can not hear or does not understand, which can also harm the potential for friendships.

Can paraeducators be successful at facilitating friendships? Given enough knowledge of the importance of friendship and coached by special educators, high school paraeducators can be effective as facilitators. As part of the annual districtwide evaluation system, both the supervising teacher and administrator should assess efforts at friendship facilitation. Data on progress toward the student's social goal should be collected by the paraeducator with the type, frequency, and duration defined in the IEP. This data would then be part of the paraeducator's evaluation, as well as any informal friendship facilitation strategies that can be discussed.

In conclusion, the strategies and implementation techniques described in this article can be used strategically by paraeducators to help increase social interactions and the potential for friendships between high school students labeled with and without ASD or other developmental disabilities. The strategies and implementation techniques reflect prior research but are tailored specifically to be effective in secondary school settings. Paraeducators can be invaluable in this role of spark-

ing social interactions and facilitating friendships.

References

- Amado, A. (2004). Lessons learned about promoting friendship. *Connections, 30*, 8-12.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-IV-TR (4th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Berndt, T. J. (1982). The features and effects of friendship in early adolescence. *Child Development, 53*, 1447-1460.
- Biklen, D. (Ed., with Attfield, R., Bissonnette, L., Blackman, L., Burke, J., Frugone, A., Mukhopadhyay, T. R., & Rubin, S.). (2005). *Autism and the myth of the person alone*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. (1989). Relationships with severely disabled people. The social construction of humanness. *Social Problems, 36*, 135-148.
- Broer, S. M., Doyle, M. B., & Giangreco, M. F. (2005). Perspectives of students with intellectual disabilities about their experiences with paraprofessional supports. *Exceptional Children, 71*, 415-430.
- Carnhan, C. R., Williamson, P., Clarke, L., & Sorenson, R. (2009). A systematic approach for supporting paraeducators in education settings: A guide for teachers. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 41(5)*, 34-43.
- Carter, E. W., & Hughes, C. (2005). Increasing social interaction among adolescents with intellectual disabilities and their general education peers: Effective interventions. *Research and Practice for Persons With Severe Disabilities, 30*, 179-193.
- Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Melekoglu, M. A., & Kurkowski, C. (2007). Peer supports as an alternative to individually assigned paraprofessionals in inclusive high school classrooms. *Research and Practice for Persons With Severe Disabilities, 32*, 213-227.
- Causton-Theoharis, J., & Malmgren, K. (2005a). Building bridges: Strategies to help paraprofessionals promote peer interaction. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 37(6)*, 18-24.
- Causton-Theoharis, J. N. (2009). The golden rule of providing support in inclusive classrooms: Support others as you would wish to be supported. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 42(2)*, 36-43.
- Causton-Theoharis, J. N., Ashby, C., & Cosier, M. (2009). Islands of loneliness: Exploring social interaction through the autobiographies of individuals with autism. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 47*, 84-96.



- Causton-Theoharis, J. N., Giangreco, M. F., Doyle, M. B., & Vadasy, P. F. (2007). Paraprofessionals: The "sous-chefs" of literacy instruction. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 40(1), 56-62.
- Causton-Theoharis, J. N., & Malmgren, K. (2005b). Increasing peer interactions for students with severe disabilities via paraprofessional training. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 431-444.
- Clark, M. L., & Ayers, M. (1993). Friendship expectations and friendship evaluations: Reciprocity and gender effects. *Youth & Society*, 24, 299-313.
- Cutts, S., & Sigafoos, J. (2001). Social competence and peer interactions of students with intellectual disability in an inclusive high school. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 26, 127-141.
- Donnellan, A., & Leary, M. (1995). *Movement differences and diversity in autism/mental retardation: Appreciating and accommodating people with communication and behavior challenges*. Madison, WI: DRI Press.
- Etscheidt, S. (2005). Paraprofessional services for students with disabilities: A legal analysis of issues. *Research & Practice for Persons With Severe Disabilities*, 30, 60-80.
- Giangreco, M. F., & Broer, S. M. (2005). Questionable utilization of paraprofessionals in inclusive schools: Are we addressing symptoms or causes? *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 20, 10-26.
- Giangreco, M. F., Edelman, S. W., Luiselli, T. E., & MacFarland, S. Z. C. (1997). Helping or hovering? Effects of instructional assistant proximity on students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 64, 7-18.
- Gillingham, G., & McClennen, S. (2003). *Sharing our wisdom: A collection of presentations by people within the autism spectrum*. North Plymouth, MA: The Autism National Committee.
- Goessling, D. G. (2002, December). "French fries" or "friendship facilitation": Which paraprofessional characteristics are valued by schools? Paper presented at the TASH Conference, Boston, MA.
- Gray, C. A. (2000). *The new social story book: Illustrated edition*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.
- Gray, C. A., & Garand, J. D. (1993). Social stories: Improving responses of students with autism with accurate social information. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 8, 1-10.
- Jackson, L. (2002). *Freaks, geeks and Asperger syndrome: A user guide to adolescence*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Jobling, A., Moni, K. B., & Nolan, A. (2000). Understanding friendship: Young adults with Down syndrome exploring relationships. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 25, 235-245.
- Jorgensen, C., Schuh, M. C., & Nisbet, J. (2006). *The inclusion facilitator's guide*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Kunc, N. (1992). The need to belong: Rediscovering Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In R. Villa, J. Thousand, W. Stainback, & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring & effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools* (pp. 7-40). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Kunc, N., & Van der Klift, E. (1995). In spite of my disability. In R. Villa & J. Thousand (Eds.), *The inclusion puzzle: Fitting the pieces together*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Marks, S. U., Schrader, C., & Levine, M. (1999). Paraprofessional experiences in inclusive settings: Helping, hovering, or holding their own? *Exceptional Children*, 65, 315-328.
- Martin, J. Tashie, C., Nisbet, J. (Producers), & Samson, G. (Director). (1996). *Voices of friendship*. [Video documentary]. United States: Institute on Disability/ UCE, University of New Hampshire.
- McVilly, K. R., Stancliffe, R. J., Parmenter, T. R., & Burton-Smith, R. M. (2006a). Self-advocates have the last say on friendship. *Disability & Society*, 21, 693-708.
- McVilly, K. R., Stancliffe, R. J., Parmenter, T. R., & Burton-Smith, R. M. (2006b). "I get by with a little help from my friends": Adults with intellectual disability discuss loneliness. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 19, 191-203.
- Milner, M. (2004). *Freaks, geeks, and cool kids: American teenagers, schools, and the culture of consumption*. Boston, MA: Routledge.
- Patterson, K. B. (2006). Roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals: In their own words. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*, 2(5), Article 1. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tefclua/vol2/iss5/art1>
- Peck, C., Donaldson, J., & Pezzoli, M. (1990). Some benefits nonhandicapped adolescents perceive for themselves from their social relationships with peers who have severe handicaps. *Journal of the Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps*, 15, 241-249.
- Pickett, A. L. (2008). Roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals working with learners with developmental disabilities: Translating research into practice. In H. Parette & G. R. Peterson-Karlan (Eds.), *Research-based practices in developmental disabilities* (2nd ed., pp. 501-520). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Rubin, L. (1985). *Just friends: The role of friendship in our lives*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Schnorr, R. (1997). From enrollment to membership: "Belonging" in middle and high school classes. *Journal of the Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps*, 22, 1-15.
- Snell, M. E., & Janney, R. (2000). *Social relationships and peer support*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Staub, D. (1998). *Delicate threads: Friendships between children with and without special needs in inclusive settings*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.
- Strully, J., & Strully, C. (1984). Shawntell and Tanya: A story of friendship. *Exceptional Parent*, 14, 35-40.
- Strully, J., & Strully, C. (1985). Friendship and our children. *Journal of the Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps*, 10, 224-227.
- Strully, J., & Strully, C. (1989). Friendships as an educational goal. In S. Stainback, W. Stainback, & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating all students in the mainstream of regular education* (pp. 59-67). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Strully, J., & Strully, C. (1992). That which binds us: Friendship as a safe harbor in a storm. In A. N. Amado (Ed.), *Friendships and community connections between people with and without developmental disabilities* (pp. 213-225). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Thompson, M., & Grace, C. (2001). *Best friends, worst enemies: Understanding the social lives of children*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Van der Klift, E., & Kunc, N. (2002). Beyond benevolence: Supporting genuine friendships in inclusive schools. In J. Thousand, R. Villa, & A. Nevin (Eds.), *Creativity and collaborative learning: A practical guide to empowering students and teachers* (2nd ed., pp. 21-28). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Wallace, T., Shin, J., Bartholomay, T., & Stahl, B. J. (2001). Knowledge and skills for teachers supervising the work of paraprofessionals. *Exceptional Children*, 67, 520-533.

Author's Note: All names of people and places used in this article are pseudonyms.

Zachary S. Rossetti (Rhode Island CEC), Assistant Professor; and **Deborah P. Goessling** (Rhode Island CEC), Associate Professor, Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island.

Address correspondence to Zachary G. Rossetti, Providence College, 549 River Avenue, Harkins 332, Providence, RI 02918 (e-mail: zrosset@providence.edu).

TEACHING Exceptional Children, Vol. 42, No. 6, pp. 64-70.

Copyright 2010 CEC.

Copyright of Teaching Exceptional Children is the property of Council for Exceptional Children and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.