



***Ribas Associates and Publications, Inc.***

596 Pleasant Street

Norwood, MA 02062

Phone: 781-551-9120

Fax: 781-349-8160

Email: [wribas@ribasassociates.com](mailto:wribas@ribasassociates.com)

Website: [ribasassociates.com](http://ribasassociates.com)

William B. Ribas, Ph.D., President

# Paraprofessional Training

Most of these programs are available live or online.

## 1 Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom ONE *(Based on the best-selling book of the same name)*

6 hours of training

Workshop with Emphasis on Relationship Building and Special Education Students (Differentiating for SEL)
1. What does the shift toward SEL look like? Defining Social-Emotional Learning: 5 Categories 44 Skills (Your SEL story).
2. How does SEL work in the classroom? SEL integrated throughout school day for general and special education students to practice and apply skills.
3. Developing a supportive classroom climate and positive teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships. Words matter, sentence frames, accountable talk, the “collaborative” classroom in which everyone is expected to contribute, be a teacher and learner, be a leader and follower. More group work examples and feedback about SEL (rubrics).
4. Routines that support SEL and academic growth: group work, accountability, and skills. Academic and social-emotional skills work together (with 11% academic improvement) and SEL growth provides intrinsic support for achievement.
5. Student goal setting, rigor, and engagement: using goal setting to support a mastery mindset for all students and to personalize/differentiate learning for at-risk learners.
6. Setting goals for your own classroom: take one idea at a time, share ideas to lessen the load, provide a time/place for sharing, and discussion.

## **2 Social-Emotional Learning in the Classroom TWO** *(Based on the best-selling book of the same name)*

12 hours of training

Workshop with Emphasis on Relationship Building and Special Education Students (Differentiating for SEL)
Day 1: Begin with defining what SEL is and isn't and each teacher's needs. Move on to routines and positive relationships, and accountable talk.
1. What does the shift toward SEL look like? Defining social-emotional learning.
2. What are the 5 Major Categories of SEL? What are the 44 SEL skills of successful people that make up each category?
3. How does SEL work in the classroom? SEL integration throughout school day for students to practice and apply skills.
4. Self-assessment using "From...to" — What does this mean for your classroom, your colleagues, your school, your district? Journeys and cultural awareness— teachers read 4 "journeys:" Teacher, EL teacher, SPED teacher, administrator—your own journey.
5. Routines that support SEL and academic growth: group work, accountability, and skills. Academic and social-emotional skills work together (with 11% academic improvement) and SEL growth provides intrinsic support for achievement.
6. Developing a supportive classroom climate and positive teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships. Words matter, sentence frames, accountable talk, the "collaborative" classroom in which everyone is expected to contribute, be a teacher and learner, be a leader and follower. More group work examples and feedback about SEL (rubrics).
Day 2: Practical applications to specific classroom management plan: classroom meeting components, next steps, assessing progress, and sharing.
7. Goal-setting (differentiation): Connecting goals to everyday work, Socratic seminar, and praise the process.
8. Developing a growth mindset and self-advocacy skills.
9. Model Classroom Management Plan provides plan and practice for introducing classroom norms, routines, and discipline.
10. A program for resolving conflict that develop SEL skills.
11. Classroom meeting and group advisory models.
12. Develop classroom meeting/group advisory format, when you will employ them (secondary).
13. Final Step: setting goals for your classroom. Metacognition and growth, wrap-up revisit continuum and "journey."

### **3 Effective Management of Individuals and Groups (half day)**

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Explain how classroom teachers develop and implement classroom rules and routines that maximize the level of respectful, on-task behavior.
- Develop and implement a system of rewards and consequences for reinforcing respectful, on-task behavior for the students with whom they work.

### **4 Understanding the Standards-Based and DI Classroom: Levels of Mastery and Planning for Mastery (half day)**

After this workshop, the participants will be able to plan their work with students using the backward-design (standards-based) method to:

- Understand the levels of mastery students move through before mastering content and skills.
- Interpret objectives for classes or units written in language that describes what the students will know and be able to do after the teaching is finished.
- Choose activities that maximize student mastery of the objectives.
- Explain the components of lesson planning in a standards-based classroom.

### **5 Effective Questioning Strategies and Checking for Understanding (half day)**

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of and effective use of Wait Time I and II.
- Using questioning strategies to increase the number of students who participate.
- Respond to incorrect answers in ways that do not discourage students.
- Use questions that develop the higher order thinking skills of students.

### **6 Assessing Student Learning (half day)**

**Prerequisite:**

*3-5 Effective Questioning Strategies and Checking for Understanding (half-day) (this page, 45)*

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Raise the thinking level of the answers they get from students.
- Use dipsticking to formatively assess student understanding.
- Use dipsticking to inform their instruction.
- Create teacher-made product and performance assessments that gauge levels of student mastery on the stated objectives, both formatively and summatively.
- Develop rubrics and criteria sheets that assess student products and performances on those concepts that are difficult to quantify for assessment.
- Explain the components of student assessment in a standards-based classroom.

## **7 Differentiating Instruction (1 day)**

### **Prerequisites:**

3-4 *Understanding the Standards-Based and DI Classroom: Levels of Mastery* - on page 45

3-5 *Effective Questioning Strategies and Checking for Understanding* - on page 45

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the components of a differentiated-instruction classroom to colleagues.
- Plan lessons that can flexibly provide re-teaching, practice and extension as needed.
- Manage differentiated activities in single lessons.
- Use graphic organizers to attend to various learning styles.
- Use a variety of instructional strategies to differentiate content, product, and process.

## **8 Understanding Intelligence and Motivation (half day)** **(a.k.a. Motivating the Low Motivation Learner)**

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the key aspects of the following theories of intelligence: innate, single-entity intelligence, growth mindset, grit learnable intelligence, multiple intelligences, and attribution of intelligence.
- Implement classroom strategies that move students toward the belief that success is due more to effort and acquired strategies than to innate ability and luck.
- Implement teaching strategies that impact all 7 areas of effective motivation.

## **9 Overview of Disabling Conditions in the Classroom** **(1 full day or 2 half days)**

After this workshop, the participants will be able to:

*Identify the Federal and State of MA Disability Categories*

- Explain the difference between providing a modification and an accommodation.
- Identify the components of an IEP.
- Discuss the various roles of the paraprofessional in a public school setting and the legal limitations of the para role.
- Explain the importance of confidentiality.
- Practice effective strategies for communicating with both general and special education teachers and team building.
- Practice the art of helping, but not over assisting a student with special needs.
- Demonstrate how the role of the paraprofessional is essential to providing services to a child with disabilities.

## **10 Working in Classrooms with Students with Neurological and Emotional Disorders**

After this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Explain the various aspects of Autism Spectrum Disorder and what to expect when working with a student with this diagnosis.
- Explain the various aspects of ADD and ADHD and what to expect when supporting a students with this diagnosis.
- Demonstrate strategies that support a student with emotional and/or behavioral challenges in the classroom.

## **11 Bullying Prevention**

Attendees of this presentation/workshop will be made familiar with the following:

- The causes of bullying: 1) power and 2) fear.
- Overt and covert bullying (signs to look for in the classroom and out in the community).
- Gender driven bullying – what male teachers need to know about how girls bully and how it is often overlooked.
- The impact of bullying on the brain (signs of PTSD, etc.).
- How children with special needs are often bullied or are “set up” to bully others to gain “acceptance” in a group.
- The damaging effects of cyber-bullying: how to be aware and to alert parents to the signs of bullying online (discussion of actual case studies).
- How to effectively incorporate anti-bullying curriculum into your school.
- How certain ethnic groups are more victimized than others.
- How sexual orientation can lead to bullying.

## **12 Executive Function: Implications for Teaching and Learning**

The term "executive functioning" has become a buzzword in schools and elsewhere. Both general and special educators, as well as paraprofessionals and family members, have long observed that many students have difficulty with such things as planning, organization, maintaining attention, getting started on a task, remembering homework, and self-monitoring – all characteristics of executive functioning.

Executive functioning affects learning and performance in school and in life. Teachers and paraprofessionals can support students with executive function difficulties by teaching and working with students on both general and task-specific strategies that they can use to develop the core skills needed to self-monitor and take control of their schoolwork and their daily lives.

This workshop explores ways to guide students and facilitate the development of self-management skills. In each area of executive function, we will learn strategies that can be used by a teacher, a paraprofessional, or a family member to support the student. In addition, we will discuss ways to teach students how to design and use their own self-management strategies.

Expected outcomes of the workshop:

- Recognize executive function difficulties in the classroom.
- Identify strategies and skills for organizing and managing time, materials, work area, homework.
- Identify strategies and skills for organizing ideas and written work.
- Identify ways to help with initiating a task.
- Develop ways to teach students strategies to use independently.

## **13 The Impact of Trauma on Student Learning**

Participants in this workshop will be able to:

- Explain the most recent research on the impact of trauma on student learning.
- Explain what constitutes ‘trauma’ in students and families.
- Use strategies that educators and school administrators can employ that identify and alleviate the negative effects of exposure to isolated incidents of trauma.
- Explain the ways in which school violence or long term exposure to domestic violence can negatively impact student learning.
- Explain how food or housing insecurity can contribute to trauma.
- To recognize signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome in children and adolescents and access appropriate resources for those students.

## **14 Succeeding with Students From Poverty**

“By age 3 children from professional, educated families have heard at least 30 million more words than children from less educated, welfare families.”

B.Hart and T.R. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children. “The Early Catastrophe.”*

The Child Trends Data Bank (2007), Learning Disabilities, *Child Trends of National Health Interview Survey* data, 1998-2004 reported that, in 2004, the average per student cost was \$7,552 and the average cost for special education was an additional \$9,369 - \$16,921. In 2004, it cost twice as much to educate a special education student as it did a “regular” student. Between 1997 and 2004, a consistently higher percentage of children diagnosed as LD came from low SES households. “It’s possible that the increase in the percentage of low SES students identified as LD is because their behaviors, learning styles, and attending patterns – which differ from those exhibited by middle-and upper-class white students- influence their inappropriate referral to special education.” (Howard, Grogan Dresser and Dunklee, 2013)

“Often, low SES students have no stable adult role models, so teachers need to embrace the “parent” (matriarch or patriarch) role in school. Treating your class as a family can reduce discipline issues and improve learning. For example, social bonding and trust help mitigate the adverse effects of chronic stress by prompting the brain to release oxytocin, a neuropeptide that suppresses the “classic” stress hormones, such as cortisol.” Kosfeld, M., Heinrichs, M., Zak, P.J., Fischbacher, U. and Fehr, E. (2005) Oxytocin increases trust in humans. *Nature*, 435(2), 673-676.

A longitudinal study analyzing MRI scans of 389 typically developing children and adolescents at 6 U.S. cities found that children from poor families showed systematic structural differences in brain development, specifically in the hippocampus, and the frontal, and temporal lobes.

By the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Explain the effects of poverty on student cognition including the “summer slide” and other issues prevalent in impoverished communities
- Explain the effects of poverty on student health.
- Define the aspects of impoverishment and student/family dynamics: including the Ribas Associates identification of the following 6 key strategies related to working with students living in poverty-
  1. Component 1: Connecting the Curriculum
  2. Component 2: Teacher Enthusiasm
  3. Component 3: Engaging Teaching
  4. Component 4: Differentiating Instruction
  5. Component 5: Interpersonal Relationships
  6. Component 6: Teacher and Student Beliefs about the Nature of Intelligence and its Connection to Student Motivation and Self-Image

## **15 Growth Mindset**

This program explains the practices used by educators to create a growth mindset among students and educators. It begins with a brief history of our evolution from a belief in fixed entity intelligence to a belief in learnable intelligence based on the research findings of Carol Dweck and others. This is followed by an explanation of, and practice using, proven strategies for empowering students by developing a growth mindset. By the conclusion of the workshop participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of a growth mindset.
- Explain the components of the growth mindset including attribution theory and learnable intelligence.
- Implement specific classroom strategies that move students to adopt a growth mindset.

## **16 Overview of the English Language Learner Experience**

While many educators have had the personal experience of learning a second language at some point in their academic careers, few have been called upon to actually develop proficiency, or even more challenging, to try to learn something new using only a language that is very new to them (second language proficiency). Acquiring English language proficiency (ELP) is the daunting task set before our English Language Learners. Research has shown that it takes considerably more time on task than we realize for an individual to gain true academic and conversational fluency in a second language.

Tapping the personal and professional experiences of the participants, this session provides an orientation to the challenges of students attempting to learn in a language that is new to them. While all learners must work to acquire new understanding and skills, second language speakers must also process the language in which the work is being done. Using video, simulation and active learning practices, participants in this session will explore unexpected ways in which children struggle, compensatory strategies they often employ in an effort to fit in, and initial ways in which teachers and administrators can begin to support these learners in their struggle.

After this session of the course, the participants will be able to:

- Empathize with the experience of non-English speakers as they are tasked with navigating a world where they do not fully comprehend the language.
- Identify ways in which non-English speaking students may mask a lack of comprehension.
- Identify strategies non-English speakers use to support their understanding and begin to plan with language objectives and strategies teachers use that support those efforts.
- Distinguish a learner's stage of language acquisition from monolingual to complete bilingualism.
- Recognize components of the English language that can prove particularly problematic for non-native speakers and develop strategies through which teachers can mitigate the negative impact of their own language choices on their ELL and FLEP students.

## **17 Questioning & Assessment for Non-English Speaking Students**

Too often, teacher questions and assessment tools measure something other than the goals for which they were intended. Even the simplest question, if not phrased carefully, can prove incomprehensible to a student who otherwise understands the material being discussed. This session focuses on the role of teacher-language, practice and expectations and how these factors can impact second language learners in their classes. We will explore through the lens of non-English speakers the strategies and materials often used in the classroom. In the process, educators will be called upon to share their current learning goals, instructional practices and favorite tools in light of this new perspective.

After this session of the course, the participants will be able to:

- Rework assessment tools currently used in their practice to ensure that the language used, as well as supporting visual contexts, are best suited to evaluate the importing thinking and learning of non-English speaking students.
- Develop questioning strategies (such as extended wait time) and additional assessment tools that are crafted to be easily comprehended by non-English speaking students.
- Identify non-verbal cues, visuals, and tasks that can help ELL students better demonstrate what they know and are able to do.
- Develop ways to differentiate instruction for ELL students on the basis of formal and informal assessments.

## **18 ELL: Teacher Language and the Social-Emotional Domain**

Considerable research has been devoted to the role that student emotional development, beliefs, and socialization play in ensuring academic success. In the case of ELL students, this affective domain is impacted by language and culture.

In this session, the participants will be able to:

- Develop strategic approaches to encouraging ELL students as they acquire language skills, cultural competency in an unfamiliar environment, and academic knowledge and skills without diminishing the student's sense of confidence or personal competence.
- Identify areas of language that are predicated on a broader cultural knowledge, such as idiomatic speech, and develop strategies to either compensate for, or directly address those potential areas of confusion.
- Discuss ways in which different languages of origin can cause unique issues for individual students.

## **19 Special Education and English Language Learners**

Far too often, teachers confuse problems of language with deeper cognitive issues, referring students to Special Education when their issues are the result of a non-English speaking background. By the same token, students in any subgroup population (English speaking, ELL and formerly ELL) can also struggle with learning difficulties. For the English speaking educator, distinguishing and applying the appropriate interventions for non-English speaking students can be a significant challenge.

In this session, the participants will be able to:

- Consider how and when to refer ELL students to special education, and what steps to take in a Tier I and Tier II setting that further inform the decision to refer.
- Identify several ways to differentiate practice in our classroom that can benefit both special education and general education students.
- Discuss assessment tools used in special education referrals using the lens of a non-English speaking student.
- Consider the ways in which special education and referral of students can be viewed in different cultures.
- Plan strategies for working with the parents of students who may themselves struggle in a new culture and in a less than familiar language.

## **20 ELL: Where Culture and Language Intersect**

Cultural differences - those easily identified by nationality or language and more significantly the subtle differences of family - compound the learning challenges of ELL students. This final session continues the conversation as we focus on general issues differences in school readiness, school versus home norms and expectations, unexpected pitfalls of student cultural backgrounds, and ways in which language exacerbate those differences.

In this session, the participants will:

- Identify the many complex cultural profiles of students whose first language is not English, recognizing differences that often go unnoticed.
- Describe the concept of school readiness and parental expectations in different cultures and how these issues can inhibit or enhance student learning.
- Discuss ways in which gaps in background knowledge can impact learning and plan strategies that will help teachers compensate for those gaps.
- Identify strategies for vocabulary development in a variety of contexts, often the most noticeable area of weakness for students with limited background knowledge.

## **21 Make Your Paraprofessional a “Co-Educator” and Raise Student Achievement (1 or 2 Day Program)**

Paraprofessionals often have highly varied skills and knowledge which often leaves any training to the classroom teacher. This workshop will provide classroom teachers with strategies for training paraprofessionals so that there are always two educators working in the classroom.

### Day 1: The strategies include:

- Alternatives to the typical one teach/one observe model.
- Streamlining planning for your para-educator when there is little to no time.
- Developing a sequence of responsibilities and trainings with your para-educator:
  - Attendance, makeup work, and homework.
  - Discipline, rewards, and consequences.
  - Collecting and organizing student work.
  - Running small groups and stations.
  - Re-teaching.
  - Behavior plans.
  - IEP expectations.
  - Software and programs that para-educators can support.

### Day 2: The strategies include:

- Developing content skills.
- Mastery objectives for content and skills.
- "Just right" support-avoid causing learned helplessness.
- Social-emotional awareness.
- School-based support for your work: a list of expectations to discuss with administration.
  - Contracts
  - School-based support for paraprofessional standards and norms
  - Special education expectations for paraprofessionals
  - Consistency in expectations
- Developing your action plan.
  - Setting priorities
  - Setting goals
- Rubric/Checklist to assess progress.

## **22 Using Paraprofessional Performance Rubrics to Improve Para Performance**

*(The duration of the program is customized based on the district's level of need.)*

Ribas Associates has created a paraprofessional development and evaluation system. This system includes performance rubrics for paraprofessionals in the areas of classroom support, Title I math, Title I ELA, special education, ELL, and a general rubric that can be used for most positions or modified for a specific positions. It also includes a self-evaluation form, annual evaluation form, and sample evaluative narrative feedback paragraphs. This program was developed after review of over a dozen paraprofessional evaluation performance criteria and a review of the literature on paraprofessional growth, development, and evaluation. It incorporates the best of those systems.

Some of the ways in which districts use this resource are:

- Empowering teachers with effective paraprofessional practice so they can increase the effectiveness of paraprofessionals in their classrooms.
- Developing effective paraprofessional evaluation systems.
- Creating effective paraprofessional professional development and evaluation systems.

## 23 Paraprofessional Supervision and Evaluation System Development Support

Ribas Associates has created a paraprofessional evaluation system. This system includes performance rubrics for paraprofessionals in the areas of classroom support, Title I math, Title I ELA, special education, ELL, and a general rubric that can be used for most positions or modified for a specific positions. It also includes a self-evaluation form, annual evaluation form, and sample evaluative narrative feedback paragraphs. This program was developed after review of over a dozen paraprofessional evaluation systems and a review of the literature on paraprofessional performance and incorporates the best of those systems.

Districts may use the system at no charge to their district when they contract with Ribas Associates to assist them with an interest based bargaining and development process between the district and representatives of the paraprofessionals association.

This program is designed to get your district ready to do the work of developing a paraprofessional supervision and evaluation system using the Ribas Associates Model System. The district would then take over running the committee. It would look like the following.

Ribas Associates has three consultants well versed in the collaborative bargaining process. All three consultants have served as union officers (including local presidents, grievance chairs, and negotiations chairs), building administrators, and assistant superintendents for human resources.

The 32 hours of consulting would approximately break out as follows (the district may revise this allocation to meet their individual needs):

- 8 hours for our consultant to review your present supervision, evaluation system, job descriptions, to customize a pre-assessment and the committee work based those documents. The union would survey their people and you would meet with the administrators to survey them.
- 8 hours would be used for the consultant to meet with the superintendent, union president, and another union person selected by the union president. The consultant would also show you and the union president how to survey teachers and administrators to get some baseline data that the committee will need prior to starting their work.
- 16 hours would be used for preparation and execution of the first committee meeting. After the first meeting you and the union president would take over the committee.

This program would get you set for developing the paraprofessional supervision and system on your own.

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