

## Educational Foundations and Special Services

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Findings indicate that students spent the majority of class time in whole group instruction (72% of interactions observed), although students with severe disabilities were often isolated from these activities. Instructional interactions in the social, behavioral, and functional domains were extremely rare and in most cases too infrequent to allow for statistical analysis. In almost all other categories of one-to-one interactions, teachers and paraprofessionals interacted more than expected by chance with students with severe disabilities and less than expected with typically developing students. Frequencies of interactions with children with mild disabilities tended to fall in between

those of the other two groups. However, general educators more frequently provided noninstructional behavioral interactions to students with mild disabilities than to other students.

In comparison to other instructors, general educators interacted more frequently with the mild and typical groups than expected by chance. In direct contrast, paraprofessionals were more often engaged in interactions with students with severe disabilities and interacted less frequently with children with mild disabilities and nondisabled students than expected by chance.

Interviews with general educators suggest that teachers perceived the primary goal for students with severe disabilities to be socialization, whereas goals and expectations for students with mild disabilities centered on performance with respect to classroom skills. In addition, teachers saw themselves as devoting more time and attention to students with disabilities than to other children.

Findings are interpreted in relation to previous research and a theoretical model of differential expectations (Cook & Semmel, 1999). Implications for policy and practice are discussed and suggestions for future research are offered.