

The Graduate School  
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

**FINAL EXAMINATION**  
**OF**  
**DANIEL ROBERT GRANGAARD**

B.A., Baylor University, 1972  
M.S. in Ed., Baylor University, 1974

**FOR THE DEGREE OF**  
**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

Wednesday, December 1, 1976, 2:00 p.m.  
Room 123, Draper

**MAJOR FIELD: EDUCATION**

**Committee in Charge:**

Associate Professor Bill D. Lamkin, *Chairman*

Professor Raymond E. Biles

Professor L. V. McNamee

Professor C. G. Strickland

Professor Charles M. Tolbert

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Daniel Robert Grangaard was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where he attended public schools and graduated from Goodrich High School in 1968. In 1972 he received the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in sociology and a minor in psychology from Baylor University. The Master of Science in Education degree with a major in educational psychology was received from Baylor University in 1974. He has served as a teaching fellow in educational psychology, a supervisor of student teaching, and a graduate assistant to a member of the education faculty at Baylor University. He has also held positions with the public schools in Waco, Texas, and in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

## **OUTLINE OF STUDIES**

Mr. Grangaard's graduate education has been primarily in the area of educational psychology. At the doctoral level, he majored in educational psychology and minored in elementary education. Mr. Grangaard's graduate education has prepared him for positions in school psychology, counseling psychology, and college teaching. His research interests include the psychological assessment of young children and the effectiveness of college teaching techniques.

# PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF PARAPROFESSIONALS IN THE KINDERGARTEN

## ABSTRACT

**The problem.**—The purpose of this study was to investigate the appropriateness of the functions of paraprofessionals in the kindergarten as viewed by kindergarten teachers, kindergarten teacher aides, and college professors. The study attempted to discover the importance attached to task- and child-centered functions of paraprofessionals by these groups. The study also investigated the extent to which task- and/or child-centered functions are predominantly performed.

**The sample.**—The population to which statistical treatment was made consisted of sixteen professors, thirty teachers, and twenty-one paraprofessionals. The professors represented a wide range of institutions in the state of Texas that offer a kindergarten endorsement program. The teachers and teacher aides were employed by four public school districts in Central Texas.

**Procedures.**—A Q sort instrument consisting of thirteen child-centered items and twelve task-centered items was constructed from a review of the literature. Individual packets containing the Q sort instrument were distributed to the target population. The professors and the teachers were instructed to sort the items from that item which they believed to be the most important function of an aide to that which they believed to be the least important function. In addition to this sort, the paraprofessionals were asked to perform a second one in which the items were sorted from exactly what listed function was performed the most frequently by them to that function which was performed the least.

Distributive statistics provided a basis for chi-square comparisons for each subject group with each other subject group on each item. The results of the chi-square tests were used to test six null hypotheses. The distributive data provided additional empirical data for a descriptive analysis.

**Results.**—All of the null hypotheses formulated for the study were supported for all twenty-five Q sort items. Two cases involving two different comparison groups and two different items were significant at the .10 level. This level was not considered to be great enough for the differences not to have occurred by chance.

Empirically, all four groups placed greater importance on child-centered functions of paraprofessionals than they did on task-centered functions. Three task-centered items, however, were ranked in the top half of the most frequently performed functions by the teacher aides. There were some discrepancies in the importance attached to these items by the various groups.

Three child-centered items were reported by the teacher aides as seldom being performed. Discrepancies existed among the subject groups as to whether or not these three functions should be considered important functions of paraprofessionals.

There was a general consensus among all subject groups as to which of the listed functions was the most and least important function of a paraprofessional. The item which was considered to be the most important function was entitled "reinforce and extrapolate what the teacher does" and the item considered to be the least important function was labeled "help serve food in the lunch room."

**Conclusions.**—The following conclusions have been made based on the findings of this study.

1. Paraprofessionals, teachers, and professors generally agree concerning what the functions of kindergarten paraprofessionals should be.
2. Child-centered functions are more important functions than are task-centered functions.
3. Paraprofessionals perform child-centered functions more frequently than they perform task-centered functions.
4. Although there is general consensus of the importance of paraprofessional functions among groups of educators, there were disagreements among individuals concerning what a kindergarten aide should do.
5. The functions a teacher aide performs depends in part on what the supervising teacher wants the aide to do.
6. The functions carried out by a paraprofessional will depend to some extent on the responsibilities an aide is willing to assume.