SUPERVISING PARAPROFESSIONAL TUTORS IN A
REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM¹

JAMES D. BARNARD, EDWARD R. CHRISTOPHERSEN, AND
MONTROSE M. WOLF

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS²

Applied researchers increasingly report the use of paraprofessionals to implement key program components. However, despite such apparent advantages as increased availability and lower salaries, problems in maintaining acceptable levels of on-the-job performance in these workers have been reported. This study assessed the effects of a supervisory package on the work behavior of five paraprofessional tutors in a remedial reading program. The package consisted of written handouts and instructions, tests of tutor understanding, a video tape, mention of tutor performance by supervisors, and publicly posted feedback on work performance. One randomly chosen tutor received feedback each day on (1) his degree of *completeness* in tutoring one student's answers to comprehension-check questions, (2) his *accuracy* in tabulating that student's data sheet, and (3) his *promptness* in beginning the first student's tutorial session. The supervisory package produced marked improvement in completeness, some improvement in accuracy, but no improvement in promptness. Application of the supervisory package seemed practical, as an average of nine daily tutorial sessions (approximately 270 min of tutoring) required a total daily average of only 28 min of supervision. It was concluded that completeness performance by nondegreed, paraprofessional tutors was closely related to the extent to which they were supervised. Despite the fact that no improvement was observed in tutor promptness, and only partial improvement was observed in tutor accuracy, the improvement to near-perfect levels in tutor completeness suggests that further research is warranted to develop supervisory packages that might ensure the reliable and efficient use of paraprofessional workers.

Received 19 September 1973.

(Revision requested 16 January 1974.)

(Final acceptance 24 June 1974.)

¹The full text of this manuscript is deposited with the National Auxiliary Publications Service (NAPS). For copies, order NAPS document #02410. Order from ASIS/NAPS, c/o Microfiche Publications, 305 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Remit with order for each copy \$1.50 for microfiche or \$5.00 for photocopies. Make checks payable to Microfiche Publications. This research was supported by a grant from the National Institute for Child Health

and Human Development (HD 03144-03) to the Bureau of Child Research, University of Kansas, and a grant from the National Coordinating Center, National Program on Early Childhood Education (OEO-3-7-070706-3118) to the Kansas Center for Research in Early Childhood Education.

²Department of Human Development, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.