

SCOPE



Washington State Association of School Psychologists

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Fall 2013

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President's Message



Greetings,

Winter is here! So are some great updates from WSASP:

First, we have our **Evaluation of Students with Intellectual Disabilities** position paper ready for your approval and feedback. The paper summarizes recommendations from the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (AAIDD) and includes new language and recommends specific eligibility criteria. Included are specific assessment instruments for understanding student need, as well as attention to bilingual/bicultural students. Here's the link to view the paper and to provide your vote and feedback:

<http://www.wsasp.org/position2013.html>

Our **SLD Evaluation Position Paper** is just about ready for your vote and feedback. The paper calls for the use of Response to Intervention and Patterns of Strengths and

Weaknesses in first ruling out instructional issues and clarifying underachievement, and secondly, providing a diagnostic approach in identifying a specific learning disability. We have read much research, (see our references) including a 2013 summary of current state regulations for the identification of SLD across the nation. We believe that our recommendation embraces the progress made through research but also understand that this approach will require training and clarification. Three Guidance Documents (Identifying Underachievement, Using RTI Data in the Identification Process, and Using a PSW Approach) will accompany the paper in an appendix. The final paper will be presented and made available in the weeks leading up to the Spring Lecture Series. We will send out an email to all WSASP members when it is added to our site for review:

<http://www.wsasp.org/position2013.html>

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As we know the main approaches within the SLD Evaluation paper will require training, we have already scheduled an outstanding line-up for Spring Lecture Series -- Please see **Page 3** for a detail of the Spring Lecture schedule and **Page 18** for registration information. In the coming weeks, Area Reps will be emailing the information to all members. Registration will be posted on our website at www.wsasp.org, and I will send the registration information through our email system in 123Signup.

Current WSASP members are encouraged to provide feedback and to vote on the papers. Please make sure your membership is current.

To update your profile or renew your membership, visit: <http://www.wsasp.org/member.html>.

I hope that your holidays are filled with peace and joy.

Sincerely,

Susan Ruby
WSASP President

WSASP 2013 Minority Scholarship Maria Hernandez-Melgar

By Diane Sidari

WSASP is proud to present the 2013 recipient of the Minority Scholarship for Graduate Training in School Psychology to Maria Hernandez-Melgar. Maria is currently enrolled at Seattle University in the School Psychology Program. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Psychology from Western Washington University.

Maria is described by her professors as “organized,” “motivated” and someone who has “strong clinical intuition.” She is highly regarded as someone with strong clinical competence and excellent collaborative skills. She is currently an Assistant in the Individual Intelligence Assessment Course at SU and has worked as a Literacy Tutor, Academic Student Advisor, and is the

Social Media: Are you LinkedIn?

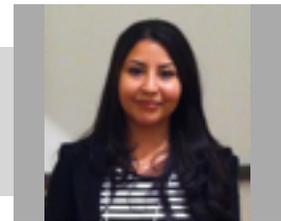
Wondering what's going on in the greater community?

Looking for assessment and intervention ideas?

Wondering about current legislation or jobs?

The following communities offer a plethora of conversation and ideas:

- * School Psychology
- * Special Education Law
- * Educations & Positive Behavior Interventionist
- * Psychologists, coach, psychotherapist, and counselors
- * Educational Psychology



Vice President of the School Psychers Club at SU.

Maria will be in charge of running a mentoring program at Seattle U that links up second and third year students with first year students as well. She has also been selected to do a service trip to Nicaragua this December to help in an orphanage with Professionals Without Borders. A few of Maria's professional goals include helping schools move toward an ecological model, helping institute multi-tiered levels of support, and helping families to become in their child's educational experience and success.

Congratulations to Maria Hernandez-Melgar!



2014 WSASP Spring Lecture Series
SLD eligibility: 39 years after PL94-142
Introducing the WSASP position supportive papers on SLD eligibility

All talks will be delivered via the K-20 videoconference system. Virtually every school district and ESD in the state has the capacity to hook into K-20. You are also able to access K-20 via your iPad using the free PolyCom application. For further information on accessing K-20 through your iPad, please see: <http://one2one.esd123.net/?page%20id=39>

* To access the sessions on-site, all you need to do is give your district or ESD video tech person the schedule so that they can dial in when invited. The origin of the K-20 will be Shoreline but the speakers will be located in various parts of the state.

All sessions will occur the last Friday of the month beginning Jan 31. Length of talks will vary but overall, each Friday will consist of 5.5 hrs of workshop (8:30am-11:30am; 12:30pm-3:00pm).

Friday, Jan 31 st	Morning	The WSASP position paper on SLD eligibility <i>It's new, and no doubt controversial</i>	Susan Ruby, Bill Link, Steve Hirsch
	Afternoon	Application of CHC Theory and Cross-Battery Assessment to SLD Identification	Vincent Alfonso
Friday, Feb 28 th	Morning	Establishing underachievement through multiple sources- one foundational piece of SLD eligibility	Steve Hirsch
	Afternoon	Utilizing referral or re-evaluation data to develop a PSW Hypothesis –The Shorecrest HS Inferential model	Laura Ploudre, Steve Hirsh
Friday, Mar 28 th	Morning	Obstacles implementing a PSW approach: The Vancouver Experience	Bill Link
	Afternoon	The Evolution of Change: The Coeur d'Alene Experience	Cindy Garner
Friday, April 25 th	Morning	The collection of RTI type data as to be used in SLD eligibility: Universal screening, progress monitoring, fidelity	Susan Ruby
	Afternoon	The Federal Way Model- A PSW Approach within a Severe Discrepancy Framework	Michael Self-Bence
Friday, May 30 th	Morning	The Franklin Pierce Model- RTI and SLD Eligibility	Bill Rasplica
	Afternoon	Tying it all together- A comprehensive evaluation process for the determination of SLD eligibility	Susan Ruby, Bill Link, Steve Hirsch

The traditional workshop on ethics will be offered at the fall conference in Skamania in October. If you require continuing education in ethics before our fall conference, please see <http://naspi.inreachce.com/>

28
Clock Hours
Available

WSASP 2013 AWARDS

By Susan Ruby



School Psychologist of the Year:

Katie Pardini, Richland School District



Katie was nominated by multiple practitioners and administrators in Richland; clearly she is appreciated by many. Nominations were provided by Sharon Bradley, school psychologist and administrative intern, Jill Williamson, speech and language pathologist, Keshia Nickle, school psychologist, Tascina Penor, school psychology intern, and Mandy Cathey, Assistant Director of Special Education. Katie is a school psychologist who goes “above and beyond” her required duties as a school psychologist. The Awards Committee was most impressed by her model for others, as colleagues from all levels (peers, supervisors, supervisees, and related service personnel) participated in the nomination process. Katie clearly prioritizes the needs of students in her daily work and makes time for direct and indirect service provision. She shares her

knowledge and expertise with others, as she presented with Sharon Bradley (last year’s award winner for “Best Practices in Intervention”) this year on Social Thinking. Congratulations, Katie!

Louisa Thompson Award:

Jamie Chaffin, Ed.D., NCSP, Eastern Washington University/Central Valley School District

The Louisa Thompson Award is for an individual who makes significant contributions to the WSASP organization and profession of school psychology. Susan Ruby nominated Jamie Chaffin for this award. Jamie is an individual who “gets things done.” She is currently serving in multiple roles to move our organization and profession forward. Jamie has served as the Area 8 (Eastern Washington) Representative for the past couple of years. She consistently forwards information from WSASP to school psychologists in her area, keeping them apprised of the many happenings with professional development available for them. Jamie serves as our association “webmaster” and has been extremely busy posting employment opportunities for school psychologists on our site, offering this as a free service for school districts in need. Jamie has proposed that we develop a database of all school psychologists in our state and is working with WSASP to plan for this as a future endeavor. Finally, Jamie has stepped in at EWU to direct the “Post Master’s Certification Program,” one many Washington State school psychologists have completed. She just completed an initial application for NASP approval for this program and is working with the state, NASP, and the university to make this program an excellent opportunity for many educators or clinicians to respecialize as school psychologists. Her work will directly impact the school psychologist shortage in many rural areas of our state, as she will be targeting these areas for recruitment of potential candidates. Thank you for your amazing hard work, Jamie. You make our organization shine!!!



Best Practices in Intervention:

Julia Zigarelli, School Psychologist, Federal Way School District Federal Way school psychologist Julia Zigarelli was nominated for Best Practices in Intervention by Director of Student Support Services, Chris Willis. Over the last two years, Julia has helped pilot a Dynamic Home Visits program at Illabee Middle School and PBIS initiatives in 17 elementary and secondary schools. The Dynamic Home Visits program has dramatically increased the participation

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of families in school conferences. Director Chris Willis described how one Spanish-only speaking parent who struggled with participation and communication changed after a home visit supported through Julia's work. This parent began attending every conference, calling for translation when needing to talk with teachers, and communicating regarding her son's absence. As PBIS facilitator in Federal Way, Julia has taught Level 1 and 2 classes, facilitates the district team, and meets monthly with PBIS coaches within the district to support implementation. She was also instrumental in the development of a district data management system. Finally, Julia was described as a "social justice warrior" by her colleagues. She "believes that every day is an opportunity to stand up for what she believes and fights for every student to be given the chance to be successful." Julia, you are clearly making an amazing difference in the lives of families and children in Federal Way!!

Best Practices in Consultation:

Bethenee Grant Engelsvold, School Psychologist, Snohomish School District

Susan Ruby nominated Bethenee Grant after seeing her work in the EWU ProCert work from a current practicum student, undergraduate internship with her through was the star of the ProCert process! Her in her self-assessment and professional growth work in the area of consultation. Bethenee three very different school environments. She Child Study Teams, Crisis Response within an



She also serves as the district coordinator for the Partners for Success Mentoring Program for students in grades 6-12, which has allowed her to collaborate with multiple community agencies (too many to list here!). Her team for this program envisioned using data from the Healthy Student Survey and research on mentoring to develop evidence-based practices addressing multiple risk-factors. Bethenee serves on both school and district leadership teams to utilize data to create new policies/programming. One team at the district level is creating new policies for both referral and evaluation of ELL students being considered for special services based on disproportionality data. With this team, Bethenee "shared information from NASP, provided research on the issue of difference vs. disability, and created a new parent interview form to assist school teams in determining the influence of language, schooling, acculturative factors and potential additional issues (i.e. relocation and/or trauma) which might impact student performance." Finally, Bethenee has recently volunteered to now work with WSASP for future committee work in advocacy and public policy. Amazing work, Bethenee. We are so glad to have you getting involved in WSASP!

Engelsvold for Best Practices in Consultation Process during 2012-2013 and hearing of her Christina Garber, who completed an Trinity Lutheran University in 2011. Bethenee reviewers were amazed at the overall content plan and were particularly impressed with her facilitates multiple building level teams in works with grade level teams, PBIS teams, alternative high school, and Transition Center

Best Practices in Education/Supervision:

Michaela Clancy, Ed.D., NCSP, School Psychologist, Seattle Public Schools



Susan Ruby nominated Michaela Clancy for the Best Practices in Education/Supervision Award after seeing her work as a facilitator for the EWU ProCert 2012-2013 Process. Michaela served as the facilitator for three ProCert candidates and was fabulous in getting teams to plan for the professional growth of candidates. Candidates benefited greatly from Michaela's guidance and willingness to share her own ideas for professional growth. Whenever candidates seemed "stuck" in the self-assessment or professional growth planning process, she was able to simplify the process and brainstorm with teams to establish working plans. Working both as a school psychologist and adjunct professor for Seattle University, Michaela brought the best of "research to practice" ideas to the ProCert process. Thank you for being such an amazing facilitator and model, Michaela!

Continued from page 5

Best Practices in Assessment:

Alisa J. Coats-Clemans, School Psychologist, Evergreen School District



Susan Ruby nominated Alisa for Best Practices in assessment after seeing her work through EWU's ProCert Program in the 2012-2013 school year. Despite a significant setback (her building burned down in a fire!), Alisa demonstrated significant and meaningful work in her professional growth plan, choosing work to improve competencies in the evaluation of adaptive and developmental skills. Alisa chose this area so she could provide better information for special education teachers and other services providers to develop IEP goals and determine appropriate next steps for interventions. Alisa focused on researching the newer adaptive and developmental assessments to improve her adaptive evaluations for the severely disabled students in her school's Developmental Skills Center Classroom. In addition to this work, Alisa also researched the practices of co-teaching

to gain skills in program evaluation and learned about assistive technology resources available in her district. She sought additional training and practice with using Excel to summarize data and to make graphs and charts. Excellent work, Alisa!

Best Practices in Research/Program Evaluation:

William (Bill) Rasplica, Executive Director, Learning Support Services, Franklin Pierce School District

Susan Ruby nominated Bill for this award, after visiting his district and examining the comprehensive approach he is taking within Franklin Pierce to evaluate intervention implementation across multiple levels and domains. Additionally, Bill's collaboration with various university-based researchers allows for the dissemination of meaningful work and will hopefully encourage others to move forward with research-based practices.



Bill also presented at the fall conference. His session on "Multi-tiered Math Interventions" was well received by participants and contributed significantly to the understanding of school psychologists in the area of math (much needed)! Franklin Pierce is also working with researcher Dr. Mark Shinn to move forward in identifying students with specific learning disabilities through a Response to Intervention approach. We are excited for Bill's participation in the Spring Lecture Series and upcoming professional development opportunities for WSASP!

Special Recognition: Poster Presentations

John Cash and Alex Franks, interns at Eastern Washington University



Kudos to our students who went the extra mile to share personal research with us at the Fall WSASP Conference. While the rest of us were enjoying the wonderful social hour food and beverages, two interns from Eastern Washington University were standing center stage and conversing with many interested school psychologists about their research. John Cash presented a poster, "*Improving Executive Functioning Skills for a Student with Borderline Intellectual Functioning*," highlighting the effectiveness and acceptability of the Homework and Organization, and Planning Skills Intervention. John is currently an intern in Spokane Public Schools. Alex Franks presented a poster on "*Emotional/Behavioral Disability, Sensory Intervention, Small Group Instruction, Goal Attainment Scales and Multi-Rater Comparison*," examining the effects and consultation challenges in using a "fidget toy" for a student experiencing multiple challenges in various general education settings. Alex is currently completing her internship in the North Thurston School District. We hope that many students will follow their lead and share what they are doing at the 2014 Fall Conference in Skamania!

NWPBIS in Washington (NWPBIS Network)

By Bob Howard



The organization, Northwest Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (NWPBIS) continues to work at local levels, the state level, and the national level to promote and develop PBIS.

These are exciting times for PBIS advocates. There are now about 625 school buildings in some stage of PBIS usage in Washington State. This represents about 30% of our state's buildings. Growth is accelerating with about 100 buildings added to the NWPBIS rolls this past year.

I am following two larger school districts fully committed to PBIS and with more than three years into it. The dramatic growth and acceptance, to my knowledge, are with the TIER I and II behavior support systems. Those are implemented in the first two years (generally) and show greatly reduced building-wide office referrals for misbehaviors. There are fewer EBD Special Education referrals. When the fewer students with more serious or chronic behavior problems don't respond to Tier II interventions, we have Response To Intervention (RTI) data useful to behavior assessments. All good!

However, both districts have found that TIER III behavior students can greatly frustrate the lower tiered group interventions, or more precisely the adults serving those students. School psychologists have become the TIER III specialists. Duh! (Please excuse the profoundness). But, what should we have expected? School psychologists have always assessed the TIER III or most severely maladjusted students and those nearly so who didn't qualify for Special Education. Furthermore, too many educators have never had a single behavior modification class in their lives. They just don't "see" things or understand how misbehaviors are shaped, reinforced,

conditioned, or whatever. Too often/most often, the common sense behavior interventions just don't work with TIER III types of students. Successful intervention strategies can be counter-intuitive to non-behaviorists.

Regular classroom teachers want help with the most severely misbehaving/disrupting students. If PBIS doesn't help with those TIER III students soon, the staff will become disillusioned with PBIS. Schools with several years of implementation have come to find out that they must have the school psychologists more involved with PBIS. NWPBIS encourages and promotes this. Buildings that haven't involved the school psychologists early have struggled, especially in buildings with higher percentages of EBD types of students.

The demographics for school psychologists in our state and across the country are terrible. Huge numbers of us started our careers back in the late 1970's and early 1980's soon after federal funding started with HB 94-142. Now we are retiring in mass numbers. There are not nearly enough recent or prospective graduates to fill the void. I hope that there are enough school psychologists to do all this work without being overloaded.

*Supportively yours,
Bob*

For more information on PBIS, check out:



www.pbisnetwork.org



www.pbis.org



www.pbisillinois.org



www.apbs.org

OSPI Job Announcement: Behavioral Success Program Supervisor

Presented by Bob Howard

Please visit the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Human Resources Website for the full details: <http://www.k12.wa.us/employment/default.aspx>

This new position is now funded and critical for the development of statewide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS). The position "...requires an in-depth knowledge of social, emotional, and behavioral sciences, and the collection and analysis of data." It sounds like a school psychologist job description! There are, also, a good number of paragraphs in the job description that identify PBIS related knowledge, experience, and skills.

This job will be based in Olympia. One role will be to go to districts and ESD's throughout the state to help them set up their own PBIS types of behavior support systems.

This executive will sit on four other diverse sections of OSPI in addition to the (PBIS related) position within Student Support. There will be abundant opportunities to bring the perspective of our profession into the OSPI decision making processes. Thirty years ago, such a person in a similar position became the OSPI liaison to WSASP and provided for a great working relationship between the two.

WSASP believes that a school psychologist would be perfect for the job. A school psychologist in this executive position would be wonderful for WSASP, too. We encourage members to consider this career move. To quote the OSPI website: You're in the right place, "If you're looking for a rewarding career that positively affects the lives of children..." An influential place, I will add! (*Position open until filled*)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The Missing Piece *by Adrian Uribarri*

A National Teacher Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools

This report documents the findings from a survey of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers across the United States with regard to their understanding and perceptions of social and emotional learning and its impact on students. Results reveal that not only do teachers feel social-emotional learning is important for student success, they want these skills to be prioritized within the larger curriculum and afforded to all students.

Check out the article at <http://www.civicerprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/CASEL-Report-low-res-FINAL.pdf>

www.casel.org/guide: The CASEL guide "provides a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of classroom-based social and emotional learning programs and applies this framework to rate and identify well-designed, evidence-based SEL programs with potential for broad dissemination to schools across the United States. The Guide also shares best-practice guidelines for district and school teams on how to select and implement SEL programs. Finally, it offers recommendations for future priorities to advance SEL research, practice and policy."

A Letter to School Psychologists: Where is your office?

By Steve Hirsch

Sometime this Thanksgiving month, Hallmark will point out that its National School Psychology Week. For me, it's usually a time of guilt. It's a time when NASP publishes some poster or whatever that tells me all the things that I should be doing and currently am not. I haven't been part of any suicide prevention or anti-bullying campaign this year. I haven't produced any publishable research either. Shoot, I haven't done half the stuff they say I should be doing! So I feel guilty.

However, this February, my high school is moving into a new building. Funny thing, when the principal pointed out where all the new offices are located, mine is still to be determined. Crap, I don't even rate office consideration! But I was wrong! Apparently my office location is still up in the air because folks want me. There is a debate going on whether I should be housed with the counselors on the first floor or the SpEd teachers on the second. Both groups are lobbying to have my office with theirs. The counselors pointed out all the collaboration re: schedules, individual counseling, sessions with students, pre-referral meetings (we even

have pre-pre-SSTs to prepare), 504 meetings, parent meetings, transfers, providing intervention to their 504 students, etc. The SpEd teachers insisted that I am spending a majority of my day with them at collaboration sessions, including PLC, IEPs, MDTs, department meetings, testing, etc. (plus, let us not forget IEP online consulting). The principal said that I am a visible psychologist, known to provide a variety of supports: giving talks to the staff, heading the site council, advising the debate club, tutoring or proctoring Tier 3 students... and frequently observed to be walking around with something on my mind (code for: walking around in a daze, looking lost). He wants me to stay visible.

I don't know where my office will end up... but they want me! Ever wonder where will your office will end up?

Don't be a psychologist who works behind closed doors just testing and writing -- Be a psych that folks fight over to have you near!



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Reflections on the Fall 2013 WSASP Conference

By Carrie Suchy

**** Check out Carrie on Facebook at the WSASP Facebook Page**

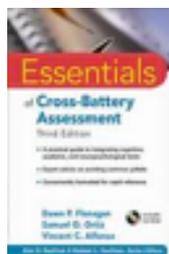
As a new Board member and first time attendee of the WSASP fall conference, I was impressed. I have previously attended two NASP conferences and one California Association of School Psychologist conference, which were all large and well attended. The WSASP conference had one thing that no others had: free, delicious food as provided within the cost of attendance. Kudos to the planning committee -- this is a big bonus!

Overall, I felt the content of the conference was well presented, timely, and included leading experts from both around the state and country. Of the seven school psychologists from my district who attended all, everyone was satisfied and returned excited to share our new learning with our cohort.

A few notable highlights for me:

Dr. Samuel Ortiz's session addressing assessment with culturally and linguistically diverse students was wonderful. Ortiz is known to be a very entertaining and engaging presenter and he did not disappoint. I so appreciated how he moved quickly from theory to practice, digging into the crux of the concern, how to assess students with what we have and the tools at our disposal to get where we need to go. Shortly after the conference I met with my director to

discuss purchasing some of the resources Mr. Ortiz spent a significant amount of time on: The Essentials of Cross Battery Assessment, Third Edition, of which he is the third author. Importantly, this book contains a disc, which I like to call a "magical program;" it contains "ELL norms" for the tests we commonly use.



I also appreciated Michael Self-Bence's session on using Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses in WA state, especially knowledge about the WACs and how these assessment practices align. He provided exceptional "grab & go" resources, including customizable tables to illustrate patterns of strengths and weaknesses, a parent friendly single sheet handout describing cognitive abilities (in English, Spanish, and Russian), and a guided interview for gathering developmental information. Plus many more!

Richard Marshall's session on Differentiated Interventions, which focused on working with Emotionally and Behaviorally Disturbed students was also excellent. Information about neurological/brain studies was shared, with a focus on the biological foundation for behavior. No one was sad to hear him say that FBA's are not the best use of time with these types

of students! It is always good to have reminders that when dealing with mental health, one size does not fit all!

I felt the session with Ashli Tyre and Ellen Winningham on Functional Evaluations of Severely disabled students was a great way to finish off presenters were knowledgeable and candid about actual cases, and involved audience participation in a meaningful and productive way. I left this session energized to try new things and immediately conferenced with my director for more tools.



Debriefing with my colleagues, we all agreed that the fall conference was well orchestrated. We felt set up for success with the location and food alone; however, the fabulous content brought this to a new level. A fellow coworker, a social worker, commented that school psychologist definitely appear to have the best conferences. As a new member in this collegial community, I can take no credit for this event, but as an attendee I can certainly say that it was well done! I look forward to future events from WSASP.

*(** Free clock hours for members on top of all the rest was also a fantastic perk!)*

Response to Intervention in Washington State

By Golda E. Waugh (Mount Vernon School District)

with support from Gene Johnson, Heath Marrs & Suzanne Little (Central Washington University)

Response to Intervention (RTI) continues to gain interest nationally as a research-based model for providing intervention to students that struggle or show a need for further teaching and understanding. RTI can assist students in gaining proficiency in the subject areas of reading, mathematics, and writing, as well as behavior (typically with the use of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems; PBIS). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) continues to shed light on the importance of early identification of deficits in academics, targeted interventions that enable students to receive assistance early on (instead of a “wait-to-fail” model) and to provide stronger foundational skills to students to allow for greater success through their educational careers in the K through 12 setting. However, more information is needed regarding how prevalent RTI is both nationally and by state. Various researchers have investigated how the implementation of RTI has changed or impacted the role of the school psychologist (Canter, 2006; Sullivan and Long, 2010). Some of these changes include a greater involvement in consultation, research, academic and behavioral interventions, data analysis, counseling, and standardized assessments (NASP, 2006). However, further research investigating how school psychologists are impacted by working in an RTI framework would be beneficial in terms of understanding the changing nature of school psychology practice. In this article, data from a recent study of the impact of RTI on school psychologists in Washington State will be presented.

Although a number of national surveys of school psychologists have been conducted (i.e., Curtis et al., 1999), Hall and colleagues (2007) suggested that state-wide surveys of school psychologist demographics, roles, and job activities are important due to the considerable variability in practices across states. The practice of school psychology is in many ways practiced and regulated at the state-level, with varying traditions, student-practitioner ratios, and typical job responsibilities. Understanding the unique trends in school psychology by state would help identify possible trends and differences in school psychology practice. One of the areas in question is the implementation of RTI in the state of Washington.

RTI is defined by the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD) as:

“...An assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data” (NRCLD, 2007).

RTI is a reflection of the Individuals Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA; IDEIA, 2004) as well as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; NCLB, 2001). Specifically, IDEIA regulations identify the use of scientifically based research, which RTI incorporates, as part of the alignment of IDEIA and NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The concept of RTI can include a number of dimensions. These dimensions typically include systems for educational staff to make decisions based on data, screening for at-risk-students, school wide collaboration, progress monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention and instruction for students. Ideally, this design allows for fewer students to be placed into special education programs in public schools, and allows extra help to those students in need. This problem-solving framework is used to address a student’s academic or behavioral needs as the need arises, and is a proactive approach when compared to the “wait-to-fail” model. When an RTI model is in place, students are provided with high quality instruction with a high fidelity instructional model (OSPI, 2006).

There are seven core principles associated with RTI including: (1) use all available resources to teach all students; (2) use scientific, research-based interventions/ instruction; (3) monitor classroom performance; (4) conduct universal screening/benchmarking; (5) use a multi-tier model of service delivery; (6) make data-based decisions; and (7) monitor progress frequently (OSPI, 2006). Using all available resources to teach students allows focus on the curricular, instructional, and environmental variables for these students versus what is wrong with the students. The belief that all students can learn is one of the main foundations of RTI and is practiced throughout each principle of this multi-tiered model (OSPI, 2006).

Continued from page 11

RTI is used for both academic and behavioral needs. Academically, RTI is being used for reading and math interventions. For behavior, it is being used for positive school-wide behavioral support. In both academic and behavioral areas educators are encouraged to be trained on the use of RTI to provide services at all seven of the core principles, and within all three to four tiers of the RTI model (OSPI, 2006). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in Washington State does not specifically identify what position a school psychologist would take in any of these areas, and the position responsibilities may be determined on an individual basis within a school district or school setting (OSPI, 2006). This may suggest that a school psychologist's roles in the framework of RTI could be consultant, trainer, data collector, supervisor, etc., based on the needs of an individual school or district.

RTI in Washington

The state of Washington currently allows school districts to decide on implementation of RTI in their individual districts, rather than require. This is currently identified in the Washington State Assessment Codes that identify the use of RTI or discrepancy model for identification of special education (WAC, 2011). Because of this ability to choose, there is considerable variability in stages of implementation throughout the state, with some districts having well-developed systems in place, some just getting started, and others not pursuing RTI. As a result, research on the effectiveness of RTI across the state is beginning to emerge. OSPI, in partnership with Evaluation Research Services, has been investigating the results of the implementation of RTI by collecting data since the 2009-2010 school year. Schools identified as participating in RTI were matched with districts of approximately the same size in population, and other demographic characteristics (e.g., percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch). Through this evaluation, results have suggested that those districts that are implementing RTI have better performance scores on state mandated tests compared to the matched districts that are not implementing RTI. This data suggests that RTI may be a better solution to educating all students instead of only those felt to be destined for special education eligibility. Washington State is moving toward providing students with the necessary interventions required to succeed instead of only identifying students for special education

(Evaluation Research Services, 2011; Evaluation Research Services; 2012).

Surveying School Psychologists

Trends in school psychology practice were last examined in Washington State by Jones and Pemble in 2004. Their study examined training experiences, common practices, and job satisfaction among practicing school psychologists. The survey was mailed to 1,107 school psychologists, with less than 30 percent responding. This survey provided some useful information about trends in Washington at that time. However, with the passage of time and potential changes in the state, a new study is needed to assess the current status of the profession, particularly with the potential changes with the implementation of RTI models. This study was conducted to assess the current state of school psychology in Washington, particularly regarding the demographics of current school psychologists, areas of primary job emphasis, and also information relating to the implementation of Response to Intervention.

Research Question

Previous national and state wide surveys have not addressed the status of RTI implementation. Consequently, there is a lack of literature pertaining to the school psychologist's role in the implementation of RTI, as well as the role RTI may have had in modifying the role of school psychologists. The following report will focus on the involvement and roles of school psychologists in the area of RTI. There was one specific research question for this study: Are the roles of school psychologists different in districts where RTI is being implemented? Other results were previously published in SCOPE in fall of 2012 (Waugh, Johnson, Marrs, & Little, 2012).

Method

Participants

Nearly 800 practicing school psychologists in Washington State were contacted by email and asked to participate in this study. The contact information was provided by OSPI and consisted of those individuals holding school psychologist certification during the 2009-2010 school year. The original list included approximately 1080 school psychologist's e-mail addresses, but many were not currently active or the addresses were inaccurate. The participants in this survey consisted of 406 school psychologists who responded producing a total response rate of 50.9%.

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Survey Instrument

The survey was adapted from surveys used by Hall and colleagues (2009) in Arkansas, as well as Jones and Pemble (2004) in Washington State, to survey school psychologists as to their role in the RTI process. It was comprised of 44 questions and divided into three sections that consisted of demographics and professional characteristics, professional roles, and RTI implementation. The survey was created electronically with the use of the program Survey Monkey©.

Procedure

An introductory e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to all Washington State school psychologists on the 2009-2010 OSPI list in January 2010. In order to maximize response rates, a second e-mail was sent 10 days later, and a third and final e-mail was sent out seven days after the second mailing.

Results

One hundred and twenty-five (34.6%) of the 406 total respondents indicated that RTI is being implemented in their current school district, and respondents were then asked to identify the areas in which RTI was being implemented. The highest response rate was for reading at 91.2% (114 respondents), followed by math at 53.6% (67 respondents), and behavior at 31.2% (39 respondents). The duration that Response to Intervention had been implemented within the school psychologist's school district revealed that 29.3% (44 respondents) were in the second year of implementation, followed by first year and third year of implementation at 28.7% (first year) and 28.0% (third year), and five plus years duration of implementation at 1.3%.

Questions on the role of the school psychologist in the RTI framework revealed that the majority consult with teachers concerning screening data at 68.9% (102 respondents), followed by being trained/attending trainings at 57.4% (85 respondents), and collecting data at 29.7%. Implementation of RTI is being documented by a data collection program as indicated 68.2% of respondents, and has not been documented with the use of a program as reported by 31.8% of respondents. Of those respondents that indicated that RTI implementation is being documented, 82.6% (100 respondents) indicated that DIBELS is being used, and 33.1% of respondents reported using AIMSweb for documentation. A question regarding the types of universal screeners that were used by schools

was also included on the survey. Of those respondents that indicated that RTI implementation is being documented, 82.6% (100 respondents) indicated that DIBELS is being used, and 33.1% of respondents reported using AIMSweb.

Respondents were also asked to make a judgment regarding their perception of the outcomes of RTI implementation. For those respondents who indicated that RTI had been implemented, 54.0% (81 respondents) indicated that academic improvement has been demonstrated. However, 41.3% (62 respondents) indicated that it was unknown if academic improvement could be determined due to RTI. In the area of behavior, respondents were less positive about the outcomes of RTI. Eighty-one (58.7%) respondents indicated that behavioral improvement was unknown with the implementation of RTI; however, 31.2% (43 respondents) did indicate that improvement in behavior has been observed with the implementation of RTI.

Discussion

Approximately 36% of the respondents indicated that RTI was being implemented in their schools in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. Reading was reported as the highest area of intervention, followed by math and behavior. The fact that reading had the highest level of implementation follows the trend that reading is already the most common intervention implemented in a school setting because it is such a common target for students (Noell, Gansel, & Allison, 1999). This may also support the argument that reading is a foundational skill and a gateway to learning other subjects in school and life (Getty & Summy, 2006). As suggested by the survey results, school psychologist's time spent in consultation may increase as a role in the RTI framework.

Results also suggested that as a result of RTI implementation, 57.4% of school psychologists reported being trained or attended trainings. This finding was similar to what Little (2013) reported in her survey conducted specifically identifying knowledge of RTI and its implementation. Approximately 50% of respondents felt prepared to support the implementation of RTI within the school setting (Little, 2013). It appears that school psychologists are being provided training in their graduate programs as well as through post degree programs. NASP requires that programs provide data based decision making and accountability training, and perhaps RTI training will be included in training programs in the future (Standards, 2008).

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Conclusion

Overall, approximately 30% of the school psychologists who responded to this survey indicated that RTI is being implemented in their district, and that student improvement has been observed in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. School psychologists report that they have contributed to the RTI process primarily by providing consultation, trainings, and data collection. The positive outcome of the implementation of RTI as reported by the psychologists surveyed is encouraging to the field of education. Results suggest that there is support for helping struggling students in the general education population and moving away from a “wait-to-fail” approach that is often practiced in schools. As a result Washington State may be heading in a positive direction with the continued growth of districts implementing RTI programs.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the list of e-mails provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Institution was only a best guess list. Many of the addresses provided were either

incorrect or invalid. Because of this, not all school psychologists in Washington State were contacted or provided the invitation to participate in the study. This suggests a need for a current database of contact information of the school psychologists in Washington State. Second, some participants had difficulty with the Survey Monkey© system and had to start the survey over due to the computer screen freezing, a faulty internet connection, or difficulties with the Survey Monkey © site. The third limitation was the discontinuation of the survey; many individuals started the survey and did not respond to all questions. A fourth limitation is that all responses were untraceable and it could not be determined what district a response came from. Therefore, more responses may have been obtained from smaller versus larger school districts and impacted the results when investigating the implementation of RTI.

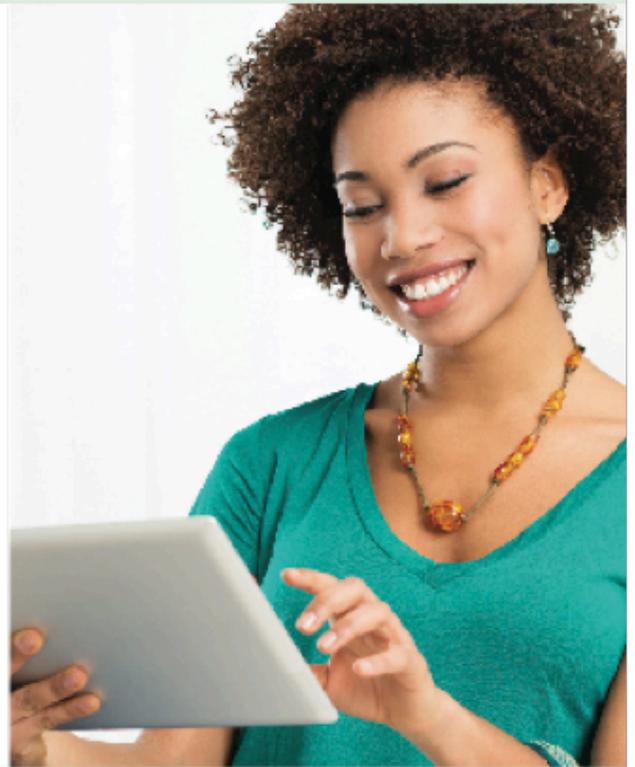
Future research should examine the possible link between characteristics of the particular region or school district a respondent works in and the roles of school psychologists. *** *Please contact editor for references.*

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Practitioner Spotlight



Teresa Vance, M.Ed., NCSP

School Psychologist & PBIS Coach in the Vancouver

Educational Background

Teresa has a M Ed. School Psychology from Central Washington University and just received the Diplomate in School Neuropsychology from the American Board of School Neuropsychology.

Employment History

Teresa has worked primarily at the elementary level in the Vancouver School District. Since the onset of Response to Intervention (RTI) in her district, her position has transitioned through a few revisions, including intervention specialist, data facilitator. Currently, Teresa's role is as .5 school psychologist and .5 building based Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) coach.

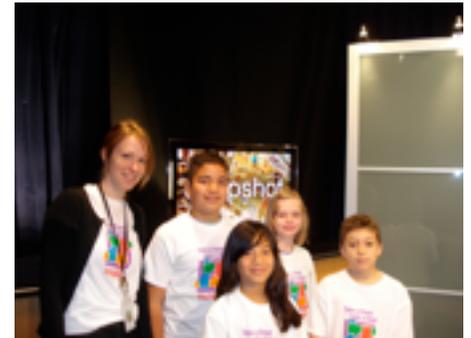
Current Role & Responsibilities

As school psychologist/PBIS coach, Teresa's primary role is in the implementation and maintenance of RTI, both academic and behavior, at Peter S. Ogden Elementary. Teresa is part of a "core team" of specialists who meets weekly to review core, Tier 2, and Tier 3 data; she collaborates with the reading and math specialists, as well as grade level teams, to ensure Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are matched to student need and are implemented with fidelity. Teresa also works with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to develop and conduct a comprehensive evaluation.

Teresa coordinates and ensures that schoolwide PBIS occurs three times a year in the form of expectations fairs and classroom booster sessions. She provides social skills instruction in general education classrooms as well as facilitates social skills groups for students who need additional and individualized social emotional support, (e.g., Tier 2 and 3). Teresa has also received several grants for increasing awareness and building a culture of bullying prevention; the most recent grant resulted in a "Stand Up to Bullying" assembly and work with fifth graders who serve as "Upstanders," teaching the students and staff how to stand up to bullying. Teresa also supervises Tier II Check In-Check Out and enters and reviews behavioral data via SWIS (Schoolwide Information System).

Professional Strengths

Teresa feels most proud of her work collaborating with and supporting teachers, which has allowed her school to successfully implement both academic and behavioral RTI and become an exemplar school within the district. Secondly, comprehensive evaluations have become an area of strength, as based on training and coursework in the area of neuropsychology. Teresa feels more confident in her ability to "drill down" using a CHC/PSW framework, which aides in the identification of meaningful supports. Finally, Teresa prides herself on supporting a culture of respect and safety; a recent survey of students following schoolwide instruction on bullying revealed that 92% of students were better at recognizing bullying, 97% of students reported they know what to do after they recognize bullying, and 89% of students surveyed reported they felt safer at school since starting a bullying prevention program.



Continued from page 11

The best parts of the job... The variability and flexibility of the role, as related to student and staff needs. For example, when SWIS data indicated an increase in bullying behaviors grades 3-5, Teresa was able to meet with the administrator and teachers and develop a comprehensive plan to support students and decrease bullying behavior at our school. Likewise, Teresa has been able to have a significant role in the implementation of RTI in her district, e.g., from its initial inception to Tier 3 activities. In addition, she also appreciates the opportunities to collaborate with other school psychologists, PBIS coaches, behavior intervention specialists, etc. to share and develop ideas.

The hardest thing about the job.... Meeting the demands when the needs of students require so many behavioral and academic supports.

What advice would you give someone considering a career in school psychology OR a student preparing to enter the field?

Every district is different and even each school within a can be very different. Not all schools are consistent with best practices taught in graduate school related to assessment and response to intervention; often times a school psychologists' role initially will focus on dispelling myths or out of date practices. Relationships are extremely important with both students and staff and is a great way to help shape building culture.

How do you think work as a school psychological service provider has changed during the length of your career?

Teresa has witnessed a transition from the "refer and test" model to a prevention based, data-driven model, which is grounded on individual student need within a team approach. Notably, school psychologists no longer work in isolation; they key team members, collaborating and consulting with colleagues in buildings and across the district.

Far left: group of 5th grade PBIS leaders; Middle: "Upstanders" bands; Far left: Teresa standing with students

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Susan Ruby: Essentials of Specific Learning Disabilities Identification

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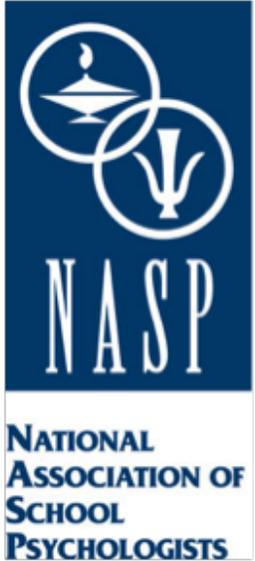
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