

president's podium

Lora Tuesday Heathfield, Ph.D.
UASP President
2006-2007



I want to wish all of you a very happy New Year! It is hard to believe it is 2007 already. A long tradition that accompanies ringing in the New Year is making resolutions. Although many of you may have made personal resolutions already, I challenge you to make some professional resolutions as well. One that we can all make (and probably keep!) is to become informed about Response to Intervention (RtI) and how it impacts our roles as school psychologists.

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The implementation of the 2004 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) brought several changes in special education service delivery. The one change that has created considerable discussion among school psychologists and other members of special education eligibility teams is the change in eligibility determination for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). IDEA 2004 indicates that as part of SLD eligibility determination, LEAs are *not required* to consider whether a student has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability, rather LEAs *may* establish a process to determine if a student responds to scientific, research based intervention as part of the evaluation process. The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) is in the process of interpreting those changes into state rules and regulations and a draft of those rules and regulations will soon be available for review and feedback on the USOE website (www.usoe.k12.ut.us). Included in the new rules and regulations will be the IDEA 2004 option for LEAs to use the process of Response to Intervention (RtI) to determine eligibility for SLD, which, as most of you know, involves a multitiered approach to service delivery. As the roles of school psychologist and other special and regular education personnel face possible changes as these new regulations take effect, I encourage each of you to take a proactive role in determining your own role within your LEA if and when an RtI process is implemented.

RtI is no longer an approaching concept on the horizon; it is here. RtI is currently being implemented in several Utah schools and is being considered by many more school districts. It is easy to become informed!

(See **Podium** on page 3)

THE OBSERVER

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THE OBSERVER editorial board invites articles, letters and other items of interest. The editor reserves the right to edit articles. Please include name, address and phone number with submission. Unsigned letters or articles will not be published.

The Observer suffers without submissions from our readership. Seize the opportunity, write and submit.

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\$50 for regular members
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FROM THE EDITOR

In his presentation in Salt Lake City earlier this year, Kevin Feldman stated that teaching is part science, part art, and part heart. The same is true of school psychology. This winter issue of the Observer addresses the science, art, and heart of school psychology. All this within the context of RtI—the theme of this year’s winter conference.

Addressing science we have a submission by a local optometrist, Nathan Green, which discusses behaviors symptomatic of vision difficulties that might not be picked up on school screenings and several articles pertaining to RtI: *Evaluating Intervention Outcomes, the Danger of Response to Intervention to School Psychology* and a *Quick List of RtI Resources*.

An article by Alex Thomas addresses the art of school psychology. He discusses how even when science offers a clear vision of what should be done, translating science into practice can be a tricky and artful enterprise.

Just in time for Valentines Day, two submissions concern the heart. *ON BEHAVIOR ... The Best Laid Plans of Dogs, Rats, and Men*, by Robert DePaolo discusses the importance of building positive relationships and the impact that has on outcomes. In *What is Love*, children define this important yet illusive construct.

Several articles pertain to all three themes: an interview with this year’s keynote, Dr. W. David Tilly, an interview with Charles, Paula, and Annie Ashcraft, an article about the Jordan Family Center, and the Presidential Address.

In addition to the science, art and heart of school psychology, we have the *paperwork of school psychology*. To this end, please note the proposed UASP by-law changes. Read up and make your views known!

Enjoy, and see you at the UASP Winter Conference. As usual, it should be good!

Paid examiners needed NOW

for nationwide standardization of new Spanish-Bilingual Edition of the Test of Auditory Processing Skills, 3rd edition. Individual testing of Spanish-speaking children from regular-education classrooms (without auditory processing difficulties) is starting now and continues at least through March, 2007. Contact Jill Youens at Academy Therapy Publications, Novato, CA; 1-800-422-7249, TAPS-SBE@academictherapy.com.

(**Podium**, continued from front cover)

The current Observer editor, Rob Richardson, has routinely included articles in this and in past issues of the Observer regarding RtI. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), along with several other national education associations, have collaborated to create a document outlining each organization’s interpretation of the roles of various professions in RtI—including school psychologists. This document created by NASP (www.nasponline.org/advocacy/RTIrole_NASP.pdf) outlining the role of school psychologists, as well as the entire document (www.nasponline.org/advocacy/New%20Roles%20in%20RTI.pdf) are on the web.

Another way to become informed is to attend this year’s UASP conference on February 9, 2007. The conference committee, chaired by Kathy Boyer and Leah Voorhies, has been working hard to create a very timely and informative conference that will be helpful to all Utah school psychologists, as well as our colleagues in special education and regular education to better understand RtI and our changing roles. Dr. W. David Tilly III will be presenting on how to implement an RtI model. He is a nationally recognized expert who has been using and refining an RtI model in the state of Iowa for more than 15 years.

I invite each of you to join me in this New Year’s resolution to become informed about RtI and how it impacts YOU in your role as a school psychologist! It is the beginning of a new year – another year for our profession to continue to grow. I invite you all to take a prominent role in guiding our profession’s continued growth!

THE OBSERVER

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The opinions and products, including advertising, class/workshop notices, and job announcements, appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily indicate official sanctioning, promotion, or endorsement on the part the newsletter or the Utah Association of School Psychologists. Articles, announcements, and letters should be submitted to the Editor:

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LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING

By Dan Olympia

State & Local News:

The 2007 Legislature is beginning to gear up for the annual process of reviewing proposed legislation, establishing what laws are needed to address a variety of concerns and set funding levels for various state activities. The discussion is likely to be more heated for this term as various interest groups and the legislature try to determine what to do with a very large surplus of tax dollars which has accumulated in the state treasury, owing to a robust economy. This will occur against the backdrop of the usual tug of war between moderates and advocates of more private sector participation in education, tuition vouchers, and more legislative tinkering with education policies and practices. Several issues have already been identified as priority items.

The state recently completed a study of charter schools and their impact on general education and has identified some key areas of concern. The legislature is expected to consider legislation dealing with charter school funding and management, legal issues and other concerns related to expectations for these schools. For example, several school psychologists, child advocates and parents have noted inconsistent responses to the need for special education services to be offered in these tax funded schools. The legislature may also consider providing additional funds to address class size reductions. Teacher compensation will also be addressed in some form or fashion, particularly in areas where there are shortages or high demands (science, math, special education). Interestingly the State Office of Education has recently included the school psychology specialty in funding opportunities available to school districts who want to support teachers and other educators who undertake additional training leading to school psychology certification. It is not clear at this point if and how any new legislation will affect school psychology compensation. The Utah School Nurses Association has also expressed concerns about the shortage of school nurses, which is extreme. The recommended ratio of nurses to students is 1 to 750. In Utah the ratio is 1 to 6,127. This shortage of nurses impacts special education and 504 students, particularly with respect to medications dispensed at schools (interestingly, ADHD meds top the list). There will likely be some efforts to address this issue.

There are several "hot button" issues which will likely surface. Rep. Mike Morley has re-filed HB 202 Medical Recommendations for Children (the "Ritalin" bill) for a fifth attempt to pass a bill that concerns how and what teachers and other educators communicate to parents when they are discussing a child's behavior or other concerns. Despite the fact that there is little documented evidence that the bill addresses a real problem and there are existing state regulations and federal laws which address the issue, Utah's version of the law has been very problematic for school psychologists (and others) in years past. Bill language has often gone beyond a simple requirement that educators can not make school attendance conditional on the use of medication or recommend that a child "take" medication to also include how DCFS addresses a failure to provide medication to a child in child protection cases or requiring that psychologists provide copies of tests (including the WISC-IV and other copyright protected content) used to evaluate children to parents before they give consent. UASP will be monitoring developments in the most current version of this legislation to represent school psychology's interests.

Other possible legislation may address ongoing concerns expressed by Sen. C. Buttars with respect to the availability of school facilities or resources used to support clubs or other activities geared toward students with gay/lesbian/bisexual affiliations. Similar legislation was proposed last year and while strongly supported in some sectors was also met with a good deal of resistance from student groups and human/legal rights advocates. Another bill has been drafted for the 2007 Legislature, tentatively entitled the Utah Suicide Prevention Act which has several provisions concerning children/adolescents which expressly prohibit screening activities without parental permission and other activities which might possibly occur in school settings. Several ultra-conservative groups in Utah have expressed concerns and given out misinformation about a specific program (Teen Screen) which has been successfully adopted in other parts of the country (and incidentally also requires parental permission). The bill would fund a task force to study the issues over the next year and issue a report.

(See **Legislatively** on page 5)

(Legislatively, continued from page 4)

Annual Legislative Reception: The Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, CHADD of Utah, NAMI Utah, the Utah Association of School Psychologists, the Utah Psychological Association, together with other advocacy/educational/disability groups will sponsor the **Annual Legislative Reception on January 17th, 2007 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm in the East Capitol Building Café. An invited guest/speaker will be Peter S. Jensen, MD; Director of the Center for the Advancement of Children’s Mental Health— Putting Science to Work, and Ruane Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.** This event is open to any UASP member. Legislators will be attending, particularly if you let them know in advance that you will be there as a constituent. You are encouraged to attend and participate as a citizen and a school

psychologist to represent concerns to your legislator. Just being there and letting your Senator or Representative know that you are following issues that affect children, education and families will send an important message to lawmakers. *Be there or be square!*

UASP List-serve: The UASP Legislative Affairs Committee maintains a list-serve for the purposes of communicating to members across a wide range of topics and professional issues. You may subscribe to this list-serve by going to the website address and following the directions provided by Yahoo. The list-serve is located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/utahschoolpsychologyassociation/>.

Views and opinions contained in this article are solely attributed to the author and do not represent the official position of the Utah Association of School Psychologists unless specifically stated otherwise.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO UASP BYLAWS

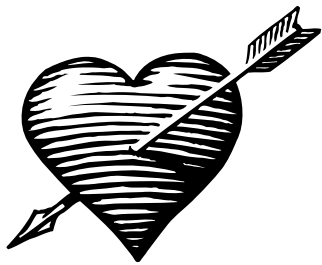
The UASP Board recently voted to approve the following proposed changes to the Bylaws. UASP members will soon be asked to vote on the adoption of these changes.

<u>Which Now Reads</u>	<u>Be Amended by Striking Out And/or Inserting New Words</u>	<u>If Adopted, Would Read</u>
Article II Membership		
Section 2.1 Membership Categories		
d. A retired member is one who has been a member of UASP under the regular category and is retired.	Strike last three words and insert "... who is now retired, and is not currently working in school psychology."	d. A retired member is one who has been a member of UASP under the regular member category, who is now retired, and is not currently working in school psychology.
Section 2.4 Membership Application		
Formal application for membership may be obtained from the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee will review the completed application and submit the name for approval by the board. Upon Board approval and payment of dues the applicant will become a member. Membership shall run July 1 to June 30.	Change the dates for membership year.	<i>Last sentence would read:</i> Membership shall run from October 1 to September 30.
Section 2.5 Severance of Membership		
a. If membership dues are not current by November 15, all membership privileges will be forfeited until dues are paid.	Change cut-off date.	If membership dues are not current by November 30, all membership privileges will be forfeited until dues are paid.

(See **Bylaws** on page 6)

(Bylaws, continued from p. 5)

<u>Which Now Reads</u>	<u>Be Amended by Striking Out And/or Inserting New Words</u>	<u>If Adopted, Would Read</u>
<p>Article III Board of Trustees Section 3.2 Number, Election and Tenure</p> <p>The number of Trustees of the Corporation is set at not less than sixteen (16) and not more than twenty (20). Any action of the Board to increase or decrease the number of trustees, whether expressly by resolution or by implication through the election of additional Trustees shall constitute an amendment to these Bylaws. Trustees shall be elected or re-elected by written vote of the membership, and each Trustee shall hold office for a two-year term. Trustees may be re-elected for additional two-year terms.</p>	<p>Insert statement clarifying who is eligible to be a trustee.</p>	<p><i>After, "...shall constitute an amendment to these Bylaws.":</i> Only current UASP members, regular, student, retired, or affiliate, are eligible to run and serve as Trustees.</p>
<p>Article VI Committees Section 6.3</p> <p>The president shall appoint chairpersons from among the elected Board members to standing and other committees. Committee chairs shall recruit and appoint committee members as needed.</p>	<p>Substitute.</p>	<p>The president shall appoint a chairperson to each standing committee and other committees. An elected Board member must serve on each committee, but not necessarily chair the committee. Committee chairs shall recruit and appoint committee members as needed.</p>
<p>Article VI Officers Section 4.6 Authority and Duties of Officers and Executive Trustees</p> <p><u>b. President-Elect.</u> The president-elect shall assist the president and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the president or by the Board. The president-elect shall, at the request of the president, or in his absence or inability or refusal to act, perform the duties of the president and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the president. The term is one year with eligibility for re-election after fulfilling one year as past president.</p> <p><u>c. Past President.</u> The past president shall assist the president and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the president or by the Board. The past president shall take responsibility for the nomination process and election of officers and trustees. In addition, the past president shall take responsibility for the nominating process and approval of award recipients.</p>	<p>Insert responsibility for elections.</p> <p>Delete responsibility for elections.</p>	<p><i>After last sentence:</i> The president-elect shall take responsibility for the nomination process and election of Officers and Trustees. The president-elect shall take responsibility for the nominating process.</p> <p><u>c. Past President.</u> The past president shall assist the president and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the president or by the Board. The past president shall take responsibility for initiation and selection of award recipients.</p>



What Is Love?

The following is in honor of Valentine's Day. It came via email, source unknown.

What does love mean?

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

Rebecca - age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

Karl - age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."

Chrissy - age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."

Danny - age 7

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate."

Nikka - age 6 (we need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday."

Noelle - age 7

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

Tommy - age 6

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."

Cindy - age 8

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken."

Elaine - age 5

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

Mary Ann - age 4

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones."

Lauren - age 4

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you."
(what an image)

Karen - age 7

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross."

Mark - age 6

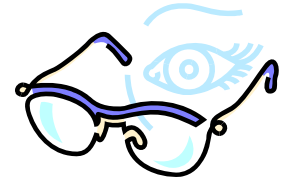
"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

Jessica - age 8

And the final one: Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

BEHAVIORS RELATED TO VISION PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN: AN OPTOMETRIST'S VIEW



By Nathan Green, O.D., P.C., Optometrist

1. Consistently sitting too close to the TV or holding a book too close. The further away from the object of interest you are, the more blurry it becomes. This can be a sign of near sightedness or astigmatism.
2. Losing his place while reading. This may signify the inability of the eyes to move well together or the inability for the eyes to jump precisely from one place to another.
3. Using a finger to follow along while reading. This is what children will do when they have a hard time using their eyes together.
4. Squinting. This is usually a sign of nearsightedness and astigmatism. It can also be a sign of presbyopia (focusing problems for the over 40's crowd).
5. Tilting the head or turning the head to see better. This can be a sign that the eyes are not aligning together and that there is one place where, if the head is turned, the child can get his/her eyes to line up and see together.
6. Frequent eye rubbing. This may be a sign of allergies or dryness but it can also be a sign of farsightedness or eye alignment issues. When a child's eyes fatigue from doing extra work the child will rub them.
7. Sensitivity to light. This is usually a sign of infection in the eye but can be a sign that one of the eyes is not aligned with the other. When one eye is not pointed the same direction it will be more sensitive to light as it is not pointed away from a light source like the other eye.
8. Excessive tearing. Of course this can be associated with dryness but also can be a sign of farsightedness and fatigue of the eyes. This is also a sign of a viral eye infection or can be associated with allergies. Look for signs of pink eye or mucous in the eyes.
9. Closing one eye to read or watch TV to see better. This is often seen in children who are farsighted or where they have a hard time keeping their eyes aligned.

10. Avoiding activities which require near vision, such as reading or homework. Or avoiding distance vision activities, such as participating in sports or other recreational activities. When a child avoids near activities it is usually an alignment issue or they are so farsighted that it is too much work.
11. Complaining of headaches or tired eyes. Same as #10.

Of the above mentioned list, only two of them will be caught by a nurse in a visual acuity screening that is done in the schools: numbers 1 and 4.

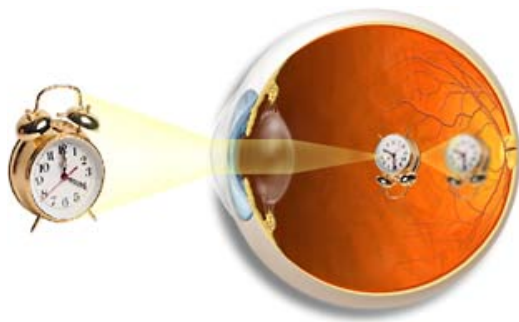
Now I will explain what it means to be farsighted and nearsighted so that one can understand why the above symptoms occur.



People with farsightedness usually have trouble seeing up close, but they may have trouble seeing at a distance as well. Farsighted means that when the light enters the eyes, it actually focuses behind the retina. To compensate for this fact a person will focus with the lens of the eye to enable him/her to see clearly at a distance. Then to see up close, the individual has to exert even more strain to focus. Eyes get tired and feel fatigued because of all the extra work done by the focusing muscles that change the shape of the lens in the eye.

If a child is overly farsighted they will suppress one eye as it turns in and no longer is used. The less dominant eye tends to turn off because the brain is no longer able to fuse the 2 images in the brain. If this persists the child will develop *ambliopia* which means the brain does not develop the ability to see clearly with an eye. And, unless the eye turns in a lot the parents won't notice it and only an eye exam will find it.

(Vision, continued from page 8)

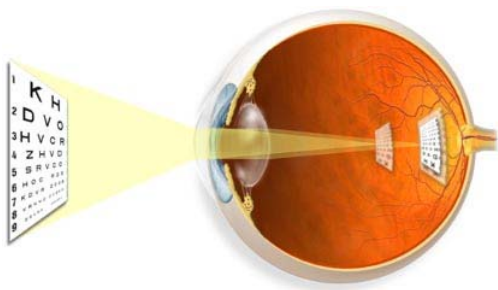


Nearsighted Eye

Nearsighted means that the light focuses before it hits the retina making distance vision blurry. If the patient focuses with the lens of the eye it only makes the distance vision worse. This problem is often discovered in school-age children who report having trouble seeing the chalkboard. Near-sightedness usually becomes progressively worse through adolescence and stabilizes in early adulthood. It is an inherited problem. Nearsighted students are the ones that get caught by the school screenings.

Stereo vision is the ability to use both eyes together to create a single image in the brain. The eyes must align to give the patient stereovision and the image sizes created by each eye must be the same size (in other words, the prescription must be within approximately 3 diopters of each other).

Astigmatism is when the curvature of the eye is more football shaped than spherical. The light focuses at 2 points in the eye instead of one. These patients see shadows around images, almost double vision. They tend to be able to guess letters and numbers pretty well even though it is not very clear. They will also tend to squint a lot to eliminate some of the astigmatism. This is often not caught by school screenings.



The parents of these children often think they are doing their child a favor by making them squint in stead of getting glasses because they are “Working their eyes and keeping them stronger.” This is not a true. A person’s vision is determined by eye shape (mostly from genetics) not by muscular conditioning. Not providing glasses *doesn’t* prevent an individual from needing them in the future. (This is a commonly believed wives’ tale.)

Eye alignment is the ability to keep both eyes together looking at the same point. It is also used to denote a child’s ability to jump from one spot on the page to the next (also known as saccades). Eyes may be looking in the same direction but can’t jump from place to place. Or eyes may lose alignment and thus the child doesn’t know which eye to follow. Eye alignment problems are manifested when a student consistently skips words or lines in a text.

CONCLUSION

Children typically think that whatever their vision is, it is normal. Consequently school psychologists need to watch for these behaviors and ask others whether they have noticed these behaviors. Don’t expect the child to raise the complaint!

School vision screenings are better than nothing; however by their very nature they miss a lot. They are moderately successful at catching nearsightedness, but typically miss farsightedness, astigmatism, and eye alignment problems. To get a good picture of how eyes are functioning, you need a thorough eye exam from a trained professional who can look inside the eye at the image projected on the retina, and examine how eyes are coordinating their efforts. The truly unfortunate part of all this is that those of us that are trained to test and catch these things are, by law, not allowed to donate our time to help with school screenings. I don’t know why it was legislated to not allow us into the schools. My guess is for marketing reasons but my children come home with dentists’ free kits with their names on the bags and everything. The dentists don’t even do a screening they just send home the advertisements.

Given this state of affairs, it is all the more important that school personnel, such as school psychologists, are aware of behavioral symptoms of those with vision difficulties. The presence of such symptoms is often a better indication of a vision problem than are the school screenings. Vision problems may be a root cause of academic difficulty; however they are typically easier to remediate than academic difficulties resulting from other sources.

KNOWING WHAT TO DO THE EASY PART—DOING IT IS THE CHALLENGE: SCIENCE IS EASIER THAN ART

By Alex Thomas

Although my 18 years as a practitioner are well behind me, the visceral feeling of waking every morning (with either gusto if I were spending the day at School X or dread if I were spending the day at School Y) is still with me. I would start with thoughts about activities for that day, what I knew about them, what I didn't know about them, and what new challenges would flummox me. Early on, I realized that my limited training ill prepared me to work as a school psychologist. Here I was in a system that routinely held back 15% of first graders, trying to talk with parents whose children were depressed, hoping to develop influence with intransigent principals, working with teachers who sought help with classroom discipline and motivation for their reluctant readers or the myriad opportunities to assist individuals and systems about relevant issues. There seemed to be so much possibility, yet so little influence and so little knowledge—a frustrating and helpless feeling, to be sure.

The feeling of helplessness and the realization that other school psychologists in disparate locations around the country likely shared this feeling spurred the notion of a compendium of “best practices,” a resource to consult when faced with professional challenges (vocational assessment and programming, suicide, test anxiety, hearing and visual impairment, etc.) which may not have been specifically addressed in training programs, however good those programs may have been. I needed such a resource and felt others would benefit as well.

There is a difference between having seven years of experience and having one year of experience seven times. Experienced school psychologists realize they can absorb every word in the most recent *Best Practices in School Psychology*, integrate the findings of the most recent professional journals, and be current with every fact existent, and that will constitute a necessary but not a sufficient condition for professional success. Science alone, knowledge alone, knowing “stuff” alone, does not make a competent school psychologist. Knowing “stuff” alone may be a key to success in some professions, but not as a practitioner school psychologist. The knowing is necessary, but it is not sufficient.

Understanding the context in which that “stuff” is applied is a more subtle and complex issue and at the core of how one defines a truly competent school psychologist. The science of school psychology is relatively circumscribed; the art of school psychology is personal and contextual. The science of school psychology practice will likely be similar in California, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. The art of school psychology will likely be different between two schools in the same district, each served by the same school psychologist. With science there are specific procedures and actions indicated when conditions warrant. With art, there are principles that can be applied with varied media and in varied ways. Following are five principles that should be considered the art of school psychology, at least in my view.

Knowing Your System, Understanding the Professional Food Chain

Early on as a practitioner, I learned that there was a simple solution for about half of the children that were coming to my attention through referrals: transfer the child from teacher A to teacher B within the same school or transfer the child from school X to school Y. Problem solved. Of course, few of us could ever do that so simply without significant cost, and anyone with some years of experience understands this perception. You intuitively know that every school is a separate amoeba with its own life form and DNA, as is each classroom. Understanding the climate of schools within the system, how the system operates, and being able to maximally amortize one's position within that system is an art.

Politics

Science teaches us that smoking is unhealthy and this scientific knowledge spurs legislation banning or limiting smoking. Politics has the same United States Congress passing legislation to provide significant subsidies to tobacco farmers. Science shows the negative effects of grade retention, corporal punishment, or robotic assessment, yet politics continues these practices within many school systems. School psychologists as artists understand that politics has a great influence on the degrees of freedom they have in their own school systems. Many decisions are predicated on politics and science.

(see **Science** on page 11)

(Science, continued from p. 10)

Understanding the differentiation between politics and science is an art, at whatever level of the professional food chain we are operating.

Getting Along With Yourself and Others

Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate. Attaining and maintaining solid interpersonal relationships, particularly in view of considerable philosophical differences, is an essential component of a competent school psychologist. Without interpersonal credibility within a system, the ability to influence anyone or any position markedly decreases. Knowing one's interpersonal strengths and weaknesses, having a professional and moral compass that does not stray, and genuinely valuing differing opinions and people is an art.

Sense of Perspective/Humor/History

Some school psychology work can be tedious, boring, and repetitious. This occurred to me some years ago when I realized that I could say "sign here" in twelve different languages and when I asked a child "What is the thing to do when you cut a finger than belongs to someone else?" Being able to take a long view or to find humor or growth in situations that may not be obviously humorous is a challenge. By the nature of our craft, we do not see children with long attention spans or those who are progressing marvelously well despite adverse environmental circumstances. Our gyroscope and perspective can get off kilter and negatively impact our practice. Maintaining a positive professional perspective and good sense of humor is an art.

STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATIONS AT UASP CONFERENCE

By Heidi Mathie, Graduate Student, University of Utah

Don't miss the student posters at the UASP Conference in February! UASP is introducing a new opportunity for students to be more involved in the Winter Conference as well as prepare for national conference presentations. The posters are intended to summarize research from a thesis or dissertation and to practice discussing the information with colleagues. The presenters will stand by their posters during breakfast and registration to answer questions, provide handout summaries, and dialogue with others who are interested in the content. The posters will remain up for some period throughout the conference day. So, take the opportunity to support the graduate students in school psychology and learn about their areas of research.

Knowing What Decision to Make

Making the correct decision is difficult. There is a saying that education is what is left over when we have forgotten everything that we have learned. When you have absorbed all the science and have incorporated all the scientific method into practice, there are still many professional dilemmas occurring which have no circumscribed answer. One way to clear debris from decision-making is to assume that the consequences of your decisions will be directly impacting your own child or loved one. If it were your child considered for retention, for special placement, for skipping a grade, or whatever circumstances led the referral to your door, would your recommendations be similar? The ability to personalize the consequences of recommendations and decisions is an art.

Best Practices in School Psychology, professional journals, and many other books are excellent resources for the science of the profession. When they are absorbed and integrated into understanding our profession, the science part is mastered. However, it is the art part that often proves to be the more challenging to master.

Alex Thomas is currently an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Dr. Thomas has had a distinguished career in school psychology, with 18 years of experience as a school psychologist in Port Clinton, Ohio. He has also been the president of NASP twice (1986-1987 and 1998-1999), a president of the Ohio School Psychologist Association, and is a co-editor of the seminal Best Practices in School Psychology. Dr. Thomas has also been very active in writing about trends in the profession of school psychology, and is a regular contributor to NASP's Communiqué. Much of his work includes the study and survey of demographics of school psychologists nationwide, as well as articles, such as this one, discussing the direction of the field.

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ON BEHAVIOR ... THE BEST LAID PLANS OF DOGS, RATS, AND MEN

By Robert DePaolo

Cues, contingencies ... “structure” ... these are words we’ve lived by for the past umpteen years in stumbling our way to various behavior management strategies for students in the public schools. The concept began in the early 20th century when, in his attempt to map the human brain, Ivan Pavlov decided its topography consisted of singular pathways that hooked up roughly like the old telephone systems. The maxim back then was that behavior was a function of associations and/or consequences emanating from the environment.

Though he was the forerunner of the behaviorist movement and, although his brand of behaviorism was more simplistic than the ‘operant’ school that came later, even Pavlov began to question his own thesis toward the end of his career. Unless one was conversant with Russian Psychology, this might have gone unnoticed—especially since a few years after he won the Nobel Prize, the Bolsheviks took over and limited the amount of information that came and went.

Had the world been more connected back then, behavior management might have taken a different course, all because of a research project—not nearly as well known as the one involving the bell and the salivating dog, but every bit as meaningful.

In this late-in-life initiative, Pavlov placed a dog in a cage and issued a verbal command for him to exit. Following that, one of two conditioned stimuli came on. It was either a buzzer (in which case walking across the cage would lead to a nasty shock), or a tone (which was supposed to be the “safety signal”). Pavlov figured if the dog learned to differentiate between the two, he would know when to respond to the command and when not to. According to the prevailing learning theory, this should have been a piece of cake.

Unfortunately the dog threw in a monkey wrench—he refused to come out regardless. They switched tones, buzzers, tried playing Tchaikovsky—and still nothing. That is until the dog’s caretaker—the one who fed and provided him with attention—came along. Then the sight of the caretaker inspired the dog to leave the cage.

God bless him. Ever the empiricist, Pavlov chose to give this a scientific name. He called it “the effect of person,” but he knew it wasn’t part of the classical conditioning paradigm. He had to conclude this darn dog had himself a schema! The animal evaluated the

bond he had with the caretaker and used the data-unfriendly concept of *trust*, rather than consequences or associations to guide his behavior.

Following that, and once again within the clandestine information climate that was the USSR, a group of Pavlov’s disciples started working on this interpretive process under the rubric of ‘semantic conditioning.’ It culminated in studies on human behavior indicating that we rely heavily on what they called a “second signal system” (i.e. language and affective appraisals) and much less on the environment than was presumed.

“...the fact is, we’re still using the language of the 1940s when it comes to behavior management.”

Had that been known in broader circles, cognitive, behavioral, and affective psychology might have been fused into a unified theory of behavior, analogous to Einstein’s Unified Field Theory in physics. All of us would have been taught in grad school that there is no essential difference between Pavlov and Piaget, and that behavior management (and perhaps teaching in general) are not about structure, nor strictly about information. They are guided by the learner’s interpretation—that unless we reach the “I” we don’t reach the kid. We would have known that saying “Good job!” to a student has no impact unless he chooses to interpret the compliment as something he needs and respects. That means the *source* of the feedback becomes as important as its mechanics or schedule of delivery. That in turn leads to a more modern, post-Skinnerian maxim (still more in the purview of primatologists than psychologists) that the larger the brain, the more social

(see **Plans** on page 13)

(Plans, continued from page 12)

the animal, and the more reliant he is on imitation, language, interaction, and perceived nurturance to find his behavioral bearings.

Had Skinner not come along and demonstrated to the world that pigeons, rats and other small brained, experientially-deprived creatures could be taught to run mazes and play ping pong, behavior management methods might look quite different today. Yet he did come along, and in a time of working parents with frenetic life styles and less time for kids, a quick solution to inappropriate behavior had its appeal. That doesn't mean it was the right way or that it couldn't evolve into

something newer and better. And the fact is, we're still using the language of the 1940s when it comes to behavior management.

If we're honest about it, that's why typical behavior management programs seldom work other than in an extraordinarily controlled environment or unless a relationship or two is thrown into the mix. Maybe that's why there is always one teacher at the parent conference who will say: "Gee, I don't have any problem with him in my class." Now that's what I call a primate!

Robert DePaolo is a school psychologist in Gilmanton, and he lives in Hooksett, NH. This article was originally printed in the NH Protocol (Vol. 24, Issue 3).

JORDAN FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

By Judith Zimmerman

The Jordan Family Education Center (JFEC) is a unique counseling and educational service provided by the school psychologists and counselors in Jordan School District. Guidance Specialist staff participate in offering family counseling or teaching classes Tuesday through Thursday evenings. The center is usually housed at Copperview Elementary School. Because of recent remodeling at Copperview, the JFEC will be temporarily housed at Union Middle School (615 East 8000 South) starting in January 2007 through the end of the school year.

Any interested parent within or outside of the school district boundaries may register for classes. The classes cover various topics including parenting teens or with ADHD children, helping children and teens cope with divorce, parenting without a partner, grieving for adults and children, bullying prevention and building self esteem, building social skills for children and teens with Asperger's Syndrome, and helping kids build effective study skills.

Anger management classes for adults and students in elementary and high school, tobacco cessation for teens, and truancy school are also offered evenings. **To review a list of class offerings, please contact the JFEC at 565-7552.**



In order to be considered for counseling services, the family needs to live within the boundaries of the school district or their child needs to be enrolled in a Jordan School District school. A school psychologist, counselor, or school administrator can refer families to the JFEC for counseling. Some parents are self-referred. After the initial call is made, an intake appointment will be scheduled and the family meets with an Intake Specialist. Each case is staffed and the team determines the appropriate course of action to best help the family. This might include short-term counseling to address child centered issues at the JFEC, suggestions for specific classes, referrals back to the school for the school psychologist to evaluate or provide support, and/or suggestions to the parents regarding community resources.

The JFEC has been in operation for over twenty-five years and has helped thousands of families. It continues to be an exceptional support service for children and their families provided by Jordan School District.

INTERVIEW WITH UASP WINTER CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: W. DAVID TILLY III, PhD

By Rob Richardson

W. David Tilly III, PhD

is the current Coordinator of Assessment Services for Heartland Area Educational Association (AEA 11), a conglomeration of 87 school districts in Iowa, which serves around 130,000 students (1/4th the state's school population) in the Des Moines area. He has worked for AEA 11 for the past 15 years promoting data-based educational decision-making.

Prior to his work as Coordinator of Assessment Services for AEA 11, Dr. Tilly was a consultant for assessment, research and innovation at the Iowa Department of Education where he helped develop Iowa's Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS), which changed the way special education was conceptualized and delivered in Iowa. This involved implementing a four-tier model of service delivery in which level of need is matched with level of resources, irrespective of disability category. This model of service delivery allowed for special education funds and services to be delivered without a disability classification label. Students were found to be either eligible or not-eligible for services based on response to a series of increasingly intensive interventions occurring in conjunction with formative evaluation.

Dr. Tilly is a prolific grant writer and grant evaluator. He secured and implemented the *Data Driven Leadership Grant* from the Iowa Department of Education, a three-year grant that provides a four-day curriculum on data-based decision making for all educational administrators in Iowa. Other major grants with which he was involved in procuring include the *Iowa State Improvement Grant* (to improve instruction and data-based decision making across Iowa), *Iowa's Success 4 Grant* (for improving social emotional, and behavioral well-being of all students), and *Iowa's Special Education Effectiveness Results* (a grant to create a process of monitoring and evaluating special education students across Iowa).



In addition to his work within his state and educational agency, Dr. Tilly has engaged in a respectable amount of scholarship. He has authored or co-authored over 21 journal articles and book chapters mostly focusing on educational innovation, systems change and improving results for children. He is a frequent presenter across the country. He is a regular speaker for the annual National LD Summits, and is the main organizer and presenter for the annual Innovations conference. He will be the keynote speaker for the Utah Association of School Psychologists' winter conference, February 9th of 2007.

Dr. Tilly is a graduate of the University of Oregon's school psychology program (as is Leanne Hawken, a professor in the University of Utah's special education program) and was in the same cohort as Lora Tuesday Heathfield (a professor in the University of Utah's school psychology program and current UASP president). Dr. Tuesday Heathfield and Dr. Tilly taught a graduate course together regarding the assessment of children with severe disabilities.

Dr. Tilly is passionate about and thoroughly devoted to improving educational outcomes for all children. While being interviewed he eagerly talked about issues concerning response to intervention (RtI), system reform and data-based decision making, but seemed put off by having to answer questions about himself, his accomplishments or his curriculum vitae saying, "It is not about egos or individual accomplishments; it's all about improving outcomes for children."

Asked where the passion for his work comes from, he responded that he went into school psychology to help improve the lives of children but found it was too much about assigning students to categories and too little about improving outcomes. Finding out what works and what doesn't and then figuring out how to promote what works, is the most motivating and invigorating thing he can think of. Key to promoting what works, he says, is following the data and setting high standards for both educational professionals and children.

(see **Interview** on page 15)

“Dr. Tilly indicates that he believes that the old system of education with basically two levels of intervention—general education and special education—had gotten about as good as it could get.

It is time for a new system (RtI) that will promote better outcomes through using the best of science and data-based decision-making. In Tilly’s view, such a system will better benefit all children, those in special and general education alike; and such a system will have the flexibility to adapt to new findings from educational research and new challenges that our children may face.”

(Interview, continued from page 14)

Dr. Tilly has a very personal connection to the importance of setting high standards for low-performing students. His own daughter had difficulty learning to read. She was reading 20 words per minute at the end of second grade (an indication of a problem) and avoidant of reading. He did not just accept that maybe her talents just did not lie in reading. Recognizing the importance of reading in our society, he became active in procuring enhanced intervention services for her. By the end of fifth grade his daughter was reading at 160 words per

minute and loving recreational reading. He attributes this transformation to high expectations and providing solid educational support. Too often in our educational system, he says, students who bump into difficulties generate low expectations from the adults that surround them. Their low performance is attributed to low aptitude and instantly people start talking about accommodations. Students then tend to meet these stationary, low expectations. High expectations, says Dr. Tilly, “is the least dangerous assumption.”

He believes firmly that you should always assume that the student can perform according to high standards with the right sort of environmental supports. When you have high but reasonable standards most students will meet those expectations. To do otherwise is to “create instructional casualties.”

Dr. Tilly endorses a problem-solving model to generate and evaluate interventions. In the problem-solving model, teams of people target a problem, which is then operationalized; interventions are selected and planned, and results are monitored. Interventions are adjusted according to the data that results from monitoring. When consulting with teachers, Tilly suggests, “They should be offered a choice of scientifically validated interventions.” This promotes resilience and ownership in the interventions selected while still assuring that the selected interventions are empirically sound. While teachers do not have time to do the legwork involved in combing through educational research, they too are creative, smart people deserving of high expectations. As such they are capable of choosing from a manageable array of validated options.

Dr. Tilly indicates that he believes that the old system of education with basically two levels of intervention—general education and special education—had gotten about as good as it could get. It is time for a new system (RtI) that will promote better outcomes through using the best of science and data-based decision-making. In Tilly’s view, such a system will better benefit all children, those in special and general education alike; and such a system will have the flexibility to adapt to new findings from educational research and new challenges that our children may face. RtI is flexible, innovative, and self-correcting. It is a process that follows data rather than personalities, politics or unvalidated theories. Tilly mused, “RtI is more about evolution than revolution. It’s all about discovering how we can do better.”

Note: Information for this article was obtained from an interview with Dr. W. David Tilly at the Innovations conference in Long Beach, California, 9/23/2006.

UTAH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROFILE: THE ASHCRAFTS

By Rob Richardson

In the Ashcraft household, school psychology runs in the family. Three of five are school psychologists: Charles and Paula (married) and Annie (their daughter). There is a possibility that there will be yet another school psychologist offspring from this family—Carlie Ashcraft is graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in psychology. The University of Utah School Psychology program should fire up its recruiting engines on this one. The third Ashcraft daughter, Beth, is a physical therapist and thus is out of reach for now. However, she may just be a little slow in discovering her true destiny!

This profile focuses on Charles, Paula, and Annie. All are great school psychologists, yet each has her or his own unique areas of interest and approach to the profession.

CHARLES ASHCRAFT

Charles, with his steady temperament, compassionate heart, educational experience and a knack for cutting to the chase at meetings, is a great asset to the Salt Lake City school psychology staff. With a Clint-Eastwood-esque element to his delivery—quiet, calm, slightly raspy and confident—he has “made many a student’s day” through advocacy, collaboration and humane instincts. He also generates some humorous off-the-cuff ironic remarks at staff meetings, which one gets the benefit of if sitting immediately next to him. It is a pleasure to be able to write about a treasured colleague.

A former special education teacher, Charles has spent his educational career in the Salt Lake City School District. He worked in the late ‘70s, as a teacher of students with behavioral disorders at Glendale Middle School. Through the ‘80s he was employed as a resource teacher at Parkview Elementary where he was known for his highly effective teaching skills and for his unique Halloween costume. After a bit over a decade of teaching, Charles went back to school to get recertified in school psychology, 1990-91, while simultaneously working as a resource teacher at Lowell Elementary.

As a school psychologist, Charles has worked with all age groups over the past 15 years. He began with Headstart preschoolers, and then moved on to elementary students for a decade or so. For the past 3 or 4 years, he has worked at the secondary level with Northwest & Glendale Middle schools, West High School and Columbus Community Center (for individuals 18 to 21 years of age). Recently, he tested a high school student that he had tested as a preschooler. He expresses enjoyment in following students through their educational career. (He plans to retire before developing a geriatric specialty.)

He feels passionately about team collaboration with consensus building, providing positive behavioral support (at tiers 1, 2 & 3), and most currently, supporting students with disabilities in the transition between high school and employment.

Confronted with a thorny issue, first thing Charles typically says is, “let’s find out who the key players are and set up a team meeting.” He claims he learned long ago that “you can’t do it alone even if you have a great idea.” “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink,” he says. Everyone brings their own perspective to the table, the administrator, the parent, the teacher, and the psychologist. You can’t do much until you have consensus on what the important issues are and what to do about them. Ability to get people to the table has been a primary skill for working in school psychology at any age level. Charles has got this one down.

For the past three years, Charles has been working on transitions from high school to employment and independence. He believes this to be neglected area in school psychology professional literature. School psychologists need more specialized tools for assessments for young adults with disabilities that translate into plans for adult employment opportunities and independents. “After all”, he says, “isn’t that one of the major aims of the whole special education process—developing individuals who are able to live independently with meaningful and satisfying employment?” In his view, key to making good transition plans is keeping parents and students informed and getting the right people around the table. From there it’s just a matter of good

(see **Profile** on page 17)

(Profile, continued from p. 16)

consulting skills and knowing about available resources.

A long time UASP member, Charles keeps renewing to keep up with our constantly evolving field: UASP provides “great conferences and local school psychology news (such as *Legislatively Speaking* by Dan Olympia) from the UASP Observer.”

PAULA ASHCRAFT

Paula has been a school psychologist in the Jordan School district for the past five years and engages in her duties with passion, energy and creativity. Her current position involves lots of juggling of roles and responsibilities but she claims to enjoy the variety and the challenge found therein. She runs counseling groups (on topics such as divorce, conflict resolution, grief, and anger management), counsels individuals, teaches evening classes in the Jordan Family Center, does psycho-educational evaluations, develops individual behavior plans, and is heavily involved with behavior initiatives at the school level. In addition to all this she and Dr. Julie Bowen have managed to develop an anti-bullying program 15 Minute Bully Blockers, which is beginning to be exported to other schools around the valley. Key to being a good psychologist with such a heavy and diverse schedule is prioritizing. “You need to find out what the perceived needs of the school are and go from there”, says Paula. “There is never enough time or resources”, she says, “you just need to do the best you can with what you have.”

Paula began her career as a speech-language pathologist (which she did for seven years). During a



The Ashcrafts: Charles and Paula (front row); Annie, Beth, and Carlie (back row, left to right)

three-year period in which she took off work to raise a family, she took classes at the University of Utah and was recertified in special education. As a special education teacher, she was employed as a cluster leader for the Jordan District Emotional Disturbance Program, a resource teacher and a behavior specialist. About seven years ago, she furthered her education by going back to the University of Utah to become a certified school psychologist.

While working together at Cottonwood Heights Elementary School, Paula Ashcraft and Dr. Julie Bowen collaborated to create the 15 Minute Bully Blockers Program and it has been an ongoing project over the last four years. The aim the program is to reduce bullying behavior, improve school climate and increase self-empowerment of students. 15 Minute Bully Blockers can be used in small groups, individual classrooms, grade levels or school-wide. Paula has been implementing

the program school-wide for the past three years at East Midvale Elementary school. The program consists of six units with eight 10 to 15 minute lessons. Every Friday an announcement is made about what the theme for the following week will be. Themes include such things as learning what bullying is, friendship skills, tolerance for diversity, conflict resolution, confidence builders, and handling bullies. Lessons include cooperative activities, children’s literature, writing assignments, and opportunities to practice skills.

Paula is involved with several other school-wide behavioral initiatives at East Midvale Elementary, including the Principals 200 Club (to reinforce appropriate behaviors) and Think Time (to reduce inappropriate behaviors).

The Principals 200 Club involves catching students being good.

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(Profile, continued from p. 17)

Teachers receive 3 200 Club tickets (placed in their mail boxes) that they need to give out every week. When students earn a ticket they go to the office and are allowed to draw a number. The student's name is written in a square corresponding to the number they drew on a grid of 200. Like bingo, when ten numbers in a row are drawn, the winning students are rewarded with an activity with the principal.

Activities consist in such things as carving pumpkins, Gameboy giveaway (which were donated to the school) and ice-cream Sunday parties. Pictures of the activities are posted in the hall to increase awareness and motivation.

Paula has been implementing Think Time for the past 5 years. Think Time is a discipline strategy for disruptive behavior. Every classroom in the school has a Think Time area. When a student is disruptive, the student's teacher hands him a yellow hall pass and requests that they go to Think Time. The student stands in doorway of the cooperating teacher and waits until invited in. Once invited in, the student sits quietly in the think time area until the teacher is able to talk with them. The student is then required to complete a Think Time form. The form indicates the time at which the student arrived and left. The student identifies what the inappropriate behavior was, an appropriate replacement behavior, and whether or not the student can perform the replacement behavior. If the student does not feel they can perform the replacement behavior, they must come up with another appropriate behavior that can be implemented. After completing the form the student

goes back to his/her home classroom and waits in the doorway until the home base teacher invites him/her in. If angry or frustrated, the student must wait till ready, usually no longer than 5 minutes. The classroom teacher keeps the Think Time slips, which serve as a record that can be shared with parents and analyzed to ascertain patterns. Each classroom has a monthly Think Time party. The criteria for party attendance is unknown to the students and changes weekly, so students never lose incentive to reduce the number Think Times they get. Those with too many cards attend study hall instead of the party. Paula indicates that about 5% of students don't respond to Think Time. These students require more intensive individual behavior plans.

Asked about what she likes best about being a school psychologist, Paula responds,

"Seeing success with a student. Seeing that you have made a difference. That's the best part. It doesn't happen every day, but just giving kids tools to manage life and seeing them use those tools is fantastic."

Paula indicates that she is a member of UASP because she appreciates the collegiality, networking, support and exchange of information and ideas. She says she appreciates the quality of the conferences that UASP presents. Besides she says, "it's good family time. I get to have lunch with my husband and daughter."

ANNIE ASHCRAFT

Annie is working on her Ph.D. in school psychology at the University of Utah. Annie had not intended on becoming a school psychologist but her interests and

circumstances conspired against her. While an undergraduate at Utah State, she found psychology classes most interesting so she ended up with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Upon graduation, it seemed natural to pursue a graduate degree in school psychology because of her interest in helping children experiencing difficulties who might not have the luxury of being able to be served in a clinical setting.

Annie has a particular interest in autism. She has worked at the University of Utah as a research assistant for the Utah Autism Research Program for the past one-and-a-half years. She has enjoyed working with a variety of ages (3 to adult). Her Thesis concerns studying eye tracking of individuals with autism while they are reading to determine whether or not they use context in the same way that typically developing individuals do. She is almost finished collecting data.

Annie had a practicum last year at the psycho-educational clinic at the University of Utah, a practicum this past fall with Alicia Hoerner in Salt Lake City, and will have another practicum in Jordan School District this coming semester. Upon graduation she plans on working in public schools for a while. Unfortunately for us, Utah will not be the beneficiary of her skills. She is getting married in August and will be moving to Colorado for her internship and first school psychology job.

Annie indicates that what she likes most about school psychology are "the moments when you apply the information that you learned and help people. That is the most exciting part of school psychology.

(see Profile on page 19)

IMPLEMENTING RTI

The Danger of Response to Intervention to School Psychology: Why We Shouldn't Be Afraid

By Randy Allison, NCSP & Kristi Upham

Heartland Area Education Agency began a process of change in the late 1980s to early 90s with the adoption of a problem solving process for addressing student learning concerns. At the time Heartland employed 32 school psychologists. This was new territory for the field of school psychology in general and certainly uncharted waters for school psychologists at Heartland. As problem solving was being operationalized, many concerns surfaced among support staff at large but especially in the ranks of school psychologists. Specifically, school psychologists had questions about job security, professional devaluation, redefinition of job focus, specialization of roles, and identity. Over the last 15 years Heartland has continued to develop the problem solving process at the individual level while expanding it to the system level. With this metamorphosis has come the redesign of school psychology. Interestingly, as federal policy now embraces the same practices we have worked for years to master (many of which now are encompassed by the term Response to Intervention; RTI), other sites across the nation are hearing school psychologists raise the same questions as we did in the early 90s. What is it we fear in the adoption of Response to Intervention approaches?

(Profile, continued from p. 18)

It is also great fun to be creative and pull information together to make a plan.”

Annie is a member of UASP because she finds the annual conferences informative. She has attended all of them since starting graduate school. She says, “I like to be involved and am looking forward to being more involved in school psychology organizations when less busy.”

Annie concluded the interview by saying that she has enjoyed the school psychology program and the people she has met along the way. “I think I have made a good vocational choice.”

Fear #1: We'll Lose Our Jobs

The fear of losing your job is possibly the most humbling feeling a person can have. Yet, supporting empirically based changes in professional practice is not likely to put you in harm's way. So how did this work in Heartland? In actuality, the activities required in a data-driven system were already in the school psychologists' skill sets (e.g., assessment, consultation, data analysis, and intervention design). Adapting current knowledge and skills to new methods and processes was a very natural shift for school psychologists. In fact, once the skills and expertise of school psychologists became more commonly known across the entire educational system, the interest in and need for school psychological services boomed. In 15 years, we have not lost jobs. In fact we now employ twice as many school psychologists as we did when we started Response to Intervention practices!

Fear #2: We'll Be Devalued

The fear of having your professional practice devalued is certainly something no one wants to experience in their career. Especially when you consider the extensive training and preparation that goes into becoming a school psychologist, why would anyone jeopardize their professional credibility by giving up traditional practices for new? The answer seems to lie in the attainment of a new sense of value and a global expansion of our potential roles through diversification.

In the realm of reform and system change, our school psychologists have taken on many new roles that are predominantly extensions of prior practices and enhancements of previous training. In fact, as supervisors of school psychologists, we would argue that our school psychologists are now performing more important and diversified functions within their jobs than they ever have in the past. School psychologists are frequently the most highly trained individuals in the area of measurement, data collection, data display, and data interpretation. These are foundational skills in the current era of accountability and emphasis on outcomes. When you add to those skills school psychologists' expertise in assessment and evaluation, their ability to integrate and synthesize information, and their involvement in RTI technologies, school psychologists become priceless. School psychologists are also savvy in the understanding and interpretation of research. This ability to evaluate, integrate, understand data, and link data analysis to research-based practices is the cornerstone of data-based decision models. Finally, school psychologists are skilled in

(see **Implementing** on page 20)

(Implementing, continued from p. 19)

applying the scientific method that is so critically important to implementing RTI. School psychologists are skilled at defining problems, analyzing why they are occurring, selecting interventions to match to the concern, and evaluating their effectiveness.

Fear #3: Our Skills Will Be Minimized and We Will Lose Credibility

No one wants to become a dinosaur. Feeling like you make an important contribution is critical to a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Many seem to fear that as school psychologists become more engaged in the teaching and learning process, they will give up something that made them more viable and important in the past. The opposite seems true. Fifteen years ago, Heartland's 32 school psychologists, following traditional practice guidelines of the day, were viewed as filling very narrow roles. They conducted assessments for entitlement to special education. In fact, working with general education students without a referral was *prohibited*. There are now 60 school psychologists on staff working with *all* students across the spectrum of problems. In essence, school psychologists have expanded the range of services they provide and they have expanded the range of clients they serve. What is more important for professional credibility is that there are also school psychologists in our system who are responsible for all types of services and specialty roles. We have school psychologists in management positions at the director, coordinator, and supervisor level. There are also school psychologists in the role of staff development specialist who work directly with staff on training and developing technical skills, and trainers who work with local school districts to improve the skills of district teaching staff. Finally, there are numbers of school psychologists in specific roles and assignments such as assessment, research, curriculum alignment, early childhood, school-wide behavior supports, autism, and challenging behavior. Based on actual resource alignment it would appear that school psychologists' skills are not minimized and credibility has not decreased. In fact, school psychologists seem to be more in demand than ever before, not only working in the traditional school team context but also in administrative and specialty assignments.

Fear #4: I'm Doing Something Any Teacher Could Do

There is a common misunderstanding that focusing on instruction and learning rates are only roles for teachers. School psychologists at Heartland work in a realm where, based on our referral rates, 80% of student referrals are for academic concerns. Of those academic referrals, approximately 80% are in the area of reading. That means that approximately 20% of our referrals are for social, emotional, or behavioral concerns. It is also well known that a large number of behavioral issues are rooted in or maintained by academic deficiency. Given these referral patterns, it only makes sense that school psychologists be attuned to the analysis and intervention of these educationally relevant issues. To minimize the importance of instructional and learning issues would seem to beg the question of the school psychologist's relevance.

School psychologists' skills enhance the skills of teachers. Through consultation, school psychologists can elicit well-defined problems from myriad concerns. They can help analyze "probable cause" through the evaluation of existing information and the generation of well-targeted questions that need to be answered. School psychologists can help teachers understand, consider, and implement meaningful interventions targeted to meet individual student needs. And finally, school psychologists have the ability to help teachers collect and analyze data regarding the impact of their instruction. In short, school psychologists are not doing *what* teachers do, rather we *support and enhance* what teachers do.

Fear #5: Others Will Be Able to Do Our Job

Probably the best way to ensure the validity of this fear is to either provide services that schools don't want or to provide services that do not positively contribute to student learning. Providing only services that others cannot provide is not the purpose of our existence. How school psychologists *add* value to the system and bring out the best in others will define our unique roles in schools.

Schools are literally begging for help and support to meet their accountability needs. Schools need to become more astute in the science of aligning curriculum materials and instruction to established standards and benchmarks. They need support in the assessment and measurement of skill acquisition both

(see **Implementing** on page 21)

“To paraphrase Darwin, it is not the strongest who survive, but the most adaptable. The extinction of school psychology most likely would occur out of the fear of embracing change.”

(Implementing, continued from page 20)

formatively to inform instruction and summatively to ensure that goals are achieved. Schools need guidance in diagnostically analyzing probable causes for individual and system level concerns as well as guidance in matching research-based practices to the analysis of results to increase the probability of success. In our experience at Heartland, school psychologists have successfully incorporated these skills into their repertoire to effectively meet schools' needs. As our schools have broadened their scope of practice and have increased their efforts to improve the academic and social/behavioral learning of all students, the demand for school psychologists has grown commensurately. Over the last fifteen years our school psychologists have faced a bigger problem in meeting all the needs that schools have referred than worrying that others will consume their jobs. In fact, keeping up with demands for service and keeping a manageable perimeter on the services we provide has been a more frequently discussed issue.

Extinction and Fear of Change

To summarize, in looking at the roles our school psychologists have assumed over the last fifteen years in Heartland, there is no evidence that school psychologists have jeopardized their value, stature, or role. To the contrary, school psychologists have thrived within the opportunity afforded by an expanded role. It seems that if there is anything school psychologists should fear of potential changes in practice, it would be extinction. To paraphrase Darwin, it is not the strongest who survive,

but the most adaptable. The extinction of school psychology most likely would occur out of the fear of embracing change.

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EVALUATING INTERVENTION OUTCOMES

Evaluating Evidence-Based Practice in Response-to-Intervention Systems

By Martin J Ikeda, Alecia Rahn-Blakeslee, Bradley C. Niebling, Randy Allison, NCSP, & James Stumme

Motivational speakers often illustratively declare that the Chinese symbol, “Wei-ji” is made up of 2 characters, danger and opportunity.¹ The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425) and the 2004 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sect. 1400 et seq.) present school psychologists with situations they can view as dangerous as opportunity.

A primary debate point, in particular as related to IDEA, is around Response to Intervention (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Tilly, Rahn-Blakeslee, Grimes, Gruba, Allison, Stumme et al., 2005)). There are those who believe RTI is under-researched (Fuchs et al., 2003; Hale, Naglieri, Kaufman, & Kavale, 2004), and an example of policy preceding practice. There are others who purport that, in the absence of evidence of effectiveness and efficiency of current practices for identification of learning disabilities (Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002; President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002), large-scale implementation of alternative practices for the betterment of students is not only defensible but acceptable (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2005; Tilly et al., 2005).

Regardless of one’s perspective, policies around implementation of RTI are likely to surface within state and local education agencies as soon as the federal regulations are finalized. Through this change

in policy, research and practice needs will evolve as well. University-based professionals will have the task of engaging in more experimental research around effective assessment and intervention, particularly within an RTI framework. Field-based professionals have the task of demonstrating that RTI practices result in meaningful outcomes for children and families. Perhaps, as never before seen in education and psychology, RTI presents an opportunity for these disciplines to truly integrate the rhetoric of bridging science and practice, espoused since 1949 (Raimy, 1950).

An important aspect of bridging the science-and-practice gap is to identify core questions and issues generated from both research and applied practice. It is our goal is to discuss some of these important questions and issues around evaluating the impact of educational and psychological practices as they occur within an RTI framework, principally the role of school psychologists in RTI systems. Issues that are of particular interest in this discussion are: (a) the role of school psychologist as a scientist-practitioner, (b) applying a scientist-practitioner framework to RTI practices, and (c) promoting socially relevant outcomes.

School Psychologists as Scientist-Practitioners

Understanding that school psychologists serve as scientist-practitioners is critical, because the translation of RTI principles to

school-based applications will change school psychological practice. Since the 1950s, the scientist-practitioner model has been promoted and adhered to by psychology training programs (Raimy, 1950); however, both psychology and school psychology have yet to fully integrate science and practice (Stoner & Green, 1992).

As summarized by Stoner and Green (1992), a well-functioning scientist-practitioner model would result in: (a) psychological services provided by professionals with research orientations and skills, (b) experimental research informing professional practice, and (c) psychologists integrating research and practice to impact important social issues.

Perhaps by embracing our different roles in the process of improving school psychological services, we can all improve our contributions to those services. One important difference in understanding and implementing RTI may be that university-based school psychologists could engage in more ongoing conversations and work with school-based practitioners to inform future work and dissemination. At the same time, school-based practitioners could spend more time better articulating the important concerns and issues that they face in applied settings, and collaborating with university-based professionals to solve those problems. In other words, instead of professionals in both settings talking about the need to bridge the research-to-

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(Evaluating, continued from page 22)

practice gap, we could all spend more time building that bridge and meeting in the middle.

In the next section, we will outline and discuss features of an RTI system, and how each of these features plays a role in impacting social outcomes. There are two areas of foci. First, all efforts should have positive impact on socially relevant outcomes for all students. Second, the scientist-practitioner framework has great potential for evaluating the efficacy and effectiveness of school psychological services in general, and the efficacy and effectiveness of RTI systems in particular.

Features of an RTI System

In order to evaluate practices within an RTI system, as well as the overall impact of an RTI system on student outcomes, it is important to have a common understanding of the core components of an RTI system. We propose and have used an RTI model that addresses four essential questions. First, what screening measures can be used to judge pervasiveness of problems across students? Second, what diagnostic measures can identify what problems are exhibited by what students? Third, what research-based practices can be applied to solve the problem? Fourth, how can student progress be measured to effect appropriate changes to programming?

Screening Decisions

Screening involves the collection of assessment information for all students in order to make judgments about skills and performance relative to peers or expectations. At a systems level, screening answers the question, “is it a group problem or an individual problem?” The data in Figure 1 are illustrative of the scenario in which problems are widespread, and in which class-wide interventions may be warranted. The data in Figure 2 illustrate the scenario in which more individualized interventions may be warranted.

While such data and graphs can be helpful, this type of information is not always available to researchers

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Figure 1. Data indicative of class-wide problem in which group intervention may be warranted

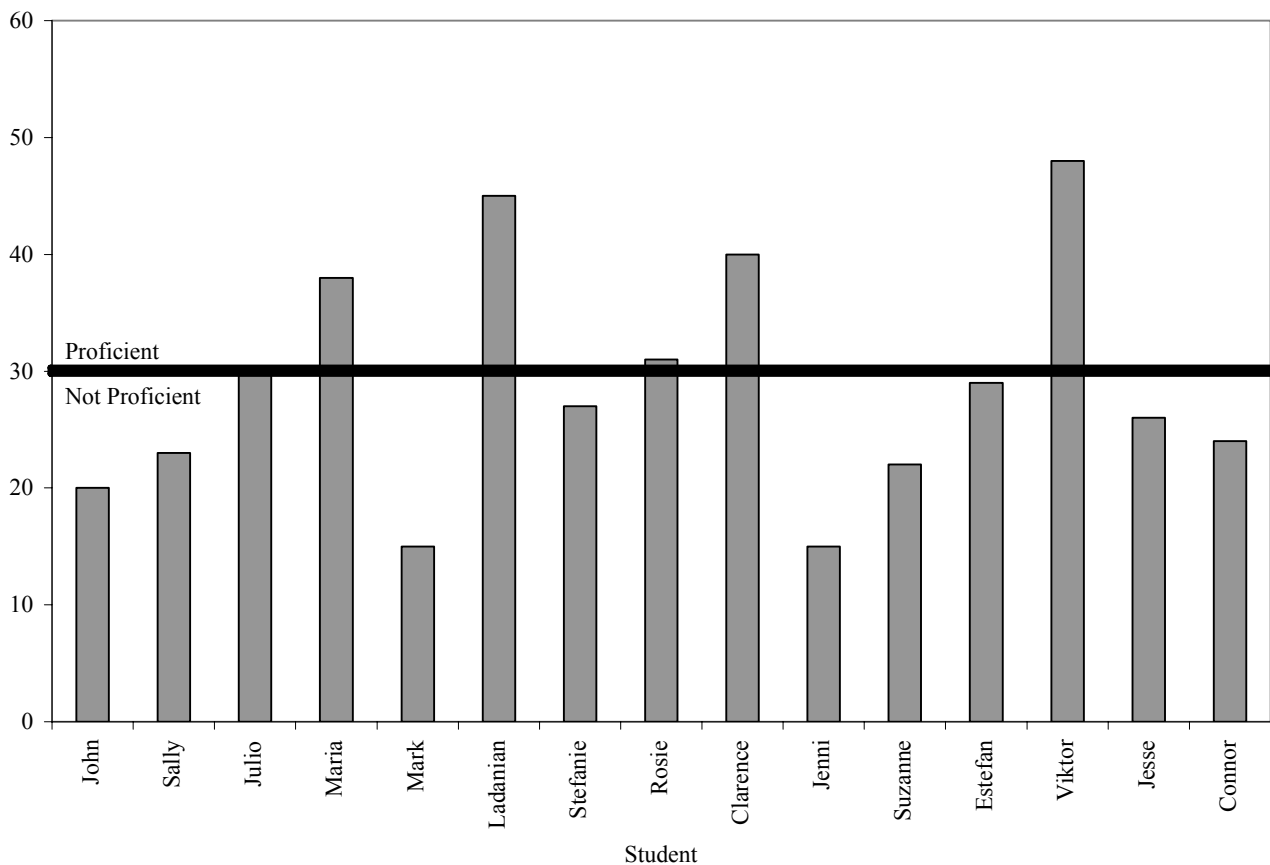
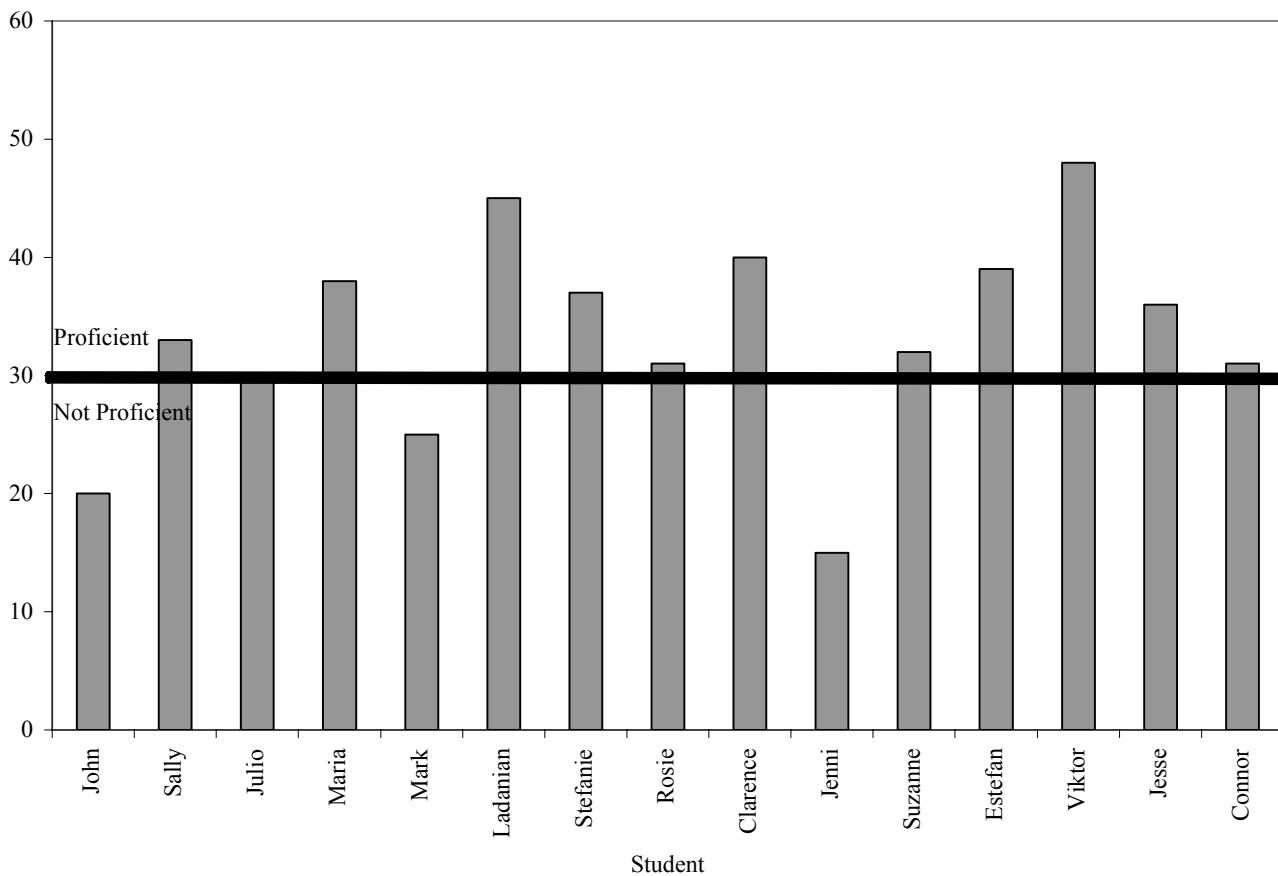


Figure 2. Data indicative of individual problem in which individual intervention is warranted



The authors would like to thank Joe Witt for sharing the format depicted in Figures 1 and 2

(Evaluating, continued from page 23)

or practitioners. Working as a scientist-practitioner, the school psychologist typically investigates whether a teacher report of student problem is more like the situation in Figure 1 or more like the situation in Figure 2. However, unless using an RTI system, this investigation often occurs without the benefit of the type of data presented in Figures 1 and 2. Research has taught us that students referred by teachers tend to have problems (VanDerHeyden et al., 2003). As scientist-practitioners in any setting, we strive to collect this type of information and to continue

developing better ways of summarizing, analyzing, and using these data to benefit all students.

In Figures 1 and 2, the vertical bars represent individual student performance. The “proficient” line is drawn on the y-axis. Students whose performance is adequate perform at or above the proficient line. Using widely available spreadsheet and graphing tools, school psychologists can easily create graphs such as those depicted in Figures 1 and 2. Graphically summarizing screening data can assist the scientist-practitioner in evaluating not only the performance of individual students, but the services delivered to all students,

either before or after instructional changes are made.

Because so many children in the classroom depicted in Figure 1 are not proficient, it would be inefficient to rely on teacher referral of individual students as a means of identifying students needing supplemental resources. It would also be inappropriate to expect special education to harbor such large numbers of what look to be curricular casualties. Instead, the school psychologist and school administration need to discuss what enhancements can be made to the core curriculum to improve achievement for all learners.

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In Figure 2, if the teacher expresses concern about “Mark,” the school psychologist would follow-up to understand why such concerns were not raised with “John” or “Jenni.”

Measures that have proven adequate for such large-scale screening share similar characteristics: (a) reliabilities of .80 or higher (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1997), (b) efficient administration and scoring (short time frames), (c) sufficient parallel forms to allow for repeated administration, and (d) links to the standards and benchmarks of a given school system. For example, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Good, Gruba, & Kaminski, 2002) and Curriculum-based Measures (CBM) (Shinn, 1989, 1995) have demonstrated utility for use as screening measures. In the area of behavior, office referrals (Sugai & Horner, 2002; March & Horner, 2002) have demonstrated utility for determining overall health of the behavioral system. For areas like math, writing, and science, the technology for screening is not well developed, although our experience working with schools suggests that results from district-wide assessments, although given only one time per year, can be used in screening.

If one can accept the argument that having effective core instruction in all academic areas and in behavior is the first step for implementing and evaluating an RTI model, then screening data become the first set of outcome data used to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of a core program. The question of interest is typically, “is our current curriculum and instruction

resulting in high levels of learning for at least 80% of our students?” If the answer is no, instructional enhancement to core programming is needed. When the answer is yes, the school psychologist and others in the educational system are able to make more defensible evaluative decisions not only about the overall functioning of services delivered within an RTI system, but also about the need for more individualized resource allocation.

“...screening data collected for all students in the system are necessary for that system to function adequately.”

In our experience in school systems in which core instruction is overlooked, there are three sources of danger. First, too many students are identified as having disabilities. Special education is used to mask general education problems, and problems like overrepresentation can occur. Second, services tend to be fragmented: general education does one thing, special education does another thing, talented and gifted does another thing, and Title I does another thing. Fragmented resources create confusion and do not promote student achievement. Third, when characteristics of children are regarded as the cause of the problem (e.g., poverty, lack

of parental support), teachers are not motivated to change instruction.

These dangers pose a real threat to the outcomes for all students in such a system. Without adequate screening data, the system will typically rely on teacher referral to access supports for student improvement. Without good screening data, these systems not only lack adequate information to ensure appropriate instructional decision making, but also lack adequate measures to evaluate the impact of any changes in practice that might occur. Therefore, screening data collected for all students in the system are necessary for that system to function adequately.

Diagnostic Decision Making

After screening, psychologists working as scientist-practitioners need to be effective diagnosticians. Scholarly writings from scientist-practitioners in university-based settings are most prevalent in the areas of reading and behavior (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2002) although the logic set can be applied to math, science, writing, and other areas as well.

In diagnosing problems after initial screening, a framework using five “big ideas” in reading is helpful: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). By gathering data on all students in all relevant “big idea” areas, the school psychologist and others in the school can start asking questions such as, “which subset of students are how far below criteria in what important learning areas?”

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By asking such questions, the school team can start to align the research base on effective instruction with the learning needs demonstrated by students. If students are highly deficient in phonemic awareness, the school team will search for evidence-based practices with large effect size for phonemic awareness.

Research-Based Practices

Teachers are using what they believe to be their most effective teaching tools (Carnine, 1992). However, this perception and effort does not always translate to employing research-based practices in the classroom. School psychologists, with their knowledge base in assessment and research (Stoner & Green, 1992), are vital supports to school staff in evaluating research and on judging effective versus ineffective practice.

School psychologists provide leadership to schools by helping differentiate the professional practice literature (e.g., the *Communiqué*) from research publications (e.g., *School Psychology Review*). School psychologists also help school personnel understand the difference between research-based practices (e.g., practices supported by a body of studies with similar effect on student achievement) versus someone’s *opinion* of what the professional literature suggests about a topic (e.g., a publication that is void of data, or is merely a comprehensive literature review around a topic).

Once school psychologists have helped instructional staff target students for specific instruction, and have identified the research-

backed strategy for implementation, it is important to recognize that (a) teachers need to implement the instruction in a manner that is similar to how it was validated in research, and (b) student progress as a result of differentiated instruction should be monitored to evaluate the impact of instruction on student learning.

It is in the area of research-based practices that university-based professionals and school-based professionals can come together in a mutually beneficial way to promote better practices in research and school applications. It is imperative that information collected from practice informs future research, and that we continue to disseminate information from research in a manner that has high utility for school-based practitioners.

Monitoring Implementation

An important aspect of effective RTI practice involves the evaluation of impact these practices have on student learning. In addition, we must determine the degree to which research-based practices are implemented as designed. Instructional leaders from within the district can facilitate this support by deciding the method best suited for implementation monitoring in local settings. These methods include (a) walk-throughs or other structured observations, (b) implementation checklists, or (c) portfolio samples. These methods, along with others, have been proposed through the professional literature as reasonable strategies for monitoring implementation (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). Specific to consultation on problems related to an RTI framework, Noell and colleagues (2005) reported that

performance feedback to teachers, throughout the intervention, resulted in high levels of treatment integrity. Clearly, since RTI systems rely on research-based interventions implemented with high fidelity for making educational decisions, school psychologists should play a central role in helping schools monitor the implementation of their practices.

Monitoring Student Progress

With our background in assessment, school psychologists should provide leadership to schools implementing RTI in the area of progress monitoring. This support can take multiple forms. For example, for groups of students, the school psychologist can assist school systems by teaching someone at the school how to put achievement information into tables, so that teachers can monitor effects of instruction. A table need not be complicated. Factors that are important but that do not change include student name, desired performance level, and students’ benchmark performance over time. Inferences and actions taken based on the data can also be put into a table. For example, “...move to supplemental group 3X/week” might be an action logged within a class-wide progress monitoring table, as might be “...transition back to core instruction.”

The scientist-practitioner can also analyze data displayed in tables and graphs to interpret effects of instructional planning for individual students for whom more specialized interventions are implemented. Individualized instruction can be provided as: (a) part of the intensive services provided through general education resource alignment in

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RTI, (b) part of the special education entitlement process to answer the question, “are the instructional resources needed to solve the problem specialized enough to warrant protections under IDEA?”, or (c) the specialized instruction of an already entitled student.

In the professional literature, evaluating individual student progress to determine if instruction is having the desired effect is called *formative assessment* or *formative evaluation* (Black & William, 1998; Deno, 1985; Fuchs and Fuchs, 1986). The important characteristics of formative evaluation are: (a) data depicted on a graph, (b) use of equal interval scales, (c) performance plotted against an ambitious goal

line, (d) making instructional changes by following data decision rules. With No Child Left Behind, one way to define an ambitious goal line is to use grade-appropriate expectations. District CBM norms can be used to help define reasonable fluency rates for Fall, Winter, or Spring. Fuchs (2002) provides a framework for writing ambitious goals using CBM.

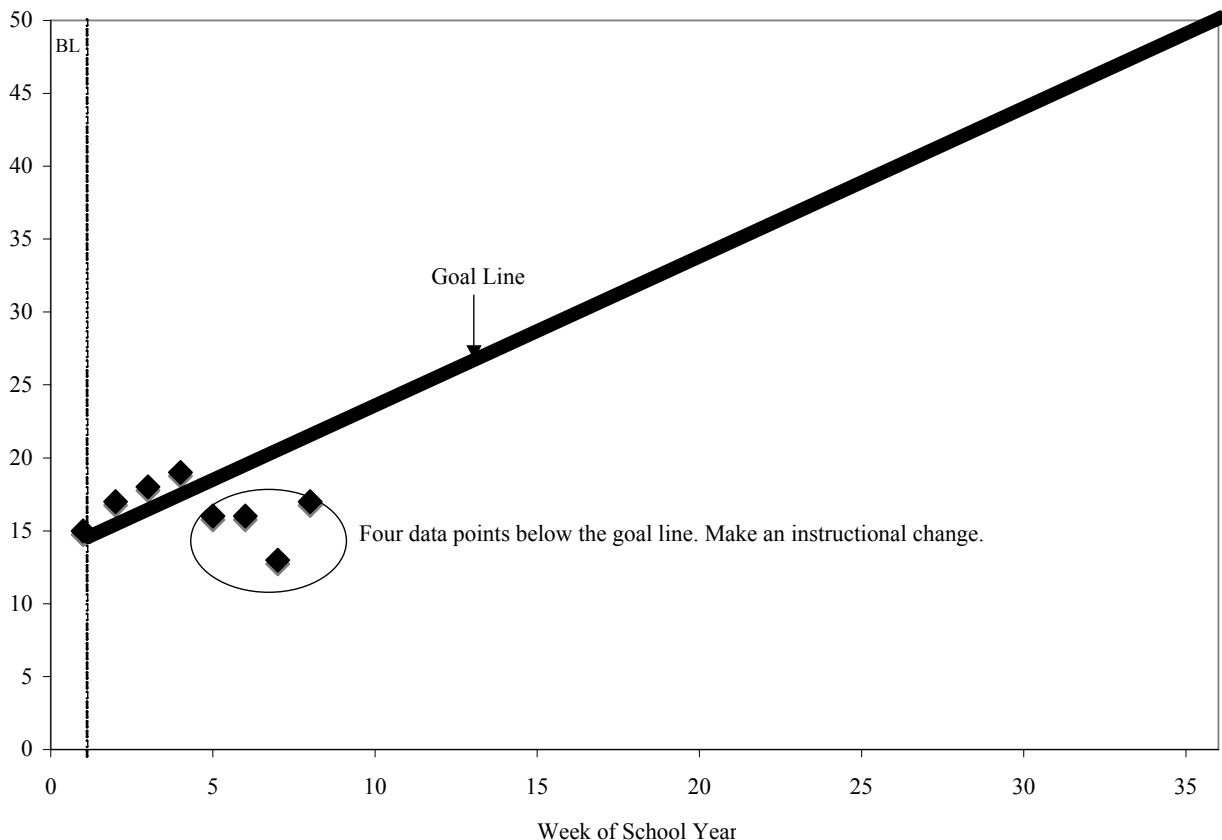
The data on formative evaluation are clear: for students whose teachers monitor progress and modify instruction based on data, achievement goes up an average effect size of .7 (Black & William, 1998; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986). An effect of .7 would raise math achievement among U.S. students from “average” to within the top five in the world (Black & William, 1998). When combined with reinforcement of goal attainment,

formative evaluation results in effect sizes of *over one standard deviation* (enough to raise achievement from the 16th- to the 50th percentile) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986).

Figure 3 is an example of monitoring student performance using CBM math probes. In Figure 3, four consecutive data points fall below the goal line. In this scenario, the decision would likely be, “make an instructional change” by (a) altering the difficulty level of the material being presented, (b) increasing the engagement within materials in which the child can be successful, or (c) changing the reinforcer for fluent performance. This process is at the heart of what RTI is all about: using data to make instructional decisions about how

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Figure 3. Formative assessment data indicative of need for instructional change



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to best meet the needs of students. When teachers use data decision rules to change instruction, student achievement increases (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Hamlett, 1989).

Another Examination of Social Validity

Recently, Myers and Sylvester (2006) discussed the concept of examining effects of qualitative research from a *social validity* perspective. Myers and Sylvester (2006) purported that effective practitioners would investigate the goal acceptability, treatment acceptability, and goal outcomes of their work. Social validity is a concept developed in the behavior analytic literature (Wolf, 1978), and challenges scientist-practitioners to evaluate the nobility of the goals of the intervention, to examine the social acceptability of the procedures used in treatment, and to examine the social impact of the procedures.

The scientist-practitioner in an RTI model strives for three outcomes. First, the goal of the treatment is to allow every child a floor of opportunity to access the important life function of learning. Second, the methods used to promote skill acquisition (a) reside within the system, (b) reside within the hands of caring educators, and (c) focus on strategies that directly target skill deficits. The social impact of the procedures is that all students receive instructional changes when they are not progressing toward goals identified as important by the state or district.

Conclusions

An effective RTI system has four components: (a) efficient, direct

measures of student performance to screen magnitude of problems, (b) diagnostic measures that identify areas in need of further academic skills instruction, (c) research-supported strategies implemented with integrity, and (d) continual assessment of student performance against ambitious standards.

In an RTI system, school psychologists need instructional and behavioral consultation skills. Data management, setting up effective instruction based on skill deficits rather than on diagnosis, and making decisions about when instructional changes need to occur become the cornerstone skills upon which school systems rely. Relevant questions asked at all levels of the system target not only resource allocation, but also instructional effect. By blending the best of science into practice, school psychologists become vital partners in ensuring that children of America have a floor of opportunity to access life, liberty, and happiness. For us, RTI represents not danger, but rather, *opportunity*.

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Footnote

¹ Roughly translated, Wei-ji means "precarious moment," more in-line with "crisis" than any kind of paradox (see: www.straightdope.com/columns/001103.html).

© 2006, National Association of School Psychologists. Use of this material is by permission of the publisher. www.nasponline.org. Martin J. Ikeda, PhD, is Coordinator of Special Projects; Alecia Rahn-Blakeslee, Ph.D, is a Research/Evaluation Practitioner; Bradley C. Niebling, PhD, is a School Psychologist and a Curriculum/Standards Alignment Specialist; Randy Allison, NCSP, is Coordinator of System Supports for Educational Results, and James Stumme, Ed.D, is Associate Administrator/Director of Special Education at Heartland Area Education Agency 11, Johnston, IA. Each is involved in systems-level efforts to improve students' educational outcomes using efficient practices.

RTI: A QUICK OVERVIEW & LIST OF USEFUL WEB-BASED RESOURCES

By Dr. Kevin Feldman

Response to Intervention “RtI” is a national movement designed to accomplish three important goals; 1) insure every single student in need of literacy support/intervention receives high quality - research based instruction, regardless of label, age, etc., as soon as the need is detected – usually in K-1, 2) provide educators the progress monitoring tools to insure teachers are making data-based decisions in terms of the interventions being utilized, adjusting interventions based on the data, and lastly 3) provide a more practical and scientifically defensible method of qualifying students as learning disabled and eligible for special education services based on their *response* to the interventions being provided. In other words, lack of adequate response to intervention after systematically providing research based interventions for a significant amount of time becomes qualifies a student for special education services. The interventions themselves become the “test” for eligibility. There are an array of resources both local, regional, and nationally available to support schools interested in exploring RtI, a list of some of the most useful links are listed below;

Web Based RtI Resources

√ **CalSTAT – *Special Edge*, Winter 2006 Response to Intervention: Overview**

This is a very readable introduction to RtI that provides an excellent beginning point – the “who/what/why/how” of RtI: <http://www.calstat.org/specialEdgeOld.html>

√ **International Reading Association**

The IRA site has wide range of RtI related information, from overview and position papers to scholarly papers in their flagship journal, Reading Research Quarterly: http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus_rti.html

For more detailed articles from RRQ see:

<http://www.reading.org/publications/journals/rrq/v41/i1/>

All of the articles are good, the Fuchs & Fuchs and Gersten & Dimino are particularly helpful.

√ **National Association of School Psychologists**

<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq325instruction.html>

√ **RtI Partnership sponsored by Univ. of Calif. Riverside & Dr. Mike Vanderwood**

A fascinating project and many useful web links and such, see: <http://www.rti.ucr.edu/>

√ **National Association of State Directors of Special Education**

A website loaded with practical tools, downloadable articles, ppts, and more, see: <http://www.nasdse.org/projects.cfm>

√ **Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center**

Another good site for a wide array of RtI resources, tools and such. See: <http://www.nwrel.org/nwrcc/nclb/rti.php>

√ **National Research Center on Learning Disabilities**

Another fine resource, be sure to check out the national symposium on RtI held in 2003, excellent articles and ppts available to download.

<http://www.nrcld.org/symposium2003/index.htm>

Some bottom lines for RtI:

- 1) It is NOT a program or simply way to qualify students as SpecEd. under new regs
- 2) It is a system or framework (heuristic) for providing comprehensive school/district wide interventions based on needs - not “disability detection”.
- 3) It will not work unless the school/district is committed to:
 - √ Improving GenEd to include interventions for ALL & improved outcomes for ALL kinds of students, including ELLs, At Risk, and other diverse learners
 - √ Providing a sensitive assessment system that includes progress monitoring
 - √ Involves SpecEd as a part of the total, integrated, “seamless” system
 - √ Providing interventions to EVERY SINGLE STUDENT who needs them, based on assessed needs, NOT label or category (e.g. ELL, LD, ADHD)

(see **Resources** on page 31)

(Resources, continued from page 30)

Additional Resource to Consider

The Sonoma County Office of Education has produced a CD ROM that is a comprehensive guide to school wide intervention including Reading, Math, ELL/ELD, Science, & Social Studies. It is designed as a tool to help schools and districts coordinate, organize, and otherwise improve their systemic approach to intervention. While not about RtI per se, it is absolutely the kind of resource that would support an RtI implementation. For more information watch the website, www.scoe.org - it will be released the end of Sept. While far from perfect, it is a decent attempt to pull together resources under one "roof" organized around; Who Needs Help? (screening), What Help Do They Need (diagnostics), How Do We Provide the Help (intervention delivery), Is the Help Helping? (progress monitoring).

Dr. Feldman may be contacted at kfeldman@scoe.org or www.scoe.org/reading

FALL 2006 UASP CONFERENCE

*Conference participants discuss important matters (top).
The registration table reviews the alphabet (bottom).*



*** * * SAVE THE DATE * * ***

W. David Tilly III, PhD, is currently Coordinator of Assessment Services for Heartland AEA 11 in Iowa, and has previously worked as a consultant to the Iowa Department of Education and as a school psychology trainer at Iowa State University. Dr. Tilly will address the UASP Midwinter Conference on Friday, February 9th, 2006 on the topic of *Implementing a Response to Intervention (RtI) Model*. This was the #1 preferred conference topic selected by UASP members at last year's conference! Dr. Tilly was instrumental in facilitating the systemic changes necessary to develop a workable RtI Model for special education service delivery that has been in effect in Iowa for over 15 years. This is an especially timely topic given the new changes in IDEIA and the national movement toward implementation of an RtI model of service delivery for all children.

Please plan on joining us on February 9th, 2006! Also plan on encouraging your colleagues in special education, general education, and administration to attend as this topic truly involves interdisciplinary participation in order to help all children succeed in school!

Additional information available online:
www.utahschoolpsychology.org



UASP Board Members, November 2006

Starting back row, left to right: Ryan Burke, Brett Barrett, Stephen Prasad, Rob Richardson.
Second row: Ellie Young, Lorie Crandall, Fulvia Franco, Karen Kowalski, Pam Doyle, Lane Valum, Dan Olympia.
Third row: Kathy Boyer, Candace Dee, Lynn Durham, Heidi Mathie. Front row: Leah Voorhies, Lora Tuesday Heathfield.

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