

president's podium

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



Welcome back to another school year and the anticipation of another beautiful autumn in Utah! First, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to lead this organization during the coming year—knowing full well, of course, that I face enormous challenges in attempting to facilitate any improvements in such a great organization. Second, I want to acknowledge that this organization cannot function without the unwavering energy of all the Board members and general members alike, and I am greatly appreciative to all of you for your support and efforts in helping to make this organization strong. UASP is a great organization made up of dedicated professionals who share the common goal to ensure that children and their families can achieve success in school and positive mental health. Together, we can accomplish a great deal, and I hope this year brings about opportunities to ensure that will happen.

Recently, UASP Board members gave up a glorious spring Saturday in April to engage in some strategic planning for our organization. Results of the recent survey of members were discussed, and ideas for enhancing membership recruitment and improving member services were highlighted. Outreaching to school psychologists in the state who are not members is necessary in order for our organization to grow and become even stronger. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through our current members. You are the true voice of this organization and can facilitate expanding membership by sharing with non-members, membership benefits that you find particularly helpful. For example, you might consider *sharing this issue of the Observer*.

We also plan outreach efforts toward greater involvement by student members of UASP. Plans are underway to incorporate a student poster session at the annual conference; and other ideas include hosting a student and new professional social event in order to mentor new members and encourage increased involvement in UASP.

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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 Unsigned letters or articles will not be published.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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EDITORIAL CORRECTION:

In the May 2006 issue of THE OBSERVER, the author of “*Expanding the Role of School Psychologists: Building Safe and Civil Schools*” was actually **Mike Booher**, not K. Daniels as indicated. Our sincere apologies.

ELECTION RESULTS

**WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING
NEWLY-ELECTED TRUSTEES TO THE BOARD
WHO WILL SERVE A TWO-YEAR TERM
BEGINNING THIS YEAR:**

Brett Barrett
Ryan Burke
Lynn Durham
Fulvia Franco
Karen Kowalski
Pam Plant
Rob Richardson

THE OBSERVER

*Official Newsletter
of the Utah Association
of School Psychologists*

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:

Rob Richardson
(robert.richardson@slc.k12.ut.us)

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

Improving services available to members is another goal, and plans already are in place to enhance our website to include a members-only link. This link is intended to provide members with access to a consultant list as well as to relevant resources and handouts. The Board is also considering ways to implement a mini-grant application process that would provide members with access to small grant amounts that would enhance services to the children and families they serve or to conduct small scale research projects. In addition, the Board generated ideas for addressing professional issues unique to our state including professional development, salary issues, and retention. UASP plans to continue to work on these goals throughout the coming months and beyond.

I encourage you to peruse the inside cover of the Observer where UASP committees and contact information are listed. Make an effort to get involved in an issue that you are passionate about. We need the help of all members to sustain this great organization and help both the organization and our profession to grow. **I challenge all of you to make a difference this year in UASP and in the field of school psychology!**

“We need the help of all members to sustain this great organization and help both the organization and our profession to grow.”

LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING

By Dan Olympia

State & Local News:

The Utah Association of School Psychologists is again partnering with Allies for Families, the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) – Utah and the Utah Psychology Association for the purposes of disseminating accurate and timely information on a variety of topics related to mental health, educational and psychological services for children adolescents and adults with disabilities and support for families engaged in these issues. The partnership has been tentatively called “Utah Healthy Minds/Healthy Bodies Coalition”

“Ritalin” bill has more lives than a cat:

As many of you may know, advocates of the last version of the so called “Ritalin Bill” were not successful in getting the bill through the Senate in the 2006 session. It was the position of many educators, school psychologists, parents and advocates for people with disabilities that this bill was unnecessary, fraught with problem language and likely to deter open communication between parents and teachers. The bill died in a Senate Committee. While the bill (in three previous versions) has always included language stating that teachers may not recommend or require as a condition of enrollment that a child take medication, bill language has often included other issues, including the rights of children and parents under DCFS care, parental access to specific tests prior to assessment, etc. The language often attempts to place further restrictions on the practice of psychology and school psychology above and beyond those already mandated by IDEIA, FERPA and other laws.

There is some indication that proponents of this legislation are now gearing up for a 4th attempt to pass a bill for the 2007 session. They appear to be focusing particularly on Senate candidates, who may be receiving erroneous or distorted “facts” to support potential legislation. For Utah school psychologists interested in this issue or in other related issues, the Legislative Committee will be providing a short list of “talking points” you may use when contacting or meeting legislative candidates in your area. It will be important for legislators and candidates to hear from their own constituents about this specific issue, as

well as the value of early intervention for children with mental health/behavioral/learning problems and the existing protections in the law for families. The list will be available at the Sept. 29 meeting in Park City. We will also be seeking people to contact specific legislative candidates. Remember, it is critical that legislators have correct information and data when dealing with issues.

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/>.

Volunteer(s) needed:

If you are interested in working on the UASP Legislative Committee, some help is needed in updating the list-serve with new member names, etc. You should be comfortable with the internet and interested in technology. Please contact Dan Olympia (dan.olympia@ed.utah.edu) for more information. And this is something you can do from the comfort of your own home.

National News & Resources:

Some excellent information on RTI and Special Education can be found at the website of the National Education Administrators Conference on SLD determination (<http://nrclid.org/sea/index.html#>). This conference was sponsored by the National Research Center for Learning Disabilities and presented current research and thinking about topics related to responsiveness to intervention (RTI) and specific learning disability (SLD) determination procedures. For each informational session, you are able to download handouts (in PDF format) and view brief biographies of each speaker and watch video presentations of selected speakers.

There exists an excellent resource for school psychologists who want to get the latest news, information and resources on the *Individuals with*

(See **Legislatively** on page 5)

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Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA):
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>.

Topic briefs on discipline procedures, changes in IEP processes, team meetings, private schools, initial evaluations and options for states in identifying students with learning disabilities and other topics may be found along with executive summaries of changes in the law.

Visit the NASP Advocacy and Action Center and contact your congressman this summer:
<http://capwiz.com/naspweb/home/>

Statistics for 2005 indicate that only 19% of Utah NASP members used this service. Let's see if we can do better for 2006-2007. You can give feedback on *the Keeping Families Together Act, the Family Opportunity Act*, and support legislation to remedy the shortage of school psychologists or contact your elected officials and urge them to fully fund IDEIA.

The views expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not reflect formal positions of the Utah Association of School Psychologists or its members.

PEACEABLE SCHOOLS: BRINGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INTO UTAH PUBLICATION EDUCATION

By Ellie L. Young, *Brigham Young University*,
Sue A. Womack & Paul Caldarella, *Brigham Young University - Public School Partnership*

The Peaceable Schools model developed by the Brigham Young University - Public School Partnership, and led by Dean of Education Dr. K. Richard Young, relies heavily on the positive behavior support model (PBS; Sugai, & Horner, 2001). This model focuses on proactively and directly teaching social skills, creating positive, inclusive school climates in order to prevent students at-risk for behavioral and emotional problems from developing more troublesome behaviors. This article contains a description of the implementation of the Peaceable Schools model in secondary schools in Utah County, followed by examples of the model as implemented in elementary schools in local school districts.

Secondary School Settings

Positive behavioral interventions are frequently found in elementary schools and focus on establishing positive behavioral expectations

for student behavior and rewarding students for appropriate behavior. In secondary schools, the basic principles are the same: setting positive standards for behavior and reinforcing that good behavior, although the application of the principles is adapted to meet the developmental needs of middle and junior high school students. Additional application adjustments are needed because the context of a secondary setting is quite different than an elementary setting.

Our work in secondary schools has been funded by a five year federal grant, and we are just beginning our third year of implementation. The research hopes to answer two fundamental research questions. First, can we accurately and efficiently identify students in early adolescence who have behavioral or emotional problems which may get worse without intervention? Second, can we meaningfully intervene with these students to address their problem

behaviors and help them be successful in schools? The two research questions are integrally related. Screening is necessary to identify the students who need intervention, and intervention is vital in making a positive difference for at-risk youth.

We have completed three screening waves and have preliminary evidence that, through a teacher nomination process, at-risk students can be accurately identified. We have used the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD) developed by Walker and Severson (1992). Teachers were asked to nominate and rank students who display either externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggressive, defiant, hyperactive) or internalizing behaviors (e.g., non-talkative, avoidant, fearful). While the SSBD has been validated for use with elementary students, our research investigated its use with secondary students. Our data indicated that the students

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identified by teachers as at-risk for internalizing and externalizing disorders are notably different from non-identified students in the number of office discipline referrals (ODR) and GPA. Our results also show that at-risk externalizers and internalizers are significantly different groups. Additional analyses indicate that the SSBD is a promising instrument for behavioral and emotional screening in early secondary settings. Specific data analyses are available from the authors and are not presented in this manuscript because they are being submitted to another publication.

The second research question has involved implementing a PBS model with additional components at a middle school (grades six and seven) and a junior high school (grades eight and nine). Each school has a committee of teachers and administrators that focuses on developing a positive, safe, inclusive school climate. Some of the efforts have included developing school-wide rules. These rules are explicitly taught and reinforced throughout the school year. Social skills are taught weekly by general education teachers. Social skill instruction is based on the needs of the respective schools as determined by reviewing data such as office referrals, surveys, and teacher input. Students have reported that when teachers explicitly teach social skills it positively impacts their behavior. Another important component includes praise notes written by teachers to reinforce the use of social skills by students. For example, when a teacher sees a student resolving a conflict in a positive way, the teacher writes a

praise note to the student, which he or she can take home and which is also entered into a weekly drawing.

Each school also has a student "Peace Committee" that advises the teacher committee and plans service oriented activities. This is an important component of the model at the secondary level because early adolescent students are developmentally ready for contributing to their schools in meaningful ways. Additionally, they are more likely to participate when they have had an opportunity to plan and organize activities. Usually, one or two teachers help with the Peace Committee, thereby involving more teachers with students in meaningful ways.

The most intensive intervention is for those students identified through the screening process to be in need of additional interventions. These students have participated in the Achievement Plus class, a one-hour per day course that focuses on more intense exposure to social skill instruction, an emotional resiliency curriculum (Merrell, Carrizales, Feuerborn, Gueldner, & Tran, 2006), self-management training, and organizational strategies. Self-management (Young, West, Li, & Peterson, 1997) is a key component of the class and students learn to monitor not only their school-work but their behaviors as well.

Preliminary evidence indicates that the class may be more meaningful for students with internalizing behaviors. Further research and interventions need to be done to determine how to best intervene for students with externalizing behaviors.

During the upcoming school-year, further refinement of the Achievement Plus curriculum will

consider how integrating the strategies into a language arts class can best be done. More goal-setting and self-management will be included in the curriculum. School-wide interventions will continue with further adaptation to meet the specific, data-based needs of the school. For example, one school intends to teach all students about self-monitoring and has included forms in each student planner. Further work in adapting social skill instruction to meet the needs of teens will be done.

Elementary School Settings

The Peaceable Schools Elementary Project is also rooted in the positive behavior support model (PBS). While elementary schools typically have set positive behavioral expectations and have recognized students in various positive ways, school-wide discipline plans traditionally rely on reactive, punitive practices (Colvin, Kamneenui, & Sugai, 1993; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Peaceable Schools helps teachers and administrators create research-based systemic supports and proactive systematic processes to prevent and address behavioral and emotional problems.

The Peaceable Schools Elementary Project collaborates with school staff, guiding them in developing the model along the following six dimensions:

- 1) Building and implementing a proactive leadership team
- 2) Building a positive school climate of trust, respect, and courtesy between and among students and adults
- 3) Creating a safe and secure learning environment that nurtures and supports all students.

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“With these six guiding principles, each school develops the details according to the contextual elements particular to their school and community. ... [O]ur partner schools are rethinking how their present culture works.”

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- 4) Teaching students critical life skills necessary for personal accomplishment, meaningful relationships, and responsible citizenship
- 5) Establishing a school-wide discipline plan to prevent inappropriate behavior and to correct inappropriate behavior; i.e. aggression, bullying, vandalism, disruptions
- 6) Establishing a positive behavior support system for students, faculty, staff, and administrators

With these six guiding principles, each school develops the details according to the contextual elements particular to their school and community. Since “empirical evidence suggests that improved academic performance is more likely to occur within a behaviorally productive environment” (Marchant, 2004,

p. 24), our partner schools are rethinking how their present culture works.

Our project currently is being implemented in eleven elementary schools, with two additional schools who have completed their planning year and who will begin implementation in Fall 2006. Our schools are located in two districts comprised of urban, suburban and rural communities spanning a variety of socio-economic groups. The Peaceable Schools Elementary Project impacts over 8,000 students and their families, as well as the classroom practice of over 900 faculty and staff.

While each school’s PBS structure reflects the nuances of the particular school, some constants have emerged. In creating systems and policies to support the six dimensions, schools have designed school pledges, praise notes, parent communications, unified school-wide, classroom and non-classroom rules, and have chosen pertinent social skills to teach. It has also been imperative for school teams to examine the school discipline plan and revamp policies which do not support a teaching approach to discipline.

Schools have chosen to create school pledges that positively affirm the expectations for the school. Students are explicitly taught what the expectations are and how to fulfill them, but the pledge is recited frequently at school events to reinforce the principles. At several schools, their pledge is part of the daily

routine of the morning. Each school uses a ‘praise note’ to recognize pro-social behavior. Faculty, administrators, staff and, in some cases, student leaders notice students’ use of good social skills and give specific written feedback on the school’s praise note form. Faculty, parents, and students have reported that students treasure these notes and read them repeatedly. So while the notes appear to be intrinsically valuable on their own, some schools have chosen to also recognize recipients in additional ways. For example, a student may be entered in a drawing for a weekly or monthly prize; or his or her name may be entered into a principal’s special book or posted on a bulletin board.

Communicating with parents about their child’s school program is critical, but often difficult. Peaceable Schools implementers have been creative in their approaches. Many of our schools have created interactive school to home notes. In addition to describing a social skill the student is practicing at school, the note gives examples of its use outside of school and includes a parent-child activity which helps the student generalize the skill. Again, some schools have added incentives for increasing parent participation by setting a return criterion for each class in order to receive a special treat.

Schools working with this model value the building-wide consistency of language about rules and social skills they have created. Students are explicitly and systematically taught the rules of each school area, as well as a set of social skills the school team has chosen based on need. As students engage in activities in each area of

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the school, expectations are clear and do not vary from one staff member to another or from one setting to another. When a reminder or correction is administered, the student can expect to hear an empathic statement, followed by a short observation statement of what went wrong. The student will be asked to tell what they should have done and follow up by demonstrating the appropriate behavior. The transaction ends with specific positive feedback from the adult. Positive regard is maintained on both sides and students experience behavioral success.

Outcomes for students at our thirteen schools are positive. One outcome measure, the Indicator of School Quality (ISQ, Center for the School of the Future, 2002) has shown improvement in many key areas, including “Teachers, students, and staff at this school treat others with positive regard and respect”; “The school uses positive means for student cooperation”; “Students learn important social skills;” and “Students are motivated to use appropriate social skills.” Studies in our schools specifically looking at universal level treatments show strong correlations with behavior. For example, as effective praise rates increased in individual classrooms, problem behaviors decreased (Castle, et al., 2002). When bus line, cafeteria or playground issues were examined and found problematic, students were taught rules, expectations and appropriate social skills. Punishing, coercive discipline practices were replaced by teaching approaches. These measures were correlated with a

dramatic diminishing of inappropriate behaviors (Christensen, Young, Young, & Marchant, 2002; Marchant, Young, Lindberg, Fisher, & Solano, 2006).

Our strongest results are coming from our schools who have been implementing for the longest time, about five years. The majority of our schools have been implementing the model for only one and one-half years and, as anticipated, change is occurring but evidence suggests that it may take more than two years to develop effective levels of school-wide functioning (Marks & Maniates, 2003).

As we work with elementary schools on the Peaceable Schools model, our expectation is that strong, school-wide practices will be put into place and implemented before we help schools design secondary interventions. We are initially focusing on prevention for all students and bringing at-risk students into acceptable ranges of behavior through systemic change. Our model, though, is comprehensive at all three levels of PBS. Peaceable Schools is proceeding systematically toward self-sustaining school-wide processes to prevent and address problem behavior.

In conclusion, while our initial work in elementary and secondary schools has been exciting and, at times, exhausting, we have been privileged to collaborate with strong administrators and creative caring teachers. We have learned from the strengths of students who, although they have challenges, continue to come to school and try to improve. We look forward to our continued collaborations with school staff and students in Utah County. If you have further questions about our work,

please visit our website (<http://education.byu.edu/peaceableschools>) or contact the authors of this article: Secondary Schools Director Dr. Ellie L. Young (ellie_young@byu.edu), Research Coordinator Dr. Paul Caldarella (paul_caldarella@byu.edu) or Elementary Schools Project Specialist Sue Womack (sue.womack@nebo.edu).

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IMPLEMENTING RTI: ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

By John L. Hosp, NCSP

One of the primary job functions of school psychologists, of course, is assessment. As pointed out by Allison and Upah (February 2006 *Communiqué*), when implementing RTI, many school psychologists may worry about potential changes to their job role and a devaluing of their skills. In practice, most school psychologists have found that RTI actually makes greater use of their skill sets than whatever their role before. Because of its reliance on data to make decisions, RTI can enhance the need for a school

psychologist and her/his skills in a school. However, some changes in practice may be necessary and it is important for the school psychologist to be aware of these in order to help others navigate them.

Assessment Versus Evaluation

Often these terms are used interchangeably, but it can be helpful in navigating the implementation of RTI to think of how these terms are differentiated. If you think of *assessment* as the process of *collecting information*, it becomes easier to convey to teachers the need for standardization, reliability, validity, and using different assessments for different purposes. This leads to thinking about *evaluation* as the process of *using information to make decisions* (i.e., information collected through assessment). We often get caught up in the process of conducting an assessment because we had to or someone told us to do so. If we think about evaluation, it starts a dialogue about *why* we are conducting assessments. Teachers have a lot of different things to do every day. Having a reason to do something (or to not do it) can be very reinforcing as their time is valuable and at a premium. This can just be the starting point—other team members might begin to consider the purpose of their activities and find time for new by eliminating some of the old.

Making Decisions

Because making decisions is a key part of evaluation, a school psychologist can guide others to look ahead to outcomes (what would you like to see happen?) and to what needs to happen in order to get there. Thus, in addition to the assessment/evaluation skill sets, a school psychologist's consultation training is also critical. Working with others to develop observable, measurable outcomes as well as planning for the steps of implementation to get there is crucial. Within RTI, it is important to be thinking of the desired outcomes. The rule of thumb is that educational decisions should be about meeting educational goals. One of our primary tasks is to provide high quality instruction to our students (for academic, behavioral, social, vocational,

(see **Implementing**, page 10)

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Marks, S. U., & Maniates, H. (2003). Formative evaluation of professional development: How will we know success? [Electronic version]. Arizona. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED479 642.

Merrell, K. W., Carrizales, D., Feuerborn, L., Gueldner, B. A., & Tran, O. K. (2006). *Strong teens: A social and emotional learning curriculum for students in grades 9-12*. Retrieved May 31, 2006, <http://orp.uoregon.edu/publications.htm>

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Walker, H. M., & Severson, H. H. (1992). *Systematic screening for behavior disorders* (2nd ed.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Young, K. R., West, R. P., Li, L., & Peterson, L. (1997). Teaching self-management skills to students with learning and behavior problems. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 6(2), 90-96.

(**Implementing**, continued from page 9)

transitional goals, etc.). This means that assessment data should be used to make decisions that lead directly to instruction.

Direct Measures

In order for our assessment data to be used to guide instruction, we have to measure things that are important to developing, evaluating, or modifying instruction. As much as possible, we want measures that directly assess the skills we are interested in (sometimes called “low inference” measures). If we are interested in a student’s ability to read words fluently in connected text, we should select a measure that requires the student to read connected text—not one that has the student skip, put puzzles together, or copy line drawings. We want to use measures that require the least amount of inference as possible. Directly observing a student perform the task of interest is at the lowest level of inference in our assessment.

Educationally Relevant/Not Relevant

Just because a measure is direct, though, does not mean that it is *relevant* to the decision we are trying to make. Generally there are three questions that must be answered affirmatively when deciding if information is relevant:

1. Does this information align with the purpose for which I am conducting this assessment?

This takes us back to the use of direct measures. Make sure the assessment data have been validated for the purpose for which you need them.

2. Is this information about an alterable variable (or related to something alterable)?

If it is something we can not control, or does not affect our instruction, we should not spend time assessing it. We can control academic and behavioral performance; therefore these skills might be relevant to instructional decision making. Although we do not have control over a student’s visual acuity, there are accommodations we can make that are important (preferential seating, enlarged print). However, most things that we do not control do not help instructional planning (e.g., knowing how many people live in the student’s home).

3. Does this information link directly to instruction or interventions? Again, it is important to discuss validation of assessment measures.

Known/Unknown

After we have determined what is relevant or not relevant, we also need to determine whether we can obtain that information or not. Information that is relevant must be known. If we do not already have it available, we need to plan how to collect it (i.e., via assessment). Data that are not educationally relevant do not need to be collected. Including educationally irrelevant information in our decision making can mask otherwise valuable solutions or distract us from solving problems and working toward goals. As new information is gathered, it is sometimes useful to reconsider whether other pieces of information are relevant or not. Occasionally, new information makes us consider other information in a whole new light.

The RIOT/ICEL Matrix

When thinking about assessment and evaluation, it is important to remember (and help others understand) that there are different ways of collecting the information needed to make decisions—tests are not the sole method of assessment. A handy rubric that is often used is RIOT—Review, Interview, Observe, Test (see Figure 1 on page 11).

- *Review*: The first step in conducting an assessment should be to review prior records or any other type of permanent product that might be relevant.
- *Interview*: Anyone with knowledge of the student and his skills should be interviewed. This might include teachers, administrators, parents, or the student herself. Multiple perspectives and input are crucial to decision making.
- *Observe*: Sometimes we need to actually see what is occurring in a classroom or other setting. Whether to use structured or informal approaches should depend on what type of information we are looking for (i.e., relevant yet unknown).
- *Test*: This is what most people think of when we talk to them about assessment. There’s good reason—sometimes it is important to administer tests to students because it is the best way to get certain types of information.

(see **Implementing** on page 11)

(Implementing, continued from page 10)

Using the methodologies of RIOT is usually common sense for most school psychologists. However, in education, we often focus all of our assessment efforts on the student and his or her characteristics. However, there are many other things that might impact a student’s performance, yet are still alterable by educators. These other sources are sometimes called *domains* and are represented by the acronym ICEL—Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, Learner (see Figure 1).

- *Instruction:* This is what we usually think of as teaching. How content is presented to students can vary in many different ways: type of materials, grouping, opportunities to respond, etc.

- *Curriculum:* This is the content that is actually taught. Scope and sequence would be included here as well as pacing within and between topics.
- *Environment:* This means the classroom environment—things such as physical arrangement of the room, where the student sits and next to whom, lighting, noise, etc.
- *Learner:* Obviously the student himself. It is important to put the student and his performance in the broader context of the instruction, curriculum, and environment before we determine why a student is performing as he is or how to address difficulties.

(see **Implementing** on page 12)

Figure 1: The RIOT/ICEL Matrix

	R Review	I Interview	O Observe	T Test
I Instruction	Review Instruction	Interview Instruction	Observe Instruction	Test Instruction
C Curriculum	Review Curriculum	Interview Curriculum	Observe Curriculum	Test Curriculum
E Environment	Review Environment	Interview Environment	Observe Environment	Test Environment
L Learner	Review Learner	Interview Learner	Observe Learner	Test Learner

Figure courtesy of Heartland Area Education Agency 11, Johnston, Iowa.

(Implementing, continued from page 11)

Saturation

Considering the purposes for assessment and evaluation, what information is relevant, what is known or unknown, and planning assessment through the RIOT/ICEL matrix sounds like an awful lot to do. In actuality, the time required will vary from student to student and problem to problem. *Saturation* is the point at which a person or team feels that there is enough information to make an informed decision. There is no sure-fire way to identify when you have enough, but it is important to make our jobs as efficient as possible. Selecting assessment methods that are the most reliable and provide for the most valid interpretations is important to consider. Also, if there are two ways to get the same information and one takes half the time, but is less reliable, it might make more sense to use the faster procedure if time is at a premium. Using two different methods that take less time than one procedure is an even better use of time. This is another area where the training of a school psychologist becomes valuable to others in schools—helping with time management decisions. It is important to make sure that we balance the effort we put into tasks with the benefits of decision making and the desired outcomes.

A Medical Analogy

While I am usually reluctant to use medical analogies for educational issues, I think this is actually a case where it might be useful. This is how a process of assessment and evaluation in RTI could look—very similar to how doctors diagnose and treat many illnesses:

A few years ago, I saw my doctor for a routine checkup. She started off measuring my vital signs—weight, blood pressure, temperature (akin to screening assessment in RTI). Two of the three (weight, blood pressure) indicated risk factors, predicting future difficulty if not addressed. At this point, she ordered some slightly more complex tests such as a cholesterol test—a diagnostic assessment. At the same time, she recommended that I improve my diet and start to exercise regularly—a Tier I intervention, something generally effective for all people

and many problems. Now I had to buy a home blood pressure machine and measure my BP twice a day—progress monitoring or formative evaluation. In addition, I was scheduled for a follow-up test of my cholesterol, etc.—a sort of post-test of my Tier I intervention (summative evaluation). At this time, my physician also outlined potential Tier II and III interventions which were scientifically based on my symptoms. Tier II would be cholesterol-lowering drugs and possibly BP drugs if my elevated BP didn't respond to the change in diet and exercise. Tier III would be the most intensive intervention—we would only move to that if I exhibited a severe need (possibly the analog to a disability). I assumed “severe need” included a heart attack or stroke. There would be additional tests to determine these risks (a comprehensive evaluation?). At every stage, she collected data and used the data to guide decisions about which treatment to use. She selected these treatments because they had been validated to address my specific problems.

“...[T]he RIOT/ICEL matrix sounds like an awful lot to do. In actuality, the time required will vary from student to student and problem to problem.”

The diagnostic tests suggested additional problems which she thought might require extreme (Tier III) interventions—she was going to skip Tier II if the data indicated a severe need. Fortunately, we were monitoring my progress and over time, the additional tests showed that the “severe needs” responded to the Tier I intervention. If we hadn't monitored my progress, I would probably be missing an internal organ right now (which I don't believe happens much in education), but more relevantly, resources would have been wasted on an unnecessary intervention—resources that could have been better used elsewhere.

So What Does This All Mean?

Assessment and evaluation in RTI often require that we think differently about what we do as well as how and why we do it. Does it require different skills than those we normally use? Sometimes, but certainly skills that should be well established in any school psychologist's repertoire. One of the most valuable contributions

(See **Implementing** on page 13)

(Implementing, continued from page 12)

school psychologists can offer schools is our training using data to make decisions and to judge the adequacy of the data we use. School psychologists are in a prime position to serve as a resource to other educators to navigate changes in what, how, and why we evaluate students.

Resources

For more information about assessment and evaluation in RTI, see:

Howell, K., Hosp, J., & Hosp, M. (in press). *Curriculum-based evaluation: Linking assessment and instruction*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Jimerson, S., Burns, M., & VanDerheyden, A. (in press). *The handbook of Response to Intervention: The science and practice of assessment and intervention*. New York: Springer Publishing.

National Association of School Psychologists (2006). *Assessment alternatives under IDEA 2004* (CD Rom Toolkit). Bethesda, MD: Author.

Salvia, J., Yseeldyke, J., & Bolt, S. (2007). *Assessment* (10th edition). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. (Particularly see Chapter 30, Assessing Response to Intervention)

© 2006, National Association of School Psychologists. John L. Hosp, PhD, is on the faculty of the University of Utah. This article was invited by Contributing Editor W. David Tilly, III.

A CASE STUDY IN RTI ASSESSMENT: SCREENING, DIAGNOSTICS, AND PROGRESS MONITORING

By Rob Richardson, NCSP

The National Reading Panel (2000) suggests four types of reading assessments: screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome. School psychologists are quite familiar with outcome assessments which include not only the academic tests from U-PASS that all students must take, but also in-class summative assessments (e.g. chapter tests) and the individually administered academic achievement tests that often are the school psychologist's bread and butter (such as WJ-III, WIAT, WRAT, GORT-IV, KEY-Math, TOWEL and so on). Traditionally, school psychologists have placed less attention to academic assessment devoted to screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring. Nevertheless, these often neglected types of assessment are valuable tools with which to guide instruction and determine whether or not an individual is benefiting from their current setting. This article will highlight an assessment case study of a fifth

grader that I tutored over the course of the 2005-06 year. In this case study, I present how I used a set of non-traditional assessment tools for purposes of screening, diagnostics, and progress monitoring.

SCREENING

Screening measures are administered to all students to identify who might be at risk for problems so they can receive additional instructional attention. With a good screening tool, it is OK to catch a few false positives. It is of highest priority to identify all individuals who are in trouble. If we also catch a few who are not in trouble, we can sort that out later. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) benchmark assessments are one such screening tool. As benchmark assessments, they give a quick, reliable snapshot of overall student reading health.

My student's oral reading fluency (as measured with DIBELS) indicates that she was at risk for reading difficulties and in need of substantial intervention. Her score of 49 words read correctly at the beginning of 5th grade placed her at the 14th percentile of 5th graders at her school (approximately 1.5 standard deviations below the mean). Her scores suggest that over the course of fourth grade, she remained behind without evidence of falling further behind or catching up. (See figure for a summary on page 16.)

Screening Validation

When screening indicates a problem, it is good practice to verify the results. DIBELS benchmarks, after all, only consist in three one-minute reading samples. Perhaps there were test administration errors, or the student just had a bad day (or a series of embarrassingly messy

(see **Study** on page 16)

UTAH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROFILE: DR. MICHELLE MARCHANT

By Megan S. Pratt

Dr. Michelle Marchant is a professor of special education in Brigham Young University's Counseling Psychology and Special Education Department. Her main research interests center on positive behavioral support, anti-social behaviors and emotional behavior disorders, parenting, internalizing behaviors of at-risk youth, functional behavioral assessment, and instruction of social skills.

She first became interested in such research as an undergraduate at Utah State University. In the quest to discover which major to pursue, a friend's counsel helped her realize that the field of special education could quench her passion for working with children with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Dr. Marchant pursued a degree in special education and after graduation sought a position as a Resource teacher in Salt Lake City. This position led her to a very challenging neighborhood where the school's student body included many students with emotional and behavioral issues. During a faculty meeting, a teacher stated that they could teach their students the three R's until they were blue in the face, but the children had emotional and behavioral problems which were of primary importance. As a result of this comment, the school implemented a social skills program, which she helped coordinate and execute. From this experience, she gained invaluable skills and knowledge that have helped her in establishing and implementing research in Positive Behavioral Support and social skills.

As a teacher for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, Dr. Marchant became the coordinator for a program called Project Hope, an interagency program that helped families with their financial, academic, social, and emotional needs. Through working in this role, parenting issues became salient to her. She has carried this research interest into her current work and plans on incorporating parenting issues into prevention



and intervention practices of public schools through use of the Positive Behavior Support model.

As part of her social skills research, Dr. Marchant leads the elementary school portion of a team called BYU Positive Behavior Support Initiative formally known as Peaceable Schools. This team seeks to build the social and emotional skills of students through the instruction of social skills and the use of positive behavioral support principles. She has worked to help write the grant for this project.

As the director of the elementary portion of Peaceable Schools, Dr. Marchant has had several interactions with students who have internalizing behaviors. These students have caught her attention with their quiet, socially withdrawn natures. This interest has helped her and several of her colleagues in piloting a questionnaire at three different elementary schools to pinpoint emotional behaviors of internalizing students.

Dr. Marchant has also recently received two grants to help support graduate and undergraduate students in their research. The first grant will help in funding research to discover the impact of adult mentors on the behavior of students. The second grant will help fund the development of a model for prevention and intervention programs that are research-based.

Editor's note:

We hope the "Utah School Psychology Profile" will be an ongoing column in the Observer. The intent of the column is to highlight Utah school psychology professionals, be they trainers or practitioners, so that we all can become more acquainted with what our colleagues and fellow members are doing. If you know of someone you would like to profile, please write something up and send it in.

ASSESSMENT: PROGRESS MONITORING TOOLS

The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (see studentprogress.org) has established a standard process with which to evaluate measures of student progress. Measures are reviewed based on the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing developed by the Joint Committee appointed by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement Used in Education (NCMUE) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For each review, two reviewers (each with no conflict of interest) came to consensus regarding appropriate ratings. Seventeen measures in all have been reviewed, so far.



Review of Progress Monitoring Tools

Updated March 2006

The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring does not endorse or recommend the tools included in the chart. The Center provides this information to assist educators and practitioners in making informed decisions about scientifically based tools that best meet their individual needs.

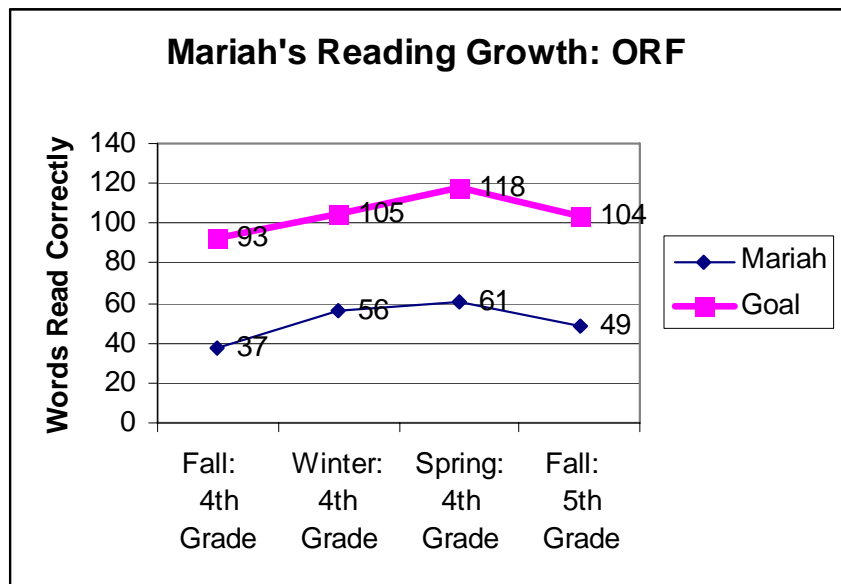
Tools	Area	Foundational Psychometric Standards		Progress Monitoring Standards				
		Reliability	Validity	Alternate Forms	Sensitive to Student Improvement	AYP Benchmarks	Improving Student Learning or Teacher Planning	Rates of Improvement Specified
AIMSweb	Maze	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Reading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	★ Test of Early Numeracy	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
	Early Literacy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Spelling	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)	Initial Sound Fluency	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
	Word Use Fluency	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
	Retell Fluency	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
	★ Oral Reading Fluency	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Nonsense Word Fluency	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
EdCheckup	Maze	●	●	○	●	●	●	●
	Reading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP)	Reading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Math	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Yearly Progress Pro	Reading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Math	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
STAR	Early Literacy	●	●	●	●	○	●	○
	Reading	●	●	●	●	○	○	●
	★ Math	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)	Sight Word Reading Efficiency	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
	Phonemic Decoding Efficiency	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF)	Reading	●	●	●	○	○	○	○

Key: ● The tool demonstrates sufficient evidence that meets the basic standard.
 ○ The tool did not demonstrate sufficient evidence that meets the basic standard.
 ★ The star indicates new information from the 2005 review.

(Study, continued from p. 13)

sneezes). Lynn and Doug Fuchs (2006) recommend five weeks of weekly progress monitoring in response to general education to determine whether or not more intensive (tier 2) interventions should be conducted. Their research (Compton et al., 2005) suggests that five weeks of weekly progress monitoring can reduce or even eliminate spending additional preventative resources on false positives. In addition, it gives you a measure of the degree to which a student is benefiting from their existing educational placement over a relatively small increment of time.

I didn't follow the Fuchs' recommendation. I believed that I had enough evidence to indicate that my student's reading problem was in need of additional instructional attention and didn't want to delay tutoring. My screening validation consisted of a review of classroom work and the administration of three 5th grade oral reading fluency passages. Her scores were inconsistent ranging from 42 words read correctly (WRC) with 9 errors to 70 WRC, with 5 errors. She had a median score of 67 WRC with 9 errors. Her reading was labored and it was not clear that she was tracking meaning. She had poor prosody, paying little attention to punctuation. Her most consistent errors involved not reading the endings of words (suffixes) correctly. She relied primarily on a glance-at-the-beginning-chunk-of-the-word-and-guess strategy for decoding. As a result of listening to these reading characteristics, I surmised that explicit instruction in spelling patterns, chunking words into component parts and in reading punctuation would be



helpful. To further evaluate this hypothesis and to get a better idea of specific areas of need, I set to work with diagnostic testing regarding phonics development.

DIAGNOSTIC

Diagnostic assessments aim to find out what specific skills need to be taught. Where screening tells you that a student has a problem, diagnostic testing helps you find out what underlies the problem.

Good published diagnostic assessments are currently in short supply. It seems like many are housed away in people's files at Universities. Since what you are interested in with diagnostic tests is performance on a set of criteria, it is not important that they be normed. However, like traditional normed psychological tests, it is important that they are reliable and valid for the purpose to which they are used. Typically this data is not available or somewhat thin. Fortunately, these tend to be fairly direct measures so inferences about what you are measuring are kept to a minimum. Furthermore they are scripted and scoring

criteria are clear. I began my diagnostic work with an informal test of active reading.

Active Reading

Active reading is something that needs to take place in order to have good reading comprehension. It involves actively thinking about the content of what one is reading. "Active readers use relevant prior knowledge, decoding skills, language knowledge, and context to understand what they read. They monitor their own understanding and problem solve when they fail to understand (Howell & Nolet, 2000)." A tricky thing to measure, no doubt.

During the oral reading sample (described in the screening validation section above) my student was making lots of errors and not seeming to track meaning (based on errors that violated text meaning and poor expression), so I wanted to evaluate how actively she was engaging the text. I desired to quickly find out if decoding really was her primary problem, or if she was just not

(see Study on page 17)

(Study, continued from page 16)

ACTIVE READING

Grade Level Passage	10/10/05 Errors Corrected	2/10/06 Errors Corrected
5 th	20%	75%

paying attention to what she was reading. In other words, I wanted to find out if she had a skill deficit or a performance deficit with regard to decoding. I assessed this in two ways: asking her about what she read (questions and summary of content) and I used a pencil tapping technique found in Howell and Nolet (2000) designed to help distinguish mere poor self-monitoring from underdeveloped decoding skills. The technique involves tapping the table with a pencil every time the student makes an error during oral reading. After tapping, you wait and see if the student is able to fix their error. If they immediately self-correct more than 70% of the time, the student has a self monitoring problem (rather than a decoding problem) and that is where instructional resources should focus. If the student immediately self-corrects less than 70% of the time then it is decoding that needs primary attention.

In October my student was able to immediately correct errors 20% of the time while reading fifth grade level text. This suggests that she had a decoding problem which was fundamentally interfering with her ability to derive meaning from text. In addition it was clear that even with unlimited time to decode, she had poor decoding strategies.

In May, after seven months of tutoring and classroom instruction, she was able to self-correct 75% of the time. It

appeared she had developed some decoding skills and would benefit from instruction that increases her engagement with the meaning of what she is reading.

Decoding

In order to attain further insight into my student’s decoding strategies, she completed a decoding inventory, consisting in a list of nonsense words with common spelling patterns. This particular inventory was developed by Lynn Fuchs. I obtained it through Michelle Hosp, at the University of Utah. There are several such inventories. Jan Hasbrouck developed the “Quick Phonics Screener” which should be published soon if it has not come out already. Ken Howell, Michelle Hosp, and John Hosp are currently working on an excellent phonics screener in the Multilevel Academic Skills Inventory (MASI)—which I hope will be published in the not too distant future. What distinguishes these diagnostic tests from Word Attack on the Woodcock Johnson is 1) there are more items with which to identify which decoding rules have been learned and which have not and 2) there is a more

varied and systematic sampling of spelling patterns. Thus, with such a tool, instructional objectives are more accurately pinpointed.

During the phonics assessment my student did not consistently use the silent e-rule or the vowel team rule to decode nonsense words. She also had difficulty decoding multi-syllabic words. Her results suggested that she would benefit from word study concentrating on vowel teams, silent-e patterns and multisyllabic decoding rules (e.g. affixes, word chunking and syllable types).

This diagnostic testing gave me and the student’s classroom teacher some specific ideas on what to focus our energy. At the end of the year, I readministered the test to see what growth my student had made. Over the course of the year she made good progress on vowel patterns within single syllable words, and some progress with decoding multi-syllabic words. However, work is left to be done on teaching her how to chunk words into syllables and how to decode the resultant word chunks. (See the tables below on page 18 for a summary of this diagnostic information.)

(see Study on page 18)

Single Syllable Words (V=vowel; C=consonant)

Pattern (examples)	10/10/05	5/9/06
CVC (bed, bat)	Mastered	Mastered
CVCC (kempt, lump, sift, clasp, cast)	Mastered	Mastered
R-Controlled (far, fur, her)	Mastered	Mastered
CVCe (tube, hike, hope)	Teach	Mastered
Vowel Teams (sleep, wait, boat)	Teach	Mastered

Multisyllabic Words (V=vowel; C=consonant)

Pattern (examples)	10/10/05	5/9/06
Short V w/ like double C (letter)	Teach	Teach
Short V w/ unlike double C (catnip)	Teach	Mastered
Short V doubling rule for -ing, -ture, -tion (jogging)	Teach	Mastered
Long V doubling rule for -ing, -ture, -tion (station)	Teach	Teach
Long V single consonant (labor)	Teach	Teach

(Study, continued from p. 17)

PROGRESS MONITORING

Progress monitoring involves frequent (at least monthly) assessment of student learning. It is the best way to measure whether or not a student is benefiting from the instruction that they are receiving. I monitored my student's progress in reading weekly using fifth grade oral reading fluency passages.

The graph below (on page 19) is rich with information about how my student has progressed over the year. The y axis represents the number of words read correctly (for the green line with the boxes) and the number of errors (for the orange line with the triangles).

The x represents the dates tested. The target aimline (the blue line with diamonds) represents an average rate of improvement for a fifth grader starting from my student's initial data point. The line with an arrow pointing to the target is the rate of improvement required to obtain the DIBELS benchmark rate for the end of fifth grade.

Through out the year my student had received general education instruction plus a half-hour of weekly instruction in word study, writing and fluency instruction (repeated readings of text with immediate corrective feedback). My student began the year showing great improvement surpassing both the typical rate of progress for fifth graders and the rate required for her to meet the

DIBELS benchmark by the end of the school year. Then came thanksgiving break, followed by winter break. Her scores nose-dived, starting with pre-break parties and then dropping precipitously following the actual break. She resumed her academic routine again in January and her scores again rose above her aimline (though below her to-catch-up line). Then, due to scheduling difficulties in mid-March, she did not receive any tutoring or progress monitoring for three weeks and went on break for an additional week. Her scores, once again, fell considerably and did not recover. Her end-of-year scores are similar to what they were back in October. Disappointing news after an exciting beginning.

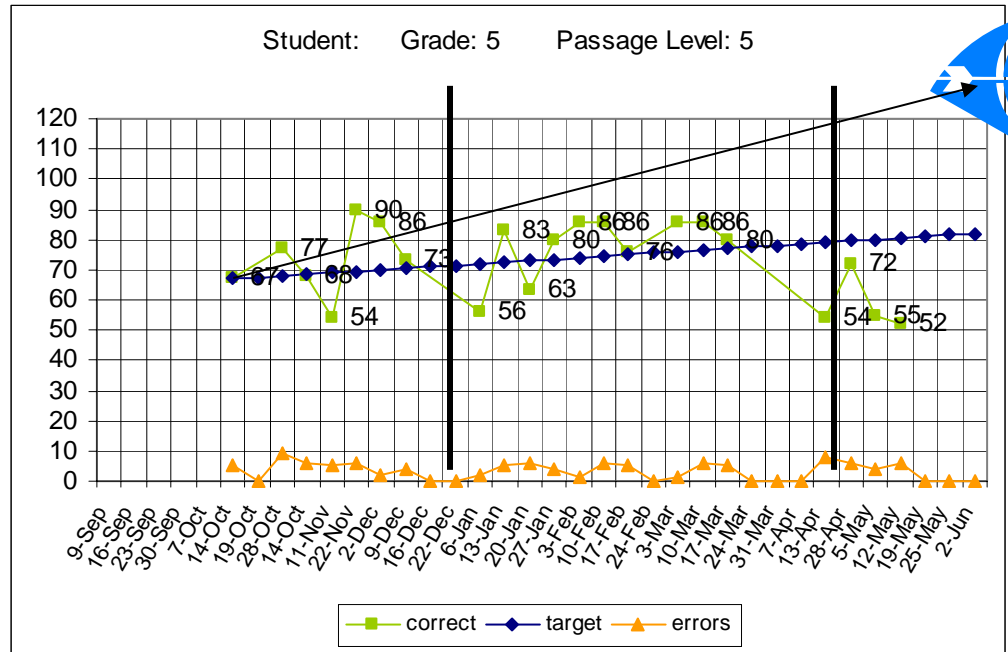
(see Study on page 19)

(Study, continued from page 18)

So what does this tell me? My student benefited from the general education and ½ hour of weekly tutoring and lost skills over breaks; not at all uncommon especially for individuals who do not read at home. However, she didn't benefit enough from this level of support. More support is required so that she can reach her goals despite post-vacation lapses. This said, her needs are not so great that she is in need of special education services. Progress monitoring reveals that even with minimal enhancements to the general education curriculum, she can make good progress.

As her tutor seeing these lapses, I can't help but be compelled to figure out something to help push her forward and buffer against future academic declines. I am advocating for daily, in-school tier-II intervention, consisting in supplemental small group instruction. I plan to intensify efforts to collaborate with my student's mom to get her reading more at home. One avenue I am taking is to train my student to tutor her younger brother in decoding and reading fluency. My student is of a nurturing disposition and I think she would get positive practice that would reinforce what she learned last year. In addition, I hope my student's mother can come into school (or I make a home visit) so that someone can model some tutoring techniques that might be helpful in the context of an evening reading ritual.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT



→ To catch up to benchmark

CONCLUSION

I believe that screening, diagnostic testing and progress monitoring are powerful and underutilized tools with which to enhance student learning. My conversion to seeing the value in these trendy modes of assessment began with reading professional articles on the topic. My own personal experience in working directly with students and teachers has added to my conviction. In addition to measures that rank order students at the completion of some lengthy period of learning, we need measures that identify who is in trouble, pinpoint skill or performance deficits, and measure learning rates in response to instruction over relatively short periods. Given our current educational zeitgeist, I suspect we will see improvements in the tools used to perform these tasks.

Note:

This article has focused on assessment of the learner. A comprehensive evaluation obviously involves more than this. Another assessment type that is conspicuously missing here is environmental assessment—assessments which evaluate the classroom (instruction and curricula), home and collaboration between these systems. There are a few of these measures out there (e.g. Ysseldyke and Christenson's Functional Assessment of Academic Behavior [FAAB], 2002), but I believe that exciting developments are on the horizon for this area of assessment as well.

REVIEW of CLARK'S (2005) JACKSON WHOLE WYOMING

By Breeda McGrath

Can you imagine a world where the rules were kept secret and no-one bothered to fill you in? Only when you cross the line and really make a blunder do people inform you of the rules. This is something like the experience of children with Asperger's Syndrome (AS). In her book, *Jackson Whole Wyoming*, Joan Clark tells us some heart-warming stories that could be taken from the life of such a student. The story is written from the perspective of a fifth-grade boy, Tyler, who is thinking about the "honor" of being considered Jackson's friend (Jackson has AS). The story is a narrative of Tyler's memories and feelings about Jackson and a glimpse into the experience of becoming friends. The story is honest and heart-warming, offering a realistic insight into a child's experience of having a "different" friend ("Don't people know I have normal friends?"). The underlying message for the reader is, "It's okay to be different."

Clark describes Jackson's circumspect interests, his fascination with fans, clocks, pinwheels and orderliness. She even shows us how obsessions can sometimes start a trend! In each chapter, we read the sensitive details of Jackson's tendency to take his teacher's instructions literally, his insistence on classmates' compliance with rules, and his difficulty with transitions. It's not hard to see oneself in some of the scenarios, either as a child or an adult. The scenarios are realistic and many of them are humorous. Clark falls short of being moralistic, and leans heavily on the technique of letting the story unfold naturally.

Jackson Whole Wyoming has something for a wide audience of readers—children with disabilities and those without; teachers who are comfortable in inclusive classrooms and those who are not; parents, relatives, and friends of children who have Asperger's Syndrome; school psychologists who work with students and their teachers. Clark's stories provide practical pointers for parents and educators about how to handle a classroom of sniggering fifth-graders and an endless stream of awkward questions. She provides a refreshing version of the uncomfortable moments that adults go through when children ask embarrassing questions. The scenarios are wonderful fodder for role-play scenarios, social stories, communication, and social skill practice.

Diagnosing students with AS is a tricky business, because the autism, Asperger's syndrome, PDD-NOS, cannot be defined by medical tests. Labels are assigned

based on questionnaires, rating scales, psychological tests, and other instruments and tools. This means that there is a large degree of subjective judgment and bias in diagnosing and labeling (Kluth, 2003). At the same time, diagnosis does not necessarily provide families, teachers, or other professionals with useful information about what the needs or abilities the student has, or how to teach him or her most effectively. School psychologists who are truly committed to working with students with Asperger's syndrome will seek the expertise and support of others, including the students themselves and their families. They will provide helpful information to educational personnel and teach the students effective strategies for self-advocacy.

Students with Asperger's Syndrome can teach others about the way they experience the world, but as Kluth reminds us, if you know one person with autism, you know ONE person with autism.

My friend lives in a world by himself.

Sometimes he lets me join him.

Sometimes he doesn't.

Clark is a speech and language pathologist in Illinois. She is currently serving on the Autism Spectrum Disorders Assessment Team in the Macon-Piatt Special Education District.

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The Utah Association of School
Psychologists
with Harcourt Assessment
presents a
Continuing Education Workshop

Friday, September 29, 2006

8:00 am to 12:15 pm



Differential Ability Scales II (DAS-II)

and

an Introduction to the Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability

Location:
Park City Library
& Education Center
1255 Park Avenue
(See map on next page)

About the Presenters:



Dr. Colin D Elliott was for 20 years the tutor and director of the course for professional educational psychologists at Manchester University (UK). Since 1973, he has been involved in research and development on the British Ability Scales, the Differential Ability Scales (the U.S. version of the BAS), BAS 2 and now DAS-II. His other research and publications have focused on individual differences in children's temperament and personality and specific learning difficulties. He moved to the United States in 1992. Dr Elliott is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) and British Psychological Society. He is also an active member of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). He is currently an Adjunct Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.



Dr. Roger Frame is a Clinical Measurement Consultant with Harcourt Assessment and PsychCorp where he provides training and consultation on assessment products. He has presented over 150 workshops. He has a Ph.D. in School Psychology from Michigan State University, an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Western Michigan University, and a B.S. from Denison University in Psychology. He has spent eleven years as a school psychologist in public schools, 10 years in private practice, 3 years as a Children's Therapist in a community mental health center, and 2 years directing a child abuse and neglect program as a faculty member at Southern Illinois University.

About the Tests Presented:

Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability (2006)

Authors: David Wechsler & Jack Naglieri

This is a new nonverbal measure of ability for ages that can be used for individuals age 4 to 22 who are neither English-language or Spanish-language proficient or have other language considerations.

Differential Ability Scales – II (DAS-II) (2006)

Author: Colin Elliott

This is a new revision of the DAS, which comprehensively assesses the cognitive ability of children age 2½ to 18. The revision expands applicability to lower functioning children and includes assessment of memory aspects and reading prerequisites.

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REVIEW of SIROTNIK'S (2004)
HOLDING ACCOUNTABILITY ACCOUNTABLE:
WHAT OUGHT TO MATTER IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

By Charles Saltzman

Until his death on January 29, 2004, Sirotnik was Professor and Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle. "This book," writes Linda McNeil, "holds standardized testing accountability up to the light of equitable, democratic public education and finds it woefully inadequate, even harmful to our children and our communities" (back cover). Sirotnik has assembled a group of highly respected scholars to provide critical analyses and sophisticated perspectives on current high-stakes testing practices. The group includes a professor of philosophy, a professor of law, and an historian of education. Collectively they challenge us to rethink what it means to act responsibly when it comes to calling our schools, school systems, educators and students into account.

In his introductory chapter, Sirotnik reveals the impetus behind the book—the mounting evidence about teacher and principal demoralization and other negative effects of mandated testing for high-stakes accountability. Legal challenges have begun or are under way in several states to counter the fallout from high-stakes testing and accountability practices. He points with great anguish to two disquieting trends: one, that there is "no solid evidence that these kinds of heavy-handed test-based accountability practices really work in meaningful and enduring ways"

(p. 6); two, that the empirical case for effectiveness of current high-stakes accountability will become entangled in ideological conflicts—the same data will be used to draw opposite conclusions. With this grim prospect before him, Sirotnik constructed eight claims for responsible accountability as alternatives to what we have and invited eight scholars to develop the arguments to support one of them.

Sirotnik's first claim: "Responsible accountability systems must pay attention to the history of accountability paradigms and critical analyses of their successes and failures" (p. 10). Larry Cuban, Professor Emeritus at Stanford University, is given this task. Cuban begins with a strongly stated observation: "At no time in the history of U.S. public schools have those responsible for schools been unaccountable," signaling the start of another scholarly, well-argued, recognizable progressive essay. He documents the trend through several decades for local school boards being held accountable only to voters in their districts. These are now being held accountable to remote external parties: the federal government, business and economic interests. The emerging power of external forces to demand and define accountability is the central historical change. Unexpectedly, however, Cuban veers to the middle of the political road, his position becoming less clearly defined. In summing up,

he asks, "Has this externally driven shift in the meaning of quality schooling, the goals for schools, and accountability structures, improved schooling?" His answer: yes and no.

Nancy Beadle, a historian of education, discusses the moral errors and strategic mistakes evident in accountability practices. The current push toward student accountability confounds the distinction between "achievement incentives" and minimum standards. This is occurring without our recognition of the vastly different circumstances existing in this country between the start of the 20th century, when relatively few young people completed high school, to the present, when a stabilized large majority (75 percent) of students are able to do so. "It is hard to imagine any more punishing set of consequences for high school failure than those that exist today. And yet, these consequences have not produced increased high school attainment" (p. 48). She concludes, "Judging from this evidence, the current policy of turning the new higher performance standards into minimum graduation requirements may prove to be not only a moral error but a strategic mistake. The history of student accountability suggests that if our goal is student improvement, we should be looking for ways to restore a culture of aspiration by decreasing rather than increasing the threat of punishment" (p. 48).

(see **Accountability** on p. 24)

(**Accountability**, continued from page 23)

Harvey Siegel, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Miami, argues that fostering critical thinking, long regarded as an uncontroversial aim of education, has been lost sight of in our rush toward “high-stakes accountability.” He addresses a local concern, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and its striking “disconnect” and incompatibility between testing and accountability practices and around educational aims. The rationale for the test, he claims, is based on a narrow, economically defined conception of education—to prepare the student for predetermined roles in the social and economic order. Siegel argues that the aim of education ought to be “to liberate the mind, by enabling the student both to envision possibilities and to evaluate their desirability intelligently” (p. 61).

Pedro A. Noguera of Harvard University decries the injustice wrought by NCLB—in that students who have no control over the quality of education they receive are the primary individuals held accountable under the law. Thousands of students in California, Massachusetts, Texas and Florida, mostly poor and minorities, are faced with the prospect of being denied high school diplomas. Under the new law, Noguera points out, there is no provision to provide assistance to struggling schools or to ensure that they receive help in developing the capacity needed to meet the needs of their students. “Instead, what they will receive is pressure and lots of it” (p. 69). Noguera does not limit himself to

protesting this injustice. He outlines a half dozen recommendations for addressing the needs of troubled schools.

Jeannie Oakes, Gary Blasi and John Rogers, all of UCLA, cite the arguments in a complaint filed in California Superior Court on May 17, 2000, that asserts that “responsible accountability systems must attend to whether students have adequate and equitable opportunities for learning.” They point out that over the past 15 years, the search for “results based” accountability systems has “effectively decoupled what states put into their educational systems and what they expect to get out of them” (p. 83). The result of this policy shift has produced “accountability systems that seek neither to uncover nor to correct inequities in resources and opportunities that hide the fact that students who have fewer resources at school nearly always learn less at school” (p. 83). Recent test scores in California, including NAEP, have been among the lowest in the nation. The case being discussed, Williams vs. State of California, has been argued by pro bono and civil rights attorneys. At the time of the book’s publication, it had not been fully decided. The trial court has already agreed with the plaintiffs that the State is obliged to set in place a system that will either “prevent or detect and correct, significant educational differences and inequalities” (p. 95). Compare this to a similarly argued case in Illinois, where the Supreme Court here found six of seven arguments “nonjusticiable,” a legalism meaning *Don’t bother us, bother someone else*—the legislature perhaps! Oakes, Blasi and Rogers end with the sobering reminder

that a victory in the courts will not be enough. Fundamental change will require widespread political pressure that reaches the highest level of policymakers. California, Illinois and other states need to take heed.

Roger Soder of the University of Washington argues that any responsible system of education assessment and accountability must attend to civic education, which he defines as “teaching students their moral and intellectual responsibilities as critical and informed citizens in a democracy” (p. 101). Soder argues, “If civic education is as central to school as it is claimed, and if civic education is to be taken seriously, then we must have a responsible system of accountability based on all the complexities of civic education” (p. 112). The assessment problem, however, places serious policy advocates in a double bind. When testing is attempted, important competencies or objectives are often reduced to trivial aspects of the citizen role. How does one assess the development of skills necessary to engage in a serious political discussion, discuss rights and privileges, seek fairness and compromise in disputes? After examining four options, Soder favors an assessment model that focuses on knowledge acquisition but includes assessment of skills, attitudes, disposition and “habits of the heart.”

Linda Mabry, Washington State University, writes with dramatic force and verve on what has become all too familiar, yet should be still regarded as strange, the familiar phrase “test-driven curriculum,” which she claims is

(see **Accountability** on p. 25)

(Accountability, continued from page 24)

the bizarre idea that the proper role of assessment is to monopolize curriculum, rather than to monitor what students have learned from it. Educational measurement, she asserts flatly, arose from distrust of teachers. Further, “the psychometric paradigm confers authority on persons far from the classrooms” (p. 119). From these premises, she elaborates a list of 15 serious adverse consequences of measurement practices, including the oft-mentioned narrowing of curricula, making curricula superficial, deprofessionalizing teachers, together with some far less familiar, e.g., “promoting parental loss of custody of children because of higher test scores in a competing spouse’s school district” (p. 120). For each of these claims, she cites one or more sources. She proceeds with a cogent study of the measurement canon familiar to us, defining and examining the use of such ideas as reliability, validity, internal consistency, inter-rater reliability. She concludes, as strongly as she had begun: “With few exceptions, current policies prefer questionable psychometric assumptions and produces and

practices and, increasingly and especially in the latest incursion into state testing practices (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), demand unrealistic educational change” (p. 129), and stronger still, “the unintended consequence of test-driven accountability is *deformed* education” (p. 127).

Why? you may ask. Her answer: “High-stakes consequences are typically based on tests with weak validity evidence and questionable reliability evidence. Stakes are high enough to make teaching to the test inevitable” (p. 127).

Patricia Wasley, Dean of the College of Education, University of Washington, addresses responsible accountability in the context of teacher quality and student accomplishment. Her focus is on the quality and extent of teacher training/learning prior to service, and the conditions and opportunities available to them for further learning while in service. “In order for teachers to ‘leave no child behind,’ they need time to learn on the job. They need data that give them information about what they need to do differently with the children they are working with. And they need expert support and time to work with their

colleagues” (p. 144).

Sirotnik concludes this incisively written collection of essays with a brief summary. He sees this work as moving toward an “ecology of responsible accountability concepts and practices.” He continues, “Yes, the public has a right to know how well our public schools are educating future citizens, yet, at the same time, those who fashion accountability systems for schooling must themselves be held accountable for doing it responsibly” (p. 163).

This is a mind-opening book for professionals, lay persons and policy-makers alike. It is especially helpful in diminishing the allure of NCLB and associated reform rhetoric as the only reasonable and necessary means for improving education.

Reference

Sirotnik, K. A. (Ed.) (2004). Holding Accountability Accountable: What Ought to Matter in Public Education. New York: Teachers College.

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REVIEW of KOZOL’S (2005) THE SHAME OF THE NATION: THE RESTORATION OF APARTHEID SCHOOLING IN AMERICA

By Charles Saltzman

The Chicago Sun-Times called Jonathan Kozol “the most eloquent spokesman for America’s disenfranchised.” Jonathan Kozol has proven to be the most morally centered of educational critics and the most passionate protester of the

inequities endured by poor minority children in America. He again calls us to the ramparts in this, his eleventh, book. His form here continues to be expository and narrative, avoiding in a limited way the criticism sometimes

directed at him that all he has brought to the discussion is anecdotal. In this work he provides a compilation of statistics, research studies and news reports to strengthen his arguments derived from a lifetime

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(Shame, continued from p. 25)

of experience and observation. He is, however, not departing from his usual narrative form, focused as he is on one big and disheartening story, namely the restoration of segregated schooling, which he pointedly calls “apartheid schooling,” chronicling America’s inability to form itself into a unified social system. Apartheid is for him the subtle return to a near total segregated education system, sustained by social, economic, emotional forces at all levels of society. The process occurs without identifiable villains or malicious intentions. It comes about willfully, voluntarily, through the cumulative individual choices of the well-to-do.

School reform efforts across the United States have been driven, primarily, by the wish to reduce the discrepancy between black and white, between Hispanic and white children’s school performance. This result, Kozol claims, is simply not happening, nor can it happen when poor black and Hispanic children are not able to have and to share the same cultural experiences. When minority children are denied access to such experiences, we cannot expect their school performances to be unaffected. Nor can we later expect that their performance as workers and as citizens will be likewise unaffected.

While preparing this book, Kozol visited approximately sixty schools in eleven states. Wherever he is, he tries to spend his evenings with teachers. In the classrooms, he studies the faces of children, sits in their chairs, joins them in the cafeteria for lunch, notices, as they must, the peeling paint, broken windows, foul-smelling bathrooms. Kozol here provides a travel guide for nonprofessional visitors to

schools. By noticing what he notices, these visits may help to open more hearts and minds to the often unpleasant realities of school life for many poor minority children.

Kozol studies bulletin boards for displays of children’s work. Does the work show exuberance, charm, and individuality? Or are the materials commercially formatted and sanitized by teachers’ corrections before they are mounted? In the classrooms, are the children engaged? Are they thoughtful, responsive? Are they encouraged to be individually expressive or to speak in the stilted, automatic phrases, phrases which they may not even understand? To recognize a new apartheid is also to recognize that now, as then, before Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, separate is far from equal. Kozol marshals considerable evidence to make this point forcefully. Court-ordered desegregation has come and gone. As he surveys the scene today, Kozol sees that the schools today have resigned themselves to resegregation, and this is the Shame of the Nation.

By the year 2000-2001 in Chicago, 87 percent of public school enrollment was black and Hispanic. In Washington, D.C., it was 94 percent black and Hispanic; in St. Louis, 82 percent; in Philadelphia and Cleveland, 78 percent; Los Angeles, 84 percent; Detroit, 95 percent; and New York, nearly 75 percent. Among the tragic ironies, Kozol reminds us, is that if one walks into a high school named for Jackie Robinson, Thurgood Marshall, or Martin Luther King, Jr., these numbers hold perhaps even to a more striking degree. The very schools named for Martin Luther King, Jr., are, Kozol would

assert, schools that Martin Luther King, Jr., would not want his children to attend. Along with segregation comes the inequities in funding that start with infant and toddler years, when hundreds of thousands of children in low-income neighborhoods are locked out of the opportunity for preschool education.

Kozol points out that in the spring of 2001 Chicago’s public schools began to operate a special track of preschool for the children of those families who were able to afford to pay an extra nearly \$6,000 to provide their children with a full-day program starting at age two. In a city where 87 percent of the students in the public schools are black or Hispanic, this pay-for-preschool program served primarily white children. The hypocrisy, Kozol implies, is that the Chicago public schools, as presumably the rest of the nation, were committed to reducing discrepant achievement levels between black and white children. They were, in fact, operating a program whose effects ran in opposite directions to public policy. Kozol quotes Deborah Meier, whom he regards as a comrade-in-arms, who said, “I’ll believe money doesn’t count in education the day the rich stop spending so much on their own children.” Kozol himself has said something like this many times the well-to-do people who tell him that throwing money at the problems of education won’t solve them, while they spend \$20,000 and more for tuition at private schools. Examining the spending figures for a typical elementary school classroom in Illinois, Kozol notes that districts with the highest numbers of minority children receive \$47,000 less than classes in districts with the fewest minorities.

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(Shame, continued from p. 26)

In his visits to schools during this period of intense reform effort, Kozol finds particularly widespread and appalling the program known as Success For All. In these classrooms there is a standard formal name for every cognitive event: “Authentic Writing,” “Active Listening,” “Accountable Talk.” The insistence on labeling all items of instruction or behavior with a specific name he finds unsettling. Classroom discourse is stultified. To hear a teacher say, “That’s a Level-4 Suggestion,” strains the listener. Similarly, to write a story, according to these written standards, is to “produce a narrative procedure.” In another school, in an SFA class, nothing even faintly frivolous took place. No one laughed, no child made a funny face to somebody beside him. He adds: “Later, when I was looking at my notes after that visit, I also noticed that I couldn’t find a single statement made by any child that had not been prompted by the teacher’s questions.” Teachers working in a school like this have little chance to draw upon their own inventiveness or even normal conversational skills. Proponents of scripted education such as this have sometimes justified the technique as a means to improve failing schools staffed by incompetent teachers, teachers who lack the requisite personal and technical skills that teaching requires. The script tells them what, when, and how to proceed, hour by hour. Is this justification enough? Kozol would answer vehemently, No.

Kozol is also critical of the intrusion of economic business models into educational reform, particularly as it affects inner-city poor children. Kozol is not pleased to read reports

that Chicago’s great corporations, “dismayed by the faulty products being turned out by Chicago’s troubled schools, have taken over the production line themselves”—that from an article in The Wall Street Journal, February 9, 1990. As a consequence of this turn of events, one principal asserts: “I’m in the business of developing minds to meet a market demand.” Kozol inveighs against the testing standards and accountability movement at great length. Test preparation in some schools, he claims, controls more than one-quarter of the entire school year.

The recently released study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, involving 3,800 high schools, showed that nearly 300 American high schools that are ninety percent or more black lose, on the average, half their black boys between grades 9 and 12, whereas the least segregated high schools with significant African-American enrollments only lose approximately one-quarter of their black male students along the way. Again, Kozol offers his plausible theory for this: Segregated schooling denies minority children the opportunity to participate fully in and share from early childhood on the experiences of children of the dominant white culture. Why then should we be surprised that as teenagers in school and later as young adults many seem unable to make their way as successfully through a world shaped by the dominant culture?

In the end, Kozol appeals to the goodwill of all citizens. He urges resistance to unfair policies and practices. The “no excuses” partisans, he says, have had things pretty much their way for an extended period of time, and those who were convinced that they know

exactly what works in schools have failed. “If the gains in elementary school that had been promised by accountability proponents ten years earlier had turned out to be real,” he says, “the performance levels of black and Hispanic high school students ought to have at least gone closer to the levels of white high school students by this time.” In New York City and Chicago, however, according to Education Week, New York City and Chicago enroll 10 percent of the nation’s African-American male students, yet they fail to graduate more than 70 percent of these students with their entering classmates (Education Week, December 1, 2004).

Kozol, despite his long career in education, does not claim to have all the answers. He does, however, direct our attention to where necessary and genuine reform may begin by recognizing what is wrong with the status quo and with our misguided and failing efforts to improve things. His appeal is to reason and compassion—directed to all of us. He wants us to recognize that our attention has been directed away from concern with adequacy and equity toward a narrowly defined, sometimes mean-spirited concern with “accountability”; with outputs rather than inputs. Has the ideal of social justice, for too many Americans, come to seem as “quaint” as the ideas embedded in the Geneva Convention?

Reference:

Kozol, J. (2005). The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America. New York: Crown.

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*** * * 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 will be available soon at
www.utahschoolpsychology.org

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