School Psychology:
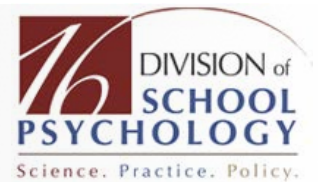# From Science to Practice

DIVISION of SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
Science. Practice. Policy.

In this Issue of *FSTP*

This issue of *FSTP* includes a number of outstanding articles by graduate students along with informative updates on SASP activities. The winter issue features an interview with Dr. Vincent Alfonso, a professor and Dean of the School of Education at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington and current President of APA, Division 16. In this issue, you'll also find the results of the 2014 SASP Executive Board elections; a message from SASP President, Jennifer Cooper; and interviews with a mentor and mentee participating in the Diversity Mentorship Program. The Lessons from the Field column presents a graduate student's reflection on the internship process and a piece on an intervention to promote socioemotional skills among students in Puerto Rico. In the Forum column, you'll find information on a new collaboration between Division 16 and Division 53. You won't want to miss the engaging and informative review of the book *Learning While Black.* The Research Review column examines the research on family-school partnerships with a focus on defining features and future directions. The issue closes with an article highlighting how the SASP Chapter at the University of Northern Colorado builds community and promotes graduate students' professional development.

Ψ VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4

Message from the Board

Jennifer Cooper, *President*

Greetings SASP Members!

As the year begins to wind down, I wanted to take the time to thank the 2013 SASP Executive Board for their tremendous efforts. We have had a successful year with great strides made towards bettering the services we provide to our student members. Some of these efforts included the initiation of two new student awards, long-term membership initiatives, the introduction of a Diversity Committee and continued growth of the Diversity Mentorship Program, and the beginning of collaborative efforts with other student-led APA groups. We also continued to provide existing support for our students through the re-vamped SASP newsletter, *From Science to Practice*, the SASP Student Research Forum (SRF) at the annual APA Convention, and the Diversity Scholarship awards and SRF travel grants. In an effort to share resources and keep our members up to date on current happenings in the field, we also continued to utilize our Division 16 SASP Facebook page, monthly announcement email, and resources page on the Division 16 website.

We are always grateful for the Division 16 Executive Board; without their support, we would not be able to have such a strong student organization in school psychology. I, and the other board members, truly appreciate the mentorship the board provided this year. Overall, it has been a great year for SASP, and I am honored to have spent the past year working with the leadership of this board. I would like to, personally, congratulate the incoming 2014 board members and wish them the best. I have the greatest confidence that SASP will continue to be a thriving student-led organization in the field! On behalf of the SASP Executive Board, I would like to wish all of our SASP members a happy and safe holiday season!

Your 2013 SASP President,
Jennifer Cooper

SASP Results Are In!

David Cheng, *2014 SASP President*

SASP would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2014 SASP Executive Board elections. The 2014 elections proved to be another wonderful year for nominations. There were many qualified individuals who submitted nominations from across the country. SASP was eager to see the potential leadership that our field has to offer in the years to come. We were also happy to see how many of you participated by voting for your favorite candidate. Our overall poll numbers were great and made for an exciting election!

SASP encourages those of you who participated to continue your involvement throughout the upcoming year as SASP will have several opportunities for your participation in the months to come.

On behalf of SASP, I am pleased to announce the 2014 SASP Executive Board:

President-Elect
Cait Hynes, Fordham University

Student Interest Liaison
Katherine Stoll, University of Arizona

Membership Chair
Rachel Stein, University of California, Santa Barbara

Convention Chair
Kendall Bowles, Texas Woman's University

Diversity Affairs Chair
Samara Montilus, St. John's University

Communications Committee
Editor
W. Jeremy Rime, University of California, Santa Barbara

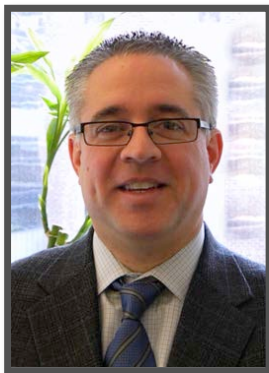**Editor-Elect**
Ashley Mayworm, University of California, Santa Barbara

Communications Liaison
Candice Aston, Duquesne University

Luminaries in the Field
Interview with Dr. Vincent Alfonso:
APA Division 16 President, 2013

Cait Hynes, *Membership Chair*

Vincent C. Alfonso, Ph.D., received his doctoral degree from the Clinical/School Psychology Program at Hofstra University in 1990. After graduating, he spent several years in the field as a school psychologist in a Long Island School District and in several special education preschools. From 1994 to 2013, Dr. Alfonso was affiliated with Fordham University, where he served as Professor, Associate Dean, Coordinator Of School Psychology Programs, and Executive Director of the Rosa A. Hagin School Consultation Center and the Early Childhood Center. He is now a Professor and Dean of the School of Education at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Dr. Alfonso formerly served as Editor of The School Psychologist and Secretary of APA Division 16. In November 2003, he received the Leadership in School Psychology Award from the New York Association of School Psychologists. Dr. Alfonso can be contacted at: alfonso@gonzaga.edu.

How did you become interested in school psychology?

I attended an APA-accredited combined program in clinical and school psychology at Hofstra University. After I graduated, I had no intention of having a private practice and decided to begin working in the schools. After a few years working in k-12, I was fortunate to find work in preschools serving young children

with special needs. And the rest, as they say, is history!

What are your current and past research interests? How have they changed over the course of your time in the field?

My research interests really have not changed much over the years. I enjoy studying and contributing to assessment, preschool psychology, subjective well-being/life satisfaction, psychometrics, and training/supervision.

What has been most rewarding aspect of your time as Division 16 President?

By far the most rewarding aspect has been working with great, talented colleagues from around the country. It is difficult to put into words the feeling one has by sharing, working, and collaborating with individuals who want to do right by the field and have a collective vision for the future.

What are some of your hopes for the future of school psychology as a field?

I have long believed that school psychology has an identity, but that sometimes that identity is not shared or understood well by all those in the profession. My hope is that as we evolve as a profession we do not forget our roots in education and psychology and can balance the pendulum that Dr. Gil Trachtman wrote about

so eloquently. In addition, I hope that we can continue to focus on early childhood education as a means of prevention. There is little doubt that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

What is your greatest advice for current school psychology graduate students?

I would say that the best advice I can give is that graduate students should not isolate themselves. They should get out there and be involved in as many activities as possible. They should be engaged in coursework, fieldwork, research, networking, advocacy, etc. If they are going to be change agents, they have to be well-rounded professionals in today's increasingly global, competitive market.

The SASP Student Research Award

Beginning this year SASP will be awarding a $75 cash prize for the most outstanding student research manuscript accepted for publication in *FSTP*. The prize will be awarded subsequent to publication of the Winter 2014 issue. The winning manuscript will be selected based on the following criteria as determined by a panel of experts:

- o   Potential for increasing the well-being of children by advancing the field of school psychology
- o   Degree to which the research and/or findings add to extant evidence-based literature
- o   Practical applicability for school psychologists (i.e., potential for bringing *Science to Practice*)
- o   Quality and fit of research design (i.e., statistical methodology, analysis, interpretation)
- o   Quality, clarity, and completeness of the manuscript (i.e., readability, grammar, punctuation, references, structure, adherence to *FSTP* guidelines)

Diversity Mentorship Program Spotlight

Kennetha Frye, Diversity Affairs Chair

Hi SASP Members,

Below, please find the winter SASP Diversity Mentorship Program spotlight. This spotlight features Dr. Jessica Cintrón, a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) for the Dallas Independent School District, and Keyoor Joshi, a 4th year doctoral student at University of Central Arkansas.

Best,

Kennetha

Mentor: Dr. Jessica Cintrón

Dr. Jessica Cintrón is a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) for the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), and she provides therapy at the DISD Youth and Family Center. Along with her role as a LSSP and therapist, she co-facilitates a weekly professional issues forum and research group for pre-doctoral interns with Dr. Lillie Haynes and Dr. Tia Crossley. She also supervises practicum students and LSSP interns. Dr. Cintrón completed her master's degree in 2004 and doctoral degree in 2011 in school psychology from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Cintrón joined the department in 2007 as a pre-doctoral intern. Her primary interests are psychology issues among ethnic minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, ADHD in Latino children, parenting challenges, and utilization of culturally appropriate interventions and measurements. Dr. Cintrón is a member of the National Association of School Psychology (NASP). She is a bilingual (English and Spanish) field staff with a strong desire to promote mental health in underserved communities.

What is your opinion on the future of multiculturalism within School Psychology?

I usually feel humbled when answering questions about multiculturalism because I believe that this is a complicated concept. As we become more connected through media, the lines between cultures may blur and create more of a world culture; but until that day comes (probably many decades away), multiculturalism will be something for school psychologists to struggle with. Experience has taught me that having information about the school staff, students and their family's ethnicity, race, and language is not enough for me to determine how they are acculturating. There is more to the human experience to consider – more than what the human brain can sometimes process. I would not be surprised if technology steps in to bridge the gap. Creating tools that can combine research, models, ideas, and biases with the client's experiences can help us make a decision on how to best meet his/her demands. Technology may one day redefine what we think about multiculturalism.

What comes to mind when you reflect on this mentorship experience?

Sometimes I get lost in the stressors of the profession, and I forget about the spark that attracted me to the field. Learning about my mentee's curiosities, experiences, and thoughts about the profession has been enlightening and uplifting. This experience has given me the energy to grow, reflect on the services that I

provide, and improve my craft, so that I can share with others what was once shared with me.

Mentee: Keyoor Joshi

Keyoor is a 4th year doctoral student at University of Central Arkansas. Prior to that, he resided in India. He received masters' degrees in educational management and psychology from India. He also worked as a school counselor for three years at a private school in India. He is interested in the practice of positive psychology in schools, social emotional learning for children, mindfulness based therapies, experiential learning, reflective practice, and working with child victims of trauma. His research interests include counseling outcome management in schools and multicultural school psychology. Keyoor is a skilled mountaineer and thinks that the therapeutic experience for any client is, in many ways, similar to a unique mountaineering expedition.

What have you enjoyed most about the mentee experience?

First of all, it is a good feeling to know that there is a professional who, although working full-time in the field, is willing to take time out from her busy life to mentor me! Each communication of ours is a learning experience for me. She is always full of humor and energy. Her emails are always encouraging and add to my passion for the profession of school psychology. We have developed a tradition of writing long emails, which are full of information related to her experiences and responses to questions I have posed. I feel that I have a professional "guru" with great ideas and experience, who is ready to guide me whenever needed.

What topics with regard to diversity have you discussed with your mentor?

We have discussed several topics among which are dealing with diverse clients, advantages and challenges of being a male school psychologist, issues in parent training with minority populations, cultural inequities and social perceptions, and issues with homeless children. Additionally, she has shared her experiences and suggestions related to graduate school, comprehensive examinations and the internship application process.

Do you plan to collaborate on any research projects with your mentor?

Yes, I would like to collaborate on a research project with her. Currently we are in the exploration stage.

SASP Diversity Mentoring Program Mentee Recognition Award

Kennetha Frye, *Diversity Affairs Chair*

One of the projects led by SASP's Diversity Affairs Committee is its Mentorship Program that connects student mentees in school psychology programs with faculty or practicing mentors in the field. This year marks the inaugural year of the SASP Diversity Mentoring Program Mentee Recognition Award that will recognize an outstanding student mentee. On a yearly basis, a selected student will be recognized and will receive a cash award of $75. The awarded student will have been heavily involved in the Mentorship program, will have demonstrated the potential to make significant contributions to diversity efforts within the field of school psychology and will have displayed a great deal of professionalism, leadership and service. This year's winner of the award is Prerna Arora, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She has been involved in the mentorship program for over 18 months and has already begun to make significant contributions to the field of school psychology.

Warm regards,

Kennetha

Kennetha Frye, M.S.
Division 16 SASP Diversity Affairs Chair

Book Review
Learning While Black

Kara Maile Scholer, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Hale, J. E. (2001). *Learning while Black: Creating educational excellence for African American children.* **Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.**

The title of the book *Learning While Black* was inspired by the term "driving while black." Janice Hale argues that the unfair treatment the African American community receives from police forces is equally harmful, in terms of emotional and psychological well being, to the unfair treatment that the African American community receives from the public school system. Hale lists numerous statistics as being illustrative of the oppression experienced by the African American community (e.g., lower wages compared to the White population, higher rates of incarceration, single parent households, lower high school and college graduation rates). However, Hale presents a completely different hypothesis and reasoning as to why African Americans experience this modern day repression. Unlike prejudiced and biased beliefs that blame the African American community for the struggles they endure, Hale sheds light on the current structures of our society that institutionalize racism. Rather than blaming the African American community for their struggles, Hale passionately calls attention to the real issue at hand, and it's not African Americans.

Introducing readers to her son Keith, Hale begins her exploration with corrupt modern day social structures starting at the educational level. Hale guides readers through the daily struggles that she endures while constantly fighting for fair treatment of her son in a private school. Despite the fact that not only is Keith enrolled in an expensive private school, and is in a class with only nine other students and two teachers, Hale is still expected to teach him how to read at home. During first and second grade, Keith's school has implemented a whole-word reading program that completely skips the crucial step in reading instruction: phonics. Although Hale discusses the research in support of the whole-word reading technique, she points out that despite its success, African American children do not respond well to whole-word reading instruction. Hale shares some disturbing stories that recount her conversations with Keith's teachers that mirror each other and end with the conclusion that Hale is the reason that Keith is failing in school. Not only does she vent her frustration towards Keith's teachers, but at the situation that is so prevalent in our nation. Although she has the resources and the knowledge to "navigate" the school system, she woes at the numerous single African American moms who do not have the resources or know-how to get their children an equal and fair education. In an interview in 2000, Jonathan Kozol expresses similar views and sentiments, "So long as these kinds of inequalities persist, all of us who are given expensive educations have to live with the knowledge that our victories are contaminated because the game has been rigged to our advantage" (p. 541). After multiple requests, Hale is able to negotiate with the school to give Keith the educational supports that he needs in order to succeed in academics. However, it never seems too long before another issue

pops up that she has to address in order to fight for an equal education for her son.

After third grade, things start to turn around for Keith, and Hale starts to become complacent with the treatment and instruction he starts to receive from his private school. She discusses the importance of school and parent relationships. In order for African American children to get the most out of school, schools must be willing to collaborate with parents. The first step to this collaborative relationship, explained by Olivos, Gallagher, and Aguilar (2010), is that educators must be willing to examine the beliefs and biases they have with working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families and communities (p. 8). Furthermore, it is important that educators realize that until they examine their own beliefs, those beliefs will continue to affect the way they treat and work with CLD families. Hale exasperates on the constant fighting and mistrust that she had with Keith's private school. She frequently discusses the "psychobabble" that educators spew out during parent teacher conferences in order to confuse and make parents feel uncomfortable. She discusses how teachers often showed her Keith's grades without any explanation as to how he received the grade or how they could help him better his grade. Again, Hale navigates her way through the psychobabble to discover that the teachers often gave him grades based on his behavior rather than his abilities. "When school professionals convey to CLD families that their perspectives are not as valid or important as those of the school, they may inadvertently exacerbate a parents' lack of confidence and trust," (as cited in Olivos, 2010, p. 35). Hale discusses the lack of trust that she has with Keith's teachers and administrators. She talks about the community within private schools, and how parents who are not in the "in club" are unable to access the resources and knowledge that come with being in the "club." The "in club" at Keith's private school is composed of teachers who have children that

are enrolled, parents of third generation children or higher who have access to resources previously used, and private tutoring. Hale illustrates how this "in club" dynamic just adds to the disparity between her son and the rest of the school. When schools make CLD parents feel like their perspectives are not valid, "this naturally creates tension between educators and parents, particularly when the latter perceive they are being treated as if they are unable to make proper decisions for their children," (Olivos, 2010, p. 35). In order to combat this real and ominous issue, Hale lists several educational reforms and recommendations for school districts across the nation.

In order to administer culturally and linguistically sensitive instruction, Hale suggests that teachers implement African American teaching strategies and infuse African American culture into the units. For example, African American children are generally more kinesthetic than other children; therefore Hale suggests that quiet activities be alternated with active learning. There are various research articles in support of culturally appropriate instruction, such as follows:

> The essence of CRT [culturally-responsive teaching] lies in acknowledging and understanding the role that race, language, and ethnicity play in teaching and learning. The use of experiences, perspectives, traits, and contributions of different ethnic/racial groups are seen as tools for teaching academic and social knowledge, values, and skills. In other words, CRT uses the child's culture to build a bridge to success in school achievement. (as cited in Chu, 2011, p. 205)

Hale states, that it is necessary for schools to have good leaders in order for there to be significant change in the school systems.

Too often is the scenario where teachers attend training sessions that introduce new and effective teaching strategies, and leave un-

responsible for implementing said strategies. In order for schools to actually implement culturally and linguistically sensitive instruction, teachers must be held accountable for their instructional implementation. Hale suggests that principals meet with teachers after training sessions and collaborate with the teachers in making goals to implement new culturally appropriate strategies. Furthermore, principals and administrators should often meet with teachers to check and document the progress towards the goals.

In order for educators to meet the needs of every student, it is important that they seriously consider the instructional recommendations set forth by Hale. School psychologists can help support educators to implement and discover culturally appropriate instruction techniques. By providing educators with the tools necessary to achieve a more culturally sensitive instructional practice, school psychologists can help create a more warm and safe school climate for CLD students by dint of collaborating with educators. In addition, educators and administrators must examine their own beliefs and biases in order to understand how their beliefs affect their actions. By doing so, schools will be able to more effectively collaborate with CLD families and communities. When there is trust among schools and CLD families, educators are better able to address and support the needs of CLD children. By implementing practices that are CLD sensitive, schools start to break down the inequality that exists between African American children and European American children, and thereby reducing the inequality for future generations.

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Lessons from the Field
True Life: Experience as an Intern

Kennetha Frye, M.S., University of Houston

It was shortly after 8 am on Friday, February 22nd. I was aboard a plane en route to visit my sorority sisters in New York City when I received an email with my match results. In the two weeks prior, I had played the scenario out in my mind over a thousand times as to how I would react if I did not match. I had family members, friends, and colleagues constantly reassuring me that I would match. Yet, in the back of my mind, I was always aware of the possibility of not matching - which is a reality for 25% of students every year. The email that I was about to read not only held information about where I would be spending a year or more of my life for internship, but would also (in my mind at the time) determine if all the late nights, hours spent at the library, lack of sleep, etc. over the past four years in my doctoral program were worth it. After opening the email, I could not believe it! I had matched to Dallas Independent School District (DISD), and I could not have been more excited!

In July, I made the move from Houston to Dallas to begin a new chapter in my life and began my internship in August. At this time I was very excited, but I was also very nervous. I started to second guess myself: "What if I am not ready?" and "What if my new internship cohort is not as fun and supportive as my program cohort, whom I have grown to love?" During the first couple weeks of my internship program, I dedicated time to

visiting local agencies that were potential referral sources for clients. It was an awesome experience to see that Dallas had many agencies to meet the diverse needs of children, adolescents, and families. Over the first couple of weeks I also got to know the other interns, who had come from all across the country. Even though we all shared the common experience of training in school psychology programs, our cohort is diverse in interests, personalities, and background, which has made it fun.

Two weeks later, on my first day at my site placement, I found myself, again, overcome with anxious excitement. Everything that I had learned in my graduate program, diverse practica experiences, and professional experiences would all be put to the test. Over the next couple of weeks, I acclimated to living in a new city and working in a new environment. I also assumed a new identity in the schools. In my prior roles in school districts, the majority of my time was spent conducting assessments and consulting with teachers and other staff. The bulk of my counseling experience had come from a practicum rotation at an inpatient psychiatric center. However, in Dallas ISD, 40% of my time would be spent in counseling activities.

After receiving my caseload, which included children, adolescents, and families who were in need of individual, group, and family therapy for diverse reasons, I was able to take on new,

exciting, and, at times, complex cases. With the help of my supervisor, Dr. Lillie Haynes, I was able to work through some of these complex cases and rise to the occasion by using and implementing interventions and therapeutic techniques that I had learned while in my doctoral program. Throughout this experience and related supervision, I gradually felt more comfortable taking on an autonomous role and working through my cases. This, I believe, has been one of the most rewarding experiences of being an intern. Additionally, it felt great knowing that even as a pre-doctoral intern, I was not expected to know everything. It was clear that the staff at Dallas ISD, including Dr. April Miller, Dr. Jessica Cintron, Dr. Susan Munoz and Dr. Tia Crossley, were invested in providing me support and a quality training experience.

Has it been easy? No, but as the late Nelson Mandela once said, "When people are determined, they can overcome anything." So far my time as an intern has been an amazing experience and I often feel reassured that I matched at the perfect site to meet my needs. With the help of the wonderful staff at Dallas ISD and a supportive environment, I am achieving my training goals and, most importantly, feel that I am growing as a clinician and as a person.

Lessons from the Field
Clean Slate Workshop: Intervention In Middle School In Puerto Rico

Mariselee Díaz Conde, BA, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus
Francisco O. Muriel Vega, BA, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

Developmental psychologists recognize that environmental influences play a role in emotional, cognitive and physical growth. Emotionally distressing situations and tensions between peers (e.g., cyberbullying) can adversely impact academic performance. This manuscript describes an interdisciplinary workshop intervention applied to a group of ninth grade students at a middle school in Puerto Rico. Workshop facilitators included school counselors, school psychologists and school psychology graduate students The main purpose of the intervention was to improve socioemotional functioning by facilitating teamwork, group cohesion and confidence among peers. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants completed questionnaires to evaluate the organization, content, time requirements, and objectives of the workshop. Sixty-nine percent of participants categorized the activity as "excellent." Group facilitators also expressed satisfaction with the experience and expressed an interest in further administrations of the workshop.

Bullying is one of the most common problems among children and adolescents around the world. Studies show that students between 11 and 18 years of age frequently report having been victims of bullying (Jose, Kljacovick, Scheib & Notter, 2011). At least 25% of all students will be affected by bullying at some point during their school years (Sassu, Elinoff, Bray & Kehle, 2004). Behaviors described as bullying include a variety of settings and activities. In recent years, growing attention has been drawn to the widespread manifestations of bullying by electronic communications commonly referred to as cyberbullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008;

Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004; Jose, Kljacovick, Scheib & Notter, 2011). Cyberbullying is defined as bullying via e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, the Web, or through digital messages sent to a cellular phone (Kowalski, Limber & Agaston, 2008; Eden, Heiman & Olenik, 2013). This phenomenon has caused problems for many students and for parents and teachers alike who are concerned about the emotional consequences that may result from bullying. Despite such concerns, the cyberbullying phenomenon has been studied in a limited way. Thus, there is a pressing need for the development of more prevention and intervention strategies to combat the growing problem of cyberbullying in our schools and communities.

During the spring of 2013 the authors completed a practicum in school psychology supervised by Professor Frances Boulon, PhD, at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. One of our practice settings was a middle school located in an urban area of Puerto Rico. The school's counselors, Dr. Mari Rosa and Professor Norma Rosa, requested assistance with the effects of a cyberbullying incident that was creating tension and emotional outbursts among ninth grade students. We agreed to develop an intervention that would allow students to vent some of their concerns and focus on developing teamwork with fellow students to help facilitate the transition into tenth grade. This teamwork took the form of organizing graduation and other

celebratory events. The activity was termed *Clean Slate Workshop* to symbolize beginning tenth grade with a "clean slate" in terms of grade point averages (GPA'S) that will be considered for college admission. It was also meant to suggest that entering high School offers a "fresh start" at which problematic issues associated with middle school can be left behind. We used this metaphor to imply that students can have a clean slate in terms of relationships with peers in addition to a clean GPA slate.

During the weeks prior to the workshop, the school counselors provided individual attention to students affected by cyberbullying. In contrast, the workshop was designed to promote teamwork, strengthen group cohesion and increase confidence among peers. The workshop design is congruent with the National Association of School Psychologist's Practice Model, in that it promotes instruction in social-emotional development as part of the educational process for students (NASP, 2010).

The ninth-grade group included 90 students. In order to facilitate the participation of each student in team building meetings, it was decided to form nine subgroups of 10 students each. These nine subgroups were placed in separate classrooms during the workshop, with two facilitators for each. The school counselors assigned the students to groups ensuring that there were no groups including "cliques" or students with already established ties. The idea was to promote interaction among students who usually did not interact at school. The facilitators were all graduate students at University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus pursuing degrees in school psychology excepting one student enrolled in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program. The practicum supervisor, along with fellow school psychologist Dr. Nelly Zambarana, and two school counselors, monitored the event and were on call to address any crises that might arise.

The workshop took place on a regular school day and lasted from 8:00 am to noon. At the beginning, both students and facilitators introduced themselves and discussed the rules. The first activity was referred to as *Building A New Ninth Grade*. On the desktop of each classroom, the facilitators had placed a tower of building blocks from the game *Jenga* which students were instructed to sit around. The tower was a symbolic representation of ninth grade. Each student had to take away a block from the tower and say something that could be improved in their class. Facilitators ensured every student listened to what their peers said. The activity allowed students to express issues not discussed before, so each idea mentioned was new. For one group, despite the high number of blocks that had been removed, the tower remained standing. Noticing this, students commented that their class "was like the tower: still standing despite difficulties." After everyone had taken their blocks, they returned them to the tower. In the next round students presented ideas to improve their class. This was meant to highlight the importance of avoiding excessive focusing on criticism by focusing, instead, on finding solutions to problems. Facilitators emphasized that every student possesses attributes and talents that could contribute to the improvement of their class.

The next activity was called *The Spider's Web Exercise,* which required students to form a circle and throw a ball of yarn to another student. Each time they threw the ball they had to share with the group an attribute they thought described the person to whom they passed the ball. The students enjoyed this activity and some were pleasantly surprised by their peer's comments. After everyone had participated, students found themselves entangled in the web formed by the yarn, symbolizing group unity. This activity promoted group cohesion among the students and helped to boost their self-esteem as they realized that their peers recognized virtues in

them.

After taking a snack break, students were invited to take out pictures from their middle school years that they were asked to bring when they were first invited to the workshop. This activity was called *The Arts That Bind Us* during which students shared, with the group, memories related to their photos and formed a collage on a cardboard letter or number that had been assigned to the group. Students who did not bring pictures were provided with magazines and newspapers from which to cut words and figures. This ensured that everyone could participate. When the activity was completed, an assembly was called where students from all groups presented their collage and formed the phrase "*Clase 2016*" (Class of 2016) with the letters and numbers assigned to each one of the individual groups.

Students expressed openly how satisfied they felt with the workshop during their presentations of the collages. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to each participant to anonymously evaluate the workshop. Sixty-nine percent of students categorized the activity as "excellent" and 31% categorized it as "good". Based on these results, we considered the workshop a successful endeavor that provided students an opportunity to freely express themselves, and contribute new ideas to improve their high school experience as the class of 2016. The counselors commented that they hope to repeat the experience with the Class of 2017 with the support of graduate psychology faculty and students and expressed a desire to make this program a tradition for all ninth grade classes transitioning to high school.

Without doubt, adverse and emotionally charged interactions between peers, such as cyberbullying, can negatively impact academic performance to a degree that warrants intervention. Regarding this dynamic, special consideration seems warranted for students transitioning to high school who, often, are already experiencing difficulties stemming

from the increased academic rigor of high school. One promising intervention has been described here – the results of which suggest its utility for promoting healthy emotional development, which is linked to positive educational outcomes. Moreover, it is aligned with the developmental literature, which recognizes that one's surrounds can be manipulated to combat and counteract adverse environmental influences. We are pleased to share the results of the *Clean Slate Workshop* as a promising socioemotional intervention for improving student well being by facilitating meaningful teamwork and conflict management among peers.

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About the Authors

Mariselee Díaz Conde, BA is a fourth year doctoral student in a psychology graduate program at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. She currently serves as a teaching assistant for graduate courses in statistics applied to psychology. Her research interests include music therapy, clinical psychology and school psychology.

Francisco O. Muriel Vega, BA is a fifth year doctoral student at in psychology graduate program at the, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. He currently is doing an internship in clinical psychology. His research interests include clinical psychology, psychological assessment and school psychology.

Forum
Promoting Cross-Divisional Collaboration: Division 16 and Division 53

Katherine A. Stoll, M.C., The University of Arizona;
Division 16, Student Interest Liaison

Davielle Lakind, M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago;
Division 53, Student Representative

The American Psychological Association (APA) implemented a new submission process for proposals to the 2014 Annual Convention in order to promote cross-divisional collaborative programming. Although collaboration between divisions is nothing new, the goal of this programming is to focus attention on the role of APA and the field of psychology as a "unifying force" ("Submit Proposals," 2013). The importance of collaborations between divisions was also emphasized at the APAGS Division Student Representative Network (APAGS-DSRN) meeting during the 2013 APA Annual Convention. As a result of the APA's efforts, many divisions are taking the initiative to work with each other in order to support the interests of their students. Besides working on collaborative programming or social events for the 2014 convention, several divisions are submitting grants to support student training, holding joint divisional meetings or conferences, and creating channels of communication to share ideas (Wood, 2013). The Division 16, Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP) 2013 Executive Board began to reach out to student leaders of APA divisions that are closely related to the field of school psychology and our mission to promote the "development and dissemination of a knowledge base that enhances the life experiences of children, families, and school personnel."

We are excited to announce the commencement of collaborative efforts with the student leaders of Division 53, the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. Division 53's very active student advisory board has developed and manages a number of student initiatives, including a mentorship program that connects undergraduates and post-baccalaureates interested in child and adolescent clinical psychology with graduate students in the specialty; a "Career Column" on the Division 53 website in which professionals in the field with widely varying career paths share their experiences and insights; an annual Student Achievement Award given to one undergraduate and three graduate students; and programming at the APA Convention. The division also sponsors www.effectivechildtherapy.com to facilitate the dissemination of information pertaining to evidence-based practices and treatments.

Division 53's official mission is "to serve children, adolescents, and families with the best possible clinical care based on psychological science." Initiatives such as www.effectivechildtherapy.com highlight Division 53's view that fulfillment of its stated mission involves getting the highest quality evidence-based care into the hands of as many practitioners as possible. One highly effective means for doing this is to establish healthy working partnerships with other APA

divisions, for example APA Division 16: School Psychology. Our collaboration with Division 53 makes perfect sense in light of the fact that more children seek and receive mental health services in schools than in any other venue (Farmer, Burns, Phillips, Angold, & Costello, 2003; Merikangas, Nakamura, & Kessler, 2009) and given that mental health services provided in school-based settings are likely to reduce the number of barriers that prevent access to care by children and adolescents (Committee on School Health, 2004). The advent of this collaboration comes at an especially critical time in the movement to provide youth with access to mental health services via school-based mental health centers with the establishment of federal funding through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010; Smith, 2013). Now more than ever, it is clear that partitioning school psychology as something separate from other parts of child and adolescent clinical psychology does the field no favors; bringing our two divisions together for dialogue and dissemination, and for student and professional development opportunities, stands to benefit all of us.

Although our discussions on ways to collaborate with Division 53 are in the beginning stages, we have identified a few possible starting points. First, our divisions will work together to promote student-relevant programming at the APA Annual Convention (e.g., at the Student Research Forum). Second, we will begin sharing relevant information or resources via our student listservs and websites with student members. Third, we will feature relevant research from students in Division 53 through our quarterly newsletter, *From Science to Practice* (FSTP). We are interested in student feedback on any ideas that may help us work with Division 53 or other divisions in the coming months. Both Division 16 and 53 student leaders are looking forward to the opportunity to collaborate with one another in order to promote the interest of school and clinical psychology graduate students working

with children, adolescents, and their families.

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About the Authors

Katherine Stoll, M.C., is a third year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at The University of Arizona. She is currently representing the 2013 Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP) Executive Board as the Student Interest Liaison. She has spent over a decade in the field of education as both a teacher and a school counselor. Her primary research interests are diverse and

include childhood behavioral disorders and interventions, juvenile delinquency, school-based mental health services, and pediatric obesity.

Davielle Lakind, M.A., is a third year doctoral student in the Clinical Psychology program at The University of Illinois at Chicago, and a Student Representative for APA Division 53, the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. She works with the Research Group on Mental Health Services for Urban Children and Families in the Institute for Juvenile Research. Her interests revolve around the integration of mental health services and supports for children and families in low-income communities into natural settings, especially schools, as well as the implementation of support and supervision structures necessary to facilitate high quality, sustainable service provision or prevention and promotion practices by teachers, paraprofessionals and other extant community members.

Research Review

Examining Family-School Partnerships: Defining Features and Future Directions

Michael J. Coutts, Shannon R. Holmes, Amanda Moen & Sonya Bhatia
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

This article identifies family-school partnerships as a distinct form of family involvement in which teachers and caregivers collaborate to address children's needs. From an ecological perspective, the authors propose some defining features of family-school partnerships. These include collaboration on child-focused goals, shared responsibility and decision making, inclusion of all pertinent parties, building strengths and promoting skills, and an emphasis on continuity across systems (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Clarke et al., 2010; Crosnoe et al., 2010; Daniel, 2011; Garbacz et al., 2008; Jones, 2010; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). Current research is described, which indicates that family-school partnerships have a significant effect on children's academic, behavioral, social and emotional outcomes. Practice implications, the need for consensus regarding the features of family-school partnerships, and the importance of developing consistent methods for measuring the effectiveness of family-school partnerships is addressed. Limitations to current research and suggestions for future research are also presented.

Keywords: family-school partnerships, family involvement, collaboration, ecological perspective

Note: Due to the diversifying profile of families in the United States, the term "family involvement" is used in place of "parent involvement" and "caregiver" is used in place of "parent" to more accurately reflect the current state of the construct.

Two of the most important systems influencing children's development are families and schools. Although education is the primary role of schools in children's development, families also play a central role in educational outcomes. In particular, family participation in children's education has been shown to be an essential part of children's social, emotional, behavioral and academic growth (Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Family participation in children's education can take many forms, including family involvement activities and family-school partnership activities. However, these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature without distinguishing unique aspects of the different types of participation. Thus, the purpose of this article is to propose a set of features for defining family-school partnerships by: (a) differentiating family-school partnerships from other family involvement activities, (b) describing key features of family-school partnerships, (c) identifying limitations in the family-school partnership literature, and

(d) suggesting future directions for research in this area.

Differentiating Family-School Partnerships and Family Involvement

Family Involvement

In a broad sense, family involvement in education can be defined as the dedication of family resources to a child's education (Grolnick & Slowiaczeck, 1994). Sheldon and Epstein (2005) identified six general categories of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. These categories include activities such as volunteering at school, participating in parent training, joining the PTA, taking a child to a cultural event, discussing school with the child or the child's teacher or helping the child with homework. As such, family involvement generally: (a) emphasizes one setting (e.g., home *or* school), (b) uses unidirectional communication (e.g., school personnel teaching caregivers to use a preplanned set of skills at home with their children), and (c) has clearly defined hierarchical roles (e.g., school personnel serving the role of instructor and the caregiver the role of learner; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

A model of family involvement, as illustrated by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), documents the process whereby families become involved in their child's education. The first step in the model is a parent's decision to involve themselves in their child's education, based on their perception of the role of parents in education, their sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed academically and the opportunities provided by the child and school. The type of involvement (i.e., one of the aforementioned six types) that the parent chooses is then based upon their unique skill set, the time and energy they have available, or the invitations from the child, teacher or the school. Once parents choose which type of

involvement to engage in, they use modeling of school-related behaviors, reinforcement of child school-related behaviors and/or instruction to influence child outcomes, which are defined as skills, knowledge and efficacy for succeeding in school. The impact of parental involvement is mediated by parent use of developmentally appropriate strategies and the fit between parent actions and school expectations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The model described emphasizes one setting, with the parent being involved either at school or at home, as opposed to across settings. Unidirectional communication also appears in the model, with the parent responding to invitations to be involved from the child, teacher or school. There are also clearly defined roles and expectations set forth, with the parent choosing to work with their child at home or participate in activities that the school has offered.

Family-School Partnerships

Although many definitions of family-school partnerships exist, herein they are defined as "child-centered connections between individuals in the home and school settings who share responsibility for supporting the growth and development of children" (Clarke, Sheridan, & Woods, 2010, p. 61). Unlike family involvement, the focus of this definition is on the relationship between members of the home and school settings, their joint roles and responsibilities and their collaborative work in addressing children's needs. In family-school partnerships, caregivers and teachers are viewed as equals who have unique strengths and are jointly accountable for student success (Reschly & Christenson, 2012).

Family-school partnerships are grounded in an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which views children's development as influenced by the many systems in which they function (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem).

In particular, family-school partnerships assume that optimal development occurs when there are healthy relationships *within* the primary systems within which children have direct contact (e.g., home, school; the microsystem) and *across* these systems (i.e., the mesosystem). Therefore, family-school partnerships focus dually on supporting children in the home and school setting and creating positive relationships between caregivers and teachers.

Key Features of Family-School Partnerships

Several features appear necessary to facilitate effective family-school partnerships. Based on a review of the literature, the following defining features of family-school partnerships are proposed: collaboration on child-focused goals, shared responsibility and decision making, inclusion of all pertinent parties, building strengths and promoting skills, and placing an emphasis on continuity across systems (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Clarke et al., 2010; Crosnoe et al., 2010; Daniel, 2011; Garbacz et al., 2008; Jones, 2010; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008).

Collaboration on Student-Focused Goals

The first feature of family-school partnerships is collaboration between families and schools toward achieving common goals for children. Collaboration has been defined as families and schools working collegially and jointly and valuing each other's input toward meeting a shared goal for a child (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). Collaborative relationships are the backbone of any family-school partnership.

Collaboration cannot occur without a healthy relationship between families and school personnel. Healthy family-school relationships include three elements: trust, sensitivity and equality (Clarke et al., 2010). Trust is hypothesized to facilitate all other

components of family-school partnerships (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). For families and schools to work collaboratively toward common goals they must trust that each member of the partnership is acting in ways that will help them meet agreed upon goals. The importance of trust in family-school partnerships can be seen in the seminal research conducted by Adams and Christenson (2000). They found that the perceived quality of the family-school relationship by caregivers and teachers was the strongest predictor of trust, and this trust was positively correlated with credits earned, grade point average and attendance for high school students (Adams & Christenson, 2000).

The second element of a healthy family-school relationship is sensitivity. Sensitivity is defined as the degree to which participants in one setting adapt to the individual needs of participants in another setting (i.e., home-school). Currently, across the United States, cultural differences between families and schools occur more often than in years past (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010); thus, it is important that families and schools be sensitive to the cultural background of each member in a partnership. Differences between families and schools should be viewed as strengths rather than potential barriers that might be problematic. Some cultural differences requiring sensitivity in family-school relationships include language, beliefs about discipline and rewards, religious affiliations, and socioeconomic status.

The final element of a healthy family-school relationship is equality. Equality within a family-school partnership is demonstrated by acknowledging that each member of the partnership has unique strengths and information about the child that they bring to the problem-solving process. Families often enter these partnerships viewing the relationship as one of inequality, with school personnel having more power (Lareau & McNamara-Horvat, 1999); thus, school

personnel may need to foster and promote equality within the relationship by openly acknowledging family strengths and valuing family opinions.

Shared Responsibility and Decision Making

The second defining feature of family-school partnerships is shared responsibility and decision-making. When individuals within collaborative partnerships recognize the unique strengths of all members, the tone is set for all parties to feel like valued members, share in the responsibility for outcomes, and join in the decision making process. In contrast, schools have traditionally been the primary decision makers regarding children's education. Shared responsibility and mutual input can help prevent blame when partners experience problems or difficulties (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). When faced with a difficult problem, partners can immediately begin working together toward a solution instead of spending time discussing who is at fault.

Inclusion of All Pertinent Parties

Family-school partnerships may also include many important members of the child's microsystems. The ever-changing family structure in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) can alter traditional family-school partnership practices. Now it is recognized that parents, grandparents, siblings, other caregivers, community members, school psychologists, principals and other professionals can participate and contribute to the partnership. Inclusive partnerships allow for a more diverse set of input from important professionals (e.g., psychologists, pediatricians) who can inform the problem-solving process. For example, caregivers and a teacher of a first grader with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) might enter into a partnership to help support the child's work completion at home and school. In this case it

might be helpful to have the child's therapist or psychiatrist join the partnership and provide additional perspectives and recommendations.

Building Strengths and Promoting Skills

Promoting competencies of all members is another important feature of family-school partnerships (Garbacz et al., 2008; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). Determining and then pooling the skills and strengths of school personnel *and* family members can allow for a synergistic effect resulting in a more optimal utilization of available resources. Each family-school partnership member brings different strengths and resources to the partnership allowing members opportunities to learn about, refine or adopt new skills. One example can be seen in communication patterns. A teacher with experience working with families might engage in a partnership with a family that has had little communication with schools (e.g., a family with a kindergartener that did not attend preschool). In this instance, communicating collaboratively provides the family with a model that they had not experienced previously and allows the family to adopt similar patterns in the future.

Emphasizing Continuity Across Systems

Emphasizing continuity across systems is the final distinguishing feature of family-school partnerships. Continuity is established when there is direct contact between families and schools. This allows for the coordination of resources aimed at enhancing the child's skills (Crosnoe et al., 2010). Continuity goes beyond individual practices, beliefs and values displayed by caregivers and school personnel; it consists of those same aspects being united together across settings in a strategic manner to create a consistent and predictable message for children. Significant positive correlations have been reported between academic achievement and children exposed to high levels of continuity between home and school settings

(Hansen, 1986; Phelan, Davidson & Yu, 1998; Warzon & Ginsburg-Block, 2008). Additionally, interventions targeting improvement of continuity between home and school can lead to positive behavioral and social outcomes for children (Galloway & Sheridan, 1994; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan & Mickelson, 2001; Sheridan, Kratochwill & Elliott, 1990).

Current State of the Research and Future Directions

Research on Family-School Partnerships

Research on family-school partnerships, as cited in this manuscript, has demonstrated significant positive effects on child academic, behavioral, social and emotional outcomes. Academic outcomes include improvements in children's homework (Galloway & Sheridan, 1994; Kerawalla et al., 2007; Weiner, Sheridan, & Jenson, 1998), cognitive abilities (Wasik, Ramey, Bryant, & Sparling, 1990), math performance (Blechman, Taylor, & Schrader, 1981; Galloway & Sheridan, 1994), language readiness (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011), academic engagement (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004; Lien-Thorne & Kamps, 2005; McConaughy, Kay, & Fitzgerald, 1998; Mortier, Hunt, Desimple, & Hove, 2009) and academic performance (Kelley & McCain, 1995; McDonald et al., 2006; Morrow & Young, 1997; Mortier et al., 2009).

Additionally, family-school partnerships have produced immediate and long-term positive behavioral outcomes for children. Examples of immediate positive outcomes include more appropriate classroom behaviors (Kelley & McCain, 1995), fewer tantrums and incontinence (Barry & Santarelli, 2000) and fewer disruptive behaviors (Lien-Thorne & Kamps, 2005; McConaughy et al., 1998; McDonald et al., 2006). Long-term behavioral outcomes of family-school partnerships include decreased risk of substance use and conduct

problems later in life (Connell, Dishion, Yasui, & Kavanagh, 2007; Ialongo, Werthamer, Kellam, Brown, Wang, & Lin, 1999). In addition to behavioral outcomes, positive social and emotional outcomes resulting from family-school partnerships were demonstrated through increased social interactions (Mortier et al., 2009), increased interpersonal competencies and social skill development (Colton & Sheridan, 1998; Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, & Kupzyk, 2010; Sheridan, Bovaird, Glover, Garbacz, Witte, & Kwon, 2012) and reduced emotional disturbances (McConaughy, Kay, & Fitzgerald, 1999).

Future Directions

Practice implications. School psychologists are uniquely positioned to establish, support, and sustain family-school partnership practices. However, effective family-school partnerships involve collaborative attitudes and intentional, coordinated practices. As a result, it is necessary for school psychologists to infuse two broad tactics into their practice: (1) building capacity for families and school personnel to partner with each other, and (2) prioritizing family-school partnership practices in regular activities (e.g., assessments, interventions).

School-wide support. As systems level consultants, school psychologists have the potential to build the capacity for families and schools to support student learning through coordination. School psychologists can help create the infrastructure (e.g., policies, procedures, practices) and climate (e.g., attitudes, atmosphere) necessary for joining families and schools (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). For example, school psychologists can coordinate trust-building events and activities (e.g., family fun nights, workshops for parents *and* teachers) between families and school personnel; ensure all families have the resources and opportunities to feel connected to the school (e.g., system-wide opportunities for bi-directional communication, access to

materials on school policies and procedures); and regularly include families to achieve student goals (Christenson, 2002).

Daily practices. School psychologists can embrace a partnership-orientation to their regular intervention and assessment duties. Families can be included as assessors and reporters of students' behaviors and skills (Christenson, 2002). Mesosystemic interventions (e.g., CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008) can be used to capitalize on students' in-school and out-of-school time by encouraging bi-directional communication, supporting cross system problem solving and decision making, and creating consistent and congruent practices to support student learning across home and school settings.

Research directions. Constraints within existing literature limit the conclusions that can be drawn about the unique effects of family-school partnerships. As a result, several broad lines of inquiry are necessary. These include: (1) clearly identifying and defining the central features of family-school partnerships, and (2) measuring the family-school partnership construct in ways that account for the multi-systemic impact that family-school partnerships have on child development.

Identifying and defining the features of family-school partnerships. The first line of inquiry that appears necessary concerns *how family-school partnerships are defined.* This manuscript proposes a working definition of family-school partnerships; however, to date, there is no agreed upon definition among researchers (Albright & Weissberg, 2010). Without this type of consensus, interpreting future research on family-school partnerships may be difficult, even misleading. For example, reviewing child outcomes of research on family-school partnerships, based on the definition proposed in this article, may lead to different conclusions about the effectiveness of family-school partnerships than one structured on a different conceptualization.

Defining family-school partnerships begs

the question of *what are the features of family-school partnerships?* This article presents potential features of family-school partnerships; however, many of these features have not been studied empirically. For instance, healthy family-school relationships are one hypothesized prerequisite to meaningful family-school partnerships (Clarke et al., 2010); however, this hypothesis has yet to be tested. Two lines of scientific inquiry into the features of family-school partnerships utilize meta- and component analyses. Such empirical techniques can help elucidate the operative features of family-school partnerships and make possible the comparison of family-school partnerships and family involvement activities to determine the relative strength of such interventions.

Systems-level measurement. Family-school partnership interventions are impacted by "circular causality" wherein changes in one system cause changes to other systems (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Unfortunately, most of the outcomes reported in the literature focus solely on child outcomes; few studies report outcome effects related to caregiver and teacher behavior (i.e., behaviors of members within the microsystems) and even fewer report evidence of impacts on the home-school relationship (i.e., the mesosystem).

Determining methods to accurately measure *family-school partnerships* is sorely needed. Past approaches have proven insufficient in assessing the various outcomes of family-school partnership interventions (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002). There is a pressing need for the development of multi-method (e.g., self-report, observation), multi-source and cross-system measures to adequately assess the effects of these interventions. One example of such a measure is the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale-II (PTRS-II; Vickers & Minke, 1995). It is intended to measure the quality of caregiver-teacher relationships. Recent research demonstrated that teacher reports of the caregiver-teacher relationship mediated effects

of a family-school partnership intervention (Sheridan et al., 2012). Additionally, future research might seek to identify caregiver-teacher relationship measures that use direct observation techniques. A well-researched coding system exists for measuring spousal relationship qualities using direct observations of interactions (Gottman, 1996) and may serve as a model for the development of a caregiver-teacher relationship quality measure.

Clearly evident are the advantages of a primary and secondary educational system in which family-school partnerships are a central component. Although much is known about the impact of these partnerships, broad questions remain regarding how best to encapsulate and measure them. To answer these questions will require an expanded research effort to better define and operationalize features of the family-school partnership. Proposed herein are considerations important to this effort and possible directions for future research. Through rigorous research, training, and collaboration with practitioners, prevention and intervention approaches that unlock the power and potential of family-school collaboration, to direct and redirect developmental trajectories, can be generated and refined.

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Student Affiliates of School Psychology Chapter Spotlight: University of Northern Colorado

Katherine A. Stoll, M.C., *Student Interest Liaison*

The Student Affiliates of School Psychology (SASP) organization at the University of Northern Colorado began the year with events to engage students in our activities before the school year began! On campus, the organization is called the School Psychology Student Organization (SPSO). All students enrolled in the School Psychology program are considered members of the organization and are invited to attend all events. The year began by inviting incoming students to attend a student led orientation on campus. The goals of the orientation were to welcome and build connections with incoming students, help make the transition to graduate school a smooth one, and encourage students to become actively involved in the school psychology program and larger community. The orientation included a student and faculty meet- and-greet, a tour of the building where coursework and counseling practicums occur, and a discussion about unique aspects of studying school psychology at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Additionally, students received packets containing calendars of fall semester events hosted by the organization, lists of important dates from the graduate school, information about resources and activities on campus, and contact information for various community resources. Following the orientation, all school psychology students and faculty were invited to attend dinner at a local restaurant.

Inviting new students to become involved with the student organization upon entering the program is important to actively engage all students in the mission of creating a supportive student community at UNC. In addition, SPSO has worked to organize events for students to build academic and professional skills, and also to connect students socially. SPSO has an established mentorship system that pairs up incoming students with second or third year student mentors who provide the new students with information about the program, the university, and ways to get involved and be successful in the program. This has proven beneficial to new students as connections are established with more advanced students. These connections facilitate learning from the experiences of others and help to establish personal and professional relationships. In addition, the organization formed connections with other on-campus organizations and facilitated opportunities for school psychology students to attend a variety of events on campus, including a presentation by Temple Grandin.

The primary purpose of SPSO is to promote professional development of graduate students studying school psychology at UNC. For example, officers of SPSO have worked to provide opportunities for students to lead professional development activities. One or two events are planned each month to serve this purpose. Students are invited to hold lunch seminars where they can present current or past research in which they have been involved, discuss current issues in school psychology, or share case studies from practicum experiences. All school psychology students are invited to attend as well as students from related disciplines. This increases collaborative relationships and research opportunities with students in other related departments, such as special education and teacher education programs. Recent seminar topics have included

written language skill development, cyber bullying prevention and intervention, changes to special education law in Colorado, traumatic brain injury interventions in schools, and applications of play therapy to school psychology. Through these events, students are given the opportunity to practice presentation skills and present research to colleagues. A recent event sponsored by the SPSO was a screening of the documentary *Bully,* followed by a student led discussion and presentation of resources on bullying prevention and intervention.

SPSO officers are continually planning future events for students aimed at furthering the organization's mission. The officers continue to create opportunities for students to present research, encourage presentations at conferences such as the Colorado Society of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association, provide resources to students, provide professional development presentations, and organize social events. SPSO officers are currently planning community outreach and volunteer activities for all school psychology students. Previously, SPSO members have assisted teachers in local elementary school classrooms with reading and math lessons and have presented to numerous groups of middle school students about the field of school psychology. In the past SPSO hosted a two-day suicide prevention training offered for free to interested student and university employees. This year, the officers are considering a partnership with a local agency to assist the many refugee families living in the community. Through these events, students are able to form connections with other students, faculty and community organizations, while pursuing personal endeavors and developing skills for future employment.

About the Authors

Jessica Byrd is a fifth year Ph.D. student in the school psychology program at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. Jessica received her B.A. in psychology from the University of Northern Colorado. Her primary research interests are crisis prevention and intervention, cyber-bullying, and diverse students populations.

Lisa Little is a fourth year Ph.D. student in the school psychology program at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. Lisa received her B.A. in psychology and family services at the University of Northern Iowa in 2010. Her primary research interests include early childhood, writing skills development, instructional practices, and home-school collaboration.

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Additional benefits for student (SASP) members include:
- Links to national and international leadership in school psychology and psychology as a whole.
- Student activities at national conferences (e.g., SASP Student Research Forum at the APA Convention)
- Resources and financial supports (e.g., Division 16/SASP Diversity Scholarships and the Student Research Forum Travel Awards).
- Information on current topics pertaining to school psychology and forums to build connections with other school psychology professionals (e.g., SASP listserv, Facebook page, and website).
- Opportunities to get involved in activities that will further strengthen this discipline in the future. Opportunities to disseminate research and to share ideas through the SASP publication, *School Psychology: From Science to Practice.*
- Connections to a national network of local SASP chapters as well as guidance in building a local SASP chapter at your institution.
- Mentoring opportunities (e.g., SASP's Diversity Mentoring Program) that create relationships between students and professionals in the field.
- Opportunities to become involved in SASP governance.