



# School Psychology: From Science to Practice to Policy

Hello FSPP Readers!

As the editors of *FSPP*, we are excited to present to you another informative issue. Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue, including our board members, the *FSPP* Editorial Committee, student members, local SASP chapters, and professionals in the field.

Inside this issue, you will first find a letter from SASP president, Aaron Haddock. Following, you will see the call for submissions for our Summer 2016 Special Topics Issue focusing on Internships in School Psychology. Next, we feature an interview with Dr. Mark Shinn from National Louis University. This quarter's *Lesson from the Field* comes from Nicole Benson, focusing on accountability in urban schools. This is followed by another article featuring urban schools, written by Lauren Wargelin, Sidra Ayoub, & Eman Tiba. We'll then highlight this year's Advanced Student Diversity Scholarship Winner, Melanie Nelson. Finally, our chapter spotlight of the quarter comes from the University of Southern Maine, written by Hilarie Fotter.

We hope you enjoy, and we look forward to receiving your spring submissions!

Jacqueline Canonaco, Editor  
Sarah Babcock, Editor-Elect

The *FSPP* Editorial Board is currently accepting submissions for the Spring 2016 issue. **See page 3 for details.**

The submission deadline is: **June 10, 2016**

The purpose of *School Psychology: From Science to Practice to Policy* (*FSPP*) is twofold and includes disseminating student scholarship pertaining to the study and practice of school psychology and circulating news relevant to the Student Affiliates of School Psychology (SASP). SASP is a student-led organization appended to Division 16: School Psychology, of the American Psychological Association (APA). *FSPP* is prepared by Editor, Jacqueline Canonaco, ([Jacqueline.Canonaco@gmail.com](mailto:Jacqueline.Canonaco@gmail.com)) and by Editor-Elect, Sarah Babcock ([sbabcock@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:sbabcock@education.ucsb.edu)). The content and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect or infer the positions of SASP, Division 16 of APA, or of APA itself. For more information about SASP or FSTP please visit <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-16/students/index.aspx>.

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## Message from the Board

*Aaron Haddock, SASP President*



It may be surprising to learn that APA Division 16's Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP) is the only student organization of its kind within the discipline. In fact, SASP is one of the most highly organized and active student affiliate groups of all the APA divisions.

Formed under the auspices of the Division 16 Executive Committee, SASP aims to keep graduate students apprised of issues pertaining to school psychology and involve graduate students in the broader professional organization in order to strengthen the discipline and foster the next generation of leaders in the field of school psychology.

The purpose of SASP is highly coordinated with the objectives of Division 16 of APA and thus shares its mission to enhance the status of children, youth, and adults as learners and productive citizens in schools, families, and communities. In addition to these aims, SASP seeks to represent graduate students within the field of school psychology through:

- Facilitating and collaborating with Division 16 to promote the training and professional development of graduate students within the field.
- Serving as an information resource that will disperse school psychology-related information to its members.
- Promoting graduate student leadership development in order to communicate with and advocate for the concerns of school psychology graduate students.
- Maintaining and disseminating information on current issues in the field (e.g., legislation, professional and ethical issues, internship and employment opportunities).
- Serving as a means of advocacy for graduate students within APA and Division 16 governance.

To accomplish these goals, graduate students

in school psychology programs across the nation provide leadership for SASP through positions on its Executive Board. There are currently nine positions available: President, President-Elect, Past-President, Student Interest Liaison, Membership Chair, Convention Chair, Diversity Affairs Chair, Communications Liaison, and Editor and Editor-Elect of the SASP quarterly newsletter *From Science to Practice to Policy*. The Executive Board meets as a group monthly via Skype to plan and update board members on activities. The SASP President attends the Division 16 Mid-Winter Meeting to coordinate activities, and SASP board members also often arrange to meet with one another and Division 16 leadership at the NASP and APA conventions. SASP also assists in the establishment of local university-based SASP chapters in school psychology programs nationwide.

SASP annually hosts the Student Research Forum during the APA convention. The Student Research Forum provides graduate students with an opportunity to network, present original research, and learn from a luminary in the field of school psychology. This year, Dr. Robert Volpe of Northeastern University will provide a keynote address tailored to the needs of graduate students in school psychology. SASP's returning Convention Chair, Maribeth Wicoff (East Carolina University), is currently hard at work planning another outstanding Student Research Forum to be held at the upcoming convention. SASP invites you to attend the Student Research Forum on Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 to 9:50am at the APA convention this summer in Denver, Colorado. Light breakfast items and beverages will be served.

If you are interested in getting more involved with SASP, please be in touch and visit our website at <http://apadivision16.org/sasp/>. We hope to hear from you!

## Call for Submissions

The *FSPP* Editorial Board is currently accepting submissions for the Summer 2016 Special Topic Issue, and we would like to hear from you! We are pleased to announce that **Internships in School Psychology** will be the focus of this issue. The submission deadline is June 10, 2016.

*FSPP* serves as an excellent venue for (1) informing the membership of relevant opportunities, resources, and happenings within and outside of the field; (2) promoting and disseminating graduate student scholarship; (3) sharing valuable practicum and training experiences; (4) exchanging information and opinions on critical issues within the discipline; and (5) disseminating scientific and applied insights from new and seasoned professionals.

The editorial board encourages submissions in the form of:

- **Book Reviews** of texts related to the Internship Process (e.g., helpful texts used during the internship process).
- **Policy Pieces** describing experiences with, or news of, professional or legislative policies affecting the Internship Process (e.g., new APA grant program).
- **Policy Pieces focusing on the barriers school psychology applicants face in the APPIC match process, including the lack of school-based internship sites through APPIC. Discussions on non-APPIC internship sites are also welcome.**
- **Lessons from the Field** highlighting a unique experience, insight, or applied skill related to helping move the field forward in meeting the internship needs of students.
- **First person accounts regarding the navigation of the internship match process.**
- **Chapter Spotlights** sharing the joint efforts of SASP chapters and their training programs to meet the internship needs of students.

*FSPP* celebrates diversity in experiences and authorship, and thus invites students, interns, faculty, and practitioners to contribute to the publication. Please visit the following website for submission guidelines:

<http://apadivision16.org/sasp/from-science-to-practice-to-policy-fspp/>

Questions and manuscripts may be submitted to:

Editor Jacqueline Canonaco ([jacqueline.canonaco@gmail.com](mailto:jacqueline.canonaco@gmail.com))

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you!

*The FSPP Editorial Board*

## *Luminaries in the Field*

### **An Interview with Mark R. Shinn, Ph.D.**

*National Louis University*

Written by: Sarah Babcock

***What originally led you to the field of school psychology? What career experiences were pivotal for you?***

I was working as a post BA position in behavior support at an elementary school. The district had one such person in each building to provide behavior support for kids and teachers. They had a contract with a University Professor to supervise/train us. His name was Stan Deno, a pretty famous special education professor. He also became my supervisor when I entered the first Minnesota cohort of Board Certified Behavior Analysts. He asked me what I was planning to do when I “grew up” meaning I couldn’t be in my current position for a career. The pay was bad, no benefits. He suggested school psychology. We had one in our building. He was worthless and teachers didn’t find him useful. Stan suggested I become a school psychologist that teachers and students *did* find useful.

Pivotal? Being exposed to leaders in the field while a grad student at the University of Minnesota, learning who does good work—and what makes poor work. My four years in high needs urban districts was irreplaceable and only confirmed that testing students to find out what was wrong with *them* was not going to lead to effective intervention. My move to the University of Oregon from a practice perspective to a teaching perspective was a big change, but led me to learn even more from some unbelievable researchers who worked at Oregon in Special Education, Psychology, and in the community research institutes.

***What aspect(s) of your career do you find most rewarding?***

Producing the next generations of professionals who will prevent or solve problems, not test/identify them.

***What have been the biggest challenges of your career and how have you stayed committed to your work?***

University politics and the corruption of money everywhere. Schools doing what serves the needs of adults more often than the needs of students. Our failure to take a stance about things that don’t work. Changes in a model that places the blame almost solely on the student—or their families—where we build systems to meet the needs of adults, not children and students, is probably one of the most discouraging things a school psychologist will encounter. That is, if that school psychologist has the idea that our goal is not to just identify the problem and assign the blame, but to intervene.

Most school psychologists, especially those in training, probably have never heard of Maynard C. Reynolds. Not Cecil Reynolds, Maynard Reynolds. A person who was a cornerstone of ECHA in 1975 and a real leader. Maynard likened the role of the school psychologist to an astronomer. “My job is to observe the stars and make predictions. Of course, I can’t change the stars, but the predictions are important.” Reynolds pointed out that our job is *not* to make predictions, but to *change* those predictions.

So how do I persist with some of the barriers? Why after consulting off and on with school systems like Chicago (I started consulting with them in 1991, spent 6 months with them as their RTI consultant in 2010 and was invited to the Mayor’s Literacy Task Force in 2015)? ...because I believe that education

makes all the difference in the world. I have foundation, influenced by others that I turn to.

*Dr. Shinn shared three pieces of writing, two from Maynard C. Reynolds, and one from Jack Bardon, recommended at the end of this column. Dr. Shinn notes, “Yup they are old articles, but without a foundation, ‘he who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast.’” – Leonardo da Vinci.*

***What are some of the most important lessons you've learned through your years of consultation with schools and departments of education to implement RTI and scientifically-based progress monitoring?***

People are far more interested in screening than progress monitoring. The former is about finding the “broken” kid—which adults have a long standing tradition of emphasis. Progress monitoring is always going to be less attractive, because it is about what adults *do* about the problem. It’s about *us* and our effects. Too often, we don’t want to know.

Good leadership is very hard to find. One presumes that people get leadership positions because of increased knowledge and skill. It’s disappointing to find out otherwise.

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

That we will focus on prevention and remediation using research-based practices, that school psychologists will become better at knowing research based instructional and behavioral programs than what comes in a test kit. That we will become a teacher’s “best friend” and support students and parents.

J. L. Graden, J. E. Zins, & M. J. Curtis (Eds.), *Alternative educational delivery systems: Enhancing instructional options for all students* (pp. 563-571). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

Reynolds, M. C. (1988). [Alternative educational delivery systems: Implications for school psychology](#). In J. L. Graden, J. E. Zins, & M. J. Curtis (Eds.), *Alternative educational delivery systems: Enhancing instructional options for all students* (pp. 555-562). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

Reynolds, M. C., & Birch, J. W. (1977). [Teaching Exceptional Children in All America's Schools: A First Course for Teachers and Principals](#). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

### **Biography**

Dr. Shinn’s career has been targeted toward the training of professional school psychologists who use evidence-based practices to make a difference with all students and their families. Prior to joining National Louis in 2003, he was a professor of School Psychology and Special Education at the University of Oregon. His particular area of expertise is assessment, especially progress monitoring and screening of basic skills through a set of practices called Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). He contributed to the development of AIMSweb. He began working as a school psychologist on special assignment for St. Paul, MN and Minneapolis, MN. In 2003, he was awarded the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 16 (School Psychology) Jack Bardon Award for Distinguished Career Contributions and in 2013, he was honored with the University of Minnesota School Psychology Program Distinguished Alumni Award.

### **Suggested Readings:**

Bardon, J. I. (1988). [Alternative educational delivery approaches: Implications for school psychology](#). In

## *Lessons from the Field:* **The Asinine Assumption of Accountability in Urban Schools**

**Nicole M. Benson**  
*The Ohio State University*

### **Accountability in Urban Schools**



The concept of accountability for student performance in our nation's schools seemed like a good solution to the achievement gap, however, it quickly proved to be a data-driven measure of students' knowledge in basic skills as opposed to a more productive measure of building better

curriculum (Ravitch, 2010). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) sought to incorporate high-stakes standardized testing as a means of holding schools accountable for helping all students achieve academic success (defined by state proficiency levels) regardless of race, socioeconomic status, language or special education status (Ravitch, 2010). The hope was to improve academic outcomes, create an even playing field for students and teachers, and increase social equality by simply incorporating common curriculum and instruction in the classroom (Harris, 2012). Although the increased focus on academic accountability among school staff was warranted, NCLB was nothing more than a simple solution to a complex problem (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). Instead of an educational reform that raises the standards and improves the substance of learning, NCLB simply gave all schools one high-achieving goal to work towards despite availability of resources, current level of students, student backgrounds, teacher quality, and many other school-specific factors (Ravitch, 2010). Moreover, an act that sought to create social equality in schools may have reproduced, rather than challenged, social inequality (Diamond & Spillane, 2004).

Urban schools, in particular, struggle with the

demands of accountability because they are forced to work twice as hard and encounter many more barriers to academic success than suburban, private, and charter schools. Urban schools "confront an uphill battle" (p. 204) when preparing their students given the academic, professional, financial, and instructional disparities that they have been dealt (Harris, 2012). Therefore, the question remains: are these measures effective at improving student success and social equality, and ultimately, what are we left with?

### **Lessons from the Field**

While on practicum in my school psychology training program, I was faced with one example of the negative consequences of accountability in urban schools. My practicum site was a joint junior high and high school building in an urban, inner city neighborhood that housed grades seven through twelve. This school was ranked in Academic Emergency due to its performance on state standardized testing and was considered a Turnaround School by means of administration changes, a total remodeling of the building, and a fresh, new focus: Science Technology Engineering Mathematics. However, there has been a lot of political turmoil in this particular school district over the past couple of years and NCLB played a major role in these problems. For starters, the current director of special education was brought out of retirement in the last year because the previous director was "encouraged to resign" due to questionable, even illegal, acts within the schools. Moreover, the principal was approached with a similar ultimatum because of a cheating scandal regarding students' performance. Regardless of the details, parties were involved in illegal acts

that stemmed from pressures of the state.

In her book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*, Diane Ravitch (2010) discussed the problems, and various ethically and legally questionable solutions, associated with standardized testing in schools. For example, at my practicum site, the principal was accused of scrubbing, or removing, attendance and test records and altering grades of students in order to receive a higher ranking in the district's standing for the upcoming academic year. Records of this were reviewed, found to be faulty, and confiscated for federal review. Ravitch (2010) discussed this, and many other examples of cheating in schools such as suspending or encouraging those lower performing students to stay home on big test days and assigning lower performing students to special education classrooms in order to be excluded from the school's overall performance, among others. One practice Ravitch described paralleled the current problems at my practicum site. In 2007, another major city school district in the same state was charged with scrubbed or tossed out test scores of students who were not continuously enrolled in the school year (Ravitch, 2010). Having a similar transient population of students like this, it's not surprising that my district's transient students' test scores were also scrubbed in order to boost the average of the school. Unfortunately, this is yet another example of how the pressures to get higher test scores may drive educators to make unethical choices that could cost them their jobs and children their education. What was most disconcerting, however, is that principals were only doing what their supervisor, otherwise known in the district as the "data czar," instructed them to do. Principals were ordered to mandatory meetings and mandated to change records. Several principals, such as the one at my practicum, not only scrubbed data, but changed grades. In the end, four principals lost their jobs and their licenses due to the massive data scrubbing in their schools. The data czar was found guilty, but not before he retired with his full pension.

### Turning a Blind Eye

Why then are urban schools driven to such desperate measures? It may be due to the inequalities in the availability of resources, the transient nature of the population, family and environmental factors, teacher preparation and training, individual student factors and developmental levels, low expectations by faculty of minority children, or the simple fact that urban schools were struggling to meet state standards even before NCLB. Regardless, when faced with a new, difficult-to-attain goal of standardized testing it is no surprise that urban schools are forced to consider unethical options when the alternative could be closing its doors for good (Waber, Gerber, Turcios & Wagner, 2006). One topic that is heavily discussed in the research on accountability in urban schools is the debate as to why children from economically disadvantaged and minority backgrounds perform more poorly on standardized tests than their more advantaged counterparts. More importantly, if this is a proven fact, why then are we still using these measures, measures that supposedly strive for social equality, to assess one's ability and academic level? The end result is the same: children from socially disadvantaged, urban communities are at a much higher risk of failing these tests and thus are being hindered in their future educational attainment and/or career (Waber et al., 2006).

To further investigate such difficult questions, I turned to the research. For example, data from K-8 teachers in Chicago's urban schools revealed that the pressure from high-stakes testing may lead to a narrow curriculum, or teaching to the test, where teachers focus on teaching only the basic skills in order to meet the demands of state standardized testing (Diamond, 2012). First, data showed that majority of the classroom instruction was teacher-directed with less student involvement and discussion than non-urban schools. Second, low-performing schools were not able to easily change instruction because of deeply entrenched negative beliefs that school staff held about low-income and minority students (Diamond, 2012).

These beliefs, dominated by implicit racialism and classism, hold students responsible for change rather than targeting teacher practices (Harris, 2012). Because of this, some teachers differentiated standards for certain students, which completely undermines the purpose of standardized curriculum and testing (Diamond, 2012). In the end, results from this data depicts yet another negative consequence of accountability in urban schools: pressure from high-stake testing can actually inhibit a teacher's instruction and limit their quality of instruction, therefore, moving away from the goal of standardization in our nation's curriculum and schools (Diamond, 2012).

### What now?

As I have briefly outlined and experienced at my own practicum site, accountability in urban schools, in the manner it is currently used, is detrimental; often leading to reprehensible activities on the part of administrators, the marginalization of low-performing students, reproduction of social inequality, and narrowing of instructional content. These assumptions of accountability in urban schools are unjust and flawed. Thus, we must work toward giving the low-performing schools an equal fighting chance at success, such that, "in order to avoid detrimentally impacting low-performing schools, they must be provided with additional resources to enhance teacher... instruction...[and] to ensure that low-performing students are not further marginalized by a policy ostensibly designed to help them" (Diamond & Spillane, 2004, p. 1172). I stand up against the idea of accountability and punishing low performing schools. The true demise of our education system- a system that only hurts our society's children and our society as a whole.

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**Nicole Benson** received her Bachelor's in Psychology at Miami University and her Master's in Education at The Ohio State University. Currently, she is in the fourth year of pursuing her Doctorate degree in School Psychology from The Ohio State University where she is conducting research related to mental health and social justice. In addition, Nicole has been working in the private and clinical settings since her undergraduate career where she held positions at two children's hospitals in Ohio and is currently at a private practice office in Central Ohio working with children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. Nicole is looking forward to continuing her research related to mental health and specifically working on her dissertation involving youth with autism and bullying in the schools.

# Providing Mental Health Services in Schools: Our Experience Opening a Counseling Center in an Urban Elementary School

Lauren Wargelin, Sidra Ayoub, & Eman Tiba

All three authors are third-year doctoral students at The Ohio State University (OSU) in Columbus, Ohio. For our third-year practicum experience, we worked in an urban elementary school in Columbus, Ohio. Birchwood Elementary (pseudonym) is located in an area characterized by high crime rates and poor living conditions. The majority of the students who attend Birchwood Elementary live in the neighborhood surrounding the school, are Black (89.6%), and are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (83.1%; Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011). Over the past nine years, there have been four different principals at Birchwood. The current principal has led Birchwood for three years. She is enthusiastic, hopeful, and actively works to provide the best resources to her students. One of these resources includes a partnership with OSU.

Though several programs are collaborating with Birchwood Elementary, our school psychology program has had a consistent presence in the school for the past several years. Students in their first year of the program work one-on-one with classroom teachers as consultants and help them develop and implement class-wide behavioral interventions. In the past, third-year students have not worked with Birchwood Elementary. However, we wanted to expand services for Birchwood students by spending our third-year practicum opening a counseling center, called Buckeye Club, within the school. In order to successfully implement our vision of readily available mental health services for students, we and our faculty supervisors completed several steps. These steps will be outlined in the subsequent sections and include building relationships between OSU and Birchwood, conceptualizing our model of service delivery, and planning the details of Buckeye Club to ensure consistent implementation of services. Finally, we will describe our experiences working with students after opening Buckeye Club and the lessons we have learned about both counseling elementary students and running a counseling center

within a school.

## Laying the Groundwork for School-University Collaboration

At OSU, Dr. Antoinette Miranda is the program director of the school psychology program. She is also the recipient of the William H. and Laceryjette V. Casto Professorship in Interprofessional Education, a result of more than 20 years of work in the Columbus area schools and community. Dr. Miranda met the principal of Birchwood Elementary, Ms. Brownie (pseudonym), at a teacher-training program that Dr. Miranda organized. Ms. Brownie was impressed by Dr. Miranda's work in the community and asked Dr. Miranda to be a part of the school's development. Dr. Miranda built a relationship with Ms. Brownie and began to establish connections between the school and the OSU community.

The first year Dr. Miranda worked with Birchwood, she focused on building her relationship with the principal and teachers. Ms. Brownie was the fourth principal in the school. When she started at Birchwood, the school was receiving failing grades on state report cards. Her goal was to strengthen the school's academic structure and improve state report card scores. During the second year, Dr. Miranda consulted with the school on data collection, as well as academic and behavioral interventions in the classrooms. That year, Dr. Miranda introduced the topic of providing a school-wide mental health service for students, with the idea that school psychology students from OSU could complete their third-year practicum at Birchwood. During the third year of her work with Birchwood, Dr. Miranda educated teachers on the benefits of school-wide mental health services, culminating with the implementation of an in-school clinic.

After three years of cultivating trust and working with school staff to improve their knowledge of the importance of mental health, Dr. Miranda and the OSU school psychology program had developed a strong relationship with Ms. Brownie and the Birchwood Elementary community. Dr. Miranda's work at Birchwood is important as it enabled us to develop and open Buckeye Club within four months. Without Dr. Miranda's established relationship with the Birchwood community, the process of opening a counseling center would have taken us significantly more time. We would have had to build trust with the school before they would have agreed to the partnership. In order for school-community partnerships to be successful, community agencies must build strong relationships and seek to understand the schools' needs prior to implementing services.

### **Conceptualizing and Implementing a Counseling Center**

Once our faculty laid the groundwork for our work at Birchwood Elementary, we spent the first semester of our third-year practicum planning the details for Buckeye Club. We wanted to ensure that the necessary infrastructure was in place before we began working with students. This involved conceptualizing our model of service delivery, determining how we would be supervised, creating templates for various documents that all three of us would use in working with students, standardizing procedures for working with students, acquiring the necessary supplies, and identifying the students in need of our services.

The first step we took in opening Buckeye Club was to choose a name for the counseling center and conceptualize our model of service delivery. Buckeye Club was chosen as a name because it referenced our university's mascot. Furthermore, we chose to call our center a club rather than a clinic because we wanted to break down the stigma associated with receiving mental health services. We decided that we would engage in a mix of individual and group counseling and that students' individual needs would determine which type of support they would receive. We would work with each student for

approximately 30 to 45 minutes once per week. This was determined by 1) the number of students we anticipated seeing, and 2) our availability. Each of us would be in the clinic one day per week, meaning Buckeye Club would be staffed three out of five days per week. We would split referrals as evenly as possible so all of us could build skills with a variety of students. In our previous courses in counseling children, we were trained on multiple theoretical approaches. These approaches included techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT; Stallard, 2005), solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC; Sklare, 2005), person-centered therapy (Cooper & McLeod, 2011), and psychodynamic theory (Jacobs, 2004). In order to broaden our knowledge of various types of counseling, we researched play and art therapy techniques that would be applicable to our work at Birchwood Elementary and that could be used with kindergarten through fifth-grade students. We agreed that we would use an eclectic approach, choosing the most appropriate methods for each individual child. We also decided that we would use pre-packaged curricula for group counseling in order to save the time of developing new curricula (e.g., The Ophelia Project for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls referred for relational aggression; The Ophelia Project, 2016).

After conceptualizing the services, we would provide in Buckeye Club, we determined how we would obtain meaningful supervision. Part of our supervision would come from our monthly practicum meetings with our faculty advisors. This would enable us to ensure that our services are in compliance with the standards of the third-year practicum experience for the OSU school psychology program. The second way we would obtain supervision would be from the school psychologist employed by Birchwood Elementary. She would be available for consultation and would ensure that we are complying with school policies. Finally, we would provide peer supervision to one another through weekly meetings. This would enable us to explore solutions to problems prior to consulting with our on-site and faculty supervisors.

Next, we created document templates to document and manage student visits. We wanted to ensure that

every student had the same experience in Buckeye Club regardless of his/her counselor. Creating standard documents was one method for ensuring consistency. We created parent permission forms to send home with students referred for counseling, student intake sheets with a summary of student information (e.g., referral concern, teacher, grade, parent/guardian name and contact information, and times during the day that the student is available), and teacher interview forms that included questions about students' strengths and problem behaviors. These documents enabled us to remain organized and obtain meaningful information about students prior to beginning counseling.

Another way we ensured that students' experiences in Buckeye Club would be consistent was to develop standard procedures for working with all students. The procedures we developed included the referral process, obtaining parent permission, creating a folder for each student, and interviewing teachers after obtaining consent. We also standardized the process of taking notes on student sessions, which is important for documenting student treatment and progress. Finally, we researched and reviewed the process for contacting Children's Services in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Establishing clear procedures before working with students enabled Buckeye Club to run systematically once the center opened.

After determining the details of service delivery in Buckeye Club, we gathered all of the supplies we would need for counseling. All three of us had extra school supplies at home that we brought to Buckeye Club and we ordered additional supplies to supplement our existing materials. We purchased art supplies to use for art-based counseling activities. We also purchased therapeutic board games. Finally, we purchased small prizes that children could take home with them after each session. These small prizes were given to students to reinforce their hard work in their sessions and to motivate them to return.

Our final steps in opening Buckeye Club were to inform teachers about the services we would be providing and obtain referrals for students who

would benefit from counseling. We started by talking with teachers individually about Buckeye Club and asking them to begin thinking of students they thought would be good candidates. Next, we emailed the entire school staff through our site-based supervisor and asked each teacher to nominate up to three students that would benefit from counseling services. Teachers were asked to provide brief background information and a summary of their concerns for every student they referred. We sent parent permission forms home with every student referred by teachers. We also called each parent who would be receiving a permission form in order to provide that guardian with additional information and answer any questions they may have. After signed permission forms were returned, we determined whether students would receive individual or group counseling. Then, groups and individual cases were evenly distributed between all three practicum students to ensure equitable caseloads. Each counselor would work with the same students each week to facilitate consistency and relationship building between the students and us.

Though developing the infrastructure for Buckeye Club took us an entire semester, this work enabled us to focus solely on students once we began counseling. Our first semester of planning also taught us how to develop and implement a counseling center in a school, which will facilitate a more informed approach to implementation in other schools.

### **Providing Mental Health Service to Elementary Students**

After establishing the infrastructure of Buckeye Club, we started working with the students who had been referred for counseling. Acknowledging that children in urban low-income communities are affected by environmental factors, we used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) as our main frame of reference, which is also a

building block of the OSU school psychology program. This model assumes that children do not experience their lives in a vacuum; instead, their development is significantly dependent on the interconnectedness of home, school, and community. Adopting this perspective in our practice enabled us to provide individualized services that are flexible in nature, one that considers contextual variables that impact a child's life. It also guided us in designing counseling strategies that consider the effects of environmental factors in students' lives. For example, several students with whom we worked displayed aggressive behavior in school after being exposed to violence and aggression at home and in their community. Possessing an ecological perspective helped to ensure we continually considered the effects of children's environment on their behavior and presenting concerns and that sometimes a problematic behavior is a manifestation of incongruence between the home and school.

Along with the family and community factors influencing the children at Birchwood Elementary, we examined students' unique needs and concerns in order to devise counseling sessions that would be most effective. We encountered a diverse range of referral issues such as anger management, low self-esteem, bullying, poor social skills, rule breaking, and defiance. To address the diversity of individual students' concerns, we adopted integrated multiple models of counseling (e.g., SFBT, CBT). We incorporated a variety of non-threatening, play-based strategies such as storytelling, role-playing, giving color codes to emotions, and completing incomplete sentences, which facilitated rapport building. We considered differences in students' age, gender, grade, and maturity level before combining students in one group. Furthermore, we individually asked students if they wanted to work in a group setting or one-on-one basis and modified our plans based on their preferences.

After including a variety of techniques and strategies in our counseling plans, we made sure

that we were incorporating all vital steps of counseling process, including building rapport, assessing problems, setting goals, implementing counseling interventions, evaluating outcomes, and terminating/modifying/extending sessions. The strategies we used for each step are described below.

### **Establishing Rapport**

In our initial sessions, we built relationships with the students by introducing ourselves, addressing them by their names, ensuring they were comfortable, and learning about them through open-ended questions. In our group sessions, we also included icebreaker games to allow students to get to know each other and feel comfortable in a new setting. Then, we explained limits of confidentiality and discussed the purpose and schedule of our weekly meetings. We focused on engaging students in exploring issues that they needed help with or that were affecting them in school and/or home. We also used preference assessments to determine the relative desirability of different kinds of reinforcers and prizes for students.

### **Assessing Student Problems and Setting Goals**

After completing the activities for initial sessions, we moved forward with problem assessment. We determined the referral concerns, which were teacher-driven for most of the students. However, instead of making teacher-reported concerns a center of our conversations, we encouraged students to share their own points of view. When students could not identify any goals for our sessions, we indirectly explored their concerns by asking questions, paraphrasing, playing games, completing art projects, telling stories, and role playing. These strategies provided students with a medium for expression that was less intimidating, enabling them to talk about their concerns. Finally, we determined problems to be addressed based on both referral concerns and students' self-report. We ensured that students' goals were self-initiated, feasible/achievable, within the range of our

knowledge and skills, indicative of positive growth, and consistent with the desired outcomes.

### **Implementing Counseling Interventions**

We used an eclectic approach based on SFBT, CBT, person-centered therapy, psychodynamic theory, art therapy, and play therapy. Eclectic, integrative approaches are promising because they promote active growth in counseling and therapeutic sessions (Norcross & Goldfried, 2005). This approach helped us to better understand students' needs and enabled students to communicate with us in positive, fun ways. For example, we incorporated counseling games that were directly or indirectly related to students' concerns. These games helped students to process hypothetical problem situations and practice the problem solving process. We also used role-play, which was fun and useful for young students who were unsure how to express their feelings and emotions.

### **Evaluating Outcomes**

We practiced ongoing assessment by evaluating problem behaviors at the beginning, middle, and end of the counseling. We used formal and informal evaluative methods to determine if students were moving towards desired goals. We used session rating scales to determine how students rated their progress towards their goals. We also gave teachers progress-monitoring forms to keep the track of changes in students' behavior. Our informal evaluation methods included talking to students and teachers about students' progress throughout counseling. Based on the progress and feedback obtained through formal and informal methods, we decided if a counseling should be terminated, modified, or extended. We adjusted our counseling techniques and strategies if we did not see improvements. We continued sessions if we saw some improvement, but not at the expected level. Finally, we terminated sessions when evaluations indicated that students had met their desired goals.

Providing mental health service to students was a great learning experience for the three of us. Employing an ecological model and an eclectic approach enabled us to work with diverse students and address a spectrum of referral concerns. We

learned that every child is unique, and every session needs to be planned differently in order to meet the individual needs of the students. Following the steps of counseling process enabled us to provide mental health services in a systematic manner and track students' progress towards desired goals from the beginning to the end. We also found out the steps of rapport building and goal setting to sometimes take longer than expected. Finally, we learned that using the same counseling strategies with the same student on two different days could bring different outcomes due to students' variable personal or environmental factors. We learned to be flexible and think quickly on our feet as we adapted to students' particular needs each day. Overall, we not only provided mental health services to students who had been referred to us, but also acquired tremendous skills that will prepare us to provide school-based mental health services in the future.

In conclusion, our overarching goal for collaboration with Birchwood Elementary was to begin to improve academic, behavioral, and psychological outcomes for the children who attend the school. This year, we focused on mental health by establishing Buckeye Club, where we provided individual and group counseling to students grades kindergarten through 5. Through this experience, we practiced invaluable counseling and consultation skills. Furthermore, we learned how to establish successful community-school partnerships. It is our goal that over time, the partnership between OSU and Birchwood Elementary will grow. With support from our graduate program faculty, we designed Buckeye Club to be a sustainable program at Birchwood Elementary. This program will continue to provide consistent support to children and training for graduate students. Each year, third-year doctoral students in their practicum will counsel students at Buckeye Club. After spending one year in the school, fourth-year doctoral students will provide supervision and guidance to the third-year students. This will enable students to learn supervisory and direct service skills. In the future, we hope that this increased presence will result in greater student utilization of Buckeye Club services. We hope that after students receive psychological support, they will be better prepared for the demands of their classrooms. This will enable them to thrive

academically and leave Birchwood as confident and resilient adolescents.

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**Eman Tiba** is a third-year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at the Ohio State University. Her research interest includes the experiences of Arab American students in school and how creative expression can contribute to student's well-being. She is from Dublin, Ohio and currently resides there. Eman served as the President Elect of the SASP-OSU Chapter for the 2015-2016 academic year and was recently elected President for the 2016-2017 year.

**Lauren Wargelin** is a third-year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at the Ohio State University. She is passionate about working with urban and marginalized populations. Her research interests relate to the applications of technology in teaching academic skills. Lauren served as the President Elect of the SASP-OSU Chapter for the 2014-2015 academic year and the President for the 2015-2016 year.

**Sidra Saleem Ayoub** is a third-year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at the Ohio State University. She is passionate about working with students who need help in academic, emotional, and/or social domains. Her five years of teaching experience and current academic pursuit highlight her commitment to her passion. Her research interests include mental health in schools and urban education.

## Advanced Student Diversity Scholarship

Melanie Nelson  
*University of British Columbia*  
 2016 Award Winner



*The Advanced Student Diversity Scholarship is awarded annually to an advanced specialist or doctoral student to help offset the cost of graduate school and/or internship preparation.*

*Congratulations to Melanie Nelson, this year's outstanding winner!*

My name is Melanie Nelson and I am an Indigenous woman from the Smith family of the Samahquam Band (In-SHUCK-ch Nation) and the Jimmie family of the Squiala Band (Sto:lo Nation). I have nine years of teaching experience in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia working with students from kindergarten through grade 12 in mainstream, adapted, modified and alternate settings. I supported students of a variety of abilities, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic groups. The majority of my teaching experience is in Special Education and Indigenous Education. I am currently completing a Masters of Arts in School Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

I am part of a small but highly diverse cohort of school psychology students. We share with each other our experiences and perspectives on working with individuals and families from our respective cultures with the understanding that there is great variation within groups due to acculturation, regional differences and individual experiences. I share

knowledge of best practice approaches to working with Indigenous youth and families based on my experience growing up as an Indigenous person in British Columbia, my years of experience teaching Indigenous youth, and my knowledge of residential schools and how they continue to impact many Indigenous families.

My thesis will explore the Indigenous parent perspective of the special education system in British Columbia. A significant number of students self-identify as Indigenous in British Columbia (roughly 11% annually) and Indigenous students have been over-represented in several special needs categories for many years. Many parents experience difficulties with the process of assessment, special needs designation, and learning how to navigate the special education system. Parents of Indigenous ancestry may experience additional stress when interacting with the special education system because of previous involvement with residential schools, where many individuals experience racism, loss of culture and maltreatment. Researchers are finding that the impact of residential schools is expressed in second-generation offspring of survivors and continues to impact at the individual, family and community levels. With a better understanding of parent perceptions of the process, we can begin to develop culturally responsive approaches to address the education of Indigenous students with special needs.

Once I have completed my Masters of Arts, I hope to continue to raise awareness of issues with

Indigenous education in the past and present by collaborating with school-based and district staff in various roles, continuing to speak in schools about the legacy of residential school and sharing my knowledge and experience of best practice approaches to working with Indigenous populations with fellow school psychologists. I will work with Indigenous groups to improve education in federally funded, on-reserve schools. I will also work with public schools to improve Aboriginal education in provincially funded schools. It is also my priority to continue research with Aboriginal individuals once I have completed my Doctor of Philosophy. It is invaluable to have an Aboriginal researcher conducting decolonizing research with Aboriginal populations, especially in the area of special education.

Addressing diversity is important to the field of psychology because of North America's increasingly multicultural population as well as the great variation within groups. Diversity also includes acknowledging a continuum of learning styles as well as increasing awareness and acceptance of all sexual orientations and gender identities. I believe it is my responsibility as a training school psychologist to learn about cultures other than mine, learn best practice approaches to working with individuals of various cultures and share this knowledge with fellow practitioners and schools. In addition, I believe it is my responsibility to advocate for all learners.

## Chapter Spotlight

University of Southern Maine  
Hilarie Fotter

The school psychology program at USM began as a Master's specialist program and has developed into a Doctoral program that also offers an Educational Psychology degree with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis. Graduates of the USM School Psychology program have a long-standing record of high after-graduation employment rates, with graduates perusing careers as traditional practitioners in schools, faculty members, private practice clinicians, specialty school directors, consultants, and other interesting roles. We have three, full time faculty and a number of adjunct faculty who guide and support our students. Typical student cohorts are small (from 4-8 students each year entering) and opportunities to develop professionally from a tight-knit group occur regularly.

***The Maine Student Affiliates of School Psychology (MaineSASP)*** is a group comprised of school psychology graduate students at The University of Southern Maine. MaineSASP strives to:

- Foster a sense of community among and with our fellow graduate students;
- Network with alumni, faculty, and professional organizations;
- Interact with the community through volunteering, advocacy, and financial support;
- Link up with local and national organizations and compile a list of workshops, talks, and conventions on our site; and

- Support a specific local community charity through fundraisers and volunteer time.

### Leadership Opportunities

MaineSASP officers hold their positions for one year terms. Currently we have positions developed for a full executive board. In these positions, students have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and hone communication skills. Elections occur once a year, assuming there is sufficient student interest in a given year as the student body is quite small.

### Collaboration, Networking and Organizational Affiliations

At its core our MaineSASP group serves as an opportunity for students to gather and discuss our studies, learn from each other, and share new ideas. One of the ongoing agenda items during monthly meetings is to provide an opportunity for students acting as Student Representative to various organizations to share their knowledge, experiences, and information with the group. These leadership opportunities allow our students to enter the workforce already developed in local and national networks, communities, and professional organizations.

### Activities

The MaineSASP Chapter has developed and participated in a number of charitable activities, awareness campaigns, and community building

activities. Fundraisers have been arranged to provide donations of books and school supplies to local Maine charities helping children and their families. There have been opportunities for student members to participate in fundraising events for NAMI and for Autism Awareness. The School Psychology program and its student groups continually seek to further improve community involvement and increase awareness to the community. Localized learning opportunities have included how to create a competitive CV, how to manage time effectively, increasing diversity awareness and understanding, and learning how to utilize computer programs for tracking field experience.

### Goals for the Future

As our program, the field, and our student body evolves, we set goals and values to guide our decision making for the future. Some of the goals in our MaineSASP group include: establishing a student mentoring and support network, participating in community and advocacy efforts, developing student-led workshops, and bringing in guest speakers from the field to gain a better understanding of the many and varied roles school psychologists perform.

**Hilarie Fotter** is a fourth year doctoral student at USM. She has been a member of the SASP chapter since 2011 and currently serves as the chapter's President. She received a BS in Elementary Education from the University of Maine in Farmington. Hilarie currently serves as a GA Case Manager at USM in the University Health and Counseling Center, and as a School Psychological Assistant for recent graduates of the program at Foreside Behavior Associates in Falmouth, ME. Her research interests include trauma and teaching resiliency to overcome traumatic events, bridging school psychological services in higher education, and broadening the role of school psychologists in Maine to include a more comprehensive service model that includes prevention and behavioral wellness services.



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Division 16 membership activities, benefits, and services include:

- Engaging in the national and international conversation on school psychology. Division 16 is active in advocating for the interests of school psychologists on issues both within the broader field of psychology as well as with constituent school psychology organizations.
- Receiving cutting edge publications such as School Psychology Quarterly, the Division's APA journal and the high quality peer-reviewed newsletter *The School Psychologist*.
- Networking with colleagues and leaders in the field who share your interest in School Psychology.
- Contributing to the Science for Policy and Practice in School Psychology during Division 16 programming at the APA annual convention via round table discussions, symposia, poster sessions, workshops and the superlative Division 16 Hospitality Suite and Social Hour.
- Joining the Division 16 listserv to keep up to date with current trends, professional opportunities, and the on-going dialogue on school psychology matters.
- Recognizing outstanding achievements. Division 16 honors Students (e.g., APF-Paul Henkin travel awards, minority scholarships, AGS outstanding scholarship awards), Early Career Scholars (e.g., Lightner Witmer Award), and substantial contributors to the field (e.g., Fellow, Senior Scientist, Jack Bardon Distinguished Service Award, Lifetime Achievement Award).
- Becoming involved in Division 16 governance. There are many opportunities to join committees and run for executive office in the Division.

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 to Policy (FSPP)*.
- 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.