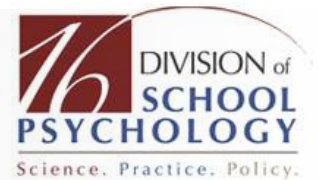


School Psychology: From Science to Practice to Policy



In this Issue of FSPP

Hello *FSPP* readers!

Thanks to the help of our board members, student members, local SASP chapters, as well as school psychologists, professors, and graduate students from around the country, we have been able to compile an incredible Summer 2015 Issue! You will find that many of this issue's pieces focus on the themes of social justice and equity within school psychology – very timely and important subjects in our field!

This issue begins with an update on the SASP Executive Board from President Cait Hynes. Next, we share our interview with a luminary in the field of school and pediatric psychology, Dr. Thomas Power; we encourage you to read his excellent reflections and insights on his own career working in a hospital setting, as well as the fields of school and pediatric psychology more generally. Additionally, we bring you original student research and writing in our Research Review, Lessons from the Field, Policy & Advocacy, and Diversity Mentor Program sections. Don't forget to check out a great book review recommendation, as well as a Chapter Spotlight from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Enjoy!

Ashley Mayworm, Editor

Jacqueline Canonaco, Editor-Elect

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Message From the Board

Cait Hynes, SASP President

Greetings SASP Members,



Happy summer! I hope all of our members are enjoying the summer months regardless of whether they are working, in class, or taking time for a little much needed rest and relaxation!

The 123rd APA Convention in Toronto is fast approaching and I hope to see many of you there! SASP's Student Research Forum will be held at the convention on August 8th from 8-9:50am. The forum will include a presentation by Dr. Katie Eklund of the University of Arizona as well as an electronic poster session featuring student research. We will also be

honoring the recipients of our 2015 Diversity scholarship winners so be sure to stop by! I would also like to take this opportunity to invite all SASP members to attend the Division 16 Business Meeting on August 8th from 2-3:50pm. The Business Meeting is an opportunity to see what Division 16 and SASP have accomplished so far this year, hear plans for the future, and connect with other members of the division.

While 2015 is more than half over, there are still many exciting things to come for SASP in the coming months! Each member of our executive board has individual plans for their respective offices, but the majority of our goals as an organization for the remainder of the year focus on maximizing opportunities for you, our members. Earlier this year SASP developed four ad hoc committees to help develop additional programming for and outreach to members. I'd like to thank those members who volunteered their time to serve on these committees and who are doing wonderful work on behalf of their fellow members. In the fall, we hope to launch a number of initiatives that will recognize the accomplishments of graduate students of school psychology, increase a sense of community among our chapters, and highlight diversity issues. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved, please feel free to let us know! I encourage SASP members to email me and other members of the SASP leadership team at any time with your input regarding how we can better serve you and make lasting student contributions to the field of school psychology. I am honored to continue to serve SASP and Div. 16, and I look forward to hearing from you in the days ahead!

Cait Hynes, 2015 SASP President

The purpose of *School Psychology: From Science to Practice to Policy (FSPP)* is two fold 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, Ashley Mayworm (ashley.mayworm@gmail.com), and by Editor Elect, Jacqueline Canonaco, (Jacqueline.Canonaco@gmail.com). 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 *FSPP* please visit <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-16/students/index.aspx>.

Luminaries in the Field

An Interview with Dr. Thomas J. Power

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania

The *FSPP* Editors are very excited to share our interview with Dr. Thomas J. Power, a leader in the field of school and pediatric psychology and our *Summer 2015 FSPP Luminary in the Field*.



Thomas J. Power, PhD is Professor of School Psychology in Pediatrics and Psychiatry at Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Power has several roles at The Children's

Hospital of Philadelphia including Director of the Center for Management of ADHD and Chief Psychologist and Associate Chief of Academic Affairs in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Power is former editor of *School Psychology Review* and former president of the Society for the Study of School Psychology. His research interests include the assessment and treatment of ADHD, family-school collaboration, integrated behavioral health in primary care, and community-based prevention.

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

Prior to entering the field of school psychology, I obtained training and experience in school counseling. Through this work, my interest in working with children and youth in schools was strongly affirmed. I

pursued a doctoral degree in school psychology because of my interest in assuming leadership roles in the field, primarily related to program development and teaching. I was fortunate to attend a combined training program that emphasized the development of children in multiple systems. My internship at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic was critical to my development because I was introduced to systems/ecological theory and practice, which has served as the foundation for so much of my intervention and prevention work over the years. While I was finishing up my doctoral work, I took a position as a school psychologist for 2 years. This was a dream job in many ways, because I spent a good portion of my time providing teacher consultation, family-school consultation, and family therapy in this position. In fact, I was able to convince school administrators to pay an expert psychologist/family therapist to supervise my intervention and consultation work during this time.

Why did you decide to work in a hospital and how has this affected your career?

I started working in a hospital right after completion of my doctoral degree at University of Pennsylvania. I sought a hospital position because I wanted to work in an environment that would challenge me to become the best psychologist I could be, and because I wanted opportunities to become involved in clinical teaching and research. Over 30 years later, I am still

working in a hospital. My career to some extent has been a search for my identity as a school psychologist in a pediatric setting. Early on, I began to conceptualize my role as a multi-systemic specialist, that is, a psychologist who promotes inter-systemic partnerships to foster child development. The primary systems of interest for me have been family, school, and health system. Through my collaborations with colleagues who share similar interests, we coined the term “pediatric school psychology” to describe the work we do. Our understanding of this term has evolved substantially over the years to include health promotion, prevention, and intervention across virtually every system in which children develop, with a particular emphasis on underserved children from low-income, urban settings.

What are the most pressing issues in school psychology and in your primary areas of interest?

It is difficult to identify the most pressing issues, but there is enormous need for school psychology to respond to the grave inequities in education, health care, and mental health care among children of diverse socioeconomic status and racial/ethnic backgrounds. Children developing in poor neighborhoods typically experience many more threats to their health and welfare than those developing in more resourced communities. I am pleased to see that some researchers in the field are focusing their efforts on reducing educational and health disparities, and that social justice is becoming more strongly emphasized in school psychology. I would like to see researchers in our field engaged in more research related to trauma-informed approaches to education and service delivery to address the unique needs of children who are the victims of trauma and chronic stress, who represent a relatively high proportion of the child and adolescent population.

Much of my work has focused on the assessment and treatment of ADHD. Intervention research is needed to improve the academic and social functioning of these children. There is a particular need for ADHD researchers to focus on the early childhood and adolescent populations. My efforts have also focused on developing integrated models of care in the community. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, there has been strong emphasis on integrating mental health services into primary care practice. This movement has improved access to care for many children and their families. A limitation with this approach, however, is that it fails to acknowledge and link the two major venues for mental health service delivery in this country: primary care and schools. An exciting opportunity for school psychologists is to develop strategies to integrate these vital systems of care, which offer essential and complementary services for children.

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

Hospital and medical school settings have enormous resources for building a career, including specialty clinics serving children with a broad range of health and mental health conditions, opportunities to receive advanced training in evidence-based practices, access to colleagues from multiple disciplines who are engaged in exciting work, and opportunities to link research and practice. One ongoing challenge to conducting research in these settings is obtaining grant support to buy out time from clinical activities to engage in research. Success in getting grants depends upon many factors, including the availability of public and private funds to support the research you plan to do. Most awards, especially federal grants, are highly

competitive, and the level of competition for these awards has increased since 2008 with reductions in available funds. I have stayed committed to my work as a clinical researcher by refining my grant writing skills; collaborating with investigators who are excellent researchers, colleagues, and grant writers; mentoring junior faculty to enable them to obtain early career grants and working with them on their projects; and working closely with trainees who are engaged in research through their dissertations and fellowship projects.

What advice would you give to those beginning in the field?

I love to preach, but I have learned, primarily from my three adult children, that my advice is usually pretty cheap. Anyway, here are some thoughts.

1. Identify one or more persons who have the job you want. Try to get to know them, find out what they do, and how they got there.
2. Develop a mentoring plan. Select mentors who can serve complementary roles in assisting you to attain your goals. Hopefully, your mentoring team will include at least one person from your institution, in addition to one or more individuals from other institutions.
3. Surround yourself with peers and colleagues who share your vision and commitment to achieve lofty goals.
4. Be opportunistic; take full advantage of opportunities that seem aligned with your goals. Your mentors will help you determine which opportunities are worth an investment.
5. Remain goal focused, but enjoy the process and value all the persons along the way.

Policy & Advocacy: **Promoting Social Justice Fieldwork in School Psychology Training Programs**

Meghan R. Silva, M.A., CAGS, Whitney L. Kleinert, M.Ed., A. Victoria Sheppard, M.A., Melissa
Pearrow, PhD

University of Massachusetts Boston

Utilizing social justice practices for all students is a core professional competency and expectation for all school psychologists (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2010) and psychologists in general (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). In the field of school psychology, a survey of experts in cultural diversity described social justice as ensuring the protection of rights and opportunities for all (Shriberg, Bonner, Sarr, Walker, Hyland & Chester, 2008). As a school psychologist, advocating for social justice involves the promotion of school environments in which all students (a) are treated respectfully, (b) have equal access to opportunities, and (c) have equal access to resources (Briggs, 2013). School psychology ethical guidelines promote advocacy within the profession by encouraging professionals to use their training and knowledge of psychology and education to support all students (NASP, 2010).

One way to promote socially just practices is to have school psychology graduate programs incorporate the principles and practices of social justice into their training models and courses (Shriberg et al., 2008). This has been evidenced in several studies. For example, one study evidenced that counseling graduate students who perceived their training program as supportive of social justice had a greater commitment to social justice work (Beer, Spanierman, Greene, & Todd, 2012). A second example involving counselors in

training (e.g., graduate students in counseling psychology, clinical psychology, school psychology) found students' social justice self-efficacy to be significantly related to interest and commitment to social justice (Inman, Luu, Pendse, & Caskie, 2015). Lastly, a study of school psychology graduate students demonstrated that students' understanding of social justice was influenced by having program-facilitated, field-based service learning opportunities (Moy, Briggs, Shriberg, Furrey, Smith, & Tompkins, 2014). Given these findings, it is imperative for school psychology graduate programs to encompass a trajectory of experiences that foster social justice.

The discussion that follows focuses on promoting school psychology graduate students' social justice commitment and self-efficacy through social justice training and fieldwork. To achieve this we discuss (a) the definition of legislative advocacy and how it can be incorporated into a fieldwork experience for students; (b) campus partnerships that promote socially just practices at the university level; (c) a brief overview of a transnational social justice experience; and (d) ideas for incorporating social justice teachings and experiences in school psychology training programs. Overall, we review how innovative social justice fieldwork experiences can be embedded within a

school psychology PhD program as a way to promote social justice competencies.

The Department of Counseling and School Psychology (CSP) PhD program at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) has a strong commitment to social justice. A key component of the program's mission is to employ systems-level change strategies to advance local and global social justice. To promote this, the program has a required course entitled *Social Justice in Counseling and School Psychology* (CSP 701) that is taken in the first semester of the doctoral program. This course embodies many aspects of a Participatory Culture-Specific Model of Course Development (PCSMCD) described by Graybill and colleagues (2013), as it incorporates the variables identified in the PCSMCD model - instructor experiences, instructor characteristics, student characteristics, and student experiences. While exploring facets of social justice and its impact on the fields of counseling and school psychology, students have the opportunity to closely examine advocacy, systems change, power, privilege, program development, implementation, and evaluation.

A central component of the course is learning about, and participating in, legislative advocacy, which is defined as taking a stance on an issue and performing actions as a means to instigate change (Labonte, 1994). Legislative advocacy often occurs on behalf of others, which involves coordination, leadership, and legal action (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003) and is considered to be a strategy that is influenced by building relationships and strategic thinking (Huntington, 2001). As part of the course, students discuss the importance of advocacy and ways to engage with policy decision-

makers and community leaders. As face-to-face meetings are the preferred method for this work (Briggs, 2013), students prepare for a trip to the Massachusetts State House as part of a fieldwork experience.

Doctoral students and their professor visit the State House and meet with representatives to learn about advocating on behalf of those with mental health and intellectual needs. Students learn from legislators and the chair of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse committee about the importance of advocating for disadvantaged populations, particularly vulnerable populations such as those with mental illness (Briggs, 2013). For example, one cohort of students recognized that representatives are not typically mental health professionals, and therefore, may benefit from advocacy efforts and advice from those with expertise (Huntington, 2001). As such, students were encouraged to contact their local representatives and to advocate for issues in which they care about and/or have expertise.

In addition to learning about legislative advocacy, the course also teaches students ways to promote socially just practices at the university level. As part of the course, for the last three years, the doctoral students have partnered with the UMass Boston's Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS), which provides support services to undergraduate and graduate students who are in vulnerable life situations, such as facing housing instability and food insecurities. To systematically explore the specific student vulnerabilities that may act as barriers to academic success in this urban, public university, the doctoral students developed and disseminated a

survey among the student body to understand the housing instability and food insecurity realities among students at UMass Boston, as well as investigate faculty perceptions of students' food insecurity and housing instability. This experience has allowed for students to use their social justice knowledge and skills learned in class to participate in social justice practices and advocacy (Graybill et al., 2013; Moy et al., 2014). This project has served as an additional avenue for advocacy as results of the surveys have been presented at conferences and in discussions with university decision-makers. The information gathered from these surveys has also allowed members of the community to gain insight into the barriers UMass Boston students who experience housing instability and food insecurity face and how these experiences affect post-secondary education.

Partaking in guided fieldwork through service learning projects has been advocated as a vehicle for furthering students' understanding of social justice (Moy et al., 2014). Furthermore, through service learning experiences, "...students should have the opportunity to interact with individuals who differ from themselves either on a social justice-related topic or culturally" (Graybill et al., 2013, p. 226). Accordingly, graduate students in the UMass Boston CSP doctoral program have had the opportunity to embark on an inaugural transnational social justice trip to Kyrgyzstan (see Cadet, Plocha, & Wheeler, 2015 for a review). In Kyrgyzstan, the group worked with the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in implementing career training group interventions, as well as collaborated with the Psychology Department on plans to meet community needs for assessments for autism and learning disorders through the establishment of an assessment and

consultation center (Cadet et al., 2015). In summary, through social justice fieldwork experiences (e.g., advocacy at the state level, campus partnerships to advocate for the vulnerabilities facing the campus body, and a transnational social justice trip) students at UMass Boston have had innovative service learning experiences that move beyond the traditional training experiences (e.g., practicum placements).

For students or training programs interested in incorporating similar experiences, here are a few helpful tips: (1) prior to making contact with legislators, come to a consensus on an area your program is interested in learning about first-hand; (2) students should learn about their local representative(s) (Briggs, 2013), including bills that they have sponsored as well as their general contact information (e.g., phone number, email address); (3) for students interested in going to the State House, contact your local representative about setting up a tour for your program. Once a date for the visit has been established, call or e-mail the chair of your program/area of interest (e.g., Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee). Request a brief meeting for your program, keeping in mind that department chairs are usually quite busy so requesting a smaller time block (e.g., one hour) may be advantageous; and (4) counseling and school psychology programs interested in integrating social justice into their programs can start by having faculty retreats that focus on the meaning of multicultural social justice and ways it can be incorporated throughout curricula and classrooms. This is congruent with research demonstrating that training programs that are perceived to be supportive of social justice and multicultural work can enhance

students' existing commitment to social justice (Beer et al., 2012). Other strategies include the promotion of service learning experiences and internship or practicum experiences that focus on multicultural and social justice issues (Bemak, Chung, Talleyrand, Jones, & Daquin, 2011; Graybill et al., 2013; Moy et al., 2014).

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Lessons from the Field: **Disproportionality in Special Education: Ethical Considerations and Potential Solutions**

Aileen Fullchange, University of California, Santa Barbara

The U.S. Department of Education's 31st annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) found that, compared to all other ethnicities combined, black students are over twice as likely to be classified as emotionally disturbed or intellectually disabled (2009). On the other hand, Asian and Pacific Islander students are approximately 75% less likely to be classified as emotional disturbed compared to all other ethnicities combined (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Historical/Legal Background

The origins of over/underrepresentation of students in special education can be traced to the first IQ test, the Stanford-Binet, which was adapted from a test that was specifically not intended to measure intelligence and that was normed only on white students. Yet, such tests were used to draw conclusions about the intelligence level of racial minorities. It was against this backdrop that the Larry P. vs. Riles (1979) case took place. The courts examined evidence regarding the disproportionate placement of African-American children in Educably Mentally Retarded (EMR) classes and concluded that IQ tests were improperly normed and could not be used to place such students in EMR classes. At the time, African-American students made up 25% of EMR classes although they only represented 10% of the student population (Wyatt et al., 2003).

Disproportionate placement of minority youth in special education is relevant to Latino/a students as well. In 1970, a class action lawsuit, *Diana v. State Board of Education*, was filed on

behalf of a Spanish-speaking student who had been placed in an EMR class using an IQ score of 30 that was obtained from an assessment given in English. Upon re-testing in Spanish, the student no longer qualified for special education, leading the courts to rule that Spanish-speaking students must be tested in their native language (Jacob, Decker & Hartshorne, 2011). In 1982, an attempt was made to address this disproportionality through the development of what would become the Woodcock-Muñoz cognitive achievement test, which is normed on Spanish-speaking individuals (Schrank, McGrew, Ruef & Alvarado, 2005). An additional attempt to address misdiagnosis concerns is a technique called cross-battery assessment, whereby students' subtest score profiles are compared to English Language Learner (ELL) and non-ELL profiles in order to determine the validity of testing (Ortiz, 2008). Outside of these two racial/ethnic groups, no other assessments have been made to specifically test for intelligence or general intellectual ability in other minority groups.

Concerns in the Process of Special Education Placement

Although current data on the rates of misdiagnosis in special education are scant, there are a myriad of issues related to current assessment practices that seem to point to a substantial rate of misdiagnosis. The first issue is the practice of norming, which uses a representative sample of the U.S population and, hence, a small sample of minorities and is, therefore, inherently biased toward mainstream culture (García & Pearson, 1994).

Additionally, even though Spanish assessments are available, they are often not given – one study found that over 40% of assessments given to ELL students were English assessments despite students being at a beginning level of English language proficiency (Del Rio, 2007). Further, Greenfield (1997) points to numerous cultural mismatches that can occur during testing and can invalidate results. For example, some cultures, especially Asian and African ones, espouse the view that knowledge flows from adults to children, so an adult examiner attempting to elicit a response from a child from such a background may in fact yield inaccurate results.

Even prior to assessment, issues can come up that favor special education classification for minority youth. Del Rio (2007) found, in an examination of pre-referral practices with English language (EL) learners, that English language proficiency was discussed in only 27% of Student Success Team (SST) meetings and that only 52% of psychoeducational reports in these cases indicated assessment of student language proficiency in both languages prior to test administration.

One of the primary ways by which students are referred to special education is through teachers, yet racial biases can undermine the objectivity of the teacher referral process. Overall, referral rates for African-American and Hispanics are higher than those for Caucasians, and, out of those referred, more African-American students are found eligible for special education than Caucasian students (Hosp & Reschly, 2003). Teachers tend to rate African-American children as being less competent and having more behavior problems than their Caucasian counterparts as early as in the first two years of school (Sbarra & Pianta, 2001). The highest referring teachers tend to be white, Hispanic, or both;

the lowest referring teachers tend to be black (Harry & Klingner, 2006). Additionally, teachers who show more prejudice, as measured by the Implicit Association Test (IAT), a tool designed to detect individual's automatic and subconscious associations, have students with larger achievement gaps based on race/SES as well as larger differences in academic expectations between racial/SES groups (Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra & Holland, 2010).

Effectiveness of Special Education

The issue of disproportionality perhaps would not be of such great concern if special education were shown to be effective for students placed in it. However, there seems to be evidence that placement in special education is at best neutral and may carry long-term negative consequences. The achievement gap between special and general education students widens with every year that students are in school, and special education students drop out at twice the rate of general education students (Spaulding, 2010). Additionally, Kavale (1999) found in a meta-analysis of the most common special education interventions that their effect sizes ranged from none to moderate. Special education students also show worse social-emotional outcomes and functioning (Kuhn-McKearin, 2013; Wiener & Tardif, 2004).

Although there is significant evidence showing that students in special education fare worse than their peers in general education on multiple measures, without a randomized control design, it is difficult to ascertain if special education is a cause of these diminished outcomes or if the magnitude of these differences would be even larger without special education interventions. Given the obvious ethical difficulties with conducting such an experiment, Morgan, Frisco, Farkas and Hibel

(2010) instead used a quasi-experimental design to compare general education and special education students, controlling for propensity of being placed in special education. It was found that special education students scored one standard deviation below their equal-propensity general education counterparts in English. Although this has been the most robust design in terms of concluding causation, there were, nonetheless, mixed results. For example, there were no differences in math scores and there was an increase in some externalizing behaviors while others decreased. The results of this study seem to indicate that special education is neutral at best on some outcomes and negatively impactful at worst on other outcomes.

Ethical Considerations and Potential Solutions

The role of ethnic/racial background in special education placement raise a number of ethical concerns. National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Principle I.3: Fairness and Justice states that school psychologists should not engage in or condone policies or services that discriminate based on race or ethnicity, among a variety of other characteristics (2010). The current process by which students are classified into special education seems to be rife with discrimination – from potentially subjective teacher referrals, assessments that do not adequately account for cultural factors, to possibly ineffective services and negative outcomes for students in special education. Combined with the fourth part of this principle (I.3.4; NASP, 2010), which states that school psychologists should promote equal educational opportunities for all children, the ethically responsible school psychologist is, as is suggested by Principle I.3.3 (NASP, 2010), which states that school psychologists should correct school policies

that discriminate against any group, obligated to ameliorate disproportionate placement of students in special education and address ineffective school practices.

Principle II.3.9 states that school psychologists should use research-based practices in interventions (NASP, 2010). This means that school psychologists should advocate for instructional practices that are effective for all students, including decreasing class sizes, providing professional development opportunities, using data to drive decisions, and classroom-level efforts that focus on sound instruction (Markowitz, García & Eichelberger, 1997). Further, there is some evidence that having a diverse teacher population can reduce disproportionate placement of African-American students in ED classifications (Serwatka, Deering & Grant 1995), and that, therefore, school districts should make efforts to hire teachers that reflect the diversity of the students they teach. One study found that African-American teachers were more likely to build upon existing strengths of their students rather than seeing their deficits as a precursor to disability and that they are more likely to have higher expectations for African-American students (Moore, 2002).

A pre-referral intervention that might be successful at reducing special education referrals by improving instructional practices is Student Success Teams (SSTs), which have been shown to result in improved student academic behavior, such as increased time on task, more task completion, and better comprehension (Kovaleski, Gickling, Morrow & Swank, 1999). The most effective teams are well trained, have a range of expertise, are excited about and are bought into the process, have good relationships with teachers, and are able to generate effective intervention strategies (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989).

Additionally, they use effective problem-solving approaches that incorporate input from individuals with knowledge of the student and expertise in problem areas. They also use a broad range of interventions that address both the academic and social-emotional and needs that are appropriate for students cultural backgrounds (Markowitz, García & Eichelberger, 1997).

NASP Principle II.3: Responsible Assessment and Intervention Practices states that school psychologists should use research-based assessment techniques (NASP, 2010). Currently, there are few cognitive assessments that are available and psychometrically validated for other languages besides for Spanish and English, there are no assessments normed using cultural background, and there are no tests that are normed on EL students who are multilingual but are not fully proficient in the languages they are familiar with, a common phenomenon among multilingual students (Hakuta, 2000). García and Pearson (1994) give an example of one instrument that attempts to utilize data on cultural background: developed by Mercer (1979), the System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment standardizes students' scores based on their age and sociocultural background, as determined by interview questions answered by parents. Although promising, updated research is needed on this tool in order for school psychologists to be able to use it.

Outside of the development of psychometrically validated assessment tools specifically for minority populations, steps can still be taken to address the biases in the assessment process in special education. For example, currently, a comprehensive reevaluation of students who are already in special education is mandated at a minimum

of once every three years. Given the possibility that placement in special education can result in academic and social-emotional deterioration for some students, schools should be required to consider exiting students out of special education more frequently. This is supported by studies on the stability of IQ, which indicate that, just between first and second grade, there is only a 0.51 correlation between verbal IQ scores and an even lower correlation of 0.36 for nonverbal IQ scores. Although the correlation is higher for older students, IQ correlations between ninth and eleventh grade can still be as low as 0.76 (Hopkins & Bracht, 1975).

If the IEP team decides that a student should be classified into special education, in accordance with NASP Principle I.1: Autonomy and Self-Determination, which states that school psychologists should promote parent/guardian participation in the decision-making process, parents should be well-informed of the risks and benefits to such a placement (NASP, 2010). The assessment team should include individuals who are familiar with and can provide families with information on the immediate and longer term impacts of identifying the student as disabled (Markowitz, García & Eichelberger, 1997). Currently, it is not standard practice to inform parents/guardians of ethnic minority students about the potential biases associated with assessments, with the teacher referral process that may have led up to a referral for testing, or with instructional practices that may not be evidence-based and may have contributed to students' academic deficiencies. Especially for minority students who are recommended to be classified under ED, the student's progress should be monitored relative to his/her general education counterparts. Additionally,

program placement should be open-ended and allow for students to transition to other service levels (Markowitz, García & Eichelberger, 1997).

Finally, Principle II.1.2 states that school psychologists should exhibit professional competence by pursuing professional development in diversity as it relates to assessment, intervention, and consultation (NASP, 2010). School psychologists' knowledge of the role of diversity is especially important given that the racial and ethnic makeup of school staff is often vastly different from that of their student bodies. As of 2011, 84% of public school teachers were white, 7% black, 6% Hispanic, and 4% other (Feistritz, Griffin & Linnajarvi, 2011). On the other hand, 52% of public school students are white, 24% Hispanic, 16% black, 5% Asian, and 4% other (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Unfortunately, currently there seems to be a lack of objective criteria for the NASP codes pertaining to school staff's diversity-related professional development, which makes it easy to claim adherence to the standards without operationalizing them to the full extent intended by these principles, which is to respect the dignity and rights of all persons. Nonetheless, suggestions have been made to incorporate multicultural and bilingual training into pre-service preparation of general and special education teachers. Eugene Valles (1998) of San Diego State University suggested that training should specifically include strategies for supporting second language learners, including "[n]ative language instruction, language transition strategies, and culturally relevant curriculum and materials...." Additionally, teachers should receive training on multiculturally competent ways of interacting with families from diverse groups and become familiar with their own cultural impact on second language learners (Valles, 1998). New York University's

Metropolitan Center has developed a training manual around issues of disproportionality that, although there has been no empirical evidence to evaluate it, shows potential in being a useful resource for practitioners (New York University, 2009).

The above recommendations may seem lofty and perhaps unattainable in the near future. Nonetheless, NASP states that in cases where the Principles for Professional Ethics "require a more stringent standard of conduct than law,...school psychologists are expected to adhere to the Principles" (2010). Many of the aforementioned recommendations require more than just simple modifications to classroom procedures or school policies. Rather, complying with ethical codes with fidelity may require us to be united as a nation in advocating for policy changes.

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Chapter Spotlight: Stephen F. Austin State University

By Ashley Doss

The newly founded chapter at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) seeks to bridge the gap between students and faculty, hold graduate students to high standards of education and training, expand upon scholarly and scientific knowledge, and further scientific pursuits. Through increasing awareness and responsibility of graduate students, the SFASU chapter of Student Affiliates of School Psychology (SASP) seeks to engage their participation as they become active members in the field.

Leadership Roles

The leadership roles within SASP-SFASU are well-established and refrain from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or disabled veteran status. As exemplars for the surrounding community and future audience, graduate students within SASP-SFASU practice a level of acceptance and commitment to individuals from all backgrounds. Members within this division are awarded full voting privileges. Acceptance and commitment of SASP-SFASU member affiliates are evaluated on a bi-annual basis by faculty to ensure students are upholding the standards of ethical conduct and professional value.

Each year, SASP-SFASU members nominate and elect officers. A president is selected for scheduling and planning student organization meetings and activities, presiding over meetings, and ensuring officer nominations and voting procedures are correctly followed. A vice-president is selected to assist the president with the

intention of assuming all presidential duties in the following year as well as acting as the stand-in president if the president is ever unavailable. A secretary is chosen from the members to maintain accurate records of meetings and all related businesses and affairs, which are then distributed to the student body. The treasurer is selected to collect and distribute any SASP-SFASU funds, following the directives of the president while abiding by regulations of SFASU and the laws of the state of Texas. A student representative that is selected attends faculty meetings when appropriate, and communicates student concerns to the faculty while also communicating faculty meeting information to the student body. Campus representatives are also selected on an annual basis as a liaison for international, national, and state positions, including: Association for Behavioral Analysis International (ABAI), American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS), American Psychological Association, Division 16 – Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP), Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP), Texas Psychological Association (TPA), and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

Activities

The SASP-SFASU Chapter is a new program and has only recently started to actively participate within the community. Fundraisers have been arranged to include donations from local restaurants and community garage sales. The chapter hosts

a “brown bag” event at the end of the Fall semester as an opportunity for all the students and faculty to share current and future research interests and papers. This event provides a forum to exchange ideas, enlist assistance on future projects, and increase awareness and cohesiveness within the department. Socials occur each semester to strengthen collegiality among and between cohorts. These engagements allow students to know and understand each other on a personal level to foster engagement and growth. In addition, it provides individuals an opportunity to begin creating a professional network.

The School Psychology programs seek to further improve community involvement and increase awareness to the community. The SASP-SFASU chapter members also volunteer hours to mentor local youth and increase awareness of available services. Through the guidance of faculty, a tour of the local state school that provides services to people with disabilities has been arranged and is scheduled to occur this coming summer.

First Year Students

As a new program, a routine for introducing first years into the program is not yet established. Projected plans include continuing social engagements to engage students on a more personal level, developing a mentor-mentee program, and creating a student survival guide handbook. The mentor-mentee program will assign a first-year student with a student in the third or fourth year of the program to whom the student can ask questions and seek guidance. A student survival handbook will assist students at all levels of the graduate program, designed to provide tips to manage self-care, time, and coursework;

locate and secure practicum and internship positions; and guidance on how to prepare for licensure exams.

Goals for the Future

Establishing a student survival handbook, developing a mentor-mentee program, participating more in the community, developing workshops, and bringing in guest speakers from the field to gain a better understanding of the many and varied roles school psychologists perform are primary goals for the SASP-SFASU Chapter. Workshops will include how to create a competitive practicum folder, how to manage time effectively, increasing diversity awareness and understanding, and learning how to utilize computer programs for tracking field experience.

About the Author: Ashley Doss has a background in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and holds a certificate in this field. She is completing her first year of graduate school within the School Psychology field. Ashley is a graduate assistant to Dr. Ellis-Hervey and assists with research and daily functions of the School Psychology Assessment Center. Her research interests include: military children and social belongingness, school-wide prevention and intervention services, and teacher-parent relationships. Her hobbies include participating in obstacle running events, hiking, camping, and spending time with her husband and son.

Diversity Mentor Program

Identity and Social Justice: My Perspective

Raul Palacios, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Raul Palacios is a Mexican-American school psychology doctoral student born and raised in the border-town city of El Paso, Texas. He received a B.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Texas at El Paso and graduated from Seattle University's Ed.S Program in School Psychology. Raul will continue his training in the Ph.D. School Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this fall, and will work under the supervision of Dr. Susan Swearer in her Empowerment Initiative Research lab. Raul is one of SASP's **2015 Incoming Diversity Scholarship Award recipients**.



Identity and Social Justice: My Perspective

In an attempt to achieve leadership for a just and humane world, a person must consistently pursue knowledge, foster a care for justice, lead with a commitment to the common good, and care about the impact diversity can make upon their particular community. School psychologists have the potential to be the catalyst within their particular school system for positive change for all students. In addition, school psychologists must act as the model for social justice so others in our field may follow our lead. However, before we can act as agents of change for social justice, we must first reflect upon our own personal identity as practitioners as well as the cultural identities of the populations we serve.

As school psychologists, we have had to identify our roles within the educational system and answer the question, "Who are we?" Jack Bardon (1967) states that we in school psychology are not unique and that our problems of self-definition, role and function, and professional identity are quite understandable. We are part of an institution, the school, which is constantly undergoing systemic changes mirrored by society itself. Within this ever-changing system, we too must be agents of change and progress through the times. Our failure to be active players in the change game permeates virtually all levels of our field (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995). It is such internal strife that has been holding us back from realizing our full capabilities, and undermines what we have been trained to do: advocate for the needs of the child. Furthermore, in defining who we are as professionals, we have also had to realize our goals and our limitations. If our main focus is limited to the administration of assessments then what is our education truly worth? We were built for more, and should therefore be constantly reflecting on our roles within the system and ways we can contribute to systematic change.

School psychologists must also be attentive to the identity of the diverse populations they serve. My experiences living within different communities has made me aware of two truths: First, every culture places value on different issues and, two, it is important to consider the needs of the community when attempting to serve them. The various cultural settings throughout my life have provided me with insight into diverse populations and guided my practice when advocating for the students I serve. I was born

and raised along the U.S – Mexico border in El Paso, TX. My bicultural roots have provided me with bilingual skills, adaptability to two worldviews, and have given me a unique perspective regarding socioeconomic and educational disparities among Hispanics, and more generally in minority communities. In addition to growing up in El Paso, I have also lived and worked as an English teacher in Chung Li, Taiwan, and as a preschool teacher in Seattle, WA. Within these settings, I intentionally made time to work together with families and understand their values as parents when teaching their children. For example, families in Taiwan held values that greatly differed from the values held by American families. Being able to identify and distinguish between these values was crucial when identifying how to create meaningful interventions to which they could follow. By doing so I was able to gain the trust of the families I served and we were able to work together to monitor the child's academic achievement. I truly care about helping the families I serve and will go to great depths to assist families in need of my services.

Song and Marth (2013) state in their chapter *Social Justice in the Air: School Culture and Climate*, when practitioners have all three skill sets (human diversity, best practices, and advocacy), then work towards social justice begins. During my time enrolled in the school psychology program at Seattle University, I have developed a strong commitment to leadership and advocacy for social justice in school psychology. Moving forward in my doctoral work at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, I plan to contribute to the exceptional research currently being conducted there by applying my knowledge of, and passion for, social justice, which I acquired at Seattle University. Locally, Lincoln,

Nebraska is an immigrant relocation settlement community for Latino families. It is my ambition to work with this community so that I may advocate for their needs within the community. I will also be an active participant of the Diversity and Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (DEMAC) in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. DEMAC is a multicultural team of students and faculty members who are committed to increasing its minority graduate enrollment. Nationally, I plan to become an active member of the American Psychological Association (APA), Division 16 of School Psychology, Student Affiliates in School Psychology (SASP), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the Social Justice interest group for NASP.

Our identity has and will always shape who we are as school psychologists and how we choose to practice. We have the tools to advocate for social justice by ensuring all students equal opportunities and supports to succeed in school. I take my commitment to the field of school psychology very serious and deeply believe in the impact that we can make in the lives of the students we serve. I am grateful for my diverse learning experiences and will continue to reflect upon ways to become the best school psychologist I can be. In short, this is only the beginning in my journey to advocate for a just and humane world.

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Research Review

Enhancing Social Skills in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Using Video Self-Modeling

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Introduction

Video self-modeling (VSM) is an intervention used to modify the frequency, quality, and duration of a desired behavior by allowing individuals to view themselves successfully performing a non-exhibited or low frequency, positive behavior (Buggey, 2009; Collier-Meek, Fallon, Johnson, Sanetti, & Delcampo, 2011). Stemming from Bandura's theories of learning through modeling (Bandura, 1977, 1994), this concept has served as the theoretical foundation for self-modeling, which by definition means observing oneself engaging in an appropriate or more advanced behavior (Hitchcock, Dowrick, & Prater, 2003). Under the interventionist's direction, individuals perform a task or engage in a role-playing situation while being filmed. After the video is edited to depict the student performing the adaptive behavior, the students will watch their individualized movie, and subsequently learn appropriate and positive behavior. This intervention has been shown to increase self-efficacy and the probability of generalizing the presence of the successful behavior to other situations (Bellini & Akullian, 2007; Shukla-Mehta, Miller, & Callahan, 2010).

The effectiveness of VSM as an intervention for improving social skills, behavioral functioning, and communication for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is hypothesized to be due to the combination of visually cued instruction and modeling (Bellini, Akullian, & Hopf, 2007). A meta-analysis of VSM for children and adolescents with ASD conducted by Bellini and Akullian

(2007) found the skills learned from this intervention can be maintained over a period of time, as well as generalized to other settings.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the effectiveness of VSM in improving overall social skill proficiency within an educational setting with elementary age students with ASD. The intervention targeted skills such as requesting information and assistance, joining in play with other students, providing compliments, greeting others, and following directions. The hypothesis for the current study was that with the use of video self-modeling, students would be able to increase identified positive target behaviors, which would then support their social skills. When students see themselves performing a task correctly they can achieve the behavior or skill they previously struggled to attain. Whereas many studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of VSM with students with ASD, most have included small sample sizes (e.g., a sample size of 2 was used in Bellini, Akullian, & Hopf [2007] and Buggey [2005]). The authors of this article hope to expand on past and current literature by increasing the sample size of participants with autism.

Method

Participants and Setting

In the current study, students were solicited through a local public school district as well as by using the snowball method of sampling. The sample of participants included five male students from a suburban public elementary

school. All participants received special education services as students with autism (primary) and a speech impairment (secondary). Autism was further categorized as high-functioning (IQ greater than 70) or low-functioning (IQ less than 70). One participant (Student 1) also received services for an other health impairment (OHI) due to an outside diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Student 1 (age 7), was a Caucasian student in 2nd grade with high-functioning autism. Student 2 (age 7), was an African American student in 2nd grade with high-functioning autism. Student 3 (age 7), was a Caucasian student in 1st grade with low-functioning autism. Student 4 (age 9), was a Caucasian student in 4th grade with high-functioning autism. Student 5 (age 10), was a Caucasian student in 5th grade with high-functioning autism.

Instrumentation

Pre-intervention data were obtained through standardized rating scales, including the Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2) Parent Rating Scale (PRS) and Teacher Rating Scale (TRS) and the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS), and semi-structured parent, teacher, and student interviews to determine the target behavior or desired functional skill. Observations were conducted to corroborate the target behaviors provided in the interviews. Post-intervention data was collected through the same interviews and standardized rating scales, including the SSIS and BASC-2, completed by the parent and teacher.

BASC-2. The Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2) is a broad measure rating scale used to assess children in various behavior areas (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004). The BASC-2 PRS (Parent Rating Scale) allows parents or guardians to

evaluate their children across four domains of Internalizing Problems, Externalizing Problems, Adaptive Skills, and Activity of Daily Living. To find change in social skills for this study, interventionists focused on the Adaptive Skills domain, which has an internal consistency coefficient above .90, median inter-rater reliability of .69 for the child form, and test-retest reliability in the .90s. The BASC-2 PRS is has moderate to high loadings in correlations among scales, indicating construct validity. The BASC-2 TRS (Teacher Rating Scale) allows teachers to evaluate children across four domains of Internalizing Problems, Externalizing Problems, Adaptive Skills, and School Problems. As mentioned above, the interventionists focused only on the Adaptive Skills domain. The internal reliability coefficients across age-groups and gender are at least .90 for Adaptive Skills (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004; Tan, 2007), test-retest reliability for the domains spanned from the mid .80s to low .90s in the child form, and internal consistency was above .90 for the Adaptive Skills domain. Median inter-rater reliability was much lower than previous reliabilities mentioned (e.g., child form was .56). Because the same teacher filled out the pre- and post-intervention BASC-2 for each child, this did not pose a problem for the study. The BASC-2 PRS has high loadings in correlations among scales, indicating construct validity.

SSIS. The Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) is a broad, multi-rater scale used to evaluate social skills, problem behaviors, and for the teacher form, academic competence in children and adolescents (Gresham, Elliott, Vance, & Cook, 2011). All forms on the SSIS provide a Social Skills domain consisting of seven different subdomains including: Communication, Assertion, Cooperation, Responsibility, Empathy, Engagement, and

Self-Control. Additionally, the parent and teacher forms identify problem behaviors in five subdomains including: Internalizing, Externalizing, Hyperactivity/Inattention, Bullying, and Autism Spectrum. For this study, researchers focused on the Social Skills domain. The Social Skills domain has an internal consistency coefficient of .97 on the Teacher form and .95 on the Parent form. A test-retest reliability coefficient for the Social Skills domain on the Teacher form was in the low .80s and the .70s on the Parent form (Crosby, 2011).

Procedure

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained to ensure the rights and welfare of all participants. Parent and teacher consent was obtained, as well as student assent. All interventionists in this study participated in extensive team training meetings in which the data collection and scoring procedures were studied and reviewed. The intervention phase was completed across six weekly group sessions in an unoccupied room at the students' school, general and special education classrooms, or the library in order to match the environment in which the target behavior was most likely to occur.

Research Design. A single-subject A-B-A design was utilized to determine change from pre-intervention data collection to post-intervention data collection. Phase 1 of the intervention consisted of gathering all baseline data and assessments. During this phase, each child's behavior and social skills were evaluated by their parent or guardian and special education teacher by completing the BASC-2 PRS, BASC-2 TRS, and the SSIS. In addition to the standardized rating scales, the parent and teacher of each student were interviewed by an interventionist using a semi-structured interview to determine which behaviors or adaptive skills to target. A targeted behavior was identified and

operationally defined, then an individualized goal was developed for each student. Goals for the current study included: recognizing and responding to emotions (Student 1 and 2); verbalizing a need for help in various school settings such as the classroom and the library (Student 3); and showing an interest in peers through reciprocal conversation, asking questions about peers, and engaging in joint interactive play (Student 4 and 5).

Phase 2 consisted of the intervention phase, which included six weekly group sessions where rapport was established between the interventionists and the participants, selected behaviors were recorded, and each student viewed their movie. In order to ensure the students understood their desired goal, three methods were used in a group setting: direct instruction to introduce a new skill, role playing scenarios by acting out scripts, and peer or adult modeling to show the student how to accomplish the skill. Once the students demonstrated an understanding of their goals and could display their desired behavior or skill on video, then the filming process began. In addition to the student, filming included peers or adults, and in some instances, scaffolding supports such as verbal (e.g., asking the student to say, "I need help") or visual prompts (e.g., emotion cards or story boards) to get the desired behavior on video. Once the interventionists edited the videos, they requested that the teachers show the student his movie for 10 consecutive school days. Each individualized movie was 2-3 minutes in length. In order to ensure treatment integrity, a monitoring system was used where the teacher documented the student's daily viewing. The interventionists used Windows Movie Maker and iMovie editing programs, which are user friendly and provide simple

instructions to follow for first-time users (for detailed instructions on VSM movie creation, see Buggey, 2007; Collier-Meek et al., 2012).

Students 1 and 2 watched similar movies that involved each interacting with others in mock social situations in which they demonstrated the ability to recognize emotions and respond in a socially appropriate way. This was made possible through modeling and prompting. Student 3's movie showed him following verbal directives the first time they were given. Specifically, he was depicted asking for help in the classroom and library by raising his hand, and then receiving help. Because Student 3 was not able to speak on command but did exhibit echolalia, he was videoed repeating words separately. The researcher's voice prompts were then edited out to appear as if Student 3 was stating "I need help" in one sentence. Student 4 and 5 had similar individualized movies in which they role played having conversations with each other and peers. They showed attentiveness to the other by asking questions about the other's interest.

In addition to removing the scaffolding support from the videos, all unrelated or undesired behavior was edited out leaving the movies to focus only on the positive desired behaviors or skills so that each student appeared to perform the skill independently. Teacher or other adult praise was also used in the movie to reinforce the student (e.g., telling the student "great job listening" or "excellent job following directions"). Movies included either text or a recorded voice-over, such as "watch how Johnny talks to a peer," allowing the student to be engaged in his movie as well as to understand the positive behavior being viewed. To keep viewer motivation high during the movie watching, positive reinforcement (student received a sticker or

small trinket) was used once the student watched their video 10 times.

During the third phase of the study, post-intervention data was collected approximately 3 months after the baseline phase. Individual intervention movies were either given to the parents, maintained for educational purposes, or destroyed per parents' wishes.

Sampling and Statistical Analysis

In the current study, data were analyzed by using a paired samples *t*-test to explore the differences between the pre- and post-intervention stages. The Adaptive Skills domain from the BASC-2 PRS and BASC-2 TRS and the Social Skills domain from the SSIS Parent and Teacher forms were used to determine any significant changes. Effect sizes and reliable change indices were calculated to determine the effect and statistical significance of VSM with each participant.

Results

Quantitative Results

Paired-samples *t*-test using SPSS was utilized to compare the average scores on pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments (see Table 1). Parent perception of social skills significantly increased, as evidenced by the increase in Adaptive Skills scores from the BASC-PRS pre-intervention to post-intervention, indicating adaptive skills had increased after the intervention was implemented. The Social Skills scores of the SSIS Teacher form also significantly increased, suggesting that social skills had increased according to teacher perception. Though increases exist, no significant differences were found for teacher perception on the BASC-2 TRS, as well as for differences between the SSIS Parent form pre- and post-intervention.

While the effect of an intervention can be calculated by determining the effect size (Cohen, 1969), doing so in single-subject designs is not very reliable due to the data being non-independent (Beeson & Robey, 2006; Dunst, Hamby, & Trivette, 2004). However, other research shows in a pre-test post-test single-subject design, effect size can be calculated to determine the effectiveness of an intervention (Dunst et al., 2004), which adds important quantitative information. Effect Sizes were calculated from the correlations between the baseline and intervention data. Because correlations in the scores were low, Cohen's *d* equation for high variance was used (for equation see Cohen, 1969). The effect sizes for the intervention as judged by the standardized measures for each rating scale (Table 1) as well as each student (Table 2) are listed in the appendix.

The results of the intervention can be found in Table 1. Overall, both the BASC-2 PRS and Teacher SSIS showed the VSM intervention had a moderate effect, while there was a small effect size for the BASC-2 TRS and the Parent SSIS showed little to no effect. Looking at the participants' effect sizes individually can give a more thorough assessment of personal intervention effects (see Table 2). Student 1's intervention showed a small effect on the Parent and Teacher SSIS, indicating a small gain perceived by both the parent and teacher in the domain of Social Skills. Similarly, Student 2's intervention showed a small effect on the Parent and Teacher SSIS. Student 3's intervention had a small effect according to teacher perception on the Teacher SSIS. Student 4's intervention had a small effect according to parent perception on the BASC-2 PRS and a medium effect according to teacher perception on the Teacher SSIS. Student 5's intervention had a small effect on social skills as perceived by both parent and teacher.

Interestingly, there was also a small negative effect on the BASC-2 TRS, indicating the teacher saw a decrease in adaptive skills after the intervention was implemented.

The Reliable Change Index (RCI) for the intervention as measured by the standardized measures for each rating scale for the intervention overall (Table 1) and for each student (Table 2) are listed in the appendix (Jacobson & Truax, 1991; for the equation used, see Schmitt et al., 2013). If the RCI is 1.96 or higher, this indicates a strong likelihood of real change (Jacobson & Truax, 1991). The effectiveness of the intervention as a whole was shown to be clinically significant by way of the BASC-2 TRS. Individually, the Teacher SSIS showed clinically significant change for Student 3 and Student 4. Additionally, Student 4 showed clinically significant change of adaptive skills on the BASC-2 PRS. Surprisingly, Student 5's adaptive skills significantly decreased according to teacher perception on the BASC-2 TRS.

Qualitative Results

Many of the parents expressed satisfaction with the intervention and mentioned that they noted an increased frequency of targeted behaviors as a result of the VSM intervention. Additionally, many indicated their child enjoyed watching the movie. One mother even stated her child requested to watch his movie over the weekend, even though the intervention required him child to watch it only on school days. Several parents reported the intervention generalized to the home setting as evidenced by the following quote: "He used to ask me to do everything: get a drink of water, help him with getting ready for bed. Since watching, he has done these types of things on his own." Another parent stated her child is better at identifying his emotions and reported the student has "been

expressing when he is frustrated by saying, 'I'm frustrated' instead of acting out. He seems to have gotten better at recognizing and expressing emotions." Not only did the intervention assist in her son's ability to identify his emotions, but also made communication easier within the family. Another parent stated her child not only improved in his ability to handle transitions, but also in his behavioral presentation. This parent said, "We have noticed improvement in his demeanor, attitude, and ability to handle situations." Another parent stated, "I have seen improvement in his speech as well as his engagement and communication." All parents and teachers in the current study endorsed the value of the VSM intervention and agreed to continue in the future. One parent indicated the desire to continue this intervention by stating, "He took away more than we'll know. This is something we definitely want to continue in the future."

Discussion

This study utilized a single-case A-B-A design to determine if a VSM intervention could improve social skills across various levels of social impairment. Six elementary-aged students with an ASD participated in the study. Parent perception of social skills significantly increased, as evidenced by the change in Adaptive Skills scores for the pre-intervention BASC-2 PRS and the post-intervention BASC-2 PRS scores, indicating adaptive skills had increased after the intervention was implemented. The Social Skills scores of the pre-intervention SSIS Teacher form also significantly increased, as well as the post-intervention SSIS Teacher form, suggesting social skills had increased according to teacher perception. Overall, both the BASC-2 PRS and Teacher SSIS showed the VSM intervention had a moderate effect. The BASC-2 TRS showed the intervention had a small effect size. This indicates the

intervention was moderately effective according to parent (and minimally effective according to teacher) perception of adaptive skills and teacher perception of social skills.

While the quantitative results show parents and teacher perceived a small increase in social skills, qualitative data showed teacher and parental appreciation of the intervention. This study replicates and expands the results of small, single-case studies to show the effectiveness of VSM in this population. With technology advancing and becoming more accessible, the authors predict VSM interventions will become more widely used by parents, teachers, and other school personnel to help students with ASD succeed in the classroom and develop better interpersonal relationships.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations have been identified in this study. First, due to the inclusion of students already being served through special education services, students in the current study were concurrently receiving general classroom-wide social skills training, speech, and teacher preferred incentives. Due to the simultaneous supports being provided, it is difficult to determine how much of the reported improvement was due to VSM alone or the combination of extraneous variables; therefore, the rival hypothesis could not be disputed. Another possible limitation is that the success and efficacy of the intervention relied primarily on parent and teacher report. Even though each participant was referred by a parent or teacher, their perceptions of the intervention effectiveness does not necessarily mean that the targeted behavior or skill improved (Hitchcock et al., 2003).

Furthermore, the intervention was carried out in a naturalistic setting, which makes it more difficult to control for extraneous variables than when using a controlled laboratory setting. Practice-based research in the schools is sometimes limited due to fire drills, state mandated testing, absences, assemblies, etc., and interventionists are required to be flexible and work around other school activities. Another possible limitation is the absence of a control group. To see additional differences, future research should include an age- and disability-matched control group. While the current study's population appeared to be representative of the regional demographics in regards to population of autism, it may not be representative of all populations. Additionally, although this is the largest sample size in research using VSM, the sample was too small to statistically analyze the data in a more powerful way. Future research should include larger sample sizes and the use of additional standardized rating scales, as well as re-administration of these rating scales to determine how well the new behaviors are maintained. Professionals working with students with autism would benefit from learning how to implement effective VSM interventions tailored to their students' needs within the school or community setting (for more detailed instruction, see Buggey, 2009; Collier-Meek et al., 2011). With training, this intervention can also be used by teachers and other school personnel to help increase positive behaviors and adaptive skills in the school setting, or with parents to improve the generalization of social skills across settings.

About the Authors:

Kendall Bowles, M.S., is a fourth year doctoral candidate in the School Psychology program at Texas Woman's University. She works as a graduate assistant for the Department of Psychology and as a research assistant for the Office of Technology at TWU. She holds a master's degree in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience from the University of Texas-Dallas, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Harding University. Her research interests include autism intervention and applying neuropsychology to the school setting.

Katy Caldwell, B.S., is a fourth year doctoral student at Texas Woman's University. She has been a member of the TWU SASP chapter since 2011 and currently serves as the chapter's President. She received a BA in psychology from Texas A&M University. Katy is currently a member of a research team examining the efficacy of the video self-modeling intervention in elementary age students. Her other research interests include resiliency in children and adolescents, autism and selective mutism.

Dr. Wendi L. Johnson is an assistant professor of school psychology in the graduate department of Texas Woman's University. She facilitates a growing research team that utilizes VSM techniques with children across grades and disability areas, which have yielded significant positive feedback from parents and teachers, as well as strong behavioral and social improvements across students. Prior to her work at the university level, Dr. Johnson worked as a Licensed Psychologist and Licensed Specialist in School Psychology in a local school district and community setting.

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Appendix

Table 1: Paired-Samples *t*-test Results and RCI Indices for Pre- and Post-Intervention Assessments

| | Time | | | | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Effect Size</i> | <i>RCI</i> |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| | Pre-intervention | | Post-intervention | | | | | |
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | | | |
| BASC-2 PRS | 35.67 | 8.38 | 40.83 | 6.05 | -3.46* | 4 | .51 | -1.38 |
| BASC-2 TRS | 43.00 | 2.00 | 45.33 | 3.01 | -2.15 | 4 | .23 | 2.13* |
| Parent SSIS | 77.17 | 7.44 | 78.67 | 8.24 | -0.57 | 4 | .1 | .26 |
| Teacher SSIS | 88.33 | 7.28 | 96.50 | 8.87 | -5.41** | 4 | .54 | 1.78 |

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$.

Table 2: Effect Sizes and Assessments for Each Student

| | | BASC-2 PRS | BASC-2 TRS | Parent SSIS | Teacher SSIS |
|-----------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Student 1 | Pre-Intervention | 35 | 39 | 83 | 81 |
| | Post-Intervention | 34 | 41 | 88 | 89 |
| | Effect Size | -.04 | .08 | .25 | .33 |
| | RCI | -.27 | 1.58 | .89 | 1.74 |
| Student 2 | Pre-Intervention | 29 | 37 | 64 | 81 |
| | Post-Intervention | 33 | 39 | 70 | 89 |
| | Effect Size | .17 | .08 | .30 | .33 |
| | RCI | 1.07 | 1.58 | 1.04 | 1.74 |
| Student 3 | Pre-Intervention | 34 | 37 | 73 | 86 |
| | Post-Intervention | 33 | 39 | 74 | 96 |
| | Effect Size | -.04 | .08 | .05 | .42 |
| | RCI | -.27 | 1.58 | .17 | 2.17* |
| Student 4 | Pre-Intervention | 31 | 44 | 83 | 98 |
| | Post-Intervention | 40 | 45 | 85 | 111 |
| | Effect Size | .39 | .04 | .10 | .54 |
| | RCI | 2.40* | .79 | .35 | 2.82* |
| Student 5 | Pre-Intervention | 34 | 43 | 79 | 96 |
| | Post-Intervention | 37 | 37 | 85 | 103 |
| | Effect Size | .13 | -.26 | .30 | .29 |
| | RCI | .80 | -4.74* | 1.04 | 1.52 |

Note. * = $p < .05$.

Book Review

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri

Reviewed by Andrea Lupas, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Each issue we bring you a review of a recommended book for students in the field of school psychology. In this issue, doctoral student Andrea Lupas discusses the following book:

Lahiri, J. (2003). *The namesake*. United States: Jhumpa Lahiri.

What book would you recommend to graduate students in school psychology?

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* would make an excellent summer read for graduate students in the field. Though it does not deal explicitly with matters of school psychology, a pivotal moment occurred in the main character's life due to the snap decision made by school staff. This staff's inclination to listen to student wishes over parental wishes may seem wise regarding a matter as simple as a preferred name, especially if the preferred name is the given name. But when the student is a kindergartener and this gesture disrespects the family's culture, it comes to light as a poor choice. This book might open our eyes to the potentially significant effects we can have as school psychologists, even unknowingly.

Briefly, what is this book about?

This book explores the life of a Bengali-American family, focusing primarily on Gogol Ganguli, the first-born child of immigrants. The story takes readers through his experience from infancy to adulthood and manifests 12.5

What important information, knowledge, or perspective did you gain from reading this book?

I am also the first-born child of immigrants. Despite my ability to relate to many experiences portrayed in *The Namesake*, the book still managed to open my eyes to how different experiences can be for those from different cultures.

Why is this book important for our field and why is it important for graduate students in school psychology to read it?

As students, we should know that even trivial moments in our lives can greatly impact the students with whom we work. We should also open ourselves to understanding the experiences of students with foreign-born parents, because we are bound to work with these students and ought to be cognizant of what they are likely going through.

About the Reviewer: Andrea B. Lupas is a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She focuses her work primarily on topics surrounding neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism. In her free time, she reads too much.

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