

# FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICE TO POLICY

## STUDENT AFFILIATES IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

### GREETINGS SASP READERS!

Letter from the Editors

We are excited to present this *special topics* issue focusing on internships in School Psychology. As we begin the internship application season, we hope that this newsletter can serve as an informative resource for SASP members at all points of their graduate study. Please enjoy reading from a variety of perspectives on the application, interview, ranking, and match process.

Jacqueline Canonaco, *Editor*

Sarah Babcock, *Editor Elect*

**We are currently accepting submissions for our Fall Issue!** Please submit your original research manuscripts, book reviews, lessons from fieldwork, chapter spotlights, and policy pieces to Jacqueline Canonaco at [Jacqueline.canonaco@gmail.com](mailto:Jacqueline.canonaco@gmail.com). We look forward to reading your work! Deadline for submission is **October 1, 2016**.

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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, 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 FSPP please visit <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-16/students/index.aspx>

## NAVIGATING THE APPIC INTERNSHIP MATCH PROCESS: TIPS FROM A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT

Whitney Kleinert

As the pre-doctoral internship process begins, thousands of psychology doctoral students across the country seek an Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) internship. Clinical, counseling, and school psychology doctoral students apply in the hopes of matching. Specifically, as of the 2015 Match process, 203 school psychology doctoral students participated in Phases I and II of the Match process with 180 students matching and 23 not matching (Keilin, 2016). It should be noted that Match rates differed based on degree sought (i.e., Ph.D., Ed.D., and Psy.D.) and graduate program accreditation (i.e., non-APA accredited versus APA accredited programs). For example, across both Phase I and Phase II of the 2016 Match, a higher percentage of school psychology students from Ph.D./Ed.D. programs matched than those from Psy.D. programs (83.2% versus 53.1%, respectively) (Keilin, 2016). Additionally, a higher percentage of school psychology students from APA-accredited programs matched (85.1%) versus those who were from non-accredited programs (55.3%) (Keilin, 2016). Although these numbers may seem daunting, they are a vast improvement in comparison to previous years' rates (e.g., Keilin, 2014; Keilin 2015).

Navigating the APPIC Match process can be quite stressful, particularly for school psychology students who have a limited number of sites that accept their application and/or offer them internships.

Although approximately 230 programs accept applications from school psychology students, when examining the intern statistics for the individual sites, it may be evident that no school psychology students may have been selected as interns in the past several years. As a school psychology doctoral student who matched for the 2016-2017 school year, I am writing this paper as a guide for those who are embarking on the APPIC Match process. Following are several tips to completing the process as a school psychology student. These tips are organized by where you are (or will be) in the Match process.

### **Part I: Beginning the Process and Before Interviews**

**Knowledge is power.** The APPIC Match is an intensive process. Prior to beginning, gain as much knowledge as you can about the process itself to help you comprehend what lies ahead. Specifically, read the APPIC website to determine what Phases I and II entail, the rules behind the Match, and understand the Rank Order List. When you feel as if you have a solid grasp on the overall concept of the Match and what it entails, you may begin to think about possible internship sites that fit your interest.

**When considering sites, variety is best.** The APPIC website offers an excellent directory search system on which you can explore the different sites that are offered (available here:

<https://membership.appic.org/directory/search>). During your initial explorations, examine different sites, even those that do not initially spark your interest. At times, you may find that these sites have components of which you are highly interested. Additionally, limiting yourself geographically can significantly decrease your chances of matching. Think about the internship year as an opportunity to expand your skillset in another area of the country (or Canada!) for a year.

### **Essays, curriculum vitae, and tailoring.**

The APPIIC application requires that you submit four essays. Each essay is brief (i.e., 500 words or less) and describes your interests and background across four areas: autobiographical statement, theoretical orientation, diversity experience, and research experience. You must also provide a cover letter for each site. It may be helpful to treat the cover letter as a “fifth essay” in that you allot an even more extensive amount of time to its development. During the essay-writing process, I highly encourage purchasing a book to help guide you as you formulate your ideas. Specifically, Williams-Nickelson, Prinstein, and Keilin’s (2013) book was particularly helpful. Although the book is geared towards all areas within psychology (not just school psychology), it was particularly helpful with the essay conceptualization process.

As you are composing your essays, you will also want to tailor them to each site to which you apply. Since some sites may be more interested in certain areas of your experience, it will be beneficial to highlight different experiences for each site. Upon creating a first draft of your essays, I would recommend having both peer(s) and faculty review them to

provide you with valuable feedback for your next drafts. Having outside feedback is instrumental in ensuring the points you are trying to make are being received successfully by your readers.

In addition to your four essays, you must also provide your curriculum vitae (CV) to each site. In general, your CV content will remain the same in that it will highlight your biggest accomplishments over the past several years. However, similar to the essays, you will want to tailor your CV to each individual site. For example, if one site emphasizes counseling experience, you may want to move any counseling-related experiences to more prominent/visible areas of your CV. This makes it easier for each site to visually scan your CV and quickly see areas that pertain to the experiences that they are offering.

**The waiting game.** Unfortunately, once you complete and submit all of your materials to your sites by their individual deadlines, a “waiting game” begins in which you wait to hear back regarding any interviews you may have received. In general, some sites will contact you relatively quickly whereas some sites may take longer. While waiting, find things to occupy your time (e.g., working on your dissertation, going to the gym, spending time with your friends, et cetera). Doing activities to keep you occupied is critical to your self-care and will help you maintain motivation and positivity during the difficult waiting process.

## **Part II: Preparing for Interviews**

**Again, knowledge is power.** Knowing the details about each of your interview sites is critical for a successful interview because (a) it demonstrates your true

interest in the site to those who are interviewing you and (b) it allows you to formulate questions for the interview to help you determine whether or not you are a good fit for the site. Going into the interview, you want to know as much about the site as you can so that you can assess your level of fit with the site. Some examples of ways to obtain knowledge about sites include exploring the site's webpage, browsing their APPIIC information page, or asking others (e.g., peers, faculty) who may know about the site and if they have any supplemental information. Gathering information allows you to see how well you fit "on paper," but the actual interview will also be a large determinant of how well your interests match the experiences that your site has to offer.

**Fact and question sheets.** To help you organize your thoughts regarding each interview site, it may be helpful to create lists for each site. For ease of editing purposes, I would recommend using spreadsheet software (e.g., Excel®) or word processing program (e.g., Word®) for this. Although the list can include many pieces of information, an example of sections you may wish to include are: (a) what I really like about this site, (b) areas in which I feel I would be a good fit for this site, (c) areas in which I need more information (and I would like to ask the site about), and, most importantly, (d) areas in which I feel this site would help me grow as a future psychologist. Having this list to review prior to the interview will help you decide what questions are critical for you to ask to determine your fit to each site, especially if you use the list to create an individualized question sheet for each site. Upon completion of each interview, it is important to update the information on your list before you

create your Rank Order List (subsequently discussed).

**Before the interview: The "little things."** As a school psychology student, you may have to take time off from your school-based practicum to attend interviews. Thus, it is important to keep open communication with your school-based supervisor(s) as you go through this process. Specifically, you may want to provide your supervisor with potential weeks for which interviews may be held. Keeping the conversation open and honest will help ensure that your supervisor, and the students you work with, are prepared for possible day(s) in which you may be off-site.

Getting to the interview (i.e., purchasing plane tickets) can be a daunting task both mentally and financially. You may proactively want to purchase plane tickets as soon as you are able, but you must keep in mind that other sites may have not given you interview notice as of yet. For example, you may buy your plane tickets for January 16 to fly to a site in California for an interview on January 18, but then find out you have an interview in Georgia on January 17! In order to prepare for the possibility of a post-ticket-purchase interview offer, many airlines provide an insurance option that allows you to cancel and/or alter your trip for free. If they do not offer this option, many airlines allow you to change your trip for an additional fee. An additional way to help alleviate financial cost is to bundle your trips. Using the California/Georgia example provided, you could fly directly from Georgia to California to save the cost of an extra return-home ticket if you live in Massachusetts.

You also want to represent yourself and your skills professionally at the interview. First, if you do not own one already, I would recommend investing in a suit. Fortunately, during the December holiday season, many professional attire stores offer excellent discounts on suits. Second, if able, invest in a travel-size clothing steamer. They are approximately 30 dollars and will save you several attire-related headaches throughout the interview process.

### Part III: During the Interviews

**Get excited.** These interviews are an opportunity to see the incredibly things the field has to offer. Although stressful, it is also an exciting time to explore the opportunities available to you as a blossoming school psychologist!

**Sell yourself as a school psychology student – you are a catch.** Self-advocacy is a critical component to career success. Interviews are an excellent opportunity for you to advocate for both yourself and the field. As school psychology students, our role is unique because we have experiences at the individual- and systems-level, experiences with assessment, direct intervention, consultation, prevention, and myriad other experiences. These interviews are an opportunity for you to share the incredible experiences you have had and provide sites with valuable information regarding your role as a school psychology student.

**Ask questions.** Utilize the previously-discussed question sheet to ask questions at each site to help you determine if the site is a good fit for you and, most importantly, decide how you could grow

as a professional by completing your internship at the site.

**Peer socialization component.** Take the opportunity to talk to other interviewees. This will help you learn more about other school psychology programs and their experiences. Additionally, it is a great networking opportunity. You never know if you may be working professionally with another interviewee in the future!

### Part IV: After the Interviews

**Rank the sites.** Based on all of the information you have gathered both prior to, during, and after each interview, create a Rank Order List to submit for the APPIC process. APPIC uses your Rank Order List in conjunction with each site's Rank Order List to determine the final internship match.

**As eloquently sung by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, “Waiting is the hardest part.”** The approximate two-week wait between submitting your Rank Order List and learning if (and where) you have matched is one of the most difficult parts of the process. During this time, maintain positivity – *you have completed the interview and ranking process!* Participating in self-care during these weeks is essential. For example, ride bikes, go for a daily run, meditate, and visit friends. Take care of yourself appropriately during this waiting period.

**Receiving the e-mail: have a plan.** On Match Day, you will receive an e-mail that tells you not only whether or not you matched, but it will tell you your site location if you matched. Regardless of good news or bad news, you want to have a plan *prior to* receiving the e-mail from APPIC. Prior to Match Day, decide

where you want to be when you read the e-mail and if you would like a friend or family member with you when the e-mail arrives. Receiving the e-mail is a big moment – try your best beforehand to make sure that the moment fits your personal needs!

In conclusion, the Match process can be overwhelming. However, as a school psychology student, completing the process can be an emotionally and professionally rewarding experience. The Match allows you to advocate for your skills and expertise and, in turn, advocate for the field of school psychology as a whole. Additionally, the process offers you an opportunity to pursue pre-doctoral internship sites that fit your professional needs. Use this document to guide you during each step of the Match and remember that *you are a catch!*

#### Author Note

Whitney L. Kleinert, M.Ed. is a doctoral candidate in school psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is interested in the identification and implementation of evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions, particularly with students who have emotional and behavioral difficulties. Whitney is currently completing her pre-doctoral internship in an alternative school and with Child Search Louisiana through the Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium in New Orleans. Correspondence is encouraged through [WhitneyLKleinert@gmail.com](mailto:WhitneyLKleinert@gmail.com).

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## LUMINARY IN THE FIELD

An Interview with Dr. Linda Reddy, conducted by Sarah Babcock



Dr. Reddy is a Professor in the School Psychology Doctoral Program at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She is the Principal Investigator (PI) for the School System Improvement (SSI)

Project funded by the US DOE (2012-2017) and PI for a randomized clinical trial focused on teacher formative assessment and coaching funded by the Brady Education Foundation (2014-2017). Her research interests include teacher assessment and professional development, assessment and treatment of children with ADHD-related disorders, as well as test development and validation. She has published over 70 papers and book chapters and six books (four with APA Books) on assessment and interventions for children with special needs. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) and member of the Society for the Study of School Psychology (SSSP). Dr. Reddy has held numerous national leadership roles. She was the President of APA Division 16 (School Psychology). She is a member of the APA Board of Professional Affairs and member of APA Division 16 Translating Science to School Practice Work Group. Dr. Reddy is a licensed psychologist in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania and is a nationally certified school psychologist. She consults with schools, agencies, and test development companies nationwide. She was selected as our luminary for this issue specifically for her involvement in Division 16's Grant Program for School Psychology

Internships. She was interviewed via email by providing responses to the questions that follow.

### **What were your most memorable or influential experiences as a school psychology graduate student?**

One of my most memorable experiences in the School Psychology Program at University of Arizona was working as a graduate student with my mentor (Dr. John R. Bergen) on a large federal grant (awarded to Dr. Bergen, Principle Investigator) conducted in the Navajo Indian Reservation, Head Start Centers. The Navajo Indian Reservation spans 4 states with the vast majority of the children qualifying for Head Start services (high poverty families). The University of Arizona research team trained and evaluated the impact of the coordination of early math and reading interventions and health services on student learning. We trained Navajo social workers to implement the consultation intervention with parents, teachers and other personnel. I led many of these consultation trainings in Shiprock, New Mexico. I learned so much about Navajo culture, met wonderful people and learned about large scale research and implementation work. For someone who was raised in Connecticut most of my life, working with Navajo social workers, teachers and staff significantly impacted my professional development and perspective on life.

### **How did you become involved in the Grant Program for School Psychology Internships?**

During my Division 16 President-elect year (2013), the American Psychological Association (APA) had disseminated concerning data on the national internship crisis. Over the past 10 years, the internship shortage has continued to worsen due in part to changes in the economy, state licensing laws, budget reductions and Health Service Provider provisions. School psychology students are at a particular disadvantage given there are so few full-time or part-time APA approved School-Based Internships in the country. The shortage creates a difficult selection process for all students in school, clinical and counseling psychology. Many very strong students were not finding internships. Division 16 wanted to help. During my Division 16 Presidential Year (2014), I organized and launched the GPSPI program with the financial support of Division 16, NASP, CDSPP, and TSP.

This has marked an important initiative for Division 16 and it has been very rewarding to my colleagues and me. We have received a lot of positive feedback from faculty and graduate students across the country which has been very gratifying. Since the GPSPI inception, we have funded and supported **14 new internship programs** that have already resulted in over **60 new internship training placements** for school psychology students. Four of our GPSPI funded programs have already received APPIC credentials and will be preparing for the APA self-study. One key aspect of the GPSPI program is that we require Directors of school-based internship programs to partner with Universities faculty at APA accredited doctoral school psychology programs. We do this because we want school-based

internship director to obtain the expertise and resources from University faculty who already have experience with writing APA self-studies and we want University faculty to obtain the expertise of school-based practitioner trainers. This partnership in our eyes is a “win-win.”

### **What do students need to know about the internship crisis?**

It is important for students to know that APA and Division 16 are working on this for them. I recommend that students apply for APPIC and/or APA approved predoctoral internships that fit their career goals. Likewise, it is important for students to build their CVs early in their doctoral training with clinical and research training opportunities to make their application “stand out.” Students should not just focus on obtaining lots of clinical supervision hours, but instead should be strategic with their practicum experience, assess how each experience builds on each other and refines their skills and competencies. Also, students should seek out applied research opportunities! Professional presentations and publications will make a difference in the selection process too.

I strongly encourage students to obtain clinical training experiences in school-based and school-related setting including juvenile justice, hospitals, private practices and health centers. If possible, I strongly encourage students to move to another state to obtain their internship training to widen their perspective of service delivery and the field.

**Given your various experiences in advocacy, how do you recommend students advocate for quality**



### **training/internships in school psychology?**

Frankly I feel doctoral students have a lot on their plate and advocating for quality internships can be daunting. However, I would suggest that students ask their program director and faculty about unique training opportunities. Becoming active in your local student organization and national organization (join both Division 16 and NASP!) and develop a repository of training sites on-line for all students to access. Also, student should seek out training opportunities they wish to obtain and bring these opportunities to the attention of their program directors. Program alumni are excellent resources for identifying training opportunities. At Rutgers we have a very active alumni association who are working worldwide. They are an important resource to our program.

### **What are some of the big projects you're working on currently (research, writing, policy, or otherwise)?**

The past 10 years my work has focused on teacher formative assessment, coaching and test development and validation. Here are some links to my current funded projects:

[Rutgers School System Improvement Project](#)

[Rutgers Collaborative Coaching Project](#)

I also have a long-standing interest in the assessment and intervention of ADHD and ADHD-related disorders.

### **What are your hopes and dreams for the development of school psychology as a profession?**

My hope is that the field continues to grow with exceptional practitioners, scholars and policy makers. School psychology would benefit from more interdisciplinary collaborative training and research opportunities. The field of school psychology is quite small and any field can become caught in a silo. School psychology fits into the larger landscape of professional psychology. It is important to keep this in mind. However, there is much to learn from other fields such as education, occupational therapy, speech, public health, nursing, and medicine. I wish all students across the country much success in their professional journey! You are the future of the profession who will bring hope, wellness and innovation to students worldwide.

#### Author note

Sarah Babcock is a student of the Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology Department at University of California, Santa Barbara and Editor-Elect of *FSPP*. Correspondence concerning her interview with Dr. Reddy should be directed to her at [sbabcock@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:sbabcock@education.ucsb.edu)

## NEVER TOO EARLY: PREPARATION FOR THE MATCH

Sonja Saqui, Michele P. Cheng, & Dorna Rahimi

As recently accepted PhD students we are starting to forecast what the next half decade of our lives in terms of academic and internship commitments will look like. Although the course work is rigorous and opportunities to engage in research are extensive, the aspect of our forthcoming program we currently find the most foreboding is the Association for Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) placement application and acceptance process; otherwise known as "The Match". We have yet to start our doctoral training in School Psychology, but have already been asked where we envision applying or what we are looking for in an internship placement. We do not think our situation is unique. Others in our cohort have been similarly approached and the message that we are gathering is that it is never too early to prepare for "The Match". Without encouraging neuroticism, there appear to be concrete things that we as students can do to enhance our chances of receiving an ideal match so we are not left wanting and scrambling to find a suitable and desirable APPIC internship placement. So, what are the factors that most predict and enhance internship applicants' appeal and ultimate acceptance to their preferred internship sites? What do we need to know about the APPIC match process?

### Overview of APPIC internships

A key component of psychology doctoral training is the 1-year full-time or 2-year half-time internship. This is the last major step in doctoral training prior to becoming a professional psychologist

(Ginkel, Davis, & Micheal, 2010). APPIC oversees the matching of internship sites of psychology interns in North America. Securing a successful interview and subsequent internship match is becoming increasingly expensive, time consuming and competitive (Madson, Hasan, Williams-Nickelson, Kettman, & Van Sickle, 2007). Research spanning back nearly two decades revealed a decrease in internship sites and an increased demand for psychology internships (Oehlert & Lopez, 1998). A decade ago the supply and demand crisis had not relented and continued to be problematic for potential interns (Madson et al., 2007). In fact, from 1999 to 2007 the number of unmatched applicants increased by a staggering 65% (Ginkel et al., 2010). To combat this issue the American Psychological Association (APA) committed up to \$3 million in grants over a period of four years to increase the number of accredited internship placements (APA, 2016). Encouragingly recently published match rates from 2012-2016 show a steady increase in the percentage of matched applicants from 71.1% in 2012 to 89.9% in 2016 (APPIC, n.d.).

Additionally, applicants can calculate internship site match rates to measure site competitiveness (e.g. divide the number of internship positions by the number of applicants; Seawell Kroh, Gorgens, & Eriskson Cornish, 2009). Site match rates may help to inform an applicants' selection strategy. There is also recent research that has begun to untangle the contributing variables and offers some direction regarding what factors

enhance the chances of attaining interviews and a successful match. Graduate students in psychology need to be aware of these known variables and their nuances to fully understand what factors make them more competitive so that they are more likely to match during the APPIC match process.

### **Number of Interviews**

Statistical analyses conducted by Callahan, Hogan, Klonoff, and Collins (2014) reveal that the single best predictor of an applicant achieving a successful APPIC match is the number of interviews offered. In fact, the number of interviews attained was associated with 15.8% of the variance in match outcome (Callahan et al., 2014). Similarly, Callahan, Klonoff, and Collins (2010) conducted a hierarchical regression analysis and reported that 20.5% of the variance in match success was related to the number of interviews attained. Specifically, securing six or more interview offers appears to be the point at which an applicant is more likely to secure a match (Callahan et al., 2014). However, contrary to the proclivity to simply apply to more internship sites, APPIC has repeatedly reported that this strategy is not necessarily a productive or effective strategy in securing more interviews during the match process.

This recommendation to avoid over-cavassing internship sites is also substantiated by Callahan and colleagues (2014). In fact, proactive approaches to increasing one's appeal to internship sites, prior to application, include strategies such as improving practicum experiences or reaching research milestones (e.g., completing a

successful dissertation defense) (Callahan et al., 2014).

A scan of the literature indicates that there are a number of meaningful factors that appear to be significantly associated with the number of interview offers attained by APPIC applicants. For example, Callahan and colleagues (2014) report that the total number of publications ( $r = .18, p < .001$ ) and presentations ( $r = .11, p < .02$ ) is positively correlated to the number of interviews attained (Callahan et al., 2014). Additionally, the total number of intervention and assessment hours ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ) and the number of supervision hours accrued during one's program demonstrated statistical significance ( $r = .16, p < .001$ ). Finally, in terms of personality measures, the facet of Trust was positively associated with the number of interviews attained ( $r = .16, p < .001$ ).

Thus, exploring the nuances of publication productivity, clinical experience, and personality traits is merited and is arguably essential knowledge for graduate students as they begin to navigate the APPIC placement process. In fact, graduate students should be aware of the factors that may help or hinder obtaining an APPIC interview and subsequent match process early on in their academic and professional pursuits. When equipped with this knowledge they can then tailor their graduate training experiences to help them to successfully secure a sought-after internship site.

### **Publication Productivity**

Scholarly publication, whether in an academic journal, a book chapter, or other avenue, is considered an important

aspect of our training as professional psychologists (Lund, Thomas & Bouchard, 2015). The APPIC Match process is certainly not exempt. In fact, extant data on successful interns highlights the importance of quality scholarly publications. In a recent article Lund and colleagues (2015) analysed publically available APPIC survey data from 2006 - 2014 regarding publication productivity and APPIC match applicants. According to researchers (Lund et al., 2015), consistent trends emerge year on year. For example, approximately 50% of applicants in any given APPIC match cycle reported having at least one publication (whether peer-reviewed or not). When applicants have five or more peer-reviewed publications, they are now likely within the top 10% of applicants in regards to publication productivity (Lund et al., 2015). Those applicants with 15 or more peer-reviewed publications likely fall within the top 1% of applicants in a given year (Lund et al., 2015). Further, about 20% of applicants have a chapter (or book) publication at the time of application.

However, worth noting is the fact that these numbers may appear somewhat deflated, because the APPIC data includes both PhD and PsyD applicants, with PhD applicants generally representing a cohort with greater publication productivity (Lund et al., 2015). Additionally, it is important to consider that interns previously matched at sites with a strong research emphasis tend to have a greater number of peer-reviewed publications when compared to applicants across all sites.

Although computing match rate on a single variable, such as publication productivity should be done with some

caution (Lund et al., 2015), there does appear to be a small but notable advantage in securing a match if applicants have published articles or chapters. Reasons for this advantage may stem from the fact that some training directors may interpret an applicant's publication productivity as indicating a more in-depth understanding of the collection and dissemination of psychological research (Lund et al., 2015). Publication history may also be interpreted as indicating that the applicant has the dedication to follow a research project through to publication and be able to collaborate productively with other professionals and researchers (Lund et al., 2015).

To further substantiate the link between publication productivity and match success, Callahan et al., (2014) found that the number of publications at the time of application, when viewed as a continuous variable, was a significant predictor of applicants' match success (Callahan et al., 2014). Although Callahan and colleagues' (2014) research drew applicants from a PhD-heavy sample, it is evident that there is some advantage in having at least one publication and securing a successful match.

### **Practicum Hours**

The number of hours that internship applicants accrue during their graduate training has been employed as a proxy for their competence to successfully participate in the pre-doctoral internship (Ko & Rodolfa, 2005). However, a recently proposed shift towards evaluating competencies rather than practicum hours is embodied within the new Standards of Accreditation for Health

Service Psychology, which was developed by the APA Commission on Accreditation (APA, 2015). Although there appears to be a shift towards competencies, standardized methods of assessing these competencies is still within a relatively nascent stage and psychology students are still required to spend significant amounts of time documenting their practicum hours in order to complete the APPLIC application process (Williams & Erickson, 2015). In fact, Callahan and colleagues (2014), determined that a greater number of intervention and assessment hours, as well as supervision hours, positively increase the chances of securing interviews. Intuitively, it follows that an increase in absolute hours then increases an applicant's probability of securing a successful internship placement. However, more practicum hours acquired during an applicants' training does not necessarily indicate that they will match during the internship placement process (Callahan et al., 2014)

Although the total number of applicants' intervention and assessment hours was not significantly associated with an increased probability of securing a match (Callahan et al., 2014), the number of supervision hours was positively correlated to securing a match ( $r_{pb} = .10$ ,  $p < .04$ ; Callahan et al., 2014). Thus, with the goal of ultimately securing an internship match, it is not simply accruing more client-contact hours that is important. Rather it is vital to ensure that one's clinical hours accrued are carefully monitored for proportionality of experiences (Callahan et al., 2014). It is imperative to have a balance between supervision hours and hours spent on assessment and intervention. For

example, APPLIC applicants with fewer clinical hours still attained a sufficient number of interview offers when their hours were a proportionate blend of supervision hours with intervention and assessment hours (Callahan et al., 2014). Additionally, it is important to remember that an increase in practicum hours does not necessarily indicate better skills and performance (Dyck & O'Donovan, 2003) and encouragingly a shift towards evaluating competencies, rather than practicum hours appears to be on the horizon.

### **Personality Characteristics and 'Fit'**

Ginkel and colleagues (2010) explored exclusion and inclusion criteria that contribute to or negate a successful match. Interestingly, researchers (Ginkel et al., 2010) reported that the 'fit' between an internship site and the applicants' goals was very important across all internship sites. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Rodolfa et al., 1999) that also highlight the importance of 'fit' upon match outcome. In fact, Ginkel and colleagues (2010) reported that factors related to an interns' personal characteristics (such as professional demeanour, the interview itself, clarity of goal for the internship, etc.) are becoming increasingly relevant (Ginkel et al., 2010). Thus, enhancing one's 'fit' to potential internship sites involves thoroughly exploring potential internship sites prior to application, shaping goal statements appropriately, and writing site-specific essays (Ginkel et al., 2010).

In light of the fact that the APPLIC match process involves an interview component in which internship supervisors meet potential applicants, personality traits

can become a factor contributing to the 'fit' of an applicant (Callahan et al., 2014). The interview itself provides the site director an opportunity to ascertain whether or not the applicant's personality is a good fit for the site (Mellot et al., 2007). Further, finding a good personality 'fit' for a particular site could become a pivotal factor when weighing candidates with similar training, achievements, and experiences against one another (Ginkel et al., 2010). In fact, personality traits which include: cooperation, sympathy, artistic interests such as an interest in music (which is reportedly a possible determinant in whether the applicant may be enjoyable to work with), orderliness, trust, self-efficacy and friendliness together contribute to 7.35% of the variance in predicting a match (Callahan et al., 2014). Specifically, artistic interests, self-efficacy and friendliness appear to all be positively associated with match outcome (Callahan et al., 2014). Thus, in addition to academic qualifications, experiences and achievements, potential interns can enhance the probability of securing a successful internship match by considering personality and presentation characteristics when applying, interviewing and securing an internship placement (Ginkel et al., 2010).

### **Other Tips**

Aside from the factors described above, there are other aspects of one's profile that can enhance the chances of securing a match. For example, Rodolfa and colleagues (1999) point to educational and program factors having some influence upon internship match outcome and list practical recommendations to enhance an applicant's success within the match

process. For example, Rodolfa and colleagues (1999) recommend that potential interns should have all academic requirements completed at the time of application. Additionally, if applying from a nonaccredited program, applicants should ensure that they are applying to sites that will accept and consider their applications (Rodolfa et al., 1999).

Finally, related work and volunteer experiences have become increasingly recognized as a way in which applicants can bolster their applications (Ginkel et al., 2010). Related work and volunteer experiences, obtained outside of graduate training can be advantageous to internship applicants wishing to differentiate themselves from the pool of increasingly competitive applicants (Ginkel et al., 2010).

### **Conclusion**

Although some of the variance in securing a successful match can be explained by factors described above, there are still relatively few empirical studies delineating what contributes to a successful match (Callahan et al., 2014). This lack of information and guidance can make the APPIC match process daunting for some graduate students. Thus, there is an imminent need to further explore the contributing factors, and the interaction between these factors, upon match outcomes. Additionally, exploring other as of yet unidentified variables that may explain the variance in match outcomes is merited. This information will help to more appropriately guide future APPIC internship applicants when embarking upon the match process and will foreseeably equip them with additional crucial knowledge to enhance

their chances of a successful and meaningful internship site match. This summary of factors shown to influence an applicant's match outcome was not intended to be a bleak commentary on the state of APPIC placements or to raise anxiety amongst future psychology intern candidates. As mentioned above, successful APPIC matches are on the rise. Further, faculty and universities tend to offer support and guidance to students pursuing an APPIC match and are an invaluable source of information, guidance and support. This article is intended to be a useful document to help orient and familiarize pre-doctoral psychology students so they can begin to more competently navigate the pre-doctoral internship process. It is our deepest hope that this has been achieved.

#### Author Note

Sonja Saqui, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student; Michèle P. Cheng, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student; Dorna Rahimi, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sonja Saqui, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z4. E-mail: sonja.saqui@alumni.ubc.ca

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## THOUGHTS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP PROCESS

Ashley M. Mayworm, M.Ed.

I have very recently (as in, one week ago) completed an APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship. Approximately a year and a half after the anxiety-provoking application process was in full swing, it all feels quite far away – like a very different time in my life. Nonetheless, when I do think back to the long months of applying, waiting for interview invitations, traveling around the country to interview, trying to decide how to rank my sites, and waiting the seemingly never-ending two weeks for match day, the stress, worry, and fear of the unknown are still palpable. It is a tough process and it is important, but it is also only one year of your life. Throughout my graduate career, I have always appreciated hearing about different milestones and experiences from those who have landed (alive and well) on the other side. So, with that in mind, I would like to share a few thoughts on completing an internship and the aspects of my internship experience, and life, that ended up mattering most to me. I hope these thoughts will be helpful to you in deciding both where you want to apply and how to rank sites once you have completed your interviews, as these are two of the aspects of the APPLIC internship process where you actually have some agency and control.

### **My Top 10 List of Things that Mattered Most about Internship, in Retrospect:**

#### **1. *That I completed an internship.***

Yes, it sounds a little redundant that the aspect of my internship that I am

grateful for is the act of completing my internship, but it is true. In the end, the absolute most important thing is that you complete your internship, so that you can complete your doctoral degree and begin your career. Of course, you also want to be happy with and fulfilled by your internship experience (which I will discuss in many of my points to follow), but those things are not essential to earning your doctorate. It is also important to remember that the internship you choose and complete does *not* have to be an APPLIC or APA-approved site. That is the path I personally chose, but there are other ways to fulfill your degree requirements and pursue your future goals, especially as a school psychologist (e.g., NASP-approved school-based sites). So, in the words of Larry the Cable Guy, just “GIT-R-DONE.”

#### **2. *That I gained skills in the areas where I felt I was weak.***

At the beginning of the APPLIC application process I was given the wise advice to really think through my current strengths and weakness as a psychologist, so that I could speak to my areas for further growth, goals for internship, and areas of strength and expertise. This was an excellent exercise, as it gave me a clear picture of where my weak points were and which internship sites might address those gaps. For me personally, I am very interested in mental health in schools, but the aspects of my training that focused on more traditional school

psychology roles did not allow me to develop my clinical intervention skills (therapy, family therapy and parent training) as fully as I would have liked. Therefore, I wanted an internship site that would give me these types of opportunities. And my internship did just that. There is no better feeling than finishing a year of training having met the goals you set out for yourself. Therefore, I would advise you to make the same list of your own current strengths and weakness and seek out internship sites that will help you to move some of those items in your weakness column over to the strengths column.

### **3. *That I learned about and worked within a new, diverse community.***

For many reasons, people often need to attend an internship site that is in the same area as their graduate program or in their hometown. I understand that there are very real familial and personal reasons to stay close to home for internship, and everyone needs to make internship decisions that will work for their life circumstances and encourage their well-being. That being said, I also think internship provides an amazing opportunity to get outside of your comfort zone for a year. It is a short period of time, so if you hate it, the pain will be short-lived. But, love it or hate it, you will likely grow in immeasurable ways. I chose to attend an internship site on the opposite side of the country from where I did my graduate work and nowhere near my hometown. I worked in an urban setting, which I had not done before, and with an almost entirely racial minority population. My graduate program provided excellent training in culturally informed practice, but nothing compared to working full-

time in a community that was so different from my own. If you can, take this opportunity to learn and live in a new community with diverse cultures and backgrounds.

### **4. *That I challenged myself to be more independent and confident in my abilities.***

It may be appealing to choose an internship site that feels "comfortable." People are often drawn to training sites where they believe they have all the skills needed. And, to some extent, you do need to apply to and highly rank sites where you have the competencies they require, or you will likely have a tough time matching. However, it is also important to challenge yourself to become more independent and self-sufficient. This can be done in many different ways. For example, I was able to accomplish this goal by matching to a site where I would work rather independently. I was assigned to one school, and worked as the sole mental health clinician there. My supervisor was always available by phone, and would come to my school about once per week for supervision, but the day to day managing of crises, attending meetings, navigating different demands and personalities, and so forth, was all on me. This allowed for incredible growth in my confidence. I think it is advantageous to prioritize sites where you have the core skills needed, but where you will also be pushed to grow and become more independent. This can be hard to gauge beforehand, so I would recommend asking current interns questions like: How are you pushed to be independent? Do you feel like the amount of supervision you receive matches your ability and

competence level? How has your confidence changed this year?

**5. *That I worked with people who are experts in the field and have an incredible wealth of knowledge.***

The internship year is an opportunity to hone your craft, gain further expertise, and ultimately feel ready to begin your career. It is also your last opportunity to be a full-time trainee (although postdoctoral positions can provide training also), so take the year to really deeply delve into the practice side of your work and learn from the experts. I think that you will feel more prepared for the next steps of your career if you work with people that are truly good at what they do. Most APPLIC accredited sites are going to be full of skilled and talented trainers and supervisors, so this shouldn't be too much of a worry. Nonetheless, if there is a particular area of expertise that you are passionate about, or want to learn, look for sites that have strong supervisors or faculty in that area. Seek out sites that will allow you to train with and build relationships with individuals that you look up to. Take advantage of being a trainee – one last time.

**6. *That I was able to meet and be connected with future potential employers and collaborators.***

It has been my impression that internship applicants often become so wrapped up in the anxiety of applying to sites and hoping to match that they forget that the internship year should serve them too. Your internship is, likely, the last milestone of your doctoral career and can be very helpful in getting you to your post-graduate goals. Therefore, it is important that you consider how different internship sites

may or may not help you to meet and connect with future collaborators/employers and secure a job when internship is finished. For example, some internship sites offer postdoctoral positions. Others may be very helpful in the application process, providing feedback on your job applications and connecting you with potential employers. However, there are also sites that are not very helpful in this process. I would highly recommend asking current interns about the professional development support that was provided through their program and how many of the interns have secured employment. Personally, I am so thankful that my internship site was committed to helping me find a job, by forwarding my name and CV to their colleagues and reviewing some of my application materials. They also introduced me to other professionals that I look up to in the field. A site that helps cultivate your professional relationships can be incredibly helpful in securing you a job when you graduate.

**7. *That I lived in a place that provided me with opportunities to enjoy my life outside of work.***

Your life is more than graduate school. It may be difficult to remember what a balanced life looks like, especially for those of us who are used to spending most of our waking hours completing externships/practicum, conducting research, attending classes, writing manuscripts, and teaching and grading. However, I found that my internship year was an excellent year to re-commit myself to my life outside of school/work. I wanted to be in a location where I could pursue some of my hobbies and get out and explore. The place I ended up in was not on my

top 5, or 10, or even 20 list of cities I would like to move to, but it ended up being amazing! I have had so much fun exploring my new city, traveling on a new coast, finding beautiful parks and hikes, and getting to know the community where I live. If there is something that is essential to your happiness outside of work (e.g., mountains, ocean, city life) include it in your considerations about where to apply and how to rank sites. Nonetheless, if you end up in a location that was not your first choice, commit yourself to finding what you can love in this new location. I truly believe that every town has its own unique charm, so use the year of internship to explore what your area has to offer and remind yourself of who you are as a person, not just as a graduate student.

#### **8. *That I got to do the kind of work I love.***

This one may seem obvious, but when I reflect back on the year, one of the best parts was getting to go to my job every day knowing that I love what I do. Make a list of the aspects of being a school or clinical psychologist that are most exciting to you. What really makes you light up? Then, make sure the places you prioritize for internship provide some of these training experiences. For example, I love doing research. I knew that my internship year would be focused on clinical work, but I was so happy to find an internship site where I got to get my hands into some evaluation and research projects at least one day per week. I also love being in schools and collaborating with teachers, families, and students; for that reason, a site where I had the opportunity to provide clinical work in a school setting was essential. It is not

always easy to tell if your internship will give you the things you love, or in the right balance, before you are there. That being said, I recommend identifying key “I absolutely love this part of my job” roles that you want to have on internship and ensuring that your top ranked sites have at least one of these roles available to you.

#### **9. *That I continue to be inspired in my chosen field and feel passionate about the career ahead.***

One of my worst fears as I entered my internship year was that I would end the experience feeling down or burnt out about my chosen career path and unexcited for the future. Graduate school is a long haul, and we all likely go through highs and lows in terms of our passion and excitement. But I knew that I didn't want to end the final phase of my graduate school experience feeling unmotivated about my career. If you are like me, and want to stay excited about what you are doing, then it is important to surround yourself with other excited and passionate people. For me, this meant selecting a site that had supervisors and other faculty/staff who seemed dedicated to their work, motivated to train doctoral students, and engaged in exciting new directions in the field. You may want to find out if people at the sites you are considering are doing new things in their school/clinical work or research that excite you. Additionally, reflect on whether or not the people you interviewed with seemed interesting and passionate. Did you leave your interview experience feeling excited and energized? Or did the interviewers seem burnt out, disillusioned, or jaded? What about the current interns? Although you cannot always anticipate

how a site may impact your drive and passion, these questions and reflections may help you to make a more informed decision.

**10. *That I am happy and healthy.***

Yes, you can get through anything for one year (see point #1 above). So, if you do not match to a site that makes you happy and keeps you inspired in your work, you will still be ok. However, being happy and healthy should always be a priority. The things that will make one person happy and healthy on internship are as unique as they are, so I don't want to give specific advice on what to look for in a site. But I would recommend reflecting on the times in your graduate career when you have been the most happy and fulfilled, and conversely the times when you have been the most stressed and/or unhappy. What factors seemed to be important? For me, I knew that working too many hours and not having time for life outside of work was a recipe for unhappiness. Therefore, I really wanted to have an internship year where the workload was manageable. During the interview process, I could get a general sense of which sites had reasonable work hours and emphasized work life balance as compared to others. The main give away was the way the current interns answered questions about work hours, work-life balance, and their current level of stress (and how tired they looked). While on internship, I made wonderful new friends, met my current partner, adopted a dog, and traveled. I lived my life, while also completing my internship. I feel like my internship was only one piece of many in the last year of my life, and that was how I wanted it to be.

I hope these thoughts are helpful to you as you think through the APPIC application and ranking process. When you are at the point of ranking sites, you finally have some agency to prioritize your own interests and needs. There is absolutely no reason to try to be "strategic" in how you rank sites. It will not help you to rank sites where you think you'll match higher than the sites you really love (see more about the match process here:

<https://www.appic.org/Match/FAQs/Applicants/Matching-Process-and-Results>). All that should matter is that you rank sites in the actual order of preference, considering your professional and personal needs and goals. And hey, you never know how things will work out. I didn't match to my first choice site, and I will never know what it would have been like there (I am sure great), but standing where I am today I am so happy it all worked out how it did.

Author Note

Ashley Mayworm, MEd, will graduate with her PhD from the Counseling/Clinical/School Psychology program at the University of California, Santa Barbara in September 2016. She has recently completed an APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship at the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland, Baltimore and will begin a postdoctoral fellowship there in August. Ashley is engaged in research and clinical work focused on the implementation of evidence-based mental health interventions in schools, school discipline and climate, and prevention of youth delinquency, gang involvement, and engagement with the juvenile justice system. Ashley is also a former Editor of *FSPP*.

## ADVOCATING FOR INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

Chapter Spotlight from the University of British Columbia

Michèle P. Cheng, Dorna Rahimi, & Sonja Saqui

As masters level graduate students in the school psychology program entering the internship year, we are faced with many decisions on how and where to begin our practical experiences. Similar to most professional psychology students, school psychology students have a different set of skills and experiences. While some students may be interested in districts with a mental health focus, others may prefer to conduct psychoeducational assessments within schools, and others still may be interested in gaining experience as consultants to a district or counsellors to students. Therefore, graduate students will find it necessary to advocate for internship placements that are tailored to their professional interests.

The internship process in school psychology allows students to gain valuable and extensive practical experience in preparation for entering the labour market after graduation. Through internship, students develop competency in assessment and interventions, which will allow them to design their own practice, to critically evaluate the academic strengths and weaknesses of students, and to integrate research and knowledge of best practices within the classroom into real world application. Additionally, students gain useful skills in effective communication and collaboration, and have the opportunity to apply proper ethical and legal knowledge regarding the professional practice of school psychology. Therefore, identifying and

selecting a proper internship placement is crucial, as many vary in terms of experiences, such as responsibility within the district, number of case-loads, and district collaboration. Graduate students should collaborate with their internship placement supervisors in order to ensure that their internship placement will be tailored to their own interests, thus fully preparing them for the tasks they will face in the post-graduation field.

### **University of British Columbia**

At the University of British Columbia (UBC), each year a member of the faculty is consigned to the responsibility of assisting masters level students with the process by introducing them to potential internship placements. The internship placements occur after the completion of all required coursework. Students initially meet their supervisors to discuss internship options, and together they attempt to establish an internship placement that would best suit the student's interests.

First, it is important to consider personal goals and ultimate career objectives. Does the graduate student prefer to work in public or private school districts? Does the student prefer to conduct assessments, interventions, or act as a consultant? Would the student prefer to work with a particular population of students? It is also important to assess goals for internship and determine what skills would like to be acquired through this placement. Following these considerations, the graduate student is

encouraged to assess the skills necessary for participation in a particular internship and evaluate his or her own interests and competencies to ensure requirements are met. For instance, at UBC, certain students who are fluent in the French language may request to be stationed in the Francophone School District in order to specialize their experience to this specific population. To advocate for this placement, they will need to voluntarily acquire the skills and assessment experience necessary to work with Francophone students, including learning French cognitive and academic assessment tests, as well as learning to write reports in the French language. Necessary experiences for more specialized internship placements may result from extensive research or professional experience, as important qualities meriting consideration (e.g., management skills, communication skills, organization skills) are transferable from one setting to another. Acquiring these qualities and skills will help faculty match students with experiences based on interests.

Once these considerations are taken into account, the internship supervisor will contact the desired placement location and advocate for the student in question. The coursework in school psychology at UBC is rigorous; therefore, qualifications for internship placements are often fully met for students.

In general, master's level students are assigned to school-based settings in order to gain experience with school-based practice and develop the fundamental skills necessary for the school psychology profession. Nevertheless, placements are tailored to the student's interests, based on setting (e.g. rural or urban locations),

language, population, and type of work (e.g. assessments, interventions, consultation) offered in a particular setting. Most internship placements are undertaken through the BC School Psychology Internship program. Through years of placements, UBC has developed relationships with internship sites. During internship, graduate students are paired with an on-site supervisor, as well as a UBC internship supervisor who consults on a bi-weekly basis. As a result, upon graduation, students possess the coursework required, the assessment experiences necessary, and the majority of hours necessary for membership credentials for the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists (BCASP), allowing them to practice school psychology at the end of their master's program. They are therefore able to practice school psychology across school districts in British Columbia, Canada. Their qualifications may also be met for different provinces and states across North America, though students may have to complete more hours depending on the regulations in each province of Canada or state in the United States.

Prior to taking part in the work force, future practitioners must ensure competency in their craft. The master's internship placement at UBC is beneficial to gather appropriate knowledge and experience within the education system, allowing practitioners to work directly with students as well as act as consultants for teachers and other school-based specialists. For individuals wanting to practice their craft in areas other than school districts, such as hospitals and community-based centres and organizations, additional practicum and internship experiences may be required

in order to tailor their experience to the desired work setting. To obtain additional experience, many individuals will seek additional training through the doctoral program.

To conclude, as the primary objective of the internship placement is to offer students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in a practical setting, it is important for graduate students to advocate for appropriate placements based on their professional interests. Students can advocate for their desired placements by communicating early on with their advisors, enrolling in specialized courses relevant to their desired placements, establishing relationship with directors of their possible placements, and performing extra-curricular activities within their fields of interests, therefore obtaining a particular portfolio and set of

skills that pertain to their placements. This is of particular importance within school psychology, as their experience on internship will often provide them with the knowledge and experience necessary to practice their craft upon graduation.

#### Author Note

Michèle P. Cheng, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student; Dorna Rahimi, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student; Sonja Saqui, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Masters in School Psychology student.



## LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY: AN ACTION PLAN FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Lauren Meyer, University of Arizona

As current students can attest, graduate training in school psychology involves a knowledge base across multiple domains, including assessment, consultation, mental health, crisis prevention and intervention, behavioral interventions, family-school collaboration, diversity, and ethics, among many others. Despite the comprehensive skill set we as students gain in our graduate careers, it is important that we recognize the role of advocacy efforts at the local, state, and federal level. Participation in these actions helps ensure the advancement of our profession and increased access to psychological services in the school setting (National Association of School Psychologists, 2015). As conversations around school-based mental health services continue to evolve, graduate students are encouraged to join the discussion and contribute their feedback. Herein lies an opportunity for school psychologists *in training* to collaborate with school psychologists *in research and practice* to identify new ways to increase our visibility as qualified mental health providers. Locally, state associations in school psychology occupy a significant space that brings together practitioners and scholars from across the state, those who have a vested interest in policy that may affect the services we provide. This venue becomes a welcoming place for graduate students to network with others from the field, and to continue their studies in an environment that combines practice, scholarship, and legislation.

### **Mental Health and Federal Legislation**

In recent years, stakeholders have come together to discuss the role of mental health services in the school setting. As a result, several legislative acts have emerged, including the Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2013, the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010, the Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2013, and the Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013. Together, these acts demonstrate how school-based provisions may influence the development of federal supports, directives that may serve as models for similar movements at the state level. Similarly, school psychologists may be expanding their knowledge of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, 2015), the recent re-authorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2002). ESSA is explicit in its definition of a school psychologist's role in school-based mental health services, specifically recognizing their skills in intervention among students at risk. These federal mandates may act as a starting point for state associations as they seek to assist school psychologists in expanding their role in the delivery of school-based mental health services.

State Medicaid plans have the potential to provide further guidance, as some state plans allow school districts to seek financial reimbursement to Medicaid eligible students and their

families (Eklund, von der Embse, & Minke, 2015). In 2010, the ACA expanded health insurance accessibility to children and families by 16.4 million (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015), thereby increasing the amount of monetary reimbursement provided to school districts. The ACA (2010) describes school psychologists who are “licensed or certified at the doctoral and/or specialist level” as recognized “qualified health professionals” for mental and behavioral health services among youth (42 U.S.C. § 18001 et seq.). Further, the ACA describes these practitioners as “mental health service professionals.” Those individuals holding a valid and current credential in their state of employment are regarded as mental health professionals in federal statutes, and therefore considered an eligible provider of reimbursable services. One may view these policies as a call to action, an opportunity for school psychologists to advocate for state-level changes that will align with federal mandates. Specifically, school psychologists can advocate for an expanded role in practice, identifying themselves as qualified providers of school-based mental health services. It becomes important then, to discuss how these changes will directly serve the needs of the students in the communities we serve.

### **State-Level Advocacy**

Current legislation identifies school psychologists as qualified mental health providers. Regardless of a graduate student's individual interests in pursuing academic, private practice, or school-based employment after graduation, an increased awareness of ongoing

legislative changes is central to a school psychologist's role as a service provider for students and their families. It is valuable to consider the efforts put forth by school psychology state associations, as these groups often disseminate state-level legislative alerts, call for collaboration on advocacy efforts, and lead state-level legislative initiatives to increase the visibility of a school psychologist's role in the school. For graduate students, this becomes an opportunity to join conversations with school psychologists from the community and other university settings in order to gain a better understanding of how practice in the schools can influence changes in legislation.

### *Getting Involved, Advocacy Survey Development*

As a graduate student eager to learn more about advocacy and how my voice can help affect change, I was delighted to become involved with my state association. To gain a better understanding of the status of the mental health services provided by school psychologists in our state, our state advocacy committee gathered mental health service data through an anonymous practitioner survey. The survey was designed to explore multiple factors of school-based services, including 1) the range of school-based mental health services being provided, 2) barriers that prohibit school psychologists from providing school-based mental health services, 3) the ratio of school psychologists to student enrollment, and whether it is related to the provision of services, and 4) credentialing and licensing as they relate to a school psychologist's involvement in Medicaid. It was a

valuable experience to not only participate in the development of this survey under the supervision of seasoned practitioners and researchers, but also to help coordinate the dissemination of the survey, which included outreach to school psychologists and special education directors across 82 districts. These actions helped me conceptualize the structure of special education and psychological services in *my state*, which has put me in a unique position to participate in conversations with practitioners, scholars, and graduate students outside my state network. Further, this experience granted the opportunity to join a committee whose mission is to support child and families, specifically through collaborative advocacy efforts.

### *Survey Findings, A Brief Overview*

Upon review of the 192 responses gathered, the committee found that over half of the school psychologists surveyed provide school-based mental health services, and that approximately 10% of a school psychologist's time each week is spent engaging in these activities, which echoes findings from previous research studies (Agrasta, 2004; Hanchon & Fernald, 2013; Suldo et al., 2010). The most frequent activities reported were individual counseling, crisis intervention, and group counseling. Moreover, in contrast to previous research findings, which suggest school psychologists may not have the training or the interest to provide these services (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013; Suldo et al., 2010), these survey results indicated practitioners do not have the time to engage in these activities. In terms of student-to-school

psychologist ratios, survey findings suggested that when ratios doubled from 700 to 1,400 students per school psychologist, the average number of hours spent on mental health services was cut in half each week. This result calls into question the implications for school psychologist to student ratios, indicating that higher ratios may influence a practitioner's ability to serve students' mental health needs. Overall, this survey led to discussions at the state level regarding what types advocacy efforts would be most effective in expanding the school psychologist's role, and what solutions can help us get there, a valuable step in the school-based mental health movement.

### **Conclusion**

In addition to the comprehensive plan of study that graduate students follow, school psychologists in training also acquire diverse experiences in various practicum placements. Certainly, these experiences act as opportunities to integrate classroom knowledge into the professional setting. However, state association involvement can facilitate additional learning experiences. By collaborating with my state association and getting connected to the mental health advocacy survey, I increased my awareness of the status of mental health services in my state, which has helped inform the types of services I want to provide in practicum, internship, and beyond. I have gained a more precise understanding of the stakeholders involved in state-level advocacy, and how to collaborate in a way that produces progress. I have learned what barriers prevent school psychologists from utilizing their training to support students and their families,

and how to address those challenges. I have also expanded my understanding of data, and how they can be used to inform change. Graduate students at any level are encouraged to get involved with their state associations. This may emerge in the form of conversations with practitioners, visits with state-level legislators, or collaboration with researchers on data collection efforts. It is a valuable experience to be gained, one that will ensure an increased understanding of the culture of school psychology in one's state, and how it aligns with federal mandates and professional standards.

#### Author Note

Lauren N. Meyer is a fourth year doctoral student in the school psychology program at the University of Arizona. Her research interests include crisis intervention and prevention, grief and loss, the high school to college transition, and positive psychology mental health interventions. She collaborates with the Arizona Association of School Psychology Child and Family Advocacy Committee, and participates in advocacy efforts with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Southern Arizona region. She can be reached at [LaurenNMeyer@email.arizona.edu](mailto:LaurenNMeyer@email.arizona.edu). A special thank you to Drs. Katie Eklund and Samara Way for their mentorship on this state-level advocacy initiative.

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## **BOOK REVIEW OF *INTERNSHIPS IN PSYCHOLOGY: THE APAGS WORKBOOK FOR WRITING SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS AND FINDING THE RIGHT FIT, THIRD EDITION***

Meghan R. Silva, University of Massachusetts Boston

As a recent internship applicant who successfully went through the match process, I can clearly remember the excitement as well as the challenges inherent in the application process. It would have been much more difficult, however, if it were not for *Internships in Psychology: The APAGS Workbook for Writing Successful Applications and Finding the Right Fit* (Williams-Nickelson, Prinstein, & Keilen, 2013). I found this workbook to be tremendously beneficial throughout the internship process and highly recommend it to any graduate student about to embark on the internship process. Below, I will outline the main components of the workbook and highlight the areas that may be particularly helpful for those about to start the internship application journey.

Before examining the contents of the workbook, let's first address when you should aim to have the workbook in your possession. For some internship applicants, buying the workbook early in your graduate career may provide the greatest benefit as it provides practical advice such as how to count your practicum hours. For others, it may be just as beneficial to buy it six months to a year before applications are due. For example, reading the workbook the summer before applying for internship will make it more likely you can read it at a relaxing pace and allow you to take full advantage of all of the helpful suggestions provided in the workbook.

Almost as important as when to buy, is how much will it cost. At the time of this submission, it was listed for new on Amazon for \$20.35, with a used version starting at \$10.49. It may also be worth reaching out to peers and colleagues who have already gone through the internship process to see if they have a copy of the workbook that you can borrow.

The workbook is divided into eight chapters: (1) general overview of the internship application process, (2) completing the APPIC application for psychology internships, (3) goals, essays, and the cover letter, (4) curriculum vitae and letters of recommendation, (5) the interview, (6) the match, (7) frequently asked questions from prospective interns, and (8) advice for DCTs of students in the internship application process. Chapter 1 provides a thorough background on the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) organization. As having an accredited internship is an requirement for some doctoral programs, the workbook helpfully explains what it means to have an APPIC recognized internship, versus an internship that is accredited by either the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). Chapter 2 discusses the Application for Psychology Internships (AAPI), and comprehensively outlines anxiety provoking tasks such as counting

hours and submitting the APPI on the online system

While all aspects of the book are helpful at one point or another throughout the internship application process, chapter 3 is particularly helpful to those who may be intimidated by the essay writing component. Included are guidelines, tips, and examples for each of the essays (i.e., autobiographical, theoretical orientation, diversity experience, and research experience), as well as for the cover letter. Before reading chapter 3, it may be helpful to have a rough draft of each of your essays as well as an outline of your cover letter. That way you can use your existing essay framework and adjust it based on the useful advice offered in the chapter, while still keeping your “voice”. Chapter 4 addresses the curriculum vitae (CV) as well as recommendation letters. If you have ever been confused on how to organize your CV, the workbook helpfully provides a suggested order of the major areas of a CV, as well as general CV “Do’s and Don’ts”.

Once you have picked the sites you want to apply to, completed your final drafts of your essays and cover letters, and have finally submitted your applications, the workbook can continue to be a valuable resource. For example, chapter 5 outlines the interview process in general, the scheduling of interviews (a logistical nightmare), interview formats, sample interview questions, and even recommendations on thank-you notes. As you travel to your different interview sites, consider bringing the workbook with you as it can be great plane reading as you prepare for your interviews. Once you have completed your interviews you will

turn your attention to the match process and the all important task of ranking of sites. Chapter 6 will walk you through this process, including registering for the match, constructing your rank order list, and a discussion on the different phases of the match (i.e., Phase I and Phase II). Finally, Chapters 7 offers frequently asked questions from prospective interns, which for some may be a good place to start. Chapter 8 concludes the workbook with advice for directors of clinical training (DCTs).

Overall, the internship application process can be an exciting, albeit daunting, experience. I found the workbook to be a valuable tool in my preparation and execution of my internship application and would highly recommend it to other graduate students who are about to embark on the process.

#### Author Note

Meghan R. Silva, M.A., CAGS, NCSP is a doctoral candidate in the school psychology program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests include the meaningful incorporation of acceptability in evidence-based interventions and supporting schools in the implementation of socially just intervention practices.

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