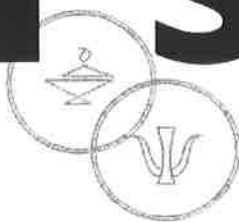


Psych

perspectives



A Publication of the West Virginia School Psychologists Association

Spring

1999

WVSPA News

From The President's Desk
Beverly Winter

A best selling book on leadership delineates the difference between a leader and a good manager. The analogy is one of a manager working with his/her employees that are digging a ditch in which to lay an important pipeline. The employees are well motivated by the manager and work very hard digging the ditch that will allow pipe to be layed which will then provide access to individuals in remote areas. They dig and dig and dig. However, working hard and harder is not useful if you are digging in the wrong direction. Someone (i.e. the leader) must scurry ahead and climb the tree to determine in what direction the others should go.

Your leadership, both at the national and state level, have provided training opportunities and information via newsletters and professional journals of the upcoming changes in IDEA 97. During the past six years state conferences have provided training on linking assessment results to meaningful classroom interventions, as well as ways to impact positively in your county systems.

It was obvious during the initial congressional hearings on the reauthorization

of IDEA seven years ago that both special educators and parents were not impressed with our norm-referenced tests and the information we delivered via our psychological reports. Much research has been provided in professional journals regarding functional assessments, not only in behavior but academics as well. Additional research has addressed writing "problem-solving reports" and "linking assessment results to interventions in the classroom."

IDEA 97 has reduced the emphasis on testing past the initial eligibility phase of services. IDEA 97 has provided for an emphasis on educational progress as it relates to IEP goals and objectives. IDEA 97 relies on a functional approach to assessing such progress. The time is right for school psychologists to move past relying on assessment activities and

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onto providing the type of information that educators and parents need to know about how to help the children we serve.

NASP President Alex Thomas has appealed to each school psychologist to engage in Practical Strategies for Expanding Services to Children and Families. He has asked that you complete certain activities (using handouts, writing letters, making a presentation, and/or providing an article). In return, you receive a project manual designed to be placed in a three-ring binder and to be expanded through handouts, presentations, letters, or articles that you may find through the NASP Website (<http://www.naspweb.org>), the *Communique*, or through resources you obtain from your personal and professional reading. If you are a member of NASP, you may enter the membership zone on the web page and obtain additional materials for your professional use.

I urge you to begin thinking about how you can become a better ambassador of yourself professionally in your county and your state. A start you may consider is following through on Alex's challenge. You can receive a copy of the Agreement Form by contacting Alex Thomas, NASP President, 4340 East West Highway #402, Bethesda, MD 20814. You may telephone 301 657 0275, FAX 301=657 0275 or e-mail to NASP8455@AOL.COM. Please act today, as all documentation is due by June 15, 1999.

Another web site of interest to school psychologists, which is a public service program of NASP is www.naspweb.org/center.html. Here's hoping that you do this one thing for yourself professionally as well as for others in our profession in West Virginia. □

Change of address notices should be sent to Cheryl Mills, 2111 Brooke Street, Culloden, WV 25510. Articles for Psych Perspectives should be sent to Charles Szasz, P. O. Box 630, Elkview, WV 25071 or even better e-mailed to: cszasz.newwave.net

School Psychologist of the Year Award

School Psychologist of the Year Award follows the same general guidelines as NASP. The criteria includes the following. This person needs to be a member of WVSPA and has to provide some exemplary service(s) to children. This is an award for direct services to children and also to the field of school psychology. University trainers and those not employed at least the majority of their time as practicing school psychologists. Each person nominated must accept the nomination, write a statement, and have up to five letters of support provided to the Nomination Committee.

Please take a few moments to think about a school psychologist in our state that deserves some recognition, and nominate them. □

WVSPA Area Meeting by Sarah Decesar

A regional WVSPA meeting for RESAs 5 and 6 was held at the beginning of December, 1998, in New Martinsville. Twelve people attended. Two of the new school psychologists were there from RESA 6: Suzanne Vila and Toni Cavasina.

Gary Chambers, B.D. teacher from Wetzel County, spoke to us about his form of doing a functional assessment. We have plans to have another meeting in February 1999, for school psychologists to simply come and discuss issues that are going on in their school systems and to share the forms they are using with each other. The December meeting was the second meeting held for this region in a while and seems to be a good forum for people to get feedback in response to different questions they have to just connect with other school psychologists socially as well as professionally. □

Spring WVSPA Conference

**by
Robert J. Childers**

Mission Statement for School Psychologists

**By
Beverly Winter**

The Spring WVSPA Conference will be held on March 7, 8, and 9, 1999 at the Days Inn at Flatwoods. The sessions for conference include a full day workshop provided by Claudia Bentley, Esq. speaking on legal issues and concerns regarding IDEA 97 on Monday, March 8. Jim Smiley will provide information pertaining to Medicaid billing on the opening session, Sunday, March 7. Andy Gerns, and Kirt Klettner, Members of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team at St. Joseph's Hospital, will be presenting information about how to handle crisis, including debriefing on March 9, the last day of the conference.

Make plans to attend the banquet and business meeting. Full Conference preregistration including banquet/luncheon is \$100 for WVSPA members and \$115 for non-members. On site registration is \$120 and \$135 for members and non-members respectively. Students may attend the conference free with confirmation of their status as students.

Preregistration should be sent to Elaine Max, 1551 Autumn Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Preregistration must be postmarked by February 26, 1999. No refunds after February 28, 1999.

Registration for just the Monday (includes luncheon) or Tuesday sessions is \$45 (\$55 non-members) and \$30 (\$40 non-members) respectively. On site registration for single day sessions is \$60 (\$70 non-members) and \$40 (\$50 non-members) for Monday and Tuesday respectively.

Think about topics and areas of interest for the 1999 Fall conference at Glade Springs. Contact Robert Childers or Nancy Cooper with suggestions. □

Three years ago, at a Sunday evening workshop at a state conference in Charleston, workshop participants developed the mission statement for the WVSPA. The mission statement provided that school psychologists in West Virginia would provide a full range of services to all students. A full-range of school psychological services was defined as the NASP definition, which is also the definition of school psychologist in WV State Code per our licensure statute.

Providing services to all students means that we will move outside the realm of assessment for determining eligibility for special education students. We work will all students. In the interim, a special task force has been established with the West Virginia State Department of Special Education for Psychologists. At the present time, Robin Bolling has been coordinating the task force. Members from each RESA region have been selected to represent school psychologists in West Virginia on issues we have, as well as receive feedback from the Department of Education regarding issues surfacing from their end. Some plans to move into other areas such as pupil services are in the planning stage.

In addition, WVSPA members should have receive a template for a brochure regarding school psychological services in West Virginia. You may use this template with specially designed brochure paper available in office supply stores, or use other paper as you choose. Sample brochures will also be sent for your use in sending one to your local legislators.

It is important that "others" see us as professionals that do more than test students for special education. Each school psychologist has a responsibility to provide information to

those individuals that need to know about our services. Disseminating information locally is much more effective, than our state association sending out the brochures. Space is provided on the brochure for you to add your name and address, so that the recipients of the brochure(s) will know how and where to contact you.

We hope that this membership service is useful to you this year and in the future, both with state legislators and your own assigned schools (administrators, teachers, parents, and students). Think about how often you hear a student, parent, or teacher say that they did not know there was a school psychologist assigned to their school, or how to access the services of the school psychologist. □

Cognitive Assessment System

by David Kotarsky and Elizabeth Maso

(InSight, Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania, Vol. 19, No. 1)

The Cognitive Assessment System (CAS) is an individually administered test designed to measure intelligence as a group of cognitive processes. It was developed to evaluate Planning, Attention, and Simultaneous and Successive (PASS) cognitive processes for individuals aged 5 through 17 years. The complete test kit consists of the administration and scoring manual, interpretive handbook, ten protocols, five response booklets (four for ages 5-7, and five for ages 8-17), ten memory response booklets, scoring templates, and a red pencil. The CAS may be used for predicting achievement and evaluating individuals with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, mental retardation, traumatic brain injury, serious emotional disturbance and giftedness, and individuals with planning problem (Naglieri & Das, 1997b).

The CAS is comprised of twelve subtests which make up the Standard and Basic Batteries. The Standard Battery consists of all twelve

subtests, three subtests for each PASS are. The Basic Battery is composed of eight subtests, with two subtests for each area. Both forms include Planning, Attention, Simultaneous, and Successive (PASS) Scales. Naglieri and Das (1997a) report that the CAS Basic Battery can be administered in forty minutes and the Standard Battery in sixty minutes.

The Planning subtests of the CAS require the child to create a plan of action, apply the plan, verify that actions taken conform to the original goal, and modify the plan as needed. All three CAS planning subtests, Matching Numbers (MN), Planned Codes (PCd), and Planned Connections (PCn), are timed and measure efficiency. The planning subtests of the CAS are easy to perform but require the individual to make decisions about how to solve novel tasks (Naglieri & Das, 1977b).

The Attention subtests of the CAS require the focus of cognitive activity, detection of a particular stimulus, and inhibition of responses to irrelevant, competing stimuli. These CAS subtest, Expressive Attention (EA), Number Detection (ND), Receptive Attention (RA), involve the examination of stimuli and decision making on how to respond (Naglieri & Das, 1997b).

The Simultaneous processing subtests require the synthesis of separate elements into an interrelated group using both verbal and nonverbal content (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). The simultaneous subtests include Nonverbal Matrices (NvM), Verbal-Spatial Relations (VS), and Figure Memory (FM).

The Successive processing subtests of the CAS were developed to demand the preservation and comprehension of a serial organization of events. All the successive subtests, Word Series (WS), Sentence

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at:<http://www.naspweb.org>

Repetition (SR), Speech Rate (SpR) for ages 5 to 7 and Sentence Questions (SQ) for ages 8 to 17, require the child to process information that is presented in a specific order that drives meaning (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). Additional information may be gathered through the use of "Strategy Assessment", which was developed to examine problem solving strategies employed by the child. Information is recorded on the protocol and is obtained in two parts: Observational and Reported Strategies.

The Administration and Scoring Manual (Naglieri & Das, 1997a) provides comprehensive instructions for administration. The Interpretive Handbook (Naglieri & Das, 1997b) is included as a supplement and provides interpretive and intervention techniques, as well as in-depth explanations of subtests.

The CAS subtest starting points are determined by age and are listed on the CAS protocol. The CAS protocol is well-organized and provides easy reference to administration guidelines as well as time limits and basal and ceiling criteria. The stimulus book and scoring templates are durable, well-designed and easy to handle. The norm tables provided in the CAS Administration and Scoring Manual are clear and user-friendly in converting raw scores to standard scores. The raw scores obtained on the CAS may be converted into subtest standard scores (mean=10 and SD of 3). The subtest scaled scores within each PASS Scale are combined to yield a Full Scale standard score with a mean of 100 and a SD of 15.

Data collection included the assessment of children 5 years through 17 years of age. The normative sample for the CAS included 2,200 children and an additional 872 children who participated in reliability and validity studies (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). The CAS standardization sample was stratified according to gender, race and ethnic origin, geographical region, parental educational attainment, and community settings across sixty-eight testing sites.

The Full Scale reliability coefficients range from .95 to .97 for the Standard Battery. The average reliabilities for the Standard Battery PASS Scales range from .88 to .96. The Full Scale reliability coefficients for the Basic Battery range from .84 to .90 (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). The average reliabilities for the Basic Battery Scales range from .85 to .90 (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). Overall, the reliability of the CAS seems to be exceptional.

The validity of the CAS is also good. Factory-analytic studies (Lambert, 1990) indicate that sets of CAS subtests match the PASS model. The CAS was compared to several tests, both achievement and intelligence. A large scale study was done in comparing the CAS to the Woodcock Johnson Psycho Educational Assessment Battery-Revised (WJ-R) (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). Correlations between the CAS FS and the WJ-R skill scores are high (.73 Standard Battery/.74 Basic Battery). The CAS was also compared to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Findings indicate that the CAS Full Scale correlated significantly with both SAT Verbal and Math scales. These results suggest that the PASS Scales in the CAS are able to predict academic achievement. Comparisons of the CAS with the WISC-III (Naglieri & Das, 1997b) indicate that the CAS Simultaneous and Successive Scales are the most related to the WISC-III, and the Planning and Attention Scales the least related. Comparisons between the CAS and the WPPSI-R (Naglieri & Das, 1997b) suggest that the Successive and Simultaneous Scales were closely related to the WPPSI-R Verbal and Performance Scales, but the Planning and Attention scales did not correlate with any of the WPPSI-R IQ Scores.

The CAS does not provide information that will be useful to professionals in an educational setting. It supplies an Interpretive Handbook that assists examiners with interpretation (chapter 5) and intervention (chapter 6). The Handbook also provides short descriptive statements that can be helpful when describing and interpreting performance on the CAS.

Lambert (1990) indicates that there is a

significant relationship between performance on the CAS and reading. Information gathered with the CAS (McLarty & Das, 1993) regarding children's attention was useful in determining and utilizing student interventions. Also, the CAS can be administered to children with a variety of disabilities (Naglieri & Das, 1997b). The use of the CAS (Das, 1988) with children who experience learning and neurological difficulties suggests they may show certain patterns of learning abilities associated with their difficulties and may need specific remediation procedures.

There are some weaknesses noted within the CAS. Preliminary evidence (Naglieri & Das, 1997b) on the CAS indicates that performance on the CAS changes with age. Also, according to Telzrow (1990), diversity in content and mode of presentation varied among PASS domains, and support for Attention as a separate cognitive processing construct appears limited. Furthermore, Das (1988) suggests that it is necessary to take into account social and cultural factors in order to fully represent the intelligence of children.

In conclusion, the CAS has the potential to be a widely used test which is easily administered and scored, and it should prove to be useful instrument among clinical and educational professionals in determining special needs of children. It is an especially valuable addition to the existing cognitive assessment tools, particularly in its different style and its practical addition of its assessment to intervention model. □

WV Learning Disability Discrepancy Version 2.0!

The West Virginia Learning Disability Discrepancy Program (LDD) Version 2.0 will be distributed in late February or early March by the Office of Special Education. The software will be distributed through training sessions at

each of the eight RESAs. The LDD program has been updated from version 1.5, which was slated to be released in January. Charles Szasz will conduct the training. Contact your RESA for details of the LDD training. □

Measures for Early Intervention: Bracken Basic Concept Scale-Revised and Curriculum-Based Measurement

**By Ruben Lopez
(CASP Today, The Quarterly
Magazine of the California
Association of School
Psychologists, Vol. 48, No. 2,
Winter 1998)**

In the proposed regulations of IDEA'97, the first listed goal is the provision of "Appropriate interventions...as early as possible in a child's life..." (p. 55029). As written in the regulations, the title of the goal indicates that an essential element of early intervention is the "early identification" of children who lack the prerequisite knowledge and skills to learn school subjects. In addition to the legal inducement, the importance of early identification and intervention is evidenced by the finding that without effective interventions the majority of students with learning problems will never become competent in academic skills. For example, few students who have not learned to read by age 9 will ever learn to read well. Furthermore, those who don't learn to read well have been found to be less resilient to disadvantages, such as poverty and neglect. I will describe two instruments I think exemplify features that are necessary for early identification and intervention.

The Bracken Basic Concept Scale and Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) are

not new. However, the revised Bracken was released this year, and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) form of Curriculum-Based Measurement was developed only in the past few years. Both measures were specifically developed for younger children. The Bracken is normed for ages 2 years, 6 months to 7 years, 11 months. The DIBELS is for those in kindergarten and first grade. Both measures are standardized and yield norm-referenced comparisons. Both are technically of the highest quality.

The various technical characteristics of the Bracken are described in its exceptionally thorough accompanying manual. The publisher is The Psychological Corporation. The technical and practical aspects of the DIBELS are clearly discussed in: Kaminski, R.S., & Good, R. H. (1996) in *Toward a technology for assessing basic early literacy skills. School Psychology Review*, 25, 215-227 and in: Kaminski, R. A., & Good, R.H. (1998) *Assessing early literacy skills in a problem-solving model: Dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills*. In M. R. Shinn (Ed.), *Advanced applications of curriculum-based measurement* (pp. 113-142). New York: The Guilford Press.

Both instruments measure knowledge and skills essential for development in the basic academic skills. As its title indicates, the Bracken-Revised measures a student's receptive understanding of critical basic concepts. The concepts are words that every student needs to understand to survive in the classroom; words like "off" and "on." A student who doesn't know these words will not understand the simplest direction you or a teacher may give. An understanding of these basic concepts is a vital requirement for development in the language arts and mathematics. Not only is the Bracken-Revised a good predictor of later achievement, but the content is some of the material a student must learn by formal instruction if he or she hasn't by informal experiences. In addition to providing a norm-references measurement, the Bracken-Revised can be used to monitor a student's progress in criterion-referenced fashion. By checking off the words of the Bracken-Revised a student with

weak listening vocabulary has learned, a teacher can monitor the student's improvement. In this sense, the Bracken-Revised allows formative as well as summative assessment.

Formative assessment is the invaluable feature of the DIBELS and the other forms of CBM. The DIBELS consists of the critical beginning reading/spelling skills of phonemic segmentation, onset recognition, and letter naming. In addition to serving as a screener to identify students at risk for reading problems, the DIBELS can be a part of an effective early intervention. It can show only a few weeks after the intervention has been started whether the intervention is putting a student on a trajectory to learn to read competently. Because CBM Reading probes can't identify those students not learning to read until the end of the first grade, the DIBELS was needed to identify those who lacked the skills prerequisite to word reading. As does the Bracken-Revised, the DIBELS measures skills in which a student must become competent to ensure fluency in spelling and reading comprehension.

Although applicable to various special education decisions, these instruments should be considered for use in various regular education applications as well, such as in programs for students learning English as a second language and for students with disadvantages. As exemplified by the Bracken-Revised and DIBELS, the characteristics of the most valuable tools for early identification and intervention are (1) high levels of reliability and validity, (2) developmentally appropriate, (3) directly relevant to the teaching of the basic academic skills, (4) providing normative as well as summative information, (5) consisting of content that corresponds with the content a student needs to know. Although assessment has its value in both early identification and intervention, it is only of secondary importance compared to a curriculum proven to have long-term efficacy for young students. □



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