

President's Letter

By

Ed Morgret



Evolution is a topic about which I know very little. However, I recently came across an article in the U.S. News & World Report that I found quite intriguing. It appears that some anthropologists have produced evidence that the evolution of the human brain is accelerating at a faster pace now than ever before, fueled by a combination of high population growth and a human genome that is trying to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Through adaptive genetic mutations, we, as a human race, are apparently picking up new traits and talents at a faster and faster pace to help us survive a technological future.

As anthropologists are debating whether or not the evolving human brain can keep up with our rapidly changing society, it seems to me that we are experiencing a strikingly similar parallel in the evolution of school psychology. Is school psychology as a profession evolving fast enough to keep up with the changing times? Are we increasing our knowledge base and developing new skills at a fast enough pace that will ensure our survival in a changing educational landscape? A friend of mine and an educational leader in our state (but not a school psychologist) quite aptly observed that “school psychology is now at a crossroads; now is the time for school psychologists to decide their future – if not, it will be decided for them.” How true!! For instance, if we allowed APA to define

our profession via the Model Licensing Act (MLA), over 90% of us in West Virginia would not even be able to call ourselves “school psychologists.” (The reader is referred to the MLA article in this newsletter)

No doubt, the role of school psychology is changing in West Virginia as well as nationally. Two examples of this are RTI and PBIS. The mandated implementation of RTI in West Virginia is placing an increased focus on teaming structures, data-based problem-solving and data-based decision-making while placing a decreased focus on the role of IQ testing, and school psychologists across our state are trying to make this shift. Also, more districts and schools in West Virginia are implementing county-wide and school-wide PBIS programs. With training in mental health prevention and intervention, program development and program evaluation, who better to take part in PBIS than school psychologists? (continued on page 2)

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WVSPA APPROVED BY NASP FOR APPROVED PROVIDER STATUS (APS)

NASP has been helpful in trying to prepare school psychologists for this major paradigm shift. NASP's "Blueprint for Training and Practice III," for example, lists the following four "functional" competencies for school psychologists: (1) data-based decision making, (2) systems-based service delivery, (3) enhancing the development of cognitive and academic skills, and (4) enhancing the development of wellness, social skills, mental health, and life competencies. I would also refer readers to two additional documents that address new competencies for school psychologists: (1) the 12/07 *Communiqué* insert entitled "What Makes a School Psychologist a School Psychologist?" which lists eleven distinct areas of school psychologists' expertise; and (2) the 2010 NASP Standards Revision, which lists ten domains of professional practice. Despite NASP's support, we can not sit idly by and assume that NASP will be our savior. We must be our own saviors. I believe each one of us must advance his/her professional skills and advocate for school psychology services in his/her school district. These dual purposes of professionalism and advocacy can be achieved with the wonderfully talented school psychologists we have in West Virginia.

Helen Wells, Past President of WVSPA, challenged us as school psychologists in West Virginia to showcase our skills, to become leaders in our respective school districts, and to become "difference makers" to positively impact the lives of students. I would like to extend that same challenge to us for this school year. To guide us in this challenge, I ask that each of us consider these three questions: (1) Where is our school district headed over the next five years (review your school district's strategic plan)?; (2) What are the skills that school psychologists can bring to the table to help our district achieve its goals? (review the three references cited in the previous paragraph); and (3) In what area(s) can we be the "expert" so that we are indispensable in our district. I expect that each of us will answer these questions differently. Collectively, we should see in West Virginia a wide range of school psychology experts covering a wide range of competencies.

I believe that by developing our individual skills within the various domains of school psychology, by networking within the state to tap into the "expertise" that exists collectively, and by advocating for these services locally and regionally, we can move school psychology forward in West Virginia and ensure our survival rather than our extinction. ♡

On April 30, 2009, NASP approved the WVSPA application for Approved Provider Status (APS). As a NASP approved provider, WVSPA is not required to seek prior approval from NASP when providing continuing professional development activities. However, WVSPA agrees to meet all NASP continuing education guidelines, as follows:

1. The activity must fall within NASP approved content areas as outlined in the NASP Standards.
2. The activity must be geared toward credentialed professionals in the field of school psychology.
3. The activity must enhance professional competencies, skills, or knowledge.
4. The activity must have stated instructional objectives related to one or more of the approved content areas.
5. The activity must be one hour or more in duration.
6. The instructional staff for the activity must have training and experience that qualifies the individual to be considered an expert in the subject matter being taught.
7. The provider must record attendance and provide documentation of completion.
8. The provider requires participants to complete an evaluation of the activity. The activity is NOT a business meeting, professional committee meeting, administrative meeting, or a presentation intended primarily for a lay audience.
9. The activity is in compliance with NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics*.

WVSPA will be responsible for the total Continuing Professional Development (CPD) experience: assessing needs, recruiting expert instructors, advertising responsibly, ensuring quality and participant satisfaction, responding to complaints, evaluating outcomes, and maintaining financial integrity. One CPD credit is granted for each contact hour of participation. Contact hours are defined as the actual number of clock hours spent as a learner in direct participation in a structured educational format. When calculating CPD credits, time spent in breaks and social activities should be deducted. CPD credit should be awarded only to those participants who completed the entire activity and completed an evaluation form.

WVSPA and WVDE Strongly Oppose the Proposed Changes to the APA Model Licensure Act (MLA)

Effective Cycle of Instruction

Renee Hardy and Sarah Hamons, MA
School Psychology Program
Marshall University Graduate College

A draft version of the 2009 APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists was up for public comment through June 5, 2009. This draft revises the current 1987 Model Act which includes an exemption for non-doctoral school psychologists certified by state departments of education and working in a public school setting. The revised draft removes the school psychology exemption, restricting the practice of school psychology to those holding doctoral degrees and having a license to practice psychology. Furthermore, the revised MLA includes language that would prevent a non-doctoral state certified school psychologist from using the title "school psychologist." If the Model Act is adopted as APA policy, state legislatures would be encouraged to use the language of this document and the policies that it espouses as the model for their own state licensure law.

Both the West Virginia School Psychologists Association (WVSPA) and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) wrote letters to APA strongly opposing the changes to the APA Model Licensure Act. NASP reported receiving more than 100 school psychology association and external stakeholder letters, including letters from APA affiliates, state departments of education, superintendents, special education directors, principals, union leaders, and elected officials. At the conclusion of the comment period, APA received over 19,000 letters regarding the proposed MLA, with approximately 19,000 of these letters addressing the school psychology exemption. Even Division 16 of the APA (which incidentally did not even have representation on the initial MLA Task Force) recommended that the MLA retain the exemption for non-doctoral school psychology. At the time of this writing, it is not clear what the final draft will look like, but it is clear that this issue has generated strong advocacy for school psychology in this state and across the nation. The WVSPA Executive Board would like to thank all of the individuals who contributed to this letter writing campaign.

Teaching begins before class even starts with preparation of objectives, performance standards and an anticipatory set. In preparing objectives, it is important for teachers to begin with the end in mind, while being mindful of students' abilities and limitations as well as each student's zone of proximal development. Expectations for performance standards should be clear from the beginning. While constructing the lesson plan, teachers must determine how the lesson will be presented and what knowledge or skills students are expected to demonstrate.

The Teaching Schema for Master Learners, as described by Pollock (2007), has six basic steps. First, the teacher should begin a lesson with clear instruction goals as well as specific content objectives in mind. Second, teachers must access students' prior knowledge. Captivating students' attention can be accomplished through an anticipatory set. The goal of this step is for students to begin thinking about the topic being presented. Relating the lesson to prior knowledge and experiences can engage students at the onset of instruction, improving retention and student involvement. Third, new information is presented. The type of knowledge, declarative or procedural, to be presented should be taken into consideration when planning the instruction method. Learning new facts is often accomplished through hearing (i.e. lecture), seeing (i.e. reading), and/or cooperative learning (i.e. conversation), although learning new procedures is often more effectively accomplished through hands-on activities, like performing the new procedure. The fourth step, applying new information can be accomplished through practicing a new procedure or employing thinking skills to new facts, such as analysis, comparison, or persuasion. In either case, a clear explanation regarding procedures to be followed and behavioral expectations must be provided to students before an application activity begins. Step five involves students summarizing what new information they acquired during the lesson or generalizing from the lesson to a real world situation in which the information could be applied. The sixth step, homework, can be utilized to broaden the scope of declarative or procedural knowledge and may then be useful to add new information the next day. The final and essential component is feedback, which Pollock (2007) referred to as the "floating steps" because feedback can and should be incorporated throughout the lesson in a variety of ways to keep students informed of progress toward goals, benchmarks, and objectives while allowing them to improve their performance.

Engaging the learner both during presentation of new information and application of this new information is sometimes referred to as active instruction. Modeling, guided practice, and cooperative learning, described below, are only a few of the research-based instructional strategies which may be used.

(graphical representation of one direct instruction model)

Direct Instruction

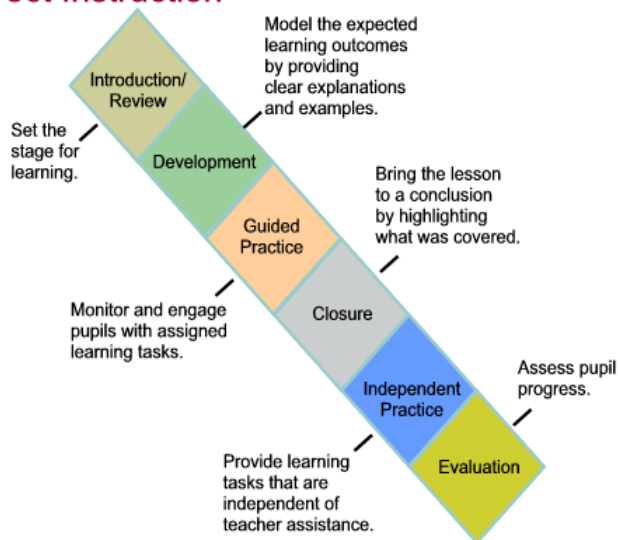


Chart obtained from: <http://www.worksheetlibrary.com/teachingtips/directinstruction.html>

Modeling is a term used to refer to a teacher or peer demonstrating a new or recently learned skill in order to advance understanding. This technique is valuable for learning at every level; in general, modeling improves understanding for all students. Additional benefits materialize when peer modeling is used, because instructing less able students improves the peer model's understanding as they work to explain concepts that may or may not be completely clear initially.

Guided practice involves a series of small steps during which the teacher closely supervises students as they develop increased proficiency in completing specific tasks. Guided practice and independent practice are related activities on a continuum. Once a new skill is introduced, less able students will need more intense instruction and supervision, which teachers can provide through guided practice. At the same time, more able students can benefit from independent practice. To prevent practice of errors, teachers should circulate in order to monitor performance, correct errors, provide positive feedback, and address problems as they arise. (Utah Students At Risk, 2008)

Cooperative learning, working as a group, has many benefits including improved academic achievement, accessing higher-order thinking skills, increased social skills development, encouraging acceptance of individual differences, and actively engaging students in the learning process. Positive interdependence is built through team accountability, helping each other learn, applauding successes, and coordinating efforts. In addition, for groups to achieve mastery, members must develop trust, learn to communicate, and establish a structure of leadership, which includes collective decision-making and successfully resolving conflict. This helps to create an atmosphere conducive to increasing social skills development, while encouraging acceptance of individual differences. Group processing incorporates higher-order

thinking skills by forcing students to evaluate their team's performance. Equally important is the individual's ability to evaluate his or her own performance. When cooperative learning is employed, the individual must also achieve mastery and be held accountable. Each individual plays an important role in group projects; true collaboration demands that individuals are actively involved and complete their assigned tasks while adhering to established standards and performing within expected parameters.

Successful Program Implementation

In order to determine the success of an instruction cycle, evaluation of student progress is essential. Evaluation is accomplished with tools to measure students' progress either as it is taking place (worksheets, classroom assignments, etc.) or as a culminating result (tests, projects, etc.) to any particular lesson. Evaluation of students' learning presents vital feedback to both the teacher and the student. In addition, the feedback can be utilized to establish whether expected learning outcomes have been met or have to be revisited during future instruction. This process becomes a progress-monitoring tool, as it sheds light on whether or not the students are learning as a whole and individually.

In conclusion, evidence from cognitive psychology tells us that students who are actively engaged in the learning process are more likely than passive learners to recall and demonstrate their understanding of a subject; if the learner is actively engaged, then more associations will be made both *within* previous learning and *between* previous learning and new concepts. Ultimately, there is value in examining the content, approach and assessments used in the instructional model and adjusting instruction when one or more students fail to learn. Thus, the objectives of No Child Left Behind approaches attainability, as education is aligned with state standards and effective instructional strategies are referenced and applied in the classroom.

References

- Brown, G. (2004). *How Students Learn. A supplement to the RoutledgeFalmer Key Guides for Effective Teaching in Higher Education series*. Retrieved from EbscoHost, July 13, 2008.
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- Worksheet Library. (2008). [Diagram depicts DI based on Zig Engelmann's theory of instruction]. Retrieved from <http://www.worksheetlibrary.com/teachingtips/directinstruction.html>

Mood Disorder Workshop
Submitted by
Kathy Showen, Region D Representative

Putnam County Schools hosted a workshop entitled "Bipolar Disorder and Other Major Mood Disorders in Youth and Adulthood: Diagnosis, Assessment and Effective Treatment." Twelve Region D school psychologists attended along with Putnam County school counselors and nurses. The presenter, Joe Shannon, from Cross Country Education, was exceptional. Debra Layne commented, "Excellent workshop and presenter. It was so informative and appropriate, while being enjoyable! Would recommend to everyone." WVSPA may want to consider bringing Dr. Shannon to speak at a conference in the near future. Some interesting information presented included:

1. 20% of individuals with ADHD go on to develop bipolar disorder 3-5 years later.
2. 15% of those with bipolar disorder have an onset in childhood.
3. The earlier the onset of Bipolar II Disorder, the greater the likelihood of rapid cycling (ages 5-17).
4. Cognitive behavior therapy is the most effective therapy for mood disorders.
5. A hypoglycemic diet (high protein, low carb) is recommended to maintain a steady level of blood sugar, which in turn stabilizes moods.
6. 30-40 minutes a day of exercise five times a week is also recommended.

NASP Opportunities

With the school year getting underway, now is a great time to consider how you can contribute to the profession and your professional growth. There is an index of volunteer opportunities, large and small, available at www.nasponline.org/membership/getinvolved.aspx

I also want to highlight some new and timely opportunities to get more involved.

The Multicultural Affairs Committee has launched a new subgroup, 'Children in Transition.' The subgroup will advocate and develop resources for students who may be in foster care, homeless, or recent immigrants. You can find out more about the committee and this new initiative at www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/mac.aspx

African American school psychologists and graduate students are invited to join the African American subcommittee of NASP's Multicultural Affairs Committee and work to increase participation in NASP and ensure that the voices of this community are heard. E-mail lizavant@cox.net to take part in this opportunity to network and collaborate with others.

An Adoption and Foster Care Interest Group was recently established. You can access the online Community and listserv, as well as some related reference materials, at www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/ig_adoption.aspx

NASP has worked with elected officials to develop and introduce a federal resolution recognizing the important contributions of school psychologists and designating the second week in November as National School Psychology Week. We need as many cosponsors for the resolution as possible, so please e-mail your U.S. Senators and Representatives using the letter available at <http://capwiz.com/naspweb/issues/alert/?alertid=13818481&type=CO>

The NASP Children's Fund, a nonprofit organization affiliated with NASP, funds disaster relief, Youth Empowerment Mini-Grants, Tiny Grants for Kids, and service projects that directly benefit children and youth. The NASP Children's Fund also supports a local service project to promote the education and well-being of children in the host city of the annual convention. To learn more about the efforts of the Fund, Fund membership, and how you can contribute, visit www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/childfund.aspx

I also want to share some new NASP resources with you. 'In the Know With NASP,' a monthly podcast focused on what's new and noteworthy at NASP, was introduced recently with an episode featuring tips for back-to-school transitions, highlights from a recent podcast on functional behavioral assessments, and news for graduate students. Download this and other podcasts at www.nasponline.org/resources/podcasts/index.aspx

Two NASP position statements were recently approved, 'Recruitment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse School Psychologists' and 'School Psychologists' Involvement in Assessment.' These can be viewed at www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/position_paper.aspx

You will want to act now to take advantage of the special discount being offered to NASP members who order 'Best Practices in School Psychology V' before October 7, 2009. Visit www.nasponline.org/publications/index.aspx to save \$100 off the list price of this practice essential.

WVSPA Executive Board

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Awards Criteria

West Virginia School Psychologist Of The Year Award is in recognition of an individual's exemplary provision of school psychological services.

Exemplary Program in the Delivery of School Psychological Services Award is in recognition of implementation of innovative practices or programs by an individual or county school system.

Chloe Hollinger Award is in recognition of an individual who has promoted school psychology in West Virginia through such things as publications, presentations and overall leadership.

Special Friends of Children Award is presented to a person who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to the children in West Virginia and has shown a commitment to the profession of school psychology.

Government & Public Relations Award is presented to a person who has demonstrated leadership in government and public relations.

WVSPA takes pride in recognizing our members each year for outstanding contributions to the field of School Psychology. We want nominations from our WVSPA members. Please review the criteria for each of the awards. Request a nomination form and complete it. Send the completed form to:

Randy Simmons
1210 13th Street
Parkersburg, WV 26101

Join WVSPA

Membership Categories

REGULAR – Available to those currently certified by the State Department of Education, or persons who hold a current license in school psychology granted by the WV Board of Examiners of Psychologists. Fee \$50.00 annually

STUDENT – Available to those actively enrolled in a psychology training program, taking a minimum of six semester hours. Student membership status is granted for no more than five years, requires annual verification from the University where they are enrolled, and is not granted to any person employed full time. Fee \$25.00 annually

RETIRED – Available to persons holding regular membership for at least five consecutive years and who retired from professional activity. No fee, but requires annual application.

ASSOCIATE – Available to those having at least a bachelor's degree and who have an interest in school psychology. Fee \$15.00 annually.

Dues are assessed on or near July 1st of each year. New and student members may be required to complete additional forms before membership is accepted. Please make checks payable to: WVSPA. Mail to:

Debbie Rolston
WVSPA Treasurer/Membership
2027 Derricks Creek Road
Sissonville, WV 25320



**March 2–6, 2010
Hyatt Regency Chicago
Chicago, IL**

*Promoting Competence,
Creating Capacity,
Expanding Opportunities*

Registration and Housing Will Open October 5, 2009

Gwendolyn L. Smith
Psych Perspectives Editor
P. O. Box 206
Falling Rock, WV 25079

TO: