

Psych *perspectives*

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President's Letter

Spring 2012

By

Lisa Gainer



Hello everyone! Spring has officially arrived and the flowers have returned. It's time once again for our WVSPA Spring Conference and we are returning to our home away from home at the Embassy Suites in Charleston. It's always a great time to meet with friends, relax a little, and catch up on the latest news in the world of school psychology.

It seems as if our schedules get busier and busier and it's hard to carve out even a little bit of time to just get together! With each new week seems to appear a new case, a new issue, or a new twist to a student's problem that we've never seen before. Sometimes it just helps to come together and share information and provide support to each other in order to navigate the never-ending sea of changes.

Since our October meeting, it's been full-speed ahead as usual in our school systems. We are monitoring the changes in the Response to Intervention tiered program (Support for Personalized Learning-SPL) as well as continuing to stay abreast of the challenges involving licensure regulations for psychologists in West Virginia. Providing adequate behavioral support as well as mental health initiatives for children is also a prime focus of attention for our schools. Advances for the diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia are also being discussed at the state level. In addition, we are ever mindful of the tightening budgets at the state and local levels in trying to maintain these

initiatives as well as providing the support and personnel which are needed to carry out our job in the schools.

As always, we strive to keep you informed. We are delighted to host the president of NASP this spring delivering our keynote address on the emotional well being of children (presented at the national meeting in Philadelphia this year). In addition, we look forward to hearing about alternatives to retention, SPL issues, software updates, and crisis intervention and prevention strategies. We also want to delve into the issue of how we as an association can better define our state and national roles to remain a viable player amongst the ever-growing list of service providers in our schools.

Thanks again to every one of you and to your hard work and dedication to the profession. Your efforts do not go unnoticed. Keep up the good work!



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Article submitted by Michael Powell

Retention: The good kind.

In the world of education retention is synonymous with the often unsuccessful practice of not promoting a child to the next grade. However, a more important use of this term relates to learning. One of the definitions for retention found on the Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary was “*an ability to retain things in mind; specifically: a preservation of the after effects of experience and learning that makes recall and recognition possible*”. In other words, it is the one of the desired results of teaching. This article will briefly discuss a two strategies that research has found to help retention: testing and spacing.

Tests, assessments, quizzes, progress monitoring, the list goes on. Although students (and teachers) cringe when they hear any of the above words these are some of the best strategies to help improve retention. Tests have been shown to reduce forgetting and improve retention over longer periods of time than restudying (Carpenter, Pashler, & Vul, 2007; Carpenter, Pashler, & Wixter, 2008; and Carpenter, Pashler, & Cepeda, 2009). Testing then studying has also shown greater improvements in retention than simply studying (Pashler, Cepeda, & Carpenter, 2007). So, the first strategy is to test the students before, during, and after learning a concept. The kind of test matters and as you might guess the least popular types of tests are most effective. Short answer or essay questions work best because they involve more in-depth recall than multiple choice tests. Also, free recall tests are more effective than cued recall tests in maximizing retention because you are drawing on recall instead of recognition. Feedback after assessment is another important aspect. It is especially crucial if the student’s performance on the assessment is poor or if the student’s knowledge of the material being tested is low. If the student’s knowledge of the material is higher and his/her performance is better then feedback is not as important.

The next strategy comes from the spacing effect research, which basically states that spacing your study/review sessions strategically improves retention (Cepeda, Rohrer, Wixter, & Pashler, 2008 and Pashler et al., 2007). The time between study sessions (interstudy interval) should increase as the time between the last study session and the test (retention interval) increases. Cepeda et al., 2008 found that the interstudy interval should be 10%-20% of the retention interval. Take the WESTEST for example. If a concept is taught at the beginning of November and it will be assessed on the WESTEST in approximately 190 days then the first study/review should be in 19 days not just ten days before WESTEST starts. This facilitates storage into long-term memory and negates forgetting the concept fully which would results in the need for a more in-depth review later on in the year. These reviews are recommended to be “folded in” with the other concepts being taught instead of being taught in isolation of the other concepts, which is often the case in mathematic curriculums. However, another important finding was that in order to increase the likelihood of retention over years than the interstudy interval should be several months.

This article briefly touched on some of the current research on strategies that help increase retention. However, as school psychologists we know that retention and learning can be affected by many different things such as emotions, environment, health, expectations, and family life just to name a few. The objective of this article was to give the reader a few useful and practical strategies to share with educators and parents. Such as using assessments as study tools instead of just re-reading and strategically spacing study/review in order to maximize retention.

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Why Are So Many Kids Committing Bullycide?

Two reasons why bullycide may be on the rise.

Published on January 11, 2012 by Izzy Kalman in [A Psychological Solution to Bullying](#)

It's relentless. Virtually every week the media informs us about another new tragedy of a young person taking his or her own life because they could no longer tolerate being bullied. Our country has been intensively combating bullying for a dozen years, since the Columbine shooting brought the problem of bullying to the nation's consciousness. Why are all of our efforts failing? Why are so many kids committing 'bullycide,' as the phenomenon of bullying-related suicide is being labeled. (The term is actually a misnomer, as linguistically 'bullycide means' 'killing a bully.')

There are two reasons. One is already well known and has been reported by many other experts. That reason is 'the copycat effect.' The behavior takes on the status of a fad, the cool thing to do. The shooting at Columbine was followed by numerous other shootings or threats of shootings. The media was reporting on these events so intensively that some perverse kids saw shooting up their schools as a great way to get publicity for their suffering. But experts in violence warned that the media was unwittingly encouraging copycat Columbine-type actions, so the media wisely toned down their reporting and the fad of school shootings gradually fizzled out.

A far more popular fad is self-injury. Self-injury is cooler than hurting others and it spares one public scorn. Not surprisingly, cutting has become a far more common copycat act than random shootings, and body piercing even more so.

The ultimate act of self-injury is suicide, and it earns one sympathy rather than scorn.

If you are a kid who has been bullied relentlessly, become desperate about your situation, see no way out and want to make a public statement against bullying, you may consider a random shooting. However, you know that you will be presented as a villain rather than a hero, while destroying your family's reputation as well. Nor will your act earn sympathy for other victims of bullying, and the media will minimize publicity of your act.

On the other hand, you have seen that the media glorifies kids who commit bullycide. They make the news big-time. Their faces appear on the covers of national magazines. Antibullying laws are named after them. Antibullying organizations capitalize on them to further their cause. So if you are hopeless, want to stop suffering, desire to strengthen the campaign against bullies and become a hero, suicide is the perfect tool.

But aside from the copycat effect, there is a second reason that is not being recognized, and it may be even more consequential. And that is our antibullying education.

Consider what kids have been taught about bullying for over a decade. They have attended assemblies presented by highly paid 'bullying experts' who tell them about the horrible effects of bullying. They have been presented with school bullying policies outlining all the kinds of bullying that they should not tolerate. They have been told that words can scar them forever or even kill them. They have seen No Bully Zone posters plastered in school corridors. They have watched movies and read books about the pain of being bullied. They have participated in anti-bullying rallies and wear antibullying bracelets. They have been told that they are not capable of dealing with bullies on their own because the bullies are too strong, so their classmates and teachers must stand up for them against their bullies. Their favorite celebrities have embarked on highly publicized antibullying campaigns and assured them "It gets better." They have been promised that tough new laws will protect them from bullying.

Then they are confronted with reality. Despite society's promises of protection and the comforting "It gets better" declarations, they continue to get bullied—and it's only getting worse. The ever-present No Bully Zone posters are nothing but a lie to them. When the school authorities get involved against their bullies, their peers despise them even more, call them 'snitches' and want revenge.

Having been told year after year how destructive bullying is, they become even *more* upset when they are bullied. And when they get upset, they get picked on even more, because emotional upset is what fuels bullying. So the bullying gets *worse*, they become *more* desperate, and they are *more likely* to feel that the only way to end their misery is to end life itself.

We will never reduce bullying by continuing our current antibullying efforts.

We need to realize that kids who commit bullycide, as much as we sympathize with their misery and grieve for them, are not heroes and the last thing we want is for them to be role models. They are the kids who lacked the resilience and the wisdom to deal with their problem. We cannot continue to glorify them with magazine covers and laws in their name and expect bullycide to *decrease*.

The most reliable way to prevent kids from taking their own lives is to teach them how to deal with bullying on their own. It is not hard to stop being bullied, and our kids deserve to be taught how to do it.

Scenes from Fall 2011



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.

NASP 2013 Annual Convention

Seattle Convention Center / Sheraton Seattle
February 12 - 16, 2013
Registration and Housing Will Open October, 2012



WVSPA Executive Board

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Region B - Angela Madia (RESA 7)

Region C - Christina Hare (RESA 8)

Region D - Kathleen Showen (RESA 2 and 3)

Region E - Michael Powell (RESA 1 and 4)

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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

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