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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the process and procedures that three Rowan graduate students of school psychology, in collaboration with two faculty members, utilize to plan and deliver school psychology services. Overall, the cases show how school psychologists can influence the academic achievement of not only an individual child but also a whole class, as well as a whole system. Two cases illustrate the benefits of collaborative consultation while another describes the need to look at systematic variables (e.g., curriculum) and their impact on individual learners. The idea that psychologists need to act as consultants to schools as systems has gained much momentum within the past 10 years. The NASP position statement on advocacy for appropriate educational services for all children and the subsequent publications, "Alternative Educational Delivery Systems: Enhancing Instructional Options for All Students" and "Best Practices in School Psychology III," provide the philosophical and theoretical bases for an expanded role for school psychologists. New roles require that school psychologists provide expertise as appropriate to the various school-based services and programs. Changes in roles and behavior call for new ways of communicating information, planning, and decision making. As a consultant, the school psychologist is a resource within the natural learning environment, using curriculum-based educational and instructional methodologies to collaboratively identify problems and devise solutions. These cases indicate this approach is beneficial because it provides help at the pre-referral stage, thus possibly preventing identifying children as disabled; it provides services for more students; and it makes full use of the professional capabilities of the educators involved, producing a multiplicative rather than an additive effect. (Author/MKA)

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USING COLLABORATIVE PLANING TO ENHANCE INSTRUCTION FOR ALL STUDENTS

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Paper presented at the 1999 Annual Convention of The National Association of School Psychologists, Las Vegas, Nevada, April 10, 1999.

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Using Collaborative Planning to Enhance Instruction for All Students

This paper describes the process and procedures that three Rowan Graduate students of school psychology, in collaboration with two faculty members, utilize to plan and deliver school psychology services. When seen as a whole, the cases show how school psychologists can have an impact in the academic achievement of not only an individual child but also in a whole class as well as a whole system. Two cases expound on the benefits of collaborative consultation while another describes the need to look at systemic variables, i.e., curriculum, and their impact on individual learners.

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In the consultant role the school psychologist is a resource within the natural learning environment, using curriculum based educational and instructional methodologies to collaboratively identify problems and think of solutions. As the following cases attest this approach is beneficial in that: (1) help is provided at the prereferral stage, thus possibly preventing identifying children as disabled; (2) it provides services for more students, and, (3) it makes full use of the professional capabilities of the educators involved (multiplicative rather than additive effect).

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A Classroom Behavioral Intervention Using CBM

Problem Identification/Goal Setting:

During my School Psychologist internship, I was introduced to a 7th grade Resource Program Reading and Math teacher, Mrs. G., to assist her dealing with her 7th period class disruptive behaviors. Assessment and interventions would be established collaboratively. I conducted a preliminary observation to identify types of disruptive behaviors occurring in Mrs. G's class. Mrs. G. collected a week-long baseline (frequency count) of the identified categories of disruptive behaviors during the Reading period. The students averaged 43 disruptions per instruction period. One of the 5 pupils was responsible for 39% of the behavioral disruptions recorded. In addition, I took measurements of instructional versus redirection time (time unit: 13 minutes). The average redirection time across observations was 31%. Observation of the students

in other classes seemed to support that they had difficulty in the area of self-control across the board. Academic variables were assessed to rule out academic frustration as possibly contributing to externalizing behaviors. Reading probes were given to the students by this School Psychologist. Three students read at instructional level, one at mastery level (the 5th student had been transferred to another class). Goals collaboratively established were: to increase instructional time and decrease behavioral disturbances during Reading time and to address social skills deficits by providing direct instruction in Responsibility and Self-control.

Intervention:

Interventions were generated to address Mrs. G's classroom management as well as the student behavioral disturbances. Interventions utilized were: a token economy system to be implemented by Mrs. G. and three social skills workshops. The token economy was designed to assist the students with the reduction of disruptive behaviors such as interrupting the teacher, one another and teasing/distracting one another. It also was designed to promote an increase of on task behaviors such as following directions and completing skill sheets. The topics of the social skill workshops were as follows: Appropriate Classroom Behavior, Responsibility, Self-Control. These were to be conducted in the classroom by myself and my supervising school psychologist initially and later by myself only. The goal of these workshops was to foster in the students awareness of the consequences of their behavior and to provide assistance in identifying more appropriate behavioral alternatives. Using behavioral interventions alone is unlikely to promote maintenance and generalization of acquired skills. The combination of social skills training and behavioral interventions was conceptualized to increase the likelihood of development of a more appropriate behavioral repertoire in the students. I took weekly measurements of redirection versus instructional time in order to monitor progress in the classroom management dimension.

Evaluation:

An improvement of redirection versus instructional time was noticed (from a baseline of 31% to 12% at week 5 of the intervention) as well as a decrease of disruptive behaviors (from an average of 43 to an average of 25 at week 5). These results suggest that this short term intervention had a positive effect on the classroom management and behavioral dimensions. Mrs. G. reports that she was able to modify her instructional pace resulting in keeping the students more attentive and participatory. This change may have also have positively effected the teacher's and students' sense of self-efficacy. Ongoing Social skills training and progressive fading of the token economy were suggested for all students in order to address their behavioral needs which could clearly interfere with consistent academic progress if left unattended. Opportunities for social skills training needed to be embedded in daily instruction using spontaneously occurring problems as well as being provided as a direct service by a counselor or school psychologist.

The student who had been the most disruptive at the beginning of the interventions, became more passively off-task once his peers' compliance increased. He appeared to warrant an individualized intervention and only marginally benefitted from this project.

Curriculum Considerations at a Juvenile Detention Center

Previous work with one student led me to believe that the instructional materials assigned to students at the Juvenile Justice Commission were in gross misalignment with their entry level reading skills. Therefore we wanted to know whether the current reading materials were appropriate for other students as well. A cursory review of 5 programs within the Juvenile Justice Commission Southern Region, found that many books existed for all academic subjects. While many books existed it was unclear what grade levels were addressed, what was the instructional level of each book and what was a functional approach to instruction. Many students in the program were below grade level with regards to reading. It would appear that to continue on the same course would only lead to frustration in the future and possible problems within the classroom. This problem did not appear to be isolated to the day program, but was a systematic problem throughout the JJC. This problem seems to exist for a multitude of reasons, which require discussion. 1) The ordering of instructional material is autonomous. While student ability is varied, the instructional material is not. 2) Teachers have grown accustomed to the status quo. They are comfortable with their approach and the students provide only minimal feedback to facilitate change. 3) Teachers report that the students reject high interest, low vocabulary reading material. 4) Teachers follow a basic generalized curriculum, but fail to take into account the students' ability level.

A review of the resources available through the JJC indicated there were extensive materials available but that the materials were possibly inappropriate, for some of the students. It was determined that a revised approach/curriculum would be an appropriate intervention. The outcome would impact positively on the student in the current study, would aid the teacher in improving their skills, improve the materials within the program and would aid individuals in the future. The focus of this project is reading. Reading is a common theme throughout all the care area courses. In order to facilitate change one must first know from where they are starting. Then a long-term goal can be established and finally, steps put in place to achieve that goal. Below a series of steps are noted as a possible way to implement change in the current JJC system.

Intervention: Identify current inventory (ongoing)

To identify a starting point it would be important to take an inventory of all the instructional material for the JJC programs. Due to the variability from program to program this would be an extensive task, which would require several weeks to complete. The review of each program's instructional material would identify the differences in each program. A discussion with the primary busi-

ness manager for the JCC supported this information. He noted that the education component of the JCC was the most difficult to approve since each program completes its own ordering. It would be much easier if textbooks were ordered in bulk. Additionally, an attempt can be made to group materials by ability level. An inventory would provide a baseline and an overview of the materials, which already exist. Gaps in the materials ability level can be identified. Once the inventory is completed a direction can be determined.

Identify the needs of students:

Students within the JCC programs vary within each program; however, this variability is probably consistent from program to program. This is to say that there are individuals of all functioning levels throughout the JCC. While there is much variability the common objective is learning in the core courses (Math, English, History, etc.). Schools indicate through their IEP's and generalized course requirements what student must receive credits for. The identification of student needs builds on the first step noted above. This will further aid in the identification of gaps in the current process.

Order appropriate material and assign a designate person to order:

For the current intervention it was identified that there are numerous subject materials available at all ability levels. An example of this could be the topic of the Civil War. Reading materials exist for all possible ability levels, but this does not change the facts of what really occurred in the war. Therefore a need exists to ensure that all programs have a multitude of instructional materials to address all student ability levels. Also to ensure a similar end result for all i.e. a knowledge of the facts of the Civil War. To ensure similarity between programs a curriculum specialist should be hired. This person could continue to monitor step #1 and #2 and ensure consistency. The current problem is the autonomy of programs to order instructional materials. The task of the new position would be to take away this autonomy and facilitate a consistent approach similar to a "regular" school district.

Develop a standardized approach:

Currently students enter JCC programs at different time and at different stages of their education. Each student works at his or her own pace with individual instruction from the teacher. It is important to develop a standardized approach to fulfilling high school requirements. This can begin with each program obtaining a student's transcript, which contains courses completed, and their credit balance. From this an individualized plan is put in place. For each student a standardized approach would enable each program to continue where the LEA stopped. Additionally, individual needs can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Revise and evaluate as needed:

Currently the JJC monitors progress through classroom performance and the TABE. The steps listed above should ensure positive growth on the part of all students. Therefore continued explanation is required and students ability levels modified as the need arises. As problems present themselves a review of steps #1 and #2 can occur with steps #3 and #4 and be utilized to trouble shoot any concerns.

From Individual to Group Assistance

Problem Identification and Goal Setting: Patrick, a 7 year, 11 month old male was considered an academically average second grade student with the exception of his reading ability. He was classified as a slow reader on the basis of the reading results he obtained on a running record assessment administered by his teacher. At the same time, Patrick exhibited behavioral problems such as speaking out of turn, frequent fidgeting, antagonizing his peers, and slouching and kneeling in his seat. He was also easily distracted and remained off-task much of the time. Quantification of this behavior was obtained by two 15-minute systematic observations using the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC): Student Observation System; one during general class activities; the other during his reading group session. The teacher and I agreed that the first aim in our collaborative problem solving relationship was to establish two goals. Our first goal was to clearly define, design and implement a behavioral intervention that would decrease Patrick's disruptive classroom behavior and enhance his ability to attend to the task at hand. Our second goal was to devise and institute, by means of a curriculum-based assessment (CBA) approach, a reading intervention plan that would engender his reading success. We aimed to achieve both goals by means of 2 one-half hour intervention sessions with Patrick over a five-week period.

Intervention: Based on the BASC results coupled with a brainstorming session between the teacher and myself, we agreed the most feasible behavior intervention for Patrick would be to institute a multidimensional approach. We implemented behavior modification and self-monitoring techniques, as well as making some environmental modification within the classroom (e.g., breaking large academic tasks into smaller units, moving Patrick's desk closer to the teacher's). To accomplish our second goals we discussed several viable reading strategies. We determined that based on his particular reading weaknesses that the "repeated Readings Method" (Samuel, 1997) offered the most suitable reading remediation technique. We decided this because it ameliorated laborious reading while enhancing motivation. Further, we agreed that a CBA approach would provide the best material for evaluating his reading ability since it afforded a more accurate description of his capability relative to his class peers.

Evaluation: The teacher and I concurred that in Patrick's case 80 words per minute (WPM) with three or fewer errors was a satisfac-

tory reading fluency goal. Further we agreed that he could be expected to acquire at least two new words per minute per week over the five-week session (a ten-word vocabulary increase). Baseline data collected prior to implementation of the Repeated Readings Methods demonstrated that Patrick read 61 WPM with one error and achieved 100% comprehension. By the end of the five weeks reading remediation intervention Patrick's reading fluency had increased to 73 WPM with an average fluency of 68 WPM. His reading comprehension remained at 100% throughout the intervention session. This reflected a 12 word per minute increase relative to his baseline score. Although Patrick did not achieve the ten-word goal criterion that we established, he did acquire nine new vocabulary words over the five-week intervention session. To determine the effectiveness of our collaborative multimodal behavioral intervention. I remained an additional 15 minutes after our final session to engage in another systematic observation of Patrick's behavior. This time I used a Functional Behavioral Assessment Matrix form. The results indicated that Patrick continued to engage in some off-task and disruptive behaviors; however, there was a decrease in their rate and magnitude as compared to the systematic observation results demonstrated prior to the implementation of the intervention plan. Hence Patrick's behavior was much more appropriate and he was able to maintain task focus better.

Impact on Second and Third Grade Reading Program:

Since the collaborative problem solving process was so successful in our single case study, we decided to duplicate it in the form of a two-group comparison pilot study. Twenty, second and third grade Basic Skills or Special Education students were randomly selected to participate in this five-week study. Of those selected, 10 were randomly assigned to the experimental group with the remaining 10 students comprising the control group. Students in the experimental group received the same collaborative problem solving process procedures (brainstormed and devised by the teacher and myself) as that of the original single case study. As in that study, students in the experimental group received a curriculum-based assessment (CBA) approach with a "Repeated Readings Methods" reading remediation technique aimed at enhancing their reading ability. Participants received academic intervention for 15 minutes, twice a week over the five-week period. Project success was evaluated in the same manner as that of the single case study. That is, by collecting individual reading baseline data prior to implementation of the intervention. This date was then compared to students' individually pre-determined satisfactory reading fluency goals at the end of the project. At the same time, students in the experimental group continued to participate in their Basic Skills Instruction or Special Education classes. The collaborative problem solving process was not employed for students who comprised the control group. Hence, these students only received the academic remediation they normally obtained in their Basic Skills Instructions or Special Education classes.

Results of the study demonstrated that students who participated in

the experimental group made greater gains in their reading fluency and vocabulary size as compared to their control group peers. Over the five-week intervention period, students in the experimental group increased their vocabulary in the range of 10 to 15 words, and their fluency in the range of 13 to 20 words per minute. Reading comprehension was 100% for all students. Control group students increased their vocabulary in the range of 5 to 8 words, and their fluency in the range of 2 to 10 words per minute. Reading comprehension ranged from 80 to 98 percent. Hence, the results of this pilot study lend support to the benefits obtained by employing the collaborative problem solving process coupled with a curriculum-based assessment approach for devising and implementing interventions for students experiencing academic problems.

Conclusions

In summary, all of these case studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative consultation and the use of specific intervention techniques to have a systems impact. That is, for the consultant to work with a specific teacher in each one of these three cases helped, in the end, to benefit a specific system or a group of children. In one instance, a teacher needed help with the management of a group of children. In this case, the use of social skills training and behavioral interventions was effective in helping the teacher in terms of classroom management dimensions. In another instance, a series of steps were developed to implement change in the entire reading effectiveness of students at a juvenile detention center. Again, in collaboration with several teachers, the consultant was able to be effective in helping the students in an entire school system through a curriculum based assessment approach. And, in the third instance, one student who was helped to improve in reading through a curriculum based assessment program led to a pilot study to improve the reading of all children in second and third grades in a specific school system.

These case examples lend considerable support to the need for training and role modeling with the helping professions for investing the time and energy in preventive and intervention approaches in the hopes of warding off more serious issues which can often lead to classification and segregation of a child rather than helping to integrate or to mainstream the child.

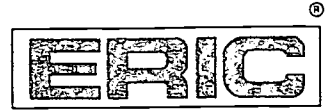
Specifically, these case studies have implications for the role of the school psychologist in terms of being effective in helping to make positive system changes. More training and practical experience is needed in prevention, intervention techniques and systems theory. As this presentation suggests, curriculum based assessment, social skills training, and behavioral interventions are all effective intervention models for the consultant to be skilled at implementing. Another implication for the role and training of the school psychologist is the need for skill and expertise as an effective collaborative consultant.

This ability to work effectively with colleagues to help them to

have a positive impact on an individual child or a group of children is, indeed, an art that merits a great deal of cultivation within a school psychology training program. And finally, the long range implication of this presentation is to help children to hopefully remain in the mainstream of society rather than to have to put the efforts on classification and a sorting out of children into separate categories.



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