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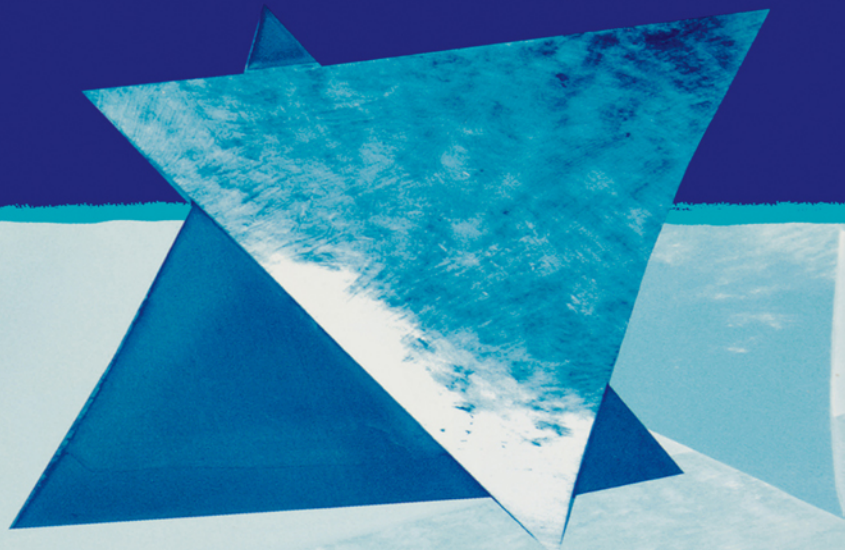
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SPECIAL ISSUE: "The Future of School Psychology Conference:
Framing Opportunities for Consultation"

ISSUE EDITOR: Emilia C. Lopez



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SPECIAL ISSUE

The Future of School Psychology Conference: Framing Opportunities for Consultation

Issue Editor: Emilia C. Lopez

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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SPECIAL ISSUE
INTRODUCTION

*Psychology in the Schools, School
Psychology Review, School Psychology
Quarterly and Journal of Educational
and Psychological Consultation*
Editors Collaborate to
Chart School Psychology's Past,
Present, and "Futures"

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For the first time in the history of school psychology, four editors of journals with a school psychology readership are collaborating to offer our field extensive coverage of the recently held School Psychology Futures conference and to continue discussion on a variety of topics relevant to the professional practice of school psychology. This introduction briefly describes the special journal issues that will be or have been offered in *Psychology in the Schools* (PITS), *School Psychology Review* (SPR), *School Psychology Quarterly* (SPQ), and *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* (JEPC) on topics related to the conference. This information is provided in an effort to offer our readers a Futures link across a variety of journals and organizations, including both the Division of School Psychology of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (All of our journals are available by subscription, or individual special issues can be purchased from the publishers listed.) This introduction, which will be reprinted at the beginning of all of our special issues, establishes a context for the Futures conference by discussing the promise (and practice) of school psychology in our ever changing, vibrant, but problem-saturated society. We hope you will join us in using these vital resources to help chart new *Futures* for school psychology.

For almost a half century, students in school psychology have investigated the "Boulder" and "Thayer" conferences (e.g., Cutts, 1955; Raimy, 1950), studying and exploring our foundation as scientist-practitioners and brooding over the *school* in school psychology. Although the Boulder conference clearly contributed to the science in our practice (Bardon, 1989; Gutkin & Reynolds, 1999), most of the issues considered at the Thayer conference (e.g., titles, roles, and services) were not resolved. The contributions of the "other" conferences, the Olympia Conference and the Spring Hill Symposium, remain even less obvious, and the outcomes are even more debated (Brown, Cardon, Coulter, & Meyers, 1982; Ysseldyke & Weinberg, 1981). Indeed, school psychology's track record with psychology conferences is filled with a great deal of conversation but little documented change (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995; D'Amato & Dean, 1989; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). Nevertheless, current conceptualizations of leadership stressing strategic planning and popular maxims of our day still reflect Benjamin Franklin's belief that "by failing to prepare you are preparing to fail."

With this in mind, NASP and APA proactively cooperated with other child advocacy groups (e.g., Society for the Study of School Psychology) to offer the November 2002 conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, with the goal of examining contemporary needs, issues, and practices and preparing for our "Futures." Through the use of technology, the Futures e-conference was able to connect with various sites and individuals from around the

world. While typical on-site meetings were held, as had previously been the case, in vivo broadcasts connected Indianapolis with school psychology practitioners, university trainers, and students-in-training across the globe. Individuals at these remote sites were able to attend and participate in the conference, including asking questions from presenters in real time.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW–SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY¹

In a notable alliance, *SPR* and *SPQ* published the proceedings of the conference jointly. The conference proceedings appeared in the 2003 Winter issue of *SPQ* and in the 2004 Spring issue of *SPR*. This partnership has provided all members of the largest two professional school psychology associations a copy of the conference proceedings. In an effort to provide individuals who are members of both organizations with original information, *SPR* is publishing its traditional research articles with the conference proceedings in the second half of their Spring issue. The keynote addresses from Drs. Thomas Kratochwill, Robert Sternberg, Michael Curtis, Deborah Crockett, and Sandra Christenson are presented in our combined issue. Related comments are provided by trainers, practitioners, and students in an article by Drs. Margaret Dawson, Jack A. Cummings, Patti L. Harrison, Rick J. Short, Susan Gorin, and Ron Palomares and an article by Dr. Gena N. Ehrhardt-Padgett et al. Some of the broad themes of the conference addressed were the current shortage of school psychologists, reduction of traditional assessments and development of more interventions, accountability, the need to focus on prevention and early intervention, families and home-school partnerships, collaboration across professional and psychological specialties, use of technology, innovative training needs, and diversity considerations (Dawson, Cummings, Harrison, Short, Gorin, & Palomares, this issue).

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SCHOOLS²

As part of the School Psychology Futures Conference: Special Journal Issues series, *Psychology in the Schools* published a special issue entitled *Short-*

¹*SPQ* can be ordered from Guilford Publications (visit www.guilford.com). Members of the Division of School Psychology of the American Psychological Association receive, as part of their membership, a subscription to *SPQ*. *SPR* can be ordered from the National Association of School Psychologists (visit publications@nasppweb.org). Members of the National Association of School Psychologists receive as part of their membership a subscription to *SPR*.

²This special issue or a subscription to *PITS* can be ordered from Wiley at www.wiley.com.

age of School Psychologists in the April 2004 issue. It was guest edited by Dr. David McIntosh. Coverage included a historical perspective of school psychology personnel shortages, best practices in doctoral and specialist respecialization, methods of addressing the shortage of school psychologists within the schools and in academia, and exploration of the shortage of ethnically diverse school psychologists. The special issue featured articles by Melissa A. Bray, Elaine Clark, Tony D. Crespi, Michael J. Curtis, Andrew S. Davis, Thomas K. Fagan, Rosemary Flanagan, William R. Jenson, K. Angeleque Akin-Little, Steven G. Little, David E. McIntosh, LeAdelle Phelps, Natalie N. Politikos, Thomas J. Kehle, and Zheng Zhou.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY

SPQ also sponsored a 2004 special issue addressing the faculty shortage in school psychology and related difficulties, edited by Drs. Steve Little and Angeleque Akin-Little. This issue considered the "State of the Academy" given current shortages and features topics including trends in graduate program faculty production, perceptions of academic positions by graduate students, strategies for promoting academic careers and increasing faculty numbers, and perceptions of women in school psychology. The special issue featured articles by Drs. Little, Akin-Little, Daniel Tingstrom, Richard Nagle, Sandra Christensen, Tanya Eckert, Melissa Bray, Thomas Kehle, Thomas Kratochwill, Edward Shapiro, Kevin Stark, and Michelle Perfect.

JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTATION³

Consultation emerged as a major thread throughout the School Psychology Futures Conference as participants brainstormed problems and solutions to meet the critical issues faced by school professionals as they work towards improving educational and mental health outcomes for children and families. The conference proceedings (now published in *SPR* and *SPQ*) provided the momentum for the special issue "The Future of School Psychology Conference: Framing Opportunities for Consultation." The special issue will be published in the *JEP* and will focus on examining the future of consultation as framed by the conference participants and proceedings.

³Readers can purchase the special issue at www.erlbaum.com (click on journals and find *JEP*).

Among the contributors are Drs. Janet Graden, Kathryn Grogg, Chryse Hatzichristou, Aikaterini Lampropoulou, Adina B. Meyers, Joel Meyers, Bonnie Nastasi, and Lorraine Wizda. Overall, the articles in the special issue address the role of consultation in meeting the critical challenges faced by schools today, while also exploring the implications of these challenges within the context of future research, practice, and training. The special issue is being published in Volume 15, Issues 3 and 4, of *JEPCC*.

CONCLUSIONS

It is easy to hope for and dream of change but we all know that real life implementation is much more difficult. The Futures conference has provided us with a great opportunity—perhaps the greatest opportunity that we will experience in our careers. What is the promise of school psychology? Who do we hope to serve? What do we hope to accomplish? How can we develop mentally and physically healthy children, safe schools, compassionate teachers, and committed parents? How can we get from there to here? That is our focus as we explore a variety of questions, systems, and possibilities in the *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology Review*, and *School Psychology Quarterly*. We hope you will join us on our journey to improve the lives of children, youth, families, and school personnel around our globe.

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The 2002 Conference on the Future of School Psychology: Implications for Consultation, Intervention, and Prevention Services

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In November 2002, the multisite Conference on the Future of School Psychology was sponsored by major professional associations of school psychologists. Conference goals included achieving consensus on current and future

demands for school, conceptualizing the practice of school psychology in the face of diminishing numbers and increasing demand for services, and developing an agenda to use school psychology resources to maximize the benefits to the children and schools. Consultation, intervention, and prevention were major themes in all conference activities. The present article provides an overview of the conference and a summary of issues and outcomes from the conference that relate to educational and psychological consultation services.

The Thayer (Cutts, 1955), Spring Hill (Ysseldyke & Weinberg, 1981), and Olympia (Coulter, Petty, & Benson, 1982) school psychology futures conferences represented significant milestones in forming school psychology's identity—milestones that have both guided and marked the development of school psychology. For many years, school psychologists' activities in consultation, intervention, and prevention have been emphasized as effective methods for promoting children's mental health and education in comprehensive school psychology services. Two conferences on the future of school psychology, the Spring Hill conference in 1979 and the Olympia Conference in 1981, highlighted the use of consultation, intervention, and prevention as alternative roles for school psychology and also identified the problems that existed in typical school psychology practices of the time. As noted by Reschly and Ysseldyke (2002), the Spring Hill and Olympia conferences resulted in the following:

strong assertions regarding the inadequacies of the traditional school psychology focus on determining eligibility for special education using standardized tests of ability and achievement, unreliable and invalid projective assessments of personality and psychopathology, and perceptual-motor measures of dubious merit. Alternative roles were explored in these conferences. (p. 10)

Previous conferences, standards for training and practice, and efforts of professional associations identified what school psychology is and where school psychologists' competencies lie. School psychology has made tremendous gains in the professional roles and expertise that we, as school psychologists, demonstrate in our work. However, it is recognized that "All is not well in school psychology.... Visions of what school psychology should be and could be are not congruent with the reality of what school psychology has become" (Gutkin & Conoley, 1990, p. 203).

During the early 2000s, major national associations of school psychologists concluded that school psychology was at a crossroads. National associations and the Thayer, Spring Hill, and Olympia conferences promoted

consultation, intervention, and prevention as important roles in school psychology and recognized the inadequacies of services that focus almost exclusively on assessment for determining special education eligibility. However, recent surveys suggested that school psychologists continue to spend a majority of their time in psychoeducational assessment and other activities related to special education eligibility (e.g., Curtis, Chesno-Grier, Abshier, Sutton, & Hunley, 2002; Curtis, Hunley, Walker, & Baker, 1999; Reschly, 2000).

In addition, in the early 2000s professional associations of school psychologists found that school psychology is facing a potential personnel shortage. Since the Springhill and Olympia conferences, school psychology has undergone tremendous growth in terms of the sheer number of practitioners that work for school districts and other agencies. However, reports by Curtis et al. (1999), Curtis et al. (2002), Reschly (2000), and others provide evidence that we may soon experience a significant shortage of school psychologists in many parts of the country—a shortage that threatens our capacity to meet the needs of children, families, and schools. Curtis et al. (2002) wrote, “A disproportionate percentage of school psychologists are approaching retirement, while an insufficient number of school psychologists are entering the field to replace those retiring. The result will be a worsening of the already apparent shortage of school psychologists” (p. 6).

The strong consensus of the leaders of the professional associations was that a major collaborative and cooperative effort was needed to examine the future of school psychology, in light of the needs of children, families, and schools for effective services and the anticipated shortages of school psychologists. The professional association leaders recognized that school psychology must consider alternatives to, and possible restructuring of, our service delivery practices in order to plan for the personnel shortage and ensure that adequate services will be provided to children, families, and schools in the future. The associations agreed to cosponsor a futures conference in November 2002 to examine directions for school psychology. Among the professional organizations represented were the American Academy of School Psychology, American Board of School Psychology, Division 16 of the American Psychological Association (APA), Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs, International School Psychology Association, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), Society for the Study of School Psychology, and Trainers of School Psychologists. The organizations set three goals for the Futures Conference:

- Achieve consensus on current and future demands for school psychologists and our profession’s ability to meet those demands.