


**Health Care (from p. 5)**

the students (let's call him John) from the behavioral needs class asked to talk to me because the death of Angel brought back memories of his mother's near death in a car accident six years ago.

John explained in detail how he and his mother were in a car accident near the Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River and how his mother "died three times on the way to the hospital." John was with his mother in the ambulance to the hospital and he explained what happened in a way that must have been relived by him many times over the past six years. While his mother still works a steady job on a manufacturing assembly line, she suffered some brain injury of which John is constantly aware. I was hesitant, but at some point I told John about my high school best friend and he seemed to appreciate

that in some small way we shared the recent tragedies. John's remembrance was very "normal" under the circumstances. I told him so. That was the last time John and I talked. He started missing classes, like the approximately 100 students who eventually drop out of the high school each year. There are scores of students like John who could benefit from counseling, so many that I couldn't see them all on a regular basis, even if that's all I did. It's frustrating. For a school psychologist, that's "normal" under the circumstances.

Health Care Update: NASP's website: [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org) has a wealth of information, which can be accessed, even by non-NASP members. For example, the School Psychologists Action Network (SPAN) is now online. 



*Downing School Psych of Year*

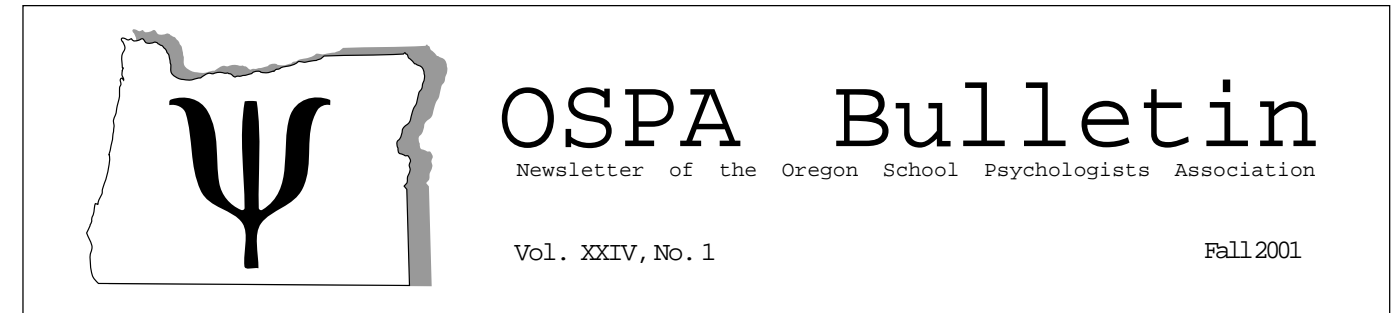
Portland's Mark Downing was named Oregon's School Psychologist of the Year, in an announcement made at the fall conference in Lake Oswego. Above, Downing is awarded a plaque in his honor by OSPA President Michael Safko. See article in the upcoming issue of this *Bulletin*.

Oregon School Psychologists Association



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*The Oregon School Psychologists Association provides leadership in creating a brighter future for all Oregon children through professional affiliation, collaborative problem-solving, and promotion of practices that are both innovative and based on solid psychological and educational research.*



## Karen O'Brien New NASP Delegate for Oregon

The summer issue of this *Bulletin* contained an article about Oregon's retiring NASP Delegate, Fred Grossman. Grossman had spent "an unprecedented eight years in office," as noted by article writer Phil Bowser, who lauded Grossman's work. The good news is that Oregon is in strong hands with the new NASP Delegate, Karen O'Brien.

O'Brien is a school psychologist in Roseburg, where she lives mid-week after commuting from her home in Gold Beach. She is the senior member on the current OSPA executive board, and few OSPA members have served the state association in as many different capacities. O'Brien is known among OSPA board members for her keen mind, her excellent organization, and her "institutional memory." She was OSPA President for the 1998-99 school year, and was the main force in Oregon behind the success of the last tri-state convention

with Washington and Idaho. The recent public-relations efforts by OSPA for the governor's proclamation of "school psychology week" have in great part been successful because of her efforts.

As NASP Delegate, O'Brien's primary duties will include recruiting membership for the national association and serving as a link—not just between boards, but among members—between OSPA and NASP memberships. This latter function includes such issues as answering queries about how one becomes a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, or remedying the situation if a NASP member has not been receiving membership materials or other documents.

Delegates to NASP sit on the Delegate Assembly, and are responsible for setting the NASP budget, approving NASP policies, and reviewing and approving position papers.



*Photo courtesy of Phil Bowser*

NASP Delegate Karen O'Brien

O'Brien can be reached via email ([kobrien@harborside.com](mailto:kobrien@harborside.com)) or phone (541.247.2740 eves). (See "NASP Delegate Report, p. 3 of this issue.")

## Responding to Tragedy: Trying to Be Normal

By Vinny Martin, NCSP, Oregon's Health Care Coordinator to NASP

It's difficult to determine a right or wrong way to respond emotionally to a tragedy.

At 8:00 A.M., Sep. 11, I was scheduled to meet with a 9<sup>th</sup> grade health class comprised of a dozen or so special education students with behavioral needs. We planned to discuss social skills and to complete the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) student questionnaire. When I entered the room, the students were focused on the TV monitor with its news from New York City and

Washington, D.C. No one in the room (except for me...I grew up in the Bronx, NY) knew anyone from New York. During the newscast, the relatively concrete questions and comments from the students were primarily geographical and impersonal. One student did ask if I knew anyone who might have been affected. I said, "No!" thinking that my best friend in high school might still work in the World Trade Center for the Ford Foundation. The TV was turned off in favor of social skills, after ten minutes. No one seemed to mind. I was relieved because the news was upset-

ting.

Since the horror of Tuesday, Sep. 11, it was almost one week to the hour that tragedy struck again...this time closer to home in Forest Grove. Angel, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, was on his way to his second week at the High School when he was killed in a car accident. The Forest Grove School District has a district-wide crisis response team, which came to the high school to provide support. As the school psychologist at the high school, I was merely "available" with no specific responsibility. However, one of

*continues on p. 8*

### The Slow Learner Paradox and the Absurdity of Discrepancy

*Editor's note: the following is excerpted from an editorial by Joseph F. Kovalski in the Fall 2001 issue of Insight, the bulletin of the Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania. Kovalski's reflections were stimulated by his state's recent "join[ing] the rest of the country and drop[ping] the cutoff for MR to 69." The previous standard had been IQ and commensurate adaptive behavior below 80. Although some of his colleagues were tormented at having to explain to parents of children functioning in the 70s that their children were "mentally retarded," the new provisions present a different problem: many children are no longer eligible for special services. This excerpt includes all but Kovalski's first paragraph.*

The diagnostic confusion here springs from two time-honored assumptions that have guided our profession yet have always perplexed me. The first is the notion that certain students with limited intelligence have a pattern of learning that is slower than average, but steady across the life span. These slow learners are expected to function below grade level, but are presumed to be able to maintain meaningful progress without specifically designed instruction. For this reason, we have seen fit to exclude these students from special education. The problem with this construct is that it doesn't match with reality for many students who have IQs in the 70s. Many of the students whom I have met over the years have significant academic deficits, and don't respond well to general educational strategies. They are resistant to intervention, and do indeed appear to need special education to gain the skills needed to lead productive lives. Rather than lagging consistently behind, these students wind up semi-, or fully, illiterate at the end of their school careers. To deny these students with special education they need based on diagnostic nicety is unconscionable.

So what can we call these students if they don't qualify as having MR? I submit that these students are learning disabled, perhaps the most truly learning disabled students that we have. The problem with labeling them as such has sprung from the concept of discrepancy which is not only regulated at the federal level, but has become the singular criterion for how we understand ID. I will not be the first to argue that differentiating students as needing special

education on the basis of the discrepancy model is based on an absurdity. Consider two students. Both have overall standard scores in academic achievement of 70. Both have a terrible time learning basic skills in spite of effective instruction. Student A has an IQ of 100 and is deemed to be LD and will receive special education. Student B has an IQ of 70 (or even 80), and does not qualify because there is no significant discrepancy with assessed IQ. The conclusion—student B is not smart enough to be LD! Apparently, we have institutionalized anguish for "bright" students who can't learn, but not for "slow" students who have identical needs.

When one considers who typically scores in the 70's, one might also argue that we have created a category (ID) that includes middle and upper class students at the expense of poor kids. The extreme of this paradox is the identification of students with above-average ability who have a discrepancy because they are only functioning at grade level. These students, who usually can be effectively accommodated in general education have in many areas filled the ranks of our learning support programs, often not being identified until secondary school. This scenario has always seemed to me to be a perversion of a well-intentioned construct, another absurdity dressed in apparent but flawed logic. These students may need support to maximize their potential, but they don't need special education.

At the end of August 2001, another group of learned experts met to consider the construct of ID, in the context of preliminary discussions about the reauthorization of IDEA (yes, it's that time already). As we went to press, Insight had not yet received news about their deliberations. We know that previous committees have failed to agree on a definition of ID. It is my hope that when they do, they consider alternatives to the discrepancy model. For example, Mark Shinn in his latest edited volume on curriculum-based measurement argues that students should qualify for special education based on a simple discrepancy from grade placement. What resonates about this position is that special education would then be reserved for our most academically deficient students, and not for students who have statistical, though not real, disabilities. Isn't that what special education was supposed to be all about?

### NASP International Affairs Committee Seeks ISPA Representative

The International School Psychology Association is interested in having a delegate in each state who is a member of NASP as well as of ISPA (or is willing to join ISPA) to promote international school psychology at the state level. We already have representatives in 18 states, but Oregon is not yet represented. Individuals who may be interested are urged to contact Shirley Natzel, Chair ISPA Delegates, at (262)-369-0253 H or (414) 525-8443 W; or email: [iqtest@juno.com](mailto:iqtest@juno.com) for additional information.

Those acting as liaisons should be members of their state association, NASP, and ISPA (the International School Psychology Association).

Other opportunities for school psychologists interested in the practice of school psychology throughout the world include the annual colloquium (see related article below) sponsored by ISPA, to be held outside of Copenhagen, Denmark, July 25-29, 2002, and a symposium at the 2002 NASP convention entitled, "Work,

Study, Travel Abroad for School Psychologists." ISPA members who will be attending the NASP convention in Chicago, are invited to come to both this and the International Reception which will follow the symposium.

Additional information about either of these events can be obtained via email to Peg Dawson (current president of ISPA and chair of NASP's International Affairs Committee): [dawson@nh.ultranet.com](mailto:dawson@nh.ultranet.com).

### What's So Great About an ISPA Colloquium?

by Peg Dawson, President ISPA Chair, NASP International Affairs Committee

At this past summer's colloquium in Dinan, France, a group of International School Psychology Association (ISPA) leaders and representatives of national affiliate associations sat down and generated a list of what is so special about an ISPA colloquium. The list was long, the benefits plentiful and varied. Here are some of the ideas the group came up with.

#### Social

- \*Opportunities to network with colleagues from all over the world
- \*A family feeling, often like an old-time family reunion
- \*Make new friends, catch up with old ones
- \*Share both personal and work experiences in interaction groups

#### Professional

- \*Quality professional training opportunities

\*Mix of practical and scholarly presentations

- \*Opportunity to earn continuing education credits
- \*Exposure to alternative models and practices
- \*A unique opportunity to get a world view of education and school psychology

#### Cultural

- \*Chance to travel and see places not on the typical tourist routes
- \*Immersion in unique cultural experiences with international colleagues
- \*Scheduled day or afternoon trips to points of interest in the region
- \*Activities for family members

#### Growth of the Profession

- \*Help shape the future of school psychology throughout the world
- \*Learn about cutting edge issues in other countries
- \*Support school psychology in developing countries

\*Participate in specific association projects by joining a committee

Sound enticing? With so many reasons to attend, how can you resist? Next summer's colloquium will be held in Nyborg, Denmark, a picturesque seaside town within easy reach of Copenhagen. Facilities include a modern hotel with an indoor swimming pool, sauna, solarium, bar, Bistro, and restaurant as well as large, comfortable rooms and state-of-the-art conference facilities. Some dormitory rooms at lesser cost will also be available specifically for students or persons with financial needs. The colloquium will take place July 25-29, 2002. Put it on your calendar now!

Registration materials will be ready in December. Reserve your copy by contacting the ISPA Central Office at: [ispa-denmark@mobilixnet.dk](mailto:ispa-denmark@mobilixnet.dk). Questions: Contact the Central Office or drop Peg Dawson, ISPA, President, an email at [dawson@nh.ultranet.com](mailto:dawson@nh.ultranet.com).

### Guidance Channel, from p. 6

on "author" and get a picture of Serv and his bio; you can click on "sponsor" and see the NASP info. There will be links to NASP and, on the NASP web page there will be a link back to GC.

As I mentioned during the DA meeting, we will be providing monthly columns on topics related to mental health and be-

havior, primarily targeted to teachers and other educators. All of you are invited to submit a column—send to me when the spirit moves you. And don't be surprised if I call to twist your arm sometime soon. Also feel free to contact me if you have any good ideas for topics, especially if you can recommend an author!

The total is not a lot but the honoraria we receive for each column will go toward supporting the NASP Center.

Once you visit the Guidance Channel site, you can sign up for a free subscription to their monthly E-newsletter. Browse around, this is a large site with a lot of relevant information and resources.

### Workshop to Address Risks to LGBQ Youths

The American Psychological Association (APA), the Center for Disease Control, and NASP will work together to offer a workshop for school psychologists at the upcoming NASP Convention in Chicago.

The APA's Healthy Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students Project will present a full-day workshop at the NASP Convention. The workshop, "Overcoming Barriers for School Psychologists in Addressing the Health and Mental Health Risks of LGBQ Youth," will take place on Thursday, February 28, 2002, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Participants will receive 6 hours of Continuing Professional Development Credit. The workshop is FREE but registration will be required to attend, and participants must complete the entire workshop in order to receive the CE credits. Please note that the workshop can only accommodate 50 persons. Additional

information on how to register will be available at the time of the NASP Conference Call for Registrations.

This workshop is designed to assist school psychologists in meeting the health and mental health needs of LGBQ youth. NASP has been one of six national health organizations working closely with the Healthy LGB Students Project to prevent health risks and promote healthy outcomes of this student population. The Healthy LGB Students Project is funded by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control's Division of Adolescent and School Health.

For more information about the Healthy LGB Students Project, contact Antonio Hughes (NASP liaison) at ahughes@naspweb.org or Dusty Porter (Healthy LGB Students Project Manager) at jporter@apa.org.

### OSPA MEMBERS NEEDED FOR VIDEO PROJECT

by Philip Bowser, NCSP

A recent Education Service District newsletter contained the results of a survey of teachers. "Give us more behavioral consultation and mental health services!!" the teachers begged. "But there are not enough people around with the proper training!" was the response. Which made the OSPA Public Relations Committee wonder, "How do we get the message across that most school psychologists have plenty of training and experience in the areas of behavioral consultation and mental health? The solution to the so called "shortage" may be as easy as more fully utilizing the staff already on hand!"

This has been the message that many school psychologists have tried to disseminate for the last, oh, thirty years or so. There have been plenty of position papers and letters and research results passed around, but still the concept hasn't sunk in. Obviously, another approach is needed. What would happen if we cre-

ated a video tape? Would people respond better when the cold statistics have a human face? To find out, the OSPA Video Project was born!

The plan is to have OSPA members face the camera and simply state—in plain, jargon-free language—what they know how to do. The resulting videotape would present a steady stream of faces describing a smorgasbord of services available from school psychologists. The OSPA Public Relations Committee would then distribute the tape. Here's how you can help!

Next Spring, OSPA will hold another training session. Start making plans to attend the Conference in Ashland. Between now and then, be thinking about what you would say to the camera if given 30 seconds to mention some of your important but lessor-used skills. It might be tougher than you think to distill it down to a few simple, jargon-free words! And then come to the meeting ready for your "screen debut!"

new OSPA web address:  
www.ospaonline.com

### Safe Schools Grants Available

SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS: More than \$38 Million in Grants Going to Communities to Prevent Violence Among Youth are available.

The U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services have announced more than \$38 million in grants to 20 communities to make schools safer, foster children's development, and prevent aggressive and violent behavior and drug and alcohol use among the nation's youth through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant.

The school-based community partnerships include rural, urban, suburban and tribal projects. School districts submitted comprehensive plans created in partnership with law enforcement officials, local mental health authorities, juvenile justice officials and community-based organizations.

Plans will be required to address six different elements:

- \* a safe school environment;
- \* violence, alcohol and drug abuse prevention and early intervention programs;
- \* school and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services;
- \* early childhood psychosocial and emotional development services;
- \* educational reform; and,
- \* safe school policies

The full announcement for these grants, and other awarded grant sites may be seen at:

<<http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/10-2001/10042001e.html>>

### NASP Begins Presence on Guidance Channel

From NASP Correspondence:

On Wednesday, May 2nd, we inaugurate our new relationship with the Guidance Channel. Go to the website at [www.guidancechannel.com](http://www.guidancechannel.com), click on "Therapy and Counseling" button on the left side of the opening page, and find our first column, this one written by Servio Carroll based on his Emotional First Aid handout published in HCHS. You can click

(continues on p. 7)

### OSPA Interest

### NASP Delegate from the NASP Delegate Perspective

by Karen O'Brien

(see related article on Karen O'Brien, page 1 of this issue)

I have had two occasions to represent Oregon at NASP events - the July Delegate Assembly and the Western Region Meeting.

One focus for NASP this year is Strategic Action Planning to assist the association in developing goals for the next five years. The delegates, other leaders, and consumers of school psychology services met for one day before the summer delegate assembly to start the planning process. We met in a large group to obtain information and then met in smaller groups to discuss the issues and brainstorm ideas. Reports about the strategic action planning process have been presented in recent issues of the *NASP Communique*.

If you are not a NASP member, I invite you to join. NASP is the only association that promotes school psychology nationwide. As a member, you receive 8 issues of the *Communique*, NASP's newspaper, 4 issues of the *School Psychology Review*, access to the NASP listserves and interest groups, and discounts on NASP books and convention fees. There is also a "members-only" section on the website that gives members access to other information and services not available to the general public. The regular member rate is \$120.00 - that's only \$10.00 a month! A great bargain for all the benefits! Student membership is \$37.00. There are other membership categories, as well. Please contact me if you would like a membership application.

The 2002 Convention will be held in Chicago from February 26th to March 2nd at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. There will be more than 600 workshops, presentations, sessions and events for professional development, and some fun too. Come join us in Chicago; many Oregon school psychologists will be attending! Registration deadlines are February 3rd for the hotel rates and February 8th for the convention rates. I have extra convention brochures, so please con-

tact me if you would like one sent to you.

There is grant money available from the NASP Education and Research Trust (ERT), a nonprofit organization. The maximum grant allowance is \$1000.00 and the application is due by November 30th. The grant process involves a 100 word proposal and two letters of support. Applications are available from me, the NASP office and the NASP website ([www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)). The grant purpose must align with the goals for the ERT that are indicated on the application.

There have been several changes in the last six months for the NCSP.

1) Beginning September 1, 2001, you will not have to send the NCSP Board all of the CPD forms for certification renewal. You will just have to submit a summary sheet of your activities. However, you do need to keep the CPD forms because 10 to 15 percent of the renewal applications will be audited. If you are audited, the CPD forms will need to be provided to the Board.

2) NASP no longer provides a transcript system as part of the automated CPD process, as members were not using this service.

3) The NCSP directory will be posted on the web rather than being mailed to you.

4) You can now retire at any age and apply for the NCSP retired credential.

5) If you have completed an organized program of study in school psychology, but do not have a degree in school psychology, there is an interim policy in place to help you obtain the NCSP. Contact the NASP office for more information (301-657-0270).

Please contact me with any ideas for new NASP services or products or with concerns you may have regarding NASP. You can reach me via email at <[kobrien@harborside.com](mailto:kobrien@harborside.com)> and my phone numbers are 541-440-4038 (W), 541-672-1514 (T-Th eves) and 541-247-2740 (Fri-Mon.). I look forward to hearing from you.

new OSPA web address:  
www.ospaonline.com



The *OSPA Bulletin*, the official publication of the Oregon School Psychologists Association, is published four times a year and distributed to members as a membership benefit. OSPA is a nonprofit, non-partisan, educational association of professional school psychologists. It is dedicated to providing for the educational and mental health needs of all children and to advocating for their achievement of independence, dignity, and purpose of life.

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The *OSPA Bulletin* invites contributions. Professional issues and news, articles, questions, reviews, letters and graphic works should be sent to David Streight, 7735 SW 87th, Portland OR, 97223, or <[streight@rsiss.org](mailto:streight@rsiss.org)>. Changes of address should be sent to Brian Craig, Membership Chairperson, 2727 Old Fort Rd., Klamath Falls OR, 97601, or <[bcraig@cvc.net](mailto:bcraig@cvc.net)>.

*Bulletin* deadlines for future issues:

Winter, January 15, 2002

Spring, March 15, 2002

from our State Newsletter colleagues

## Rating Scales vs. Direct Observations A Recommendation for Best Practice

by Gayle Fellers, Ph. D.

-Reprinted with permission from the South Carolina School Psych Scene, June, 2000.

What are the assumptions underlying rating scales and direct observational data? Are they measurements of the same phenomena? These questions are concerned with the methodological issues surrounding the use of behavioral rating scales and behavioral observations in evaluations of students.

Rating scales use the ability of the raters to integrate multiple sources of information and then to apply this information to some abstract quality of the person being rated. The time that elapses between the times that the observations are made may be short or considerable, i.e., retrospective. Raters must evaluate the information they have gathered through knowing a person over time. Their evaluations are not just objective but are a function also of their own interactions with that person. Rating scales may provide more information about raters than those they are rating. Given this, what are the assumptions that are made about the raters?

The first assumption that investigators make about the persons who are doing the rating is that they share the same theoretical concept of the quality or attribute being rated. It is important that the terms used in the rating have common meanings for all raters in the lexical, affective, and implicative sense. In other words, raters need to understand the terms as the dictionary would define them, to understand the emotional connotations of words, and to understand how they occur together in a language or culture, the structural relations that exist among the set of words used. Rating scales require an observer to rate a person on a well-defined dimension on the basis of intensity, quality, frequency or some combination of these characteristics of the person's actual behavior. In order for the rater to do this, the dimension should be given a clear definition in terms of the behaviors or properties associated with it. This helps with another assumption investigators make about raters, and that is that the raters shares with the investigator and other raters a concept of which behaviors of the subject's demonstrate the quality or trait (attribute) being rated.

It is also an assumption that the rater is able to detect information associated with an attribute in the flow of activities of the person being rated. Raters have to decide whether what the subjects are doing is intentional or accidental; then a judgment must be made which takes into account or discounts sources of variation that are related to the situation in which the person being rated is involved. If a rater

is not familiar with a subject across various situations, then the rating will not reflect the attributes across situations.

A final, but important, assumption that is made about raters is that they share the same norms for the behaviors being measured as the investigator and as other raters and that they can decide where the person to be rated falls in relation to that norm.

There are basically two systems underlying theories behind direct observations. The first is the sign system, in which certain behaviors are seen as a sign of underlying problems or a more extensive behavioral system. Using this system, observers are asked to record the incidence of certain behaviors and are not requested to record all the behaviors that occur. The other system is a category system that is an attempt to record all behaviors that have been shown to relate to a particular category of behaviors so that interactions can be detailed and antecedent and consequent behaviors can be determined.

An advantage of direct observational techniques is that the data which is generated are objective as long as the categories are well defined and not global constructs (aggression, etc.) and require little inference on the part of the observer. Another advantage is the reliability of the instrument is not under the control of the rater and can be improved with good definitions of behaviors and good observer training.

Direct observations are also useful for specifying treatment because they identify the interactional-situational factors that contribute to individual differences. They reflect real interpersonal and setting controls and help identify how behaviors are elicited, maintained, and controlled. Observation scores are a function of enduring characteristics of the individual being observed + interpersonal acts + fusion of settings + institutional norms, etc.

Are rating scales and direct observational data measures of the same phenomena? No, they are not. Rating scales are measures of traits or attributes of an individual averaged across time and situations. Observations are measures of situational behaviors and interactions that give us information about the antecedents and consequences of behavior.

Therefore, it only makes sense to compare the information about subjects one gets from rating scales with the information one gets from direct observations if one is interested in whether or not a significant person (teacher, parent) in the life of the individual views the behavior of the individual in an appropriate manner. Or, does the history of their interactions with the

*continues on next page*

individual or the label placed on the individual cloud their perceptions of the actual behavior of the individual. Rating scales should be used to determine classification of children but if intervention is the goal, direct observations are a must.

The NASP position statement on the rationale for functional behavioral assessments states, "The primary purpose of the assessment should be identification of needs/goals and related intervention, not labeling. In addition it states that systematic and structured observations that demonstrate reliability and validity should be used. This points to the need to have a standardized observational system within a given school system so that systematic training procedures are developed to ensure that professionals are using the instruments in a competent manner and to improve communication and collaboration among professionals. Most school psychology training programs do not emphasize direct observational procedures and school psychologists tend to develop their own observation codes that may be inadequate or have unknown technical properties.

The observation system should be selected based on standards of psychometric quality and appropriateness. The reliability of an observation code (inter-observer agreement) implies that you are observing characteristics of the student rather than the observer's inaccuracy. Inter-observer agreement can be improved when behavior categories are operationally defined and the number of behaviors coded is kept to a minimum. Validity measures include content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity, and treatment validity. Content validity is determined by evaluating whether the code includes specific problem behaviors as well as positive, alternative behaviors. It also should include variables that might be influencing the observed problem.

Finally, it should be a coding system that can be used in a variety of classroom settings. Criterion-related validity is a determination of whether the coding system includes behaviors

that can be predictive. These behaviors might include time engaged in academic work, teacher and peer interaction, teacher praise and disapproval, stimulus procedures, prompts, accuracy feedback, and error correction. Construct validity includes the way in which the behaviors are defined and how they are recorded. Recording procedures can be partial interval, whole interval and momentary time sampling. The most accurate procedures has been shown to be momentary time sampling. Longer intervals will result in less accurate data. Treatment validity is a determination of whether the data is useful in developing intervention or treatment plans.

The State Event Classroom Observation System (SECOS) developed by Dr. Rich Saudargas at the University of Tennessee is an observational coding system which has been well researched and shown to have both reliability [interobserver agreement .8 to .97 for states and .71 to 1.00 for events with significant Kappas ( $p < .05$ ) on all state behaviors] and validity. It was designed for use in remediation of academic and/or behavior problems in elementary school children. The codes consist of 17 low inference, descriptive behavior categories. States are coded using a momentary time sampling system with intervals of 15 seconds. Events are coded as frequency counts.

All data is coded sequentially. SECOS has been used in research looking at children with learning disabilities, children with ADHD, children who are intellectually gifted, children with behavior problems and average classroom, children ranging throughout elementary school grades. There is a broad range of research that supports its validity. Normative data on 486 non-disabled elementary students is available from Dr. Saudargas.

While other coding systems are available and some have been developed locally, few have the technical quality of SECOS. If you are interested in documenting classroom behavior for the purpose of intervention consider using a behavior coding system such as SECOS.

### Stop Disability Harassment

The National Association of School Psychologists has offered the following steps your district can take to ensure students with disabilities are treated with respect by their peers. Schools should:

- Implement school-wide prevention programs that promote a positive school and community climate. Existing programs can effectively reduce the occurrence of bullying and require the participation and commitment of students, parents, educators and members of the community.

- Intervene early, preferably in elementary or middle school, and as early as pre-school. Group and building-wide social skills training is highly recommended, as well as counseling and systematic aggression interventions for students exhibiting bullying and victim behaviors.

- Train parents to reinforce their children's positive behavior patterns and model appropriate interpersonal interactions.
- Train parents to identify and respond to potentially-damaging victimization, as well as to implement positive feedback and modeling to address appropriate social interactions.
- Stop defending bullying behavior as part of growing up, or with the attitude that "kids will be kids." School personnel should never ignore bullying behaviors.
- Promote a positive school environment. Schools with easily understood rules of conduct, smaller class sizes and fair discipline practices report less violence. A positive school climate will reduce bullying and victimization.

*(reprinted from Louisiana School Psychologist, 2001, v. 13.5)*