

NASP Delegate (from p. 3)

the annual convention will be on the West Coast in **Anaheim, California** March 28-April 1!

Need some money for a project? *The NASP Children's Fund has two funding sources – one for service projects that directly benefit children. You can receive up to \$5,000 for a service project or \$500 for a "Youth Empowered Mini-Grant" that is student driven and helps students and a supporting adult (e.g., school psychologist, counselor, teacher) develop one or more of the 40 Developmental Assets. Go to www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/childfund.html for proposal information. Let's see some Oregon grant projects listed in the Communiqué!*

NASP e-Communities: This is a new service for this year. It both replaces all the listservs and adds new communities for members. NASP e-Communities are organized by topic, role, geography, or interest. They allow NASP visitors and members to communicate with colleagues, access and share documents, and receive announcements and news items relevant to profession and specific interest groups. Non-NASP members can access the NASP Center e-Community, individual state e-Communities, and the state calendar listings. Visit the STATE e-Community for updates on events and issues. Go to

www.naspwebservices.org and log in with your NASP membership number and password, then click on Communities to view all the communities you can access.

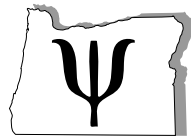
Contacting Me: Please feel free to contact me with ideas for NASP services, problems you may have or any questions about membership or other services. Email at home is kobrien@harborside.com. My work email address is kobrien@roseburg.k12.or.us. You may also call me at home 541-247-2740 (Fridays-Mondays); 541-679-3576 (Tues-Thurs eves) or at work 541-440-4038.

OSPA Bulletin electronic edition?

This is the third time this box has appeared here. So far, we've received no comments. Is it fair to assume that a "no comment" means *yes, it's okay* for an electronic newsletter?

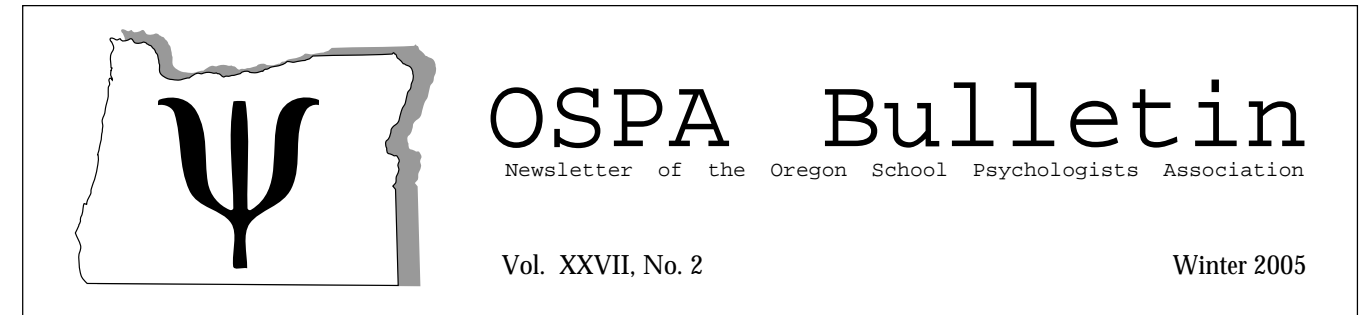
An increasing number of state newsletters are being published in PDF format, to be read on-line or printed out at home or at the office. It saves both paper and time. If you are opposed to this idea for Oregon, please let the editor know (streight@rsiss.net)

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.

**OSPA Election Yields New Leaders**

It is not news to members of this association that for the past several months OSPA has been governed by a committee. A new slate of candidates arose in the fall, and OSPA members submitted the slate to a vote in November. On December 8, 2004, the election for officers for the 2004-05 year was completed, with the following individuals emerging as association officers for the immediate future:

President: Allen Jeppesen
President-Elect: Mary Jo Lee
Treasurer: Carol Moore
Secretary: Mike Miller

Alan Jeppeson is employed by Reynolds School District, where he has been for the past decade. He served OSPA in the 1990s as chair of the Professional Standards committee. He will be supported by President-Elect Mary Jo Lee, who is a school psychologist in Portland.

Treasurer Carol Moore, who will replace Roseburg-based co-treasurers Karen O'Brien and Phil Bowser, is a school psychologist for Northwest Regional ESD. The new OSPA secretary is Mike Miller, who also works for Portland Public Schools.

Jeppesen is well aware of the challenges that lie ahead, and knows that there is a need for volunteer help far beyond the four individuals who were elected in December (and previously elected NASP delegate Karen O'Brien) to represent the state association officially (see, for example, the editor's comments on p. 2 of this issue). Many of his fellow officers have worked with conference planning over the past several months; in that sense, all are aware that they are a team that can work together with ease.

O'Brien, who has worn several hats

over the past two years (as an integral member of the Committee of the Whole, as well as election official and chief ballot-counter for the recent elections, in addition to her work as treasurer and NASP Delegate) was the first to express officially the association's thanks to those who attended the various business meetings of the organization during the past two years.

O'Brien mentioned especially outgoing committee chairperson Shannon Van Horn; past-president Alex Granzin; membership chair Brian Craig; Vinny Martin, Mark Downing and the conference committee members for months of labor on the fall conference; and Phil Bowser for his work as OSPA's webmaster. At one point there were serious questions about the future of the organization, and it was these individuals who "helped OSPA maintain," she said.

The Anti-Depressant Classroom: What Teachers Can Do

by John MacDonald, Seattle Public Schools

Depression is one of the most common disorders among students

How Do We Recognize Depression?

There are many different types of depression, but the most common is a chronic type called dysthymic disorder, which used to be called "neurotic" or mild depression. The symptoms of dysthymia include: sad mood, poor appetite or over-eating, sleeping too little or too much, low energy or fatigue, low self esteem, difficulty making decisions, and feelings of hopelessness. Only two of these symptoms need be present for a diagnosis to be made, and the symptoms need to have been ongoing for at least one year (two years in adults). In the general US school popula-

tion, estimates are that 10% to 15% meet diagnostic criteria for dysthymia at any one time, and 20% to 30% will meet diagnostic criteria at some point in their lives. The prevalence in the US special education population at any one point in time has been found to be 30% to 50%. Other types of depression, such as major depression and bipolar disorder, are rarer, but differ from dysthymia primarily in the degree of severity of symptoms. You should consider the possibility of depression in any student who looks sad, is isolated from peers, makes self-deprecating comments ("I probably will mess this up"), seems preoccupied, or seems tired. The most important indicators I use are a lack of playfulness and/or self-deprecating comments or an

overconcern with the adequacy of their performance.

The Nature of Depression

Depression has multiple causes, and multiple effects. There are biological causes including genetics, biochemistry, and certain medical conditions; cognitive causes through learning depressive ways of thinking; and social causes through the stressors people may experience and in ways others interact with them. The effects of depression are nearly always biological (low energy, effects on the immune system), cognitive (worry, hopelessness, fear), emotional (feelings of sadness), and social (withdrawal, lack of interest in pleasant activities).

continues on p. 6

Anote from the editor

Job Change: Coming Soon to All Schools Near You

Since President Jeppesen's column on this page will not begin until the spring, let me bridge the gap, with an editor's note about the most significant Oregon-specific change I've seen in twenty years as a school psychologist. It is issues like this that indicate our need for a state association of school psychologists. Not just a state association, but a STRONG state association that needs more than a committee of the whole or a few elected officers (thank you for your willingness to be candidates!) do not suffice. An issue is something that all Oregon school psychologists should express an opinion about.

Retard...

Let's say you're not a school psychologist, but you do try to work in the mental health field. And getting clients has been made more difficult by the managed care system we've all dealt with in the past decade. And on top of that, the Oregon economy is still one of the worst in the nation, and it's improving more slowly than any of us would like.

Let's say you and a bunch of friends have more time on your hands than you like. Oh, a few of your colleagues have too much work, because they are tremendously skilled at what they do, and word gets around if you're good. (In Portland, try to get a therapy appointment with Skip Greenwood or Leah Sebastian... this year, that is.) Let's say you and your friends brainstorm where pots of available money might be for private practitioners who don't have clients trying to get appointments with them. Hey, what about schools?

Let's add that some of your friends also have a concern that school psychologists have not spent as much time in graduate classes as you have, and therefore don't know as much as you do. (Okay, they might have more professional education and supervised experience regarding children than you and your friends, but let's leave that aside for now.)

So, what about schools? Lots of districts don't like you working there as much as they like appropriately trained school psychologists, because of all the hand-holding they've had to do in past cases. But what if? Just what if, you could get the state legislature to mandate that you be a part of an assessment team?

That might be a big move, but if you start with something small... could that not be a great foot in the door? A little more could be added later, with ease.

Oh, and just between you and your friends, if you want to sneak something into schools, maybe summertime might be best.

Okay, stop pretending...

The text in the column to the right is from the Oregon Revised Statutes: i.e., from state law. All except the little point at the bottom, which got slipped in as a proposal last summer. The Oregon Psychological Association "will be seeking approval for [it] from the Legislature in 2005." The OPA sees this point as "a change so simple and appropriate that [they] can only believe that it was an oversight in drafting the original legislation." We'll put it in small print, since it is so unimportant.

You, reader, are invited to ponder point (d) and wonder if it was indeed "so simple" as to be an oversight. While doing so, think about how much easier it might make your job to have someone else do this work for you... and maybe other ramifications of this legislative change. You might be relieved to know that individuals better qualified than you (well, maybe not in dealing with school children, but...) will be there to make sure your assessments are competent.

Back when I was president, OSPA dealt with a legislative proposal that ultimately kept most Oregon school psychologists from engaging, outside the school day, in a wide variety of professional activities for which they are trained. (Curiously, that legislative proposal was presented during the summer, too.) If 2005 is like back then, lots of

OSPA members will be saying to President Jeppesen and his small band of association executive volunteers, "You guys need to do something about this!"

Know, however, that if this issue is an important one for school psychologists in Oregon, it will take more than the five elected OSPA officials to deal with it. Help will be needed from every legislative district in the state. And by "help," I mean numerous volunteers, from all over.



SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCEDURES

343.146 Determination of eligibility for special education services; evaluation; reevaluation; medical or vision examination; health assessment.

(1) To receive special education, children with disabilities shall be determined eligible for special education services under a school district program approved under ORS 343.045 and as provided under ORS 343.221.

(2) Before initially providing special education, the school district shall ensure that a full and individual evaluation is conducted to determine the child's eligibility for special education and the child's special educational needs.

(3) Eligibility for special education shall be determined pursuant to rules adopted by the State Board of Education.

(4) Under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, each school district shall conduct an evaluation every three years, or more frequently if conditions warrant or if the parent or teacher requests an evaluation.

(5) If a medical or vision examination or health assessment is required as part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation, the evaluation shall be given:

(a) In the case of a medical examination, by a physician licensed to practice by a state board of medical examiners;

(b) In the case of a health assessment, by a nurse licensed by a state board of nursing and specially certified as a nurse practitioner or by a licensed physician assistant; and

(c) In the case of a vision examination, by an ophthalmologist or optometrist licensed by a state board.

(d) In the case of a mental health or behavioral assessment, by a psychologist licensed to practice by a state board of psychological examiners.

Hey, since the proposal doesn't say which state's board of psychological examiners needs to do the licensing, maybe we could invite some of our friends from other states with whom clients are reluctant to make appointments (and to whom no one wants to refer) to come help us raise the quality of school psychology services here?

SHARK ATTACK

REVISITED

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

Two years ago, after approximately two weeks, thirty-nine stitches, and a ten thousand-dollar hospital bill, one of my school psychology interns "walked sitting down" out of a hospital to recover further from a shark attack off the Oregon coast. You should have seen the boogie board! We were only a few weeks into the school year when the accident interrupted his lucrative assignment, which paid a grand total of \$5,000 (health insurance not included) for the entire school year. He was one of the 40 million Americans without health insurance, but he had a "job," and his application to the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) was pending.

Insurance coverage by the OHP was denied, not because he was currently making roughly 3 dollars per hour (less than half the minimum wage), but because he had worked the previous school year (during his practicum) and made too much money to qualify. Fortunately, the hospital eventually wrote off his bill, so he could concentrate on paying off his college loans and writing those comprehensive psychological reports for which he was being so well paid. Throughout the school year, my intern had no difficulty empathizing and identifying with the low socioeconomic status students he served. He completed a fabulous internship and has not once contacted me for a loan.

There appears to be an increasing burden placed by government upon individuals within our American society. Whether you are an experienced, thirty-year school psychologist veteran making \$60,000 per year (before all those deductions) or an intern making much closer to nothing, you feel the pressure to do more with ever decreasing resources. You can recommend, suggest, conclude, and decide... whatever you want, as long as it doesn't translate into spending money a school district either doesn't have or would rather allocate elsewhere. And it's prob-

ably good to remember that not much that happens in a school district cannot be translated into money (i.e. Time is money).

As OSPA's state health care coordinator to NASP, I try to waste as little of my (and your) precious time as possible. For those of you who belong to NASP, its publications are full of well-researched resources. Joining NASP is well worth the time and money. For example, the November issue of the *Communique* includes extensive coverage of health issues to include mental health, obesity, and pending IDEA re-authorization updates. One of the articles reminded me that "counseling" as a related service does exist, if only sometimes in federal and state regulations. Did you know that provisions also exist for "parent training and counseling" (i.e. to enable students to benefit from their school program)? Unless a student is placed in a day treatment program or perhaps a special class for students with emotional problems, counseling is rarely included in an IEP. I've never seen "parent counseling" in an IEP.

OSPA doesn't have the financial or human resources of NASP, but OSPA can provide closer to home, more personally supportive, resources by facilitating interactions among school psychologists across the state. This past October, OSPA conducted another successful conference at the Inn at Spanish Head (Lincoln City) and recently conducted an election process with a complete slate of officers. Some preliminary discussions have occurred with Washington State (WASP) regarding a future BI-state conference. WASP has a conference scheduled at Skamania in Oct., 2005 and NASP conventions are scheduled for spring 2005 (Atlanta) and spring 2006 (Anaheim).

What do a shark attack, an internship, money, NASP and OSPA have in common?

Answer. They are all ways to spend your time, or (in some cases) have it spent for you.

DO'S	DON'TS
Describe the future in hopeful terms. Describe the next lesson, unit, or year as more exciting than the one they have just done.	Describe the future in fearful terms, such as saying things like "If you think fourth grade is hard, just wait till you get to fifth."
Be realistic, but optimistic about the future. Describe challenges that will face students, but communicate your confidence that they will meet those challenges in stride ("Next year in 6th grade, the classes will move a lot faster, and you'll have to get more done in a shorter time. But you'll be ready for it because you know how to manage your time, study," etc.)	Describe the future unrealistically—you won't be convincing.
Talk with your students about careers that might be related to class topics, and describe realistically what might make a certain career interesting. Guest speakers can be helpful.	Avoid talking about careers or the distant future.
Encourage your students to participate in activities you think they are likely to enjoy (reminding them, if the activity is new, they might have to get practice first).	Ignore isolated, quiet students.
Refer students who you believe may be depressed to a school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, or school social worker.	

Anti-Depressant Classroom (from p. 1)

Changes in one of these systems (e.g., cognitive) can affect other systems (e.g., emotional, biological, social). It is a mistake to think of the biological system as static or unchanging, and a mistake to think that if there is a biological predisposition, it is impossible to influence the effects of depression.

Why the Classroom Is Important

Student counseling, family intervention, and medication are often important components of any package to help students with depression, but they are inadequate for the job alone. The cognitive effects of depression are the most debilitating for school achievement, and are actually the most dangerous because they may put the person at risk for suicide. The thoughts that people with depression experience aren't random; they have a specific form. Some 30 years ago, Aaron Beck presented evidence that three thoughts are very common, so common he called them the "cognitive triad of depression": a) "I am an incompetent person; b) "the world is a dangerous or unhelpful place"; and e) "the future is hopeless". These beliefs are very strong, and resistant to contradiction. Depressed people often withdraw from situations that could disprove these beliefs, but even when they experience contradictory evidence, they often discount the evidence. Passing a test might be a matter of "good luck" rather than actually being skilled and knowledgeable enough to pass it. Helpful people might be thought to be helping for ulterior motives rather than really being helpful. Because others' intentions are often misread, people with depression tend not to reciprocate kindnesses, or may respond with suspicion. This tends to make them more socially isolated, as others avoid them. They

may already be socially isolated, because depression tends to reduce a person's interest in pleasurable activities. I think depressed children and adolescents are particularly prone to avoiding situations where they don't feel competent. Many of these students don't know how to play specific games competently, especially team or social games. They often do respond very well to sensitive coaching.

The classroom is where much of the "cognitive triad" comes to a head. Student's competence is often being evaluated, intentionally when they are tested, but also incidentally as they compare themselves to other students. It could be argued that classrooms (as well as the school cafeteria, hallways, etc.) are the most social settings these students encounter on a regular basis, and where they learn the nature of the world as safe or threatening. It's also where hope becomes reality: much of a student's future depends on his or her educational attainments. The classroom is much more prevalent and pervasive than any weekly counseling session could ever be. The classroom is also what students perceive as the "real world" of other children/adolescents. But counseling, even group counseling, is not perceived as the "real world".

Below, I've prepared a list of Do's and Don'ts that may help educators better address the needs of students at-risk for or currently experiencing depression. These suggestions primarily focus on how to enhance activities in which educators already engage, not on the creation of additional activities. It is acknowledged that some of these may be more possible to achieve in some classes than in others.

(Reprinted from the Washington State Association Newsletter, SCOPE, Fall 2003)

DO ' S	DON ' Ts
Make task-referent comments/questions: What's the first step in solving this problem? (e.g., "That's a good answer." "That's a good question.")	Make self- or student-referent comments/questions ("Why don't you have that done?" "You must be very smart." "You must not understand how to do this.")
Give feedback about tasks they have completed successfully or unsuccessfully, and feedback about behavior you have observed. Place your greatest attention on successful performance. (This may be as simple as grading on the basis of points they have earned, rather than taking points off for errors.)	Give feedback about assumed traits. Place more attention on errors/mistakes than on successful performance.
Make student progress as visible to the student as possible, on as frequent a basis as possible.	Fail to let students know how they are progressing.
Normalize beginning incompetence (everyone was a beginner at everything once; emphasize that being unable to do a task is a temporary condition, changed by know-how and effort).	Make statements/comments that indicate a student "should be able to do a task when he or she is putting effort in and is not being successful.
Provide coaching for a student if he or she is having difficulty being successful at a task. If this is not possible by the instructor, have a knowledgeable peer help the student. Try to arrange "errorless learning," or at least situations where students end with a successful experience.	Move on from a task that the student has not yet mastered.
Encourage peers helping each other; they may need coaching themselves in doing this effectively, and you may need to monitor that it is effective help.	Encourage competition between individuals (such competition can have some developmental benefits, but only if the student is ready to be competitive).
Get to know your students to the extent that you can; converse with them during non-task times. Especially get to know quiet students.	Avoid conversation with students outside of classroom tasks.

(continues on next page)

State Association News/Business

NASP Delegate's Report

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NASP?, by Karen O'Brien, NASP Delegate

Membership: Join NASP now to take advantage of lower convention rates, discounts on NASP publications, web only resources and the e-communities. At this time, memberships are for a year and a half (January 2005 to June 30, 2006). Go to www.naspwebservices.org to join, or contact me for an application.

On-line Member services: Here is a list of the on-line services for NASP members. You can download a membership certificate; a NASP screensaver or various handouts (20 so far) for your Palm/Pocket PC.

Need some CPD hours? NASP has 8 different modules that you can earn hours for. There are 8 modules so far and some of the titles include "Reducing academic failure and promoting alternatives to retention," "Assessment of adaptive behavior," and "Working with school interpreters to deliver school psychological services." When you complete the module and the brief assessment, NASP will send you a certificate of completion with the hours listed.

As a NASP member you have access to several PowerPoint presentations that can be downloaded from the website. There are four that promote school psychology and 5 about curriculum based measurement including how to administer and score reading, math and written language samples. There is a training curriculum for school psychologists on the topic of gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning youth that you can use with your school staff. The bullying and social skills PowerPoint presentations have recently been updated. Check them out and schedule a presentation for your school staff or school board to promote school psychology in your district.

There is a section for Interventions

and the current volume (#4) is entitled Collaboration –Building Partnerships to Promote Students' Learning and Development. These modules list various resources (NASP and others) for you to read on the topic given. There are currently 3 intervention modules available on the website.

You can access back issues of the Communiqué and School Psychology Review. There is also a Communiqué Extra (CQ Extra) where you can find articles, handouts and book reviews not published in the Communiqué that comes to your mailbox!

Need a letter documenting your NCSP status? Go the NCSP letter generator section and provide NASP with the information they need and a letter will be sent to you.

YOU must be a member to access these services. Join today, if you are not already a member!

2005 Convention: The annual convention will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 29-April 2, 2005. Registration is \$155 for NASP members by 2/25/05 or \$205 after this date or on-site. Student membership is \$55 and \$60, respectively. Nonmembers pay \$305 or \$375, respectively. There are extra fees for the half and full day workshops or any special events you may wish to attend.

Theme: Achieving Better Outcomes for Children—there will be several sessions on assessment that informs effective instruction and interventions; special seminars on making career transitions at all levels including retirement; many special events for students and interns; and moderated brown bag lunch discussions on hot topic in our profession. Come join us in Atlanta for professional growth and some fun!

Can't get away for the convention this year? Save your money for 2006 as



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.net>](mailto:streight@rsiss.net). Changes of address should be sent to the same address.

Bulletin deadlines for future issues:
Spring, April 15, 2005
Summer, June 15, 2005

Putting Content Into Consultation

The Functional Analysis of Academic Behavior

by John Brady, PhD, Chapman University (Reprinted from CASPToday, Fall 2004)

School psychologists are often asked to help design educational interventions for students. In fact, most referrals made by general education teachers are for children who need academic help (Reschly, 2000). However most of the assessment instruments that school psychologists use were not designed to be useful for creating academic interventions (National Council on Disability, 1989). An instrument developed by Ysseldyke and Christenson (2002), the Functional Assessment of Academic Behavior (FAAB) fills the need to gather information on the learning environment that will help create effective academic interventions.

The FAAB is designed to help evaluate instructional support elements in both the school and home environments. It can help the school psychologist determine what aspects of the environment can or should be manipulated to enhance a student's learning. The scale is based on Ysseldyke and Christenson's research into aspects of instruction that have been shown to positively affect academic skills (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1987). They identified 23 of these factors, 12 classroom, five home, and six home-school factors (see Table 1.1). These critical aspects of instruction can then be targeted for research-based classroom or home interventions as needed.

This instrument can be helpful to school psychologists who are looking for ways of affecting student academic performance from an ecological point of view. At Chapman University, we use it to train our graduate students in the development of interventions that directly impact achievement. We have chosen this approach because a) most of our students are not teachers and consequently don't have a base of direct instructional knowledge (usually the RSP teacher and speech and language specialist fill that need), b) standardized tests (WISC IV WIAT, etc.) often do not lend themselves to the development of classroom interventions that improve learning, and c) the FAAB helps evaluate both the conceptual and contextual complexities of the classroom instructional environment. In addition to the help the FAAB gives school psychologists in working with teachers, it is very helpful in consultation with parents in that the parent interview covers home supports for learning. The importance of family school partnerships is increasingly highlighted in practice and the literature (Pelco, Jacobson, Ries, & Melka, 2000). In addition, it has been demonstrated that academic and behavior improvement can be significantly improved by including the parents in the process (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992).

The FAAB provides the school psychologist with a comprehensive process to assess those areas of the student's learning environment that support learning and to then help develop research-based intervention strategies that can be carried out in the school and home. It consists of a series of observations and interviews. The

process usually starts with the student and class being observed during a lesson. While observing the student, the school psychologist is also looking for and noting evidence of the 12 components of classroom support for learning. As soon after the lesson as possible, the student is interviewed as to whether he understood the lesson and what difficulties and supports he experiences in the classroom. The psychologist then interviews both the teacher and parents. The teacher interview covers the classroom processes and instructional planning. The parent interview assesses the presence and extent of home supports for learning.

At the conclusion of the observation and interview process, the psychologist can either meet with the parent and teacher or the student study team to develop interventions based on the presence or absence of the support for learning components. The instrument manual contains a number of well-researched intervention ideas for each component. These can be used as interventions or the team can generate others.

Table 1.1: FAAB Support for Learning Components

Instructional Support	Home Support	Home-School Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Match • Instructional Expectations • Classroom Environment • Instructional Presentation • Cognitive Emphasis • Motivational Strategies • Relevant Practice • Informed Feedback • Academic Engaged Time • Adaptive Instruction • Progress Evaluation • Student Understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Expectations and Attributions • Discipline Orientation • Home-affective Environment • Parental Participation • Structure for Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Standards and Expectations • Consistent Structure • Cross-setting Opportunity to Learn • Mutual Support • Positive, Trust Relationships • Modeling

The following case description illustrates the process.
Case Study

Mary was a fourth-grade student attending a public school in an upper middle class neighborhood. She was referred to the school psychologist for assessment because "she was the lowest in the class academically." An initial review of the past test data showed that she had grade level skills in reading, math, and written communication and would not be a candidate for a special education referral.

She was, however, not doing well in her fourth-grade classroom, if for no other reason than the level of achievement in this school was consistently above national norms. It was decided to use the FAAB process (at the time of this case study the older version of the FAAB, The Instructional Environment System [Ysseldyke and Christenson 1993], was used) as a format for assessing her learning environment from the perspectives of psychologists, teachers, and parent and student. This was done

in the hope of finding areas that could be enhanced in order to improve her academic and classroom performance.

A classroom observation of a math lesson was done using the Observation Record. There was clear evidence of complete instructional planning and well-paced instructional delivery. However, while the monitoring of her understanding of the lesson was consistent with a generally good monitoring of the class as a whole, it was seemingly not enough for Mary. When the teacher checked for understanding, she did not raise her hand. Instead she checked with the child next to her several times during the lesson. When Mary was interviewed after the lesson using the Student Interview Record, it was evident that she only partially understood the lesson and believed that she could do it "with help." As she was questioned about this and either classroom assignments, Mary explained that she often did not completely understand the lessons, did not have enough time to complete them and often did not do very well in them. She felt it was helpful to have the teacher or the child next to her help in re-explaining the assignment. When questioned about her homework environment she described a somewhat unstructured process with little designated help and accountability. Mary's teacher felt that Mary's response to the lesson was typical for her, in that she needed extra attention to stay on task and in general she displayed poor accuracy and low levels of completion of practice assignments.

Mary's parents were interviewed using the Parent Interview Record. They had been aware of her academic difficulties for several years and had provided private tutoring in reading and writing for two years. The interview revealed possible problems in level of attention, knowing what to do on the assignments, lack of consistent help at home, monitoring of homework and difficulty with follow through on either home responsibilities.

The *Instructional Environment Form* and the *Home Support for Learning Form* were completed by the psychologist to summarize the data and to determine areas of intervention at school and home. The forms ask the rater to determine the level of "presence" of the 12 classroom components and five home components and in the case of the classroom components how important they are to the resolution of the case.

After reviewing the data sources, the areas that needed attention in the classroom seemed to be checking for student understanding (instructional presentation), inadequate drill and practice (relevant practice), an established system to get help needed (academic engaged time) and alternative ways to complete tasks (adaptive instruction). The areas that needed attention in the home learning environment seemed to be monitoring of homework (discipline orientation), recognition for improvement (Home Affective Environment), and regular routine for homework (structure for learning).

A joint parent, teacher, and psychologist conference was

held to review the findings and plan interventions. It was decided to check her more often for understanding in the classroom, send home a daily homework outline, and check it for understanding before she left school, have a specific time and place for homework, designate one parent each night as the homework helper and focus her private tutor on written communication skills. Other areas of concern on the FAAB were left for future conferences if needed. Weekly conversations with Mary's classroom teacher and a follow-up conference with her parents a month later indicated that both her understanding of her assignments and productivity had improved to the point that both teacher and parents were satisfied with her progress.

The case illustrates a typical use of the FAAB, the assessment of critical aspects of the instructional and home learning environments and the development of strategies to support the student's learning. These are areas of intervention that are both complimentary to and supportive of the direct instructional interventions that are often provided by either members of the instructional team.

In summary, the use of the FAAB in the evaluation process helps focus the psychologist's evaluation on the critical aspects of the instructional and home environments that have been shown to directly affect school learning and it provides research validated ecological interventions to improve academic achievement. School psychologists should find the instrument very helpful as we are increasingly asked to provide research-based pre-referral interventions for children experiencing academic difficulties in the classroom.

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