THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: TRAINING VS. PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the perceptions of practicing school psychologists as they relate to the role and function of the profession. Surveys were sent to a national sample of 1,000 school psychologists randomly selected from the National Association of School Psychologist's (NASP) membership list. The survey solicited information about the training and current practice of school psychologists with regard to NASP's eleven domains of professional practice. The survey also assessed school psychologists' perceptions about their current job activities, preferred job activities, and professional role. Results indicated significant differences between the training emphases of the practitioners' school psychology training programs and the requirements of the profession. Other results found significant differences between the preferences of the practitioners and the amount of time they spend performing specific job-related activities.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Discussions and arguments for change in the functional role of school psychologists have appeared in the literature for the past 50 years (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000). Because of the obvious and growing need for prevention and intervention services, school psychologists have been encouraged to expand their role. Discussions have centered on the traditional role, the current confusion about the role, and role expansion.

In school psychology, the traditional role has been linked with serving children who have not progressed at the same rate as their peers (Tharinger, 1995). Whether it has been to segregate these students, or to help mainstream them, school psychologists have used testing as a tool to label or diagnose children who exhibit academic or behavioral difficulties (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998). Often, traditional school psychologists have used normative-based assessments to compare a child's performance with their peers from a national normative sample (Bardon, 1994). While practitioners will use clinical judgment to determine whether a student should receive special education services, the student first needs to perform a certain way on assessments to qualify for the label. This process allows educators to provide the student with educational services they would not ordinarily receive. This type of diagnostic or medicalized assessment has been around in some variation or another since the turn of the century (Carlson, Paavola, & Talley, 1995), and many traditional school psychologists have been viewed as the gatekeepers for special education services (Deno, 1995). Today, traditional school psychologists continue to use intelligence tests to extract meaning from subtests, a process some believe adds little new information (Canter, 1997).

Today, traditional school psychologists continue to use intelligence tests to extract meaning from subtests (Canter, 1997). School psychologists have used intelligence testing as a way to discern a student's strengths and weaknesses through subtest profiles (Canter). However, current research focuses on academic and behavioral skill development and use of tests that are directly linked to measuring these skills (Canter). This practice is less culturally biased and more directly linked to a student's success in school (Canter). Using intelligence tests to analyze students is a process that some believe adds little new information (Canter).

The current role of school psychologists continues to be overwhelmingly geared toward the assessment and diagnosis of children with special needs (Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford, & Hall, 2002; Reschly & Wilson, 1995). An impetus for assessment as the primary role came with the passage of Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). This law required states to develop and implement policies that assure a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities in order to receive federal funds. School psychologists play a large role in schools to determine who the children are with disabilities. This is done in part with formal and informal assessments. However, the role of school psychologists as assessors was around long before this influential law (Braden, Dimarino-Linnen, & Good, 2001; Fagan, 1986).

Many professionals within the field contend that if school psychologists do not adapt to school reform, diagnose less, and learn to deal with increased poverty, diversity, and social pathology, they may not survive (Bardon, 1994). A trend toward greater role expansion is also reflected in national law, committee resolutions, state law, and licensing practices (Gutkin, 1995). Further, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) supports working with teams in an expanded, supportive way for students, rather than focusing on labeling and placement (Ysseldyke, Dawson, Lehr, Reschly, Reynolds, & Telzrow, 1997). Another

consideration is that performing a traditional activity like labeling youth with terms like mental retardation is viewed as a medical or diagnostic act. When school psychologists provide labels, practitioners can appear to function as pseudo-psychiatrists. Since labeling students can be viewed as an anti-educational act, school psychologists who participate in the labeling process may be in danger of losing their importance in the educational system (Gutkin).

Confusion about the role of school psychologists is understandable given the multiple factors that influence the profession's service delivery. Reform movements, state laws, national laws, and children's needs have heavily influenced the school psychologist's role. In addition, administrator demands, practitioner desires or fears about role change, and the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) have been major influences on the role and function of school psychologists in today's society (Braden, et al., 2001).

While the role of school psychologists is confusing, much of current literature in the field has concluded that the future direction of school psychology will involve role expansion (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Carlson et al., 1995; Dwyer & Bernstein, 1998; Grimley, 1978; Gutkin, 1995; Myers, 1998; Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998; Power, McGoey, Heathfield, & Blum, 1999; Tharinger, 1995; Thomas, Levinson, Orf, & Pinciotti, 1992; Ysseldyke et al., 1997). Some of the broad trends in school psychology include health promotion, de-medicalizing, and seeing the environment of the child as a significant influence on how the child behaves. An emphasis on prevention activities, increasing the coordination of school-based services (versus piecemeal and unsystematic services), and providing services that depend more on the unique needs of the local community and school are more specific directions outlined in the professional literature. Other proclivities in the functional role include helping teachers develop new teaching techniques, developing less clear role boundaries and greater coordination/collaboration with other health specialties, encouraging sensitivity toward the family and the multicultural

community, and evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.

Many believe the key to successfully expanding the role of school psychologists involves improving the scope and quality of training programs. As early as 1970, an emphasis on role expansion at the university level was cited in the literature (Griebink & Ringness, 1970). In 1974, an article was published listing the training emphases of the different school psychology training programs, and these emphases ranged from assessment to systems analysis (Bardon & Wenger, 1974).

Studies have addressed how training influences practice (Costenbader, Schwartz, & Petrix, 1992; Curtis, Hunley, & Grier, 2002; Huebner, 1993; Meacham & Peckham, 1978; Reschly, 2000; Wilson & Reschly, 1996). These studies indicated a strong link between training and practice concerning degree level obtained, assessment tools used, and time spent on different job-related activities. Some studies have examined the perceptions of practicing school psychologists as they relate to the adequacy of their training programs (Allen, Jerome, White, Marston, Lamb, Pope, & Rawlins, 2002; Graden, Christenson, Ysseldyke, & Meyers, 1984; Meacham & Peckham, 1978; Ochoa, Rivera, & Ford, 1997; Rogers, Ponterotto, Conoley, & Wiese, 1992; Wise, Smead, & Huebner, 1987).

Additionally, the overall needs of students and how improvements in school psychologists' training programs could help address these issues have been addressed in the literature (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Dawson, 2000; Knoff, Curtis, & Batsche, 1997). Examples of the main improvements needed are in: the quality of teaching, how programs are organized, curriculum, opportunities for students to observe how big problems in the schools are tackled, and providing continuing education courses (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Dawson, 2000; Knoff, Curtis, & Batsche, 1997).

Even though the argument seems strong for expanding the role of school psychologists and reducing the emphasis on assessing and diagnosing children, controversy continues to surround this issue. Many school psychologists believe that norm-referenced tests yield valuable information about students (Hyman & Kaplinski, 1994; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1990). In addition, many practitioners fear that the reduction of assessment activities may decrease the necessity for their services since many school psychologists are partially supported by national and state laws strongly tied to assessment (Hyman & Kaplinski).

A primary reason for expanding the role of school psychologists, however, is the health, education, and welfare of our children. Increased stressors, concomitant health problems, and suicide rates in the United States underscore the need for intervention, prevention, direct services and indirect interventions for the nation's youth. Many believe these needs outweigh the need for testing services that often address a minority of our nation's needy children (Bramlett et al., 2002; Nastasi, Varjas, Bernstein, & Pluymert, 1998).

In 1997, NASP published *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II (Blueprint II)*. The authors designed this publication to be used as a guide for school psychologists and trainers. The authors of this document favored an expanded role for school psychologists. This publication identified ten areas of skill and competency related to the trends annotated above (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). An additional area of competency was later added in 2000 with the publication of *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (See Appendix B).

As is indicated, there has been much written regarding the role and function of school psychologists. The current study has three objectives related to the role of school psychologists. The first objective of this study is to determine whether there are significant differences between what is emphasized in the school psychology training programs and what is currently required to

perform satisfactorily as a practicing school psychologist. The second objective is to determine whether there are significant differences in the ideal and actual amount of time school psychologists engage in specific job-related activities. The last objective is to determine which of NASP's eleven domains of skill or competency have been identified as the most important by currently practicing school psychologists to meet the current demands of today's schools.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The following review will examine many important themes exploring the past, present, and future of the role of school psychologists. First, the history of school psychology is examined. Next, the actual and the desired role of school psychologists are discussed from a national perspective. Then, regional differences in how school psychologists perceive their actual and desired role are addressed. Research on the perceptions and attitudes of school administrators and other school personnel is examined next. A discussion about current trends toward role expansion is presented to understand what specific elements might be included in these trends. Furthermore, *Blueprint II's* importance toward critically and empirically examining role expansion as a preferred trend of school psychology is articulated. Next, many challenges and barriers that may impede a school psychologist's efforts toward role expansion are reviewed. Finally, a discussion about the effects of graduate training programs follows.

History of School Psychology

The need for a psychologist's role in the schools was generated when a federal compulsory education law in 1852 flooded schools with a diversity of children (Braden et al., 2001; Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998). This mandate introduced significant numbers of children with physical, learning, developmental, behavior, and emotional problems to our nation's schools. Many of these children found success unusually difficult within the academic and social parameters of American schools. As a result, psychologists were introduced to the schools and given the task of sorting, selecting, and segregating students (Pfeiffer & Reddy; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Tharinger, 1995).

Lightner Witmer was one of the first persons to train clinical psychologists in the early 1900s to solve problems that hindered a student's progress, and this problem-solving process

typically involved the administration of assessments (Carlson et al., 1995; Tharinger, 1995). He became the father of both clinical and school psychology (Fagan, 1986). These fields began as a merged entity, and they did not become differentiated into two separate fields until the 1930s (French, 1990).

In 1925, Walter, a director of psychological measurements in his school district, described the role of school psychologists in a very comprehensive way (French, 1990). He described six functions of school psychologists. They included: select and interpret tests used in the schools; diagnose problem cases through intellectual assessment, emotional observations, and background information from teachers and parents; develop therapeutic programs and conduct therapy; conduct research; use expertise in psychology to contribute to the understanding of learning problems; and consult with teachers. Walter described how school psychologists of his time were beginning to fill the *need* for objective data in order to classify, place, and analyze *exceptional* children for foster care and special programs (French).

The split between clinical and school psychology began in the 1930s with the first governmental regulations on professional psychological practice (French, 1990). Not until the 1940s, then, did state certification, state associations, and professional journals of school psychology materialize (Braden et al., 2001). In 1945, professional psychology became more specialized as the American Psychological Association (APA) developed nineteen divisions. Division 16 of the APA was created for school psychology (Fagan, 1986; French, 1990).

Two conferences in the psychological field would significantly alter the paths of clinical and school psychology. The Thayer Conference, in 1954, and the Boulder Conference, a few years earlier, finally differentiated the roles of clinical and school psychologists. The Thayer conference emphasized school psychology as a practice in the schools with children. The Boulder Conference highlighted clinical psychology as a science focused on the adult population

(French, 1990).

Initially, many school psychologists chose the path of non-doctoral practice. This trend did not coincide with APA's emphasis on doctoral-level training. The National Association of School Psychology (NASP) was formed in 1969 (French, 1990) to include both doctoral and non-doctoral practitioners (Fagan, 1986; French). In context, school psychology developed as a specialty recognized by APA, later developing into a separate identity with the creation of NASP (French).

The federal Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, which was re-authorized in 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), mandated a free and appropriate public education to all children with disabilities. For school psychologists, this law equaled job security, as it was their role to determine who the children were with disabilities in part by using assessment tools for which they had specialized training. IDEA helped foster the development of school psychologists as assessors, diagnosticians, and gatekeepers for special education services (Bradley-Johnson, Johnson, & Jacob-Time, 1995; Carlson et al., 1995; Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998). Most updates in the law since 1975 were to expand the age of children who could be serviced by special education. At first only school-aged children could receive services. Then additions were made so that finally children and students from birth to age 21 could receive special education services.

Actual Versus Desired Role

The actual role of school psychologists appears to lean heavily toward assessment and conducting special education evaluations (Bramlett et al., 2002; Levinson, 1990; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Smith, 1984). Reschly and Wilson studied national data compiled in 1991-1992 (Reschly & Wilson, 1995). They found that more than one-half of practitioner time was devoted to performing psychoeducational assessments, about 20% was

spent on direct interventions, and the rest was spent on consultation and research. Wilson and Reschly (1996) predicted that the use of intelligence testing would not abate due to the legal mandates in which disabilities are identified through the use of such assessments.

More recently, Bramlett et al. (2002) scrutinized 1999 survey data obtained from school psychologists. Respondents indicated that 46% of their time was engaged in assessment. Additionally, Curtis, Hunley, Walker, and Baker (1999) examined national data from a 1994-1995 survey of school psychologists. About 60 % of these respondents reported spending more than 70% of their time completing special education evaluations. Curtis et al. determined that most school psychologists conduct assessments for special education purposes. These findings are consistent with Reschly and Wilson's findings (1995).

The desired role of school psychologists generally involves a reduction in time spent on psychoeducational assessments with a corresponding increase in intervention planning, consultation, and research services (Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts, 1970; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Smith, 1984). Nationally, school psychologists would prefer to spend 32% of their time on assessment, 28% on direct interventions, 23% on problem-solving consultation, 10% on organizational-systems consultation, and 7% on research/evaluation (Reschly & Wilson).

Some school psychologists have been considered practitioners of *exemplary* programs (Nastasi et al., 1998). Their actual role appears to be much different than most school psychologists (Reschly & Wilson, 1995). These unique school psychologists spend about 21% of their time on assessment, 27% in consultation, 20% in counseling, 16% in prevention, 10% in other components of program implementation/design/evaluation, and 6% in research (Nastasi et al.). One identifiable problem for school psychologists of *exemplary* and standard special education programs is that spending so little time in research prevents many of them from disseminating vital information that could result in role expansion. Others consider expanding

the role of research a necessary area of expansion in the field (Nastasi et al.).

Regional Differences in Role

Few studies have been conducted to determine regional differences in the functional activities of school psychologists. The Reschly and Connolly (1990) study found that there was little difference between rural, suburban, and urban districts concerning how much time school psychologists spent on special education evaluations. According to the Reschly and Connolly study, all groups of school psychologists spent about 66% of their time in this role.

In another 1992-1993 regional comparative study (Roberts & Rust, 1994), results indicated that school psychologists in Tennessee devoted 66% of their time to assessment activities. In the same study, however, Iowa school psychologists spent 51% of their time conducting assessment-related activities. The school psychologists from both states indicated that they preferred to spend less time on assessment, but only by 16% of the school psychologists in Tennessee and by 5% in Iowa. One could conclude from the Roberts and Rust study that school psychologists in these states were reluctant to completely relinquish their assessment role.

Results from the Roberts and Rust (1994) study suggest that great differences appear between the states regarding the service delivery and attitudes of school psychologists. While it appears that school psychologists throughout the nation would like to reduce assessments to one-third of their role (Reschly & Wilson, 1995), practitioners in Tennessee and Iowa appear to prefer that assessment related activities take up approximately one-half of their time (Reschly & Wilson; Roberts & Rust).

By examining practitioner to student ratios and the number of evaluations practitioners perform yearly, an impression of regional differences in the role of school psychologists can be obtained. According to a 1999 national survey (Thomas, Joaqin, & Toleski, 1999), the national school psychologist to student ratio is 1 to 1816. Regionally, the highest ratio is in Hawaii, with

one school psychologist to 8,252 students. The lowest ratio was reported in New York, with one school psychologist to 817 students. Connecticut followed closely with a 1 to 844 ratio. To promote a broad role, NASP recommends a minimum ratio of one practitioner to 1000 students (Lund, Reschly, & Connolly Martin, 1998). It is likely that these differing ratios have a differential effect on the activities and roles of school psychologists on a state-by-state basis.

A national survey by Thomas and others, (1999) found that school psychologists average 87.5 evaluations per year. Regionally, the greatest number of yearly evaluations is in Hawaii, with 160, and Alaska, with 143. Connecticut and New Jersey reported conducting the fewest number of assessments, with Connecticut averaging 49 and New Jersey averaging 53 per year (Thomas et al.). A cursory examination of the states' ratio figures and number of yearly evaluation figures suggests a positive correlation. Thus, an argument could be made that school psychologists would be more likely to complete larger numbers of yearly evaluations in schools where there is a greater student to practitioner ratio. Further research in this area is needed to determine the relation between school psychologist ratios and assessment-related activities.

Perceptions of School Administrators and Other School Personnel

In 1964, Tindall was one of the first to suggest that the leadership of the school administrator is one of the most instrumental variables affecting the school psychologist's role. Therefore, one way researchers have evaluated the actual time school psychologists spend in certain roles is to examine the perceptions of school administrators and other school personnel. Researchers have examined the school administrators' and personnel's perceptions about what they believe to be the most beneficial school psychology activities (Abel & Burke, 1985; Beauchamp, 1994; Cheramie & Sutter, 1993; Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985; Thomas et al., 1992). Researchers also have examined school administrators and personnel's satisfaction with the school psychologist's role (Abel & Burke; Beauchamp; Cheramie & Sutter; Hartshorne &

Johnson; Thomas et al.). In addition, the perceptions of school administrators and personnel concerning influential factors and possible solutions related to the school psychologist's role have been examined (Abel & Burke; Hartshorne & Johnson; Thomas et al.).

Most research seems to focus on the school administrators' and personnel's satisfaction with the school psychologist's role. In general, many educational colleagues were satisfied with the way school psychologists spent their time, with the quality of their knowledge, and with the effectiveness of their services (Abel & Burke, 1985; Cheramie & Sutter, 1993; Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985; Thomas et al., 1992). In addition, one study found that the more time school psychologists spent consulting with teachers, the more satisfied school administrators were with their school psychologists (Beauchamp, 1994).

A considerable amount of research focuses on the perceptions of administrators and other personnel about the amount of time school psychologists spend completing specific activities and what amount of time they believe would be the most beneficial (Abel & Burke, 1985; Beauchamp, 1994; Cheramie & Sutter, 1993; Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985; Thomas et al., 1992). According to one study, administrators and other school personnel believed that school psychologists spend most of their time conducting assessments and engaging in consultation (Cheramie & Sutter). The same study also found that administrators and other school personnel thought more time should be spent performing consultation and counseling services (Abel & Burke; Cheramie & Sutter; Hartshorne & Johnson). However, research also suggests that administrators and other school personnel still identify assessment as a top priority in the role and function of school psychologists (Abel & Burke; Beauchamp).

A smaller proportion of research focuses on the perceptions of administrators and other educational personnel about the factors influencing school psychologists' role (Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985). Hartshorne and Johnson examined four possible influences: the training and

personality of the individual practitioner, the circumstances unique to the school or setting, and special education regulations. Their study found that school administrators believed that special education regulations appeared to be the most influential factor impacting the role and function of school psychologists.

A 1992 study (Thomas et al., 1992) of school administrators suggested several other potential influences on the role of school psychologists. These included: differences in the demographic composition of the students in school, differences in the organizational/structural delivery of special education services, and the economic considerations of specific school districts.

Role Expansion

Role expansion appears to be a trend in school psychology. Many have articulated what role expansion might include. Some have found that broad trends in school psychology should include the promotion of health services, assisting all students, and seeing the environment of the child as a significant influence on how the child behaves (Bradley-Johnson et al., 1995; Gutkin, 1995; Power et al., 1999; Tharinger, 1995; Ysseldyke et al., 1997).

Health promotion, one broad trend, was listed as the first function of school psychologists in a brochure published by the American Psychological Association in 1994 (Gutkin, 1995). Tharinger (1995) concluded that health promotion would include services that assessed mental health disorders, the psychosomatics of illness, and high-risk behaviors like alcohol and substance abuse in our nation's youth. In addition, Tharinger argued that health promotion should include health education, believing that this service would decrease the incidence of health-related disorders. She asserted that health promotion should include a coordination of health/mental health and educational development, as does the Nastasi study (2000). To promote health services, schools and their communities would need to be examined to determine what

practices are blocking or cultivating the manifestation of healthy behavior (Power et al., 1999).

Another trend in school psychology is to address the needs of all students. As far back as 1978, some contended that the role of school psychologists needed to expand to help as many children as possible (Grimley, 1978). This philosophy is supported by NASP with the more recent publication, *Blueprint II* (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). This document states, "School psychologists have a role to play in advocating for reductions in all forms of demission, expulsions, suspensions, and *drop outs* and for increasing inclusive education options to meet the needs of all students, especially those most disenfranchised from the system" (p. 3).

A final trend is for school psychologists to develop a philosophy where the environment of the child is perceived to be a significant influence on how the child behaves and develops. This ecological focus can be related to the child's behavior, performance, and development. The demands and quality of the child's environment can influence how the child behaves, as well as how their personality develops (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998; Gutkin, 1995; Nastasi, 2000).

Other specific trends include an emphasis on prevention activities, increasing the coordination of school-based services (versus piecemeal and unsystematic services), and the provision of services that depend more on the unique needs of the local community and school (Dwyer & Bernstein, 1998; Furlong, Morrison, & Pavelski, 2000). Prevention activities tend to be educationally, and not medically, based (Bradley-Johnson et al., 1995). By examining research results, school psychologists can ascertain and recommend the best prevention activities for their school districts (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Nastasi et al., 1998; Ross, Powell, & Elias, 2002). Due to the cost-effectiveness of prevention activities and the high prevalence of health problems in today's youth, a focus on prevention versus expensive reactionary measures seems to be a logical step (Gutkin, 1995; Power et al., 1999). This prevention focus has been supported by trends in federal funding. Funding appears to have increased significantly for

preventive measures, but has not increased substantially to implement the specific components of IDEA (Curtis & Batsche, 1991).

Another direction for the field is coordinated school-based services where school psychologists and others solve problems through team development and system-wide involvement. School-based collaborative services can include teacher assistance teams, interagency collaboration models, intensive service coordination, and other services ranging from prevention to treatment. Other collaborative services can include information networks with others (social workers, community workers, etc.), pre-referral assistance teams, and community-based service delivery (Dwyer & Bernstein, 1998; Nastasi, 2000). School-based services also can include school/community teams used to monitor and implement programs, promote the involvement of peers and family in volunteering, and ensure the provision of training to educators and other staff members concerning their role (Power et al., 1999).

According to many, the specific services of school psychologists would be best determined through an evaluation of the unique needs of the school and community rather than through the latest fad (Power et al., 1999; Grimley, 1978). With greater collaboration between services, there is a tendency to develop less clear role boundaries and greater coordination or collaboration with other health specialties in order to be as flexible and effective as possible (Tharinger, 1995). It has been argued that, when working with others, school psychologists can direct improvements in current programs while developing new ones (Nastasi et al., 1998; Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998; Power et al.; Tharinger).

Within the assessment domain, the field of school psychology also is broadening its scope. One area of assessment opening up for school psychologists is program evaluation (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Dwyer & Bernstein, 1998; Furlong et al., 2000; Grimley, 1978; Nastasi, 2000; Nastasi et al., 1998; Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998; Power et al., 1999; Tharinger, 1995).

Another area of assessment-related role expansion includes the use of outcome-based assessment strategies such as curriculum-based measures and functional behavior analyses (Canter, 1997; Bradley-Johnson et al., 1995; Power et al., 1999).

The provision of indirect service also continues to develop for school psychologists. One targeted area is helping teachers develop new teaching techniques to enhance student learning through promoting teacher development and providing in-service education and consultation services (Tharinger, 1995). Families and communities are other populations who can receive indirect services from the school psychologist. School psychologists can accomplish successful collaborative efforts with these populations by encouraging sensitivity toward the family and the multicultural community through obtaining cultural knowledge (Dwyer & Bernstein, 1998; Rogers & Lopez, 2002).

Blueprint II

The role of the school psychologist has been addressed by NASP. This is particularly noticeable in the 1997 publication, *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II (Blueprint II)* (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). This document was published as a guide for school psychologists and trainers. The authors of this document advocated for an expanded role for school psychologists. The introduction of this publication argues that changes in society and schools have exacerbated the need for role expansion.

Blueprint II distinguished ten areas of skill and competency to be considered within the training and practice of school psychology. These domains include (a) data-based decision making and accountability; (b) interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation; (c) effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills; (e) socialization and development of life competencies (f) student diversity in development and learning (g) school structure, organization, and climate; (h) prevention, wellness promotion, and crisis intervention;

(i) home/school/community collaboration; (j) research and program evaluation; and (k) legal, ethical practice, and professional development (See Appendix B for a more extensive description of the domains). An additional domain, information technology, was later added in 2000 with the publication of *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (See Appendix B).

Blueprint II's authors asserted that striving to obtain a high level of expertise in all of these domain areas is a commendable goal. However, they understood that this goal might be somewhat unrealistic. The authors recommended that school psychologists obtain expertise in four areas: (a) data-based decision making and accountability; (b) legal and ethical practices; (c) interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation; and (d) student diversity in development and learning. According to *Blueprint II*, a range of proficiency in the other six areas is expected, but continued professional development in all areas also is recommended (Ysseldyke, et al., 1997).

Two recent studies were conducted in Wisconsin involving *Blueprint II's* domains of competency (Myers, 1999; Myers, 1998). The first study examined the perceptions of Wisconsin's school psychologists related to the current and future role (Myers, 1998). School psychologists in Wisconsin perceived that their current role was diverse, but they also perceived that their role would become even more diverse in the future. Another finding was that NASP members from the Wisconsin were more likely to identify future changes in the role than those who were nonmembers (Myers, 1998).

In the Myers study (1998), Wisconsin school psychologists' responses resulted in identifying the top four domains as: (a) data-based decision making and accountability; (b) legal, ethical practice and professional development, (c) prevention, wellness promotion, and crisis intervention; and (d) interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation. This

matched three out of four of the most important domains identified in *Blueprint II.* Unlike the perceptions of the Wisconsin school psychologists, *Blueprint II* did not consider 'prevention, wellness promotion, and crisis intervention' as one of the most important four domains (Myers).

A second Wisconsin study examined the future role of school psychologists as perceived by school administrators (Myers, 1999). The study found that administrators in Wisconsin generally agreed with the perceptions of the practicing school psychologists regarding their role and function (Myers, 1998). School administrators in Wisconsin also agreed with the Wisconsin school psychologists' perceptions on the most important four domains (Myers, 1999). Since administrators are considered to be strong influences on the role of school psychologists (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995; Nastasi et al., 1998; Tapasak & Keller, 1995), the Wisconsin survey findings would seem hopeful for those who promote a broad-based role for school psychologists.

Challenges and Potential Barriers for Role Expansion

While role expansion appears to be "on the horizon," Ysseldyke (2000) purports that it has been "on the horizon" for several years. School psychologists will likely face many challenges and barriers in their quest for role expansion. The literature has recognized several of these challenges and barriers. A shortage of practitioners has been acknowledged as a possible barrier (Curtis & Zins, 1989; Elliott, 2000; Lund et al., 1998). According to Reschly (2000) shortages can adversely affect the student-to-practitioner ratio, which may influence how much time practitioners have available for the provision of diverse services. For this reason, NASP recommends a ratio of 1,000 students to one school psychologist to encourage an expanded role (Lund et al.).

Burnout and attrition is another barrier that may influence student-to-practitioner ratios. For many reasons, practitioners are leaving the field at an estimated rate of 5% per year (Lund et al., 1998). Burnout in school psychology may be due to a lack of variety in job activities that can

lead to job dissatisfaction (Vensel, 1981).

Another consideration is funding. With limited funds and numerous priorities school districts may be reluctant to allocate extra moneys toward the resources practitioners might need to expand their role and provide diverse services. Funding may be needed, for instance, to coordinate efforts between the school and the community and to reimburse school-linked health services (Carlson et al., 1995; Elliott, 2000; Nastasi et al., 1998; Power et al., 1999). Funding can be provided by private and public agencies, but many school psychologists may not be knowledgeable about these possible sources of revenue (Power et al.).

One very large barrier seems to be the lack of control practitioners perceive they have regarding their role. Many school psychologists believe district or school administrators and the administrative system, which governs school policy, have a prominent influence over what they do on the job (Braden, et. al., 2001; Conoley & Gutkin, 1995; Nastasi et al., 1998; Tapasak & Keller, 1995). According to some, if administrative support is not given to expand their role and change the system in a large, long-lasting way, little leeway will be made (Tapasak & Keller). Further, a portion of the barrier may be related to a school psychologist's lack of knowledge and skill in learning how to influence principals and other school personnel (Conoley & Gutkin).

Ysseldyke (2000) argues that the lack of role expansion is often due to a lack of training by school psychology programs in providing models of how schools have "tackled and solved" large problems. Research suggests a strong link between training and practice (Wilson & Reschly, 1996). The training focus of many graduate programs is on the science and practice of skills related to working with individual children and special education evaluations (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995). Thus, additional training may be needed to educate school psychologists on how to affect change. However, little specific information is provided in the literature regarding how this training should be implemented (Tapasak & Keller, 1995). For systems change, curriculum

focused on the principles of social psychology, organizational development, social influence, prevention, collaborative consultation, and the skills needed by change agents would appear helpful (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Conoley & Gutkin; Tapasak & Keller). In addition, university faculty may need to actively pioneer needed changes in their local school districts by creating practicum and internship locations that parallel the ideology of their academic programs (Conoley & Gutkin).

Many school psychologists (practitioners and faculty) may be reluctant to change. The main rationale appears to be that many believe they do not have enough time, or are too busy, to make needed changes (Elliott, 2000). Even faculty members who are urged to change and expand their areas of training use this rationale (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995). The expectation for change cannot be limited to practitioners alone, but for long-term improvements to be made change needs to be embraced by both faculty and practitioners.

Though school psychologists may claim they are viewing student problems in light of their environmental contexts, their actions reveal that many continue to medicalize the problems exhibited by the students they serve. Medicalizing problems may hamper a school psychologist's ability to provide mental health services. According to Gutkin (1995), a trend of 'demedicalizing' needs to be adopted. Instead of viewing problems as medical issues residing within individual students, viewing them as skill deficiencies may empower students to cope with life's events through learning coping skills. In this way, education can promote the health of our nation's youth (Gutkin). Demedicalization also has been conceptualized as decreasing the use of labels and focusing on outcome-based education (Bradley-Johnson et al., 1995).

If school psychologists are expected to expand their role to include the coordination and collaboration of services between the home, school, and community, a case can be made that they will need ample community resources. In many disadvantaged and rural community

locations, access to health and social services is inadequate. A lack of access can be a major barrier for those communities as well as for school psychologists who seek to improve services through collaboration (Carlson et al., 1995).

Many school psychologists often do not view themselves as systems change agents (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995). However, the versatile role of school psychologists is conducive to being an agent of change in the schools (Power et al., 1999; Tharinger, 1995). Education and health reform has provided a bountiful opportunity for change. For change to occur, however, school psychologists will likely need to get involved at the national, state, and local levels. Unfortunately, like other school district employees, school psychologists often perceive their role as being beyond their control (Conoley & Gutkin). Therefore, the perception that they lack control may prevent many school psychologists from perceiving themselves as effective systems change agents (Conoley & Gutkin).

Finally, federal and state mandates have been perceived as the assessment gods, regulating the use of assessments for special education purposes (Braden, et al., 2001). Since the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was implemented, a diagnostic role for school psychologists was ensured (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998).

The role of school psychologists has become a confusing one due to the many directions in which practitioners are pulled. Many mandates pull school psychologists toward testing and labeling, and the general education initiative pushes school psychologists toward consultation and developing interventions in the classroom (Roberts & Rust, 1994). These mixed messages may further increase practitioners' perceptions that they lack control over outside forces.

Training

Education and training appears to be a natural solution to address some of the challenges and barriers to role expansion for school psychologists. If school psychologists are properly

educated in how to address role barriers, they will likely become empowered to affect change. Training programs can be instrumental in the process.

The literature has addressed many concerns regarding the training of school psychologists (Allen, et. al., 2002; Costenbader et al., 1992; Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Curtis, Hunley, & Grier, 2002; Graden et al., 1984; Huebner, 1993; Meacham & Peckham, 1978; Ochoa et al., 1997; Reschly, 2000; Rogers et al., 1992; Swerdlik & French, 2000; Wilson & Reschly, 1996; Wise et al., 1987). One concern is determining the exact relation between training and practice. Secondly, it is important to determine areas of inadequacy in school psychology training programs. A third concern is to identify those factors that affect training and the challenges to implementing change within school psychology training programs. Finally, the literature has suggested particular areas in which training programs need to improve.

One particular area the literature addresses the degree level of school psychologists, and how the degree level can affect practice. Findings suggest that the higher the degree level (e.g., doctorate versus masters), more time is spent on consultation (Costenbader et al., 1992; Curtis et al., 2002; Meacham & Peckham, 1978), providing in-service activities (Curtis et al., 2002), prevention/intervention (Reschly, 2000), affecting change, and engaging in research (Meacham & Peckham). The significance levels of these findings have become more moderate recently, suggesting the differential effects by degree level are becoming less distinct.

Other studies have examined specific functions of school psychologists (Huebner, 1993; Wilson & Reschly, 1996). One study indicated that the assessment tools taught in graduate school were those used in the field (Wilson & Reschly). Additionally, Wilson and Reschly concluded that updates in assessment tools in training were reflected in the field practice. Another study found that school psychologists spent the largest portion of their time on psychological assessment (36%), and they rated this activity as one in which they felt the most

adequately trained (Huebner, 1993). Consultation (15%) was rated as the second activity in which they were most adequate at performing. Staffing and individual counseling tied for third concerning ratings of training adequacy, of which school psychologists indicated spending 13% and 12% of their time, respectively (Huebner).

A considerable amount of research has addressed the perceptions of school psychologists concerning areas in which they believe their school psychology training programs were deficient. An early 1990s study (Costenbader et al., 1992) concluded that the more pre-service training school psychologists reported spending in consultation, the greater their perception of the quality of their training (at a significance level of $p < .001$). This finding suggests that we need to solicit information from practicing school psychologists about needed program changes. According to Allen et al. (2002), this information is needed before assuming deficiency areas and instituting curriculum that is unnecessary (Allen et al.).

Several articles cited crisis intervention as an area in which school psychologists have not had adequate training (Allen, et. al., 2002; Huebner, 1993; Wise et al., 1987). A late 1980s study indicated that only 8% of surveyed school psychologists reported taking a course devoted to crisis intervention (Wise et al.), and a more recent study indicated that only 5% of school psychologists reported taking a specific class on crisis intervention (Allen, et al.). This difference would suggest that training in this area is more limited today. However, an examination of the results according to graduation dates presents a different picture (Allen, et al.). Of the respondents in the Allen et al. study, 62% of school psychologists graduating after 1993 had coursework or internship/practicum experience in crisis interventions compared to 25% of school psychologists graduating before 1980. Thus, a steady increase in crisis intervention training between 1980 and the more recent graduation dates was observed in this area. However, 62% of those graduating after 1993 continued to report taking no coursework with a crisis

intervention emphasis.

School psychologists also reported a lack of training in delivering services at an organizational level, especially those with a focus on developing an evaluation of educational programs in school systems (Graden, et al., 1984; Huebner, 1993). Further, these studies found that school psychologists believed they lacked training in general counseling skills, consultation strategies, vocational/career training, family counseling, and affecting change (Graden, et al.; Huebner).

Another study examined the adequacy of training in four competency areas of bilingual psycho-educational assessment (Ochoa et al., 1997). The importance of competency in this area was emphasized because of increasing numbers of limited English proficient students in the United States. Ochoa, et al. found that 77% of school psychologists reported minimal to non-existent training in working with an interpreter. Further, the Ochoa et al. results indicated that 90% of respondents stated no bilingual assessment course was available in their graduate training programs. In each of the four bilingual assessment competency areas, 69-87% of school psychologists indicated having inadequate training. These results are alarming considering the number of students who can be adversely affected by school psychologists who have inadequate training in this area.

One obvious factor that can affect the quality of training is the degree level of school psychologists. For example, research suggests that doctorate programs are more likely to integrate minority issues into assessment coursework (Rogers, et al., 1992), offer optional minority coursework (Rogers, et al.), provide more training in consultation (Costenbader et al., 1992; Curtis et al., 2002), and deliver more training in the provision of in-service activities (Curtis et al.). School psychologists with doctorates judge the quality of their training as stronger than those with other degree levels (Costenbader et al.). This means that school

psychology programs need to narrow the gap between specialist and master programs and doctoral level programs in terms of the quality of the education they are receiving. Obviously little can be done about the quantity of education they are receiving other than to provide plenty of continuing education coursework for graduates, as well as additional learning opportunities outside of the college environment.

Another factor affecting training is accreditation (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Rogers, et al., 1992; Swerdlik & French, 2000). For example, one study suggested that APA accredited programs were more likely to integrate minority issues into assessment coursework and offer optional minority coursework (Rogers, et al.). This was not found to be the case with NASP/NCATE or state accredited programs (Rogers, et al.). This suggests more "directed and systematic" attention may be applied to APA programs concerning multicultural issues in school psychology (Rogers, et. al., p. 610). Curtis and Batsche (1991) asserted that NASP guidelines are more consistent with federal and state funding trends than with training program trends. Curtis and Batsche argued that training programs tend to *follow* the field rather than *lead* it. If training programs only address current practice and not future trends, Curtis and Batsche assert that other disciplines may be better prepared to meet the needs of students.

State and federal laws can influence special education training by determining funding patterns (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Swerdlik & French, 2000; Wilson & Reschly, 1996). These laws can challenge role expansion in training due to their definitions of disabilities that require the use of individually administered intelligence tests (Wilson & Reschly).

Another factor is the attitude of university faculty regarding change (Allen, et al., 2002; Curtis & Batsche, 1991). One article portends that change is difficult to integrate into the training curricula because of the well-established nature of today's school psychology programs. Many faculty may not have enough training and/or experience in areas that need improvement,

like crisis intervention (Allen, et. al.).

The last factor influencing training and its improvement is that change is slow to occur in any environment. Even changes in assessment practices, a primary function for most school psychologists, often occur slowly (Wilson & Reschly, 1996).

Based on all the data just cited, policy-makers have suggested particular areas in which school psychology training programs need to improve. Several studies or articles suggest that training programs offer a more ecological approach to serving schools and their students (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Graden, et al., 1984; Gutkin & Conoley, 1990; Huebner, 1993; Nastasi, 2000; Pianta, 2000; Power, 2000; Ross et al., 2002; Shapiro, 2000). Thus, training programs should emphasize the skills needed for organizational improvement and a community-based, health-care approach.

At an organizational level, several authors have argued that developing and evaluating educational programs are necessary training areas (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Graden, et al., 1984; Huebner, 1993). Writing grant proposals (Graden, et. al.; Power, 2000), learning interpersonal influence skills to intervene with organizations (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Graden, et al.; Gutkin & Conoley, 1990; Ross et al., 2002), knowing educational policy (Pianta, 2000), and using measures for systems-wide screening, prevention, needs and risk assessment that are empirically sound are other necessary competency areas that can be addressed in school psychology training programs (Pianta; Ross et al.).

A community-based, health-care approach to training would need to include training in crisis intervention (Allen, et al., 2002; Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Huebner, 1993; Wise et al., 1987), interpersonal influence skills (Gutkin & Conoley, 1990; Knoff, Curtis, & Batsche, 1997; Pianta, 2000), cultural diversity (Curtis & Batsche; Ochoa et al., 1997; Rogers, et al., 1992), drug/alcohol treatment knowledge (Allen, et al.; Huebner), counseling (Huebner), and prevention

(Allen, et. al.; Curtis & Batsche; Pianta; Ross et al., 2002). Such an approach should also include training in public health (Nastasi, 2000; Power, 2000), pediatric medicine and psychology (Nastasi; Power; Ross et al.), community psychology (Power; Ross et al.), grant writing skills (Graden, et al., 1984; Power), and organizational and health psychology (Ross et al.).

Another area addressed in the literature is improvement in the quality of teaching faculty and program organization (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Knoff et al., 1997; Dawson, 2000). Some authors have suggested that trainers needed to work in settings where their graduate students spend practicum or internship time (Curtis & Batsche; Knoff et al.). It also has been asserted that university faculty members need to develop their own unique competency areas and ethical standards as they have a role that is different from practitioners (Curtis & Batsche, 1991; Knoff et al.). Some authors have further suggested that university training needs to address the lifelong process of training by offering coursework that address continuing educational needs (Curtis & Batsche; Knoff et al.).

The importance of establishing outcome-based measures to determine how well students are trained instead of the traditional method of showing that students took all the *right* classes and got good grades has been argued (Curtis & Batsche, 1991). According to Curtis and Batsche, programs also need to organize their curriculum by linking coursework to predetermined educational goals. Finally, Dawson (2000) argued that school psychologists need to observe role models in their training at close range to learn how big problems are tackled, solved, and learn from their mistakes.

This review has explored the roots of school psychology, how the practice of school psychology may differ across different regions of the United States, and how school psychologists would prefer to spend their time working for schools. The review also discussed

role expansion as a current trend (though slow), *Blueprint II's* take on the preferred direction of role expansion, and the challenges school psychology faces on the way to role expansion. The effect of graduate training programs on the future practices of school psychology also was addressed. Results indicate a need for training school psychologists to perform a broad role to meet the ever-changing demands of our nation's schools. To determine whether school psychology graduate training programs are appropriately fulfilling the needs of the profession, the perceptions of practicing school psychologists need to be examined.

This study's research idea is different from the previous research examined here in a few fundamental ways. First, some previous studies have examined how broad concepts, like degree level, relate to quality of training (Costenbader et al., 1992; Curtis et al., 2002; Meacham & Peckham, 1978; Reschly, 2000). This study examined how training related to practice by surveying whether areas emphasized in training were similarly needed to fulfill the needs of school psychologists' jobs. This was done using NASP's eleven domains of competency as a standard. Second, while previous research has examined specific job-related activities, they either focused on only one area (assessment tools) (Wilson & Reschly, 1996) or had school psychologists rate how well they felt they were trained in these various job functions (Huebner, 1993). Then Huebner examined how the adequacy of their training correlated with how much of their work-time was spent in those different activities. This study's research seeks to examine more directly whether school psychology programs are adequately addressing the needs of today's practicing school psychologists than previous research appears to have done before.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Procedure

Questionnaires were mailed to 1000 school psychologists who were randomly chosen members of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in November of 2001. Participants were told the purpose of the study was to examine their current role and function, as well as areas of emphasis in their school psychology training programs.

All participants were requested to respond to demographic-type questions regarding their age, gender, ethnicity, years of experience as a school psychologist, degree, training university, employment status (full or part time), psychologist to student ratio, number of evaluations conducted last year, professional memberships, whether or not they were required to attend most annual IEP meetings, whether they worked in a rural, suburban, or urban school district, and how many schools they served. They were asked to complete the 15-minute questionnaires and return them in addressed and stamped envelopes.

One thousand questionnaires were initially distributed in November of 2001. Subsequent follow-up reminder post cards were sent to non-respondents in March of 2002. These procedures yielded an overall sample of 243 and a response rate of 24.3%. Of the overall sample, 237 were sufficiently filled out to obtain information regarding the research questions.

Participants

A summary of the school psychologists' demographic characteristics is provided in Table 1. As is depicted, the majority of the respondents were female, Caucasian, employed full time, and members of their state's school psychological association. Their mean age was 45, and they averaged 13 years of experience. The average number of initial evaluations completed last year was 36, while the average number of re-evaluations was 31. The average number of schools

served by each school psychologist was 3, while the median was 2. Almost half (48.1%) of respondents were nationally certified by NASP. About two-thirds of school psychologists reported that they were not required to attend yearly individual education plan (IEP) meetings. Forty-two percent of respondents worked in suburban districts. The most frequent degree held was M.S/M.A +32 credits. Most respondents (86.4%) were not members of the American Psychological Association (APA) or did not specify whether they were members. The majority of respondents were working in schools with a psychologist to student ratio of less than 1 to 1500.

Compared to a study of the demographic characteristics of school psychologists surveying NASP members from a database of the 1994-1995 school year (Curtis et al., 2002), the demographic characteristics of this study's participants are similar. Of the 2,598 surveys distributed by Curtis et al., 1,922 were returned. This is a large comparative sample to determine similar representation. The comparative study's respondents were 71% female, compared to the current study's percentage of 75%. Examining the highest degree held, 41% of the comparative study respondents held masters degrees, whereas 39% of the respondents held master's degrees in the current study. The Educational Specialist degree was held by 36% of the comparative study respondents, and 22% of the current respondents held the Educational Specialist degree. A doctorate was held by 21% of the comparative study's respondents, and by 27% of the current study's respondents. The remaining demographic characteristics were similar to the Curtis et al. study (school settings and student to school psychologist ratios). The results from this study confirm a trend toward an increase in pre-service education, an increase in female representation, and a decrease in student to school psychologist ratios.

Instruments

Jaymie L. Meyer and Jacalyn Weissenburger developed the five-item questionnaire to

survey practicing school psychologists (see Appendix A). Item sets one and two were developed to compare current practice and training emphases based on the eleven domains published in the *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (2000). A sheet was included with the questionnaire detailing each of the eleven domains using the exact wording of each domain description from the *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (2000) (see Appendix B). Item sets one and two examined general domains, while item sets three and four compared specific activities. The two item set pairs were formatted differently. In item sets one and two, respondents were asked to rank the eleven domain areas (1 through 11) based on the most to the least emphasized in training and required in work. Item sets three and four required respondents to estimate the number of hours they spent and would like to spend in an average week on each activity, assuming a 40-hour workweek. Item set five contained the demographic portion of the questionnaire.

Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) were calculated to determine how the school psychology group rank ordered each of the eleven domains in item sets one and two. Additionally, descriptive statistics (i.e., means, medians, and standard deviations) were calculated to determine how many hours school psychologists currently spend and prefer to spend in specific job-related activities on a weekly basis. To answer research objectives one and two, mean differences comparative analyses were conducted between item sets one and two and between item sets three and four through matched pair t-tests. Once again, the first objective of this study was to determine whether there are significant differences between what is emphasized in the school psychology training programs and what is currently required to perform satisfactorily as a practicing school psychologist. The second objective was to determine whether there are significant differences in the ideal and actual amount of time school

psychologists engage in specific job-related activities. Due to the number of comparisons, $p \leq .005$ level of significance was chosen to control for familywise error. To determine which domains were considered the most important by the practicing school psychologists, the domains in item set one were ranked from highest to lowest based on their group mean values.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter summarizes the results of the study in relation to the research questions. A discussion of the implications of the results is included in Chapter V.

The first objective of this study was to determine whether there are significant differences between what is emphasized in the school psychology training programs and what is currently required to perform satisfactorily as a practicing school psychologist. Descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) on the rank order for each of the eleven domains are included in Table 2. The findings indicate significant differences between the two groups (current practice and training) in 8 out of the 11 domains. School psychologists were more likely to rank three domains as emphasized more in training than needed for job performance. They were (a) data-based decision-making and accountability ($t(212) = 3.157, p < .005$), (b) research and program evaluation ($t(212) = 16.986, p < .005$), and (c) school psychology practice and development ($t(212) = 11.693, p < .005$). School psychologists were more likely to rank five domains as needed more for job performance than was emphasized in their school psychology-training program. They were (a) consultation and collaboration ($t(212) = -4.77, p < .001$); prevention, crisis intervention, and mental health ($t(212) = -7.59, p < .001$); (c) socialization and development of life skills ($t(212) = -2.90, p < p < .005$); (d) home/school/community collaboration ($t(212) = -8.24, p < .001$); and (e) information technology ($t(212) = -7.38, p < .001$). A complete comparison of these domain ranked results are included in Table 3.

The second objective of this study was to determine whether there are significant differences between the ideal and actual amount of time school psychologists engage in specific job-related activities. Descriptive statistics (i.e., means, medians, and standard deviations) on how many hours school psychologists currently spend and prefer to spend in specific job-related

activities on a weekly basis are included in Table 5. According to the findings, significant differences exist between the idealized and actual amount of time for all 8 specific job-related activities listed (see Table 6). The ninth activity, an open-ended non-specific 'other activities' category to account for any job-related activity unaccounted for in the list, found no significant differences.

The school psychology respondents reported they would prefer to spend more time in three activities than they currently do at work. These activities included consultation ($t(234) = -11.287, p < .001$), counseling ($t(234) = -11.145, p < .001$), and intervention planning ($t(234) = -10.994, p < .001$). School psychologists reported they would prefer to spend less time than they currently do in assessment ($t(234) = 6.061, p < .001$), at team meetings ($t(234) = 9.278, p < .001$), on paperwork ($t(234) = 14.260, p < .001$), with telephone contacts ($t(234) = 5.737, p < .001$), and driving ($t(234) = 8.455, p < .001$).

The last objective of this study was to determine which of NASP's eleven domains of skill or competency are the most important to practice effectively in today's schools. According to the findings, the top four domains in order of importance for current practice are: (a) consultation and collaboration; (b) data-based decision making/accountability; (c) effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills; and (d) prevention, crisis intervention, and mental health (see Table 4).

Chapter V

Discussion

This study addressed three research questions. The first purpose of this study was to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between what is emphasized in school psychology training programs and what is needed to perform competently on the job for practicing school psychologists. The second intention of this study was to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between the preferences of the school psychologists and actual amount of time school psychologists engage in specific job-related activities. The third purpose of this study was to determine which of NASP's eleven domains of skill or competency would be identified as the most important by the practicing school psychologists to meet the current demands of today's schools.

Responses by the participating school psychologists indicated there were significant differences on 8 of 11 domains. Results indicated that school psychologists ranked three domains as receiving more emphasis in training than was needed for satisfactory job performance. Those domains or skill competency areas were (a) data-based decision-making and accountability; (b) research and program evaluation; and (c) school psychology practice and development. These results appear to indicate that school psychology graduate students receive more training in assessment, research, program evaluation, and school psychology practice than is needed on the job. Other results suggest school psychology practitioners received less training than is currently needed in consultation, prevention, crisis intervention, mental health service delivery, social skill interventions, behavior goal-setting, home/school/community collaboration, and technology.

Significant findings between the amounts of time engaged in specific job-related activities versus the preferences of the school psychologists were also identified through comparing their mean scores. Significant findings were found in all eight specific job-related

activities (team meetings, consultation, paperwork, assessment, counseling, intervention planning, driving, and telephone contacts). School psychologists reported they would like to increase the time spent engaging in consultation, counseling, and intervention planning. In all other areas, school psychologists reported they would like to decrease their time. These included the time they engage in team meetings, completing paperwork, conducting assessments, driving, and making telephone contacts.

School psychologists indicated they would prefer to engage the most time in consultation, assessment, and counseling. Conversely, school psychologists reported they currently spend most of their time in assessment, paperwork, and team meetings. Interestingly, while school psychologists indicated a preference for reducing the amount of time they spend in assessment, this activity was still identified as one of the top two preferred activities.

In this study, participants were asked to express the time they engaged in activities in hours according to a forty-hour workweek. When converted to percentage of time, a comparison can be made with prior studies (Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts, 1970; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Smith, 1984) and this one according to the time they spend engaging in various activities, as well as their activity preferences. These results indicate that school psychologists are slowly reducing the amount of time they spend on the assessment process. Results also suggest that school psychologists would prefer to have a more diverse role.

Researchers have been concerned with how school psychologists spend their time since at least 1970 (Roberts, 1970). Studies in the mid-1990s found that school psychologists were spending more than one-half of their time on psychoeducational assessments (Reschly & Wilson, 1995), whereas the current study reveals a reduction in the amount of time spent on assessment-related tasks. In this study, school psychologists reported spending a total assessment time of 43% (21% paperwork and 22% assessment). They also reported a preference in reducing that

time to 30% (11% paperwork and 19% assessment).

The current study demonstrates that school psychologists desire spending more time on consultation, counseling, and intervention planning. This concurs with prior studies (Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts, 1970; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Smith, 1984), and indicates a desire for school psychologists to spend time on activities that indirectly or directly affect positive outcomes for students.

This study's findings identified four areas school psychologists considered most important for effective job performance. In order of importance, these areas were (a) consultation and collaboration; (b) data-based decision-making and accountability; (c) effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills; and (d) prevention, crisis intervention, and mental health. This study's findings also identified four primary areas of emphasis in their school psychology training programs. These areas were (a) data-based decision-making and accountability; (b) consultation and collaboration; (c) school psychology practice and development; and (d) effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills. According to the developers of the original ten domains for school psychology, the top four most important domains for obtaining expertise are (a) data-based decision-making and accountability; (b) legal and ethical practices;[1] (c) interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation;[1] and (d) student diversity in development and learning (Ysseldyke et al., 1997).

One interpretation of these results and the differences between the top four skill areas is that NASP policy-makers, trainers, and practicing school psychologists have different views of what is most important to know and practice as a competent school psychologist. There were similarities, however. These three entities (i.e., practitioners, trainers, and NASP policy-makers)

1 These domain names were the old terminology used before they were most recently updated. Legal and ethical practices has since been integrated into school psychology practice and development. Additionally, the domain interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation was shortened to consultation and collaboration.

agreed on two of the four top areas needed for competency in school psychology (i.e., (a) data-based decision making/accountability and (b) consultation and collaboration). There was a difference in the order of importance of these domains, however. These results may point to a disconnect between policy-makers, trainers, and practitioners. This disconnect could exacerbate a lack of progress in the field of school psychology.

Merits and Limitations

This study attempted to characterize practicing school psychologists' perceptions related to their training, current practice, desired practice, and the skills and activities described in *Blueprint II.* Two benefits of this study deserve mention. First, although the study received a low response rate of 24.3%, it was conducted at a national level. Previous studies related to NASP's domains of professional practice were limited to certain regions or states. Second, the design of the study provides current information from practicing school psychologists (i.e., *frontline workers*) regarding their perceptions related to their training, the needs of their job, and their desired role.

There are limitations in this study of school psychologists' roles. The study, while taken from a national population pool, did not evenly cover each region of the United States. In addition, a sample size of less than three hundred practitioners was obtained. More generalizable and valid findings would have been obtained if more school psychologists had responded from different regions. Another limitation of the sample was that all respondents were members of NASP; thus, they were not selected from the entire pool of school psychologists. An earlier study (Myers, 1998), for example, found that NASP members had different perceptions regarding their role and function compared to non-members.

Further, the data obtained in this study was based on the respondents' perceptions. Perceptions are less reliable than hard evidence about the role of school psychologists; thus, the

results may not precisely represent the demands of the profession or the preferences of all school psychologists.

Another area of limitation is that *assessment, team meetings,* and *paperwork* were not delineated as separate activities in the other studies. Comparisons, between this and prior studies may, therefore, be misleading.

Another limitation to this study is how respondents were asked to specify the amount of time they spend their time according to a forty-hour workweek. Some respondents' responses did not total forty hours. This may have skewed the results.

Implications for Further Research

Findings from this study indicate that further research related to the training of school psychologists is necessary. Many studies have been conducted concerning the role of school psychologists, but little has been studied concerning the impact of training programs in forming the role of school psychologists. Additionally, research conducted on the influence of NASP and other environmental forces that affect change in training programs could be beneficial.

Examining trainers, school administrators, and special education staff concerning what they perceive to be necessary areas for school psychologists to perform their jobs using the eleven domains as standards are other areas in need of future research. Examining the perceptions of practicing school psychologists may not be comprehensive enough to determine the needs of our nation's schools and how school psychologists may play a role in addressing the needs of students in our current society.

Research examining differences based on region, student to practitioner ratios, and number of evaluations completed may be useful because these factors may be skewing overall national findings. Also, specific regional data may be useful for universities that seek to meet the needs of school psychologists working in their area. Examining those districts or schools

where school psychologists spend less than 30% of their time on the assessment process would be useful. This sort of research is important to determine what factors are required for role expansion.

Summary

This study examined the differences between the skill areas emphasized in school psychology training programs and the skill areas needed for school psychologists to perform competently on the job. Additionally, the top four domain areas were identified. Differences between actual and desired job-related activities were also delineated. These results were then compared to similar studies in the last decade.

This study revealed that school psychologists, training programs, and leaders of the profession have different ideas about the top four domain areas. All three identified data-based decision-making/accountability and consultation as within the top four most necessary skill areas. There was disagreement, however, about the placement of these areas according to their relative importance. This disagreement could reflect a lack of cohesion in the field.

The study also revealed that school psychologists continue to spend 43% of their time in assessment and paperwork. Responses reveal they would like to reduce that to about one-third. Similar to previous research, this study found that school psychologists would like to increase the time they spend in consultation, counseling, and planning interventions. These results are similar to past studies and show some, though little, change in the amount of time school psychologists actually spend engaging in assessment.

Contradictions between the perceptions of trainers, policy-makers, and practitioners help us to understand the historical lack of cohesion in the field regarding the role and function of school psychologists. Through further study, areas can be identified where trainers may need to alter their curriculum. The information from this study is a starting point for future research and

debate.

The future development of training programs is the life force that will sustain school psychology's existence in public education to serve the needs of our nation's children. However, this task will take dedication, manpower, and a well-thought-out plan for training programs and supporting associations. While it may seem a very daunting task, this is a long-term goal with many steps. Therefore, let us gather around the table to address the needs of school psychology and work together to develop an individualized education plan, so that one day we are *able* to reach our goal.

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Table 1

School Psychologists' Demographics

Characteristics	Respondents	
	n	%
Gender		
Male	61	25.1
Female	182	74.9
Not Specified	0	0
Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	224	92.2
Asian American	1	0.4
Native American	1	0.4
Other	2	0.8
Black/African American	6	2.5
Hispanic/Latino	8	3.3
Not Specified	1	0.4
Highest Degree Held		
Master's	5	2.1
Master's + 12 cr.	11	4.5
Master's + 32 cr.	79	32.5
Specialist	53	21.8

Characteristics	Respondents	
	n	%
Doctorate	65	26.7
Other	29	11.9
Not Specified	1	0.4
Employment Status		
Full time	212	87.2
Part time	28	11.5
Not Specified	3	1.2
Psychologist-to-Student Ratio		
1 – 500	24	9.9
501 – 1000	60	24.7
1001 – 1500	52	21.4
1501 – 2000	37	15.2
2001 – 2500	21	8.6
2501 or more	28	11.5
Not Specified	21	8.6
Members of State School Psych Assoc.		
Yes/checked	168	69.1
No/not checked	75	30.9
NASP Member		
Yes/checked	231	95.1

Characteristics	Respondents	
	n	%
No/not checked	12	4.9
APA Member		
Yes/checked	33	13.6
No/not checked	210	86.4
Member of Other Organizations		
Yes/checked	40	16.5
No/not checked	203	83.5
Nationally Certified School Psych.		
Yes	117	48.1
No	122	50.2
Not Specified	4	1.6
Regular Annual IEP Attendance		
Yes	72	29.6
No	159	65.4
Not Specified	12	4.9
Type of School District		
Rural	63	25.9
Suburban	104	42.8
Urban	68	28.0
Not Specified	8	3.3

Table 2

Statistics for Current Practice (N = 221) and Training Emphasis (N = 219)

	Current Practice		Training Emphasis	
Domains	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Data-Based Decision Making/Accountability	3.52	3.02	2.89	2.79
Consultation and Collaboration	2.86	1.76	3.81	2.34
Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive Academic Skills	4.53	2.44	4.72	2.68
Socialization and Development Of Life Skills	5.53	2.44	6.17	2.50
Student Diversity in Development And Learning	6.36	2.46	6.50	2.54
School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate	6.88	2.65	7.27	2.52
Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health	4.90	2.55	6.55	2.52
Home/School/Community Collaboration	5.66	2.27	7.25	2.32
Research and Program Evaluation	9.35	1.77	6.00	2.64
School Psychology Practice and Development	7.28	3.17	4.45	2.85
Information Technology	9.14	2.22	10.40	1.52

Table 3

Dependent Groups T-Test Between Current Practice and Training Emphasis

Pairs	*M difference*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Data-Based Decision Making/Accountability	.59	212	3.157*	.002
Consultation and Collaboration	-.92	212	-4.766**	.000
Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/ Academic Skills	-.18	212	-.918	.360
Socialization and Development Of Life Skills	-.62	212	-2.896*	.004
Student Diversity in Development And Learning	-.21	212	-1.001	.318
School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate	-.33	212	-1.416	.158
Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health	-1.67	212	-7.590**	.000
Home/School/Community Collaboration	-1.60	212	-8.238**	.000
Research and Program Evaluation	3.35	212	16.986**	.000
School Psychology Practice and Development	2.84	212	11.693**	.000
Information Technology	-1.25	212	-7.381**	.000

Note: Significant at *$p < .005$ and **$p < .001$.

Table 4

Ranking of Current Practice and Training Emphasis

Domains	Rank	
	Current Practice	Training Emphasis
Data-Based Decision Making/Accountability	2	1
Consultation and Collaboration	1	2
Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/ Academic Skills	3	4
Socialization and Development Of Life Skills	5	6
Student Diversity in Development And Learning	7	7
School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate	8	10
Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health	4	8
Home/School/Community Collaboration	6	9
Research and Program Evaluation	11	5
School Psychology Practice and Development	9	3
Information Technology	10	11

Note: The rank orders are based on group mean values from Table 3.

Table 5

Statistics for Current Activities (N = 237) and Ideal Activities (N = 236)

	Current Activities			Ideal Activities		
Activities	*M*	*Mdn*	*SD*	*M*	*Mdn*	*SD*
Team Meetings	6.53	6.00	4.03	4.65	5.00	2.96
Consultation	4.97	5.00	3.02	7.80	8.00	3.87
Paperwork	8.47	8.00	4.99	4.41	4.50	2.95
Assessment	8.91	8.00	5.25	7.56	7.00	4.19
Counseling	3.68	2.00	5.09	6.32	5.00	5.26
Intervention Planning	3.34	2.00	3.25	5.97	5.00	4.29
Driving	1.64	1.00	1.91	0.77	0.00	1.17
Telephone Contacts	2.48	2.00	1.94	1.91	2.00	1.58
Other	0.86	0.00	2.81	0.77	0.00	2.17
Total Hours Spent on Activities	40.87	40.00	5.91	40.17	40.00	5.81

Note: Values are expressed in hours.

Table 6

Dependent Groups T-Test Between Current and Ideal Activities

Pairs	*M difference*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Team Meetings	1.91	234	9.278*	.000
Consultation	-2.83	234	-11.287*	.000
Paperwork	4.12	234	14.260*	.000
Assessment	1.40	234	6.061*	.000
Counseling	-2.68	234	-11.145*	.000
Intervention Planning	-2.63	234	-10.994*	.000
Driving	.86	234	8.455*	.000
Telephone Contacts	.57	234	5.737*	.000

Note: Significant at *$p < .001$.

Table 7

Ranking of and Percentage of Time in Current Activities and Ideal Activities

Activities	Rank		Percentage of Time	
	Current Activities	Ideal Activities	Current Activities	Ideal Activities
Team Meetings	3	5	16.3	11.6
Consultation	4	1	12.4	19.5
Paperwork	2	6	21.2	11
Assessment	1	2	22.3	18.9
Counseling	5	3	9.2	15.8
Intervention Planning	6	4	8.4	14.9
Driving	8	8 (tied with Other)	4.1	1.9
Telephone Contacts	7	7	6.2	4.8
Other	9	8 (tied with Driving)	2.2	1.9

Note: The rank orders are based on group mean values from Table 6.

APPENDIX A
Jenkins-Weissenburger Survey

1) Please rank, **in terms of importance**, the following skill areas necessary for you to perform competently in **your current job as a school psychologist,** with 1 equaling most important to 11 equaling least important. (For a more complete description of each area, please refer to the separate sheet entitled "NASP's Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice.")

Rank 1-11	Domain
_____	**Data Based Decision Making and Accountability**
_____	**Collaboration and Consultation**
_____	**Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills**
_____	**Socialization and Development of Life Skills**
_____	**Student Diversity in Development and Learning**
_____	**School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate:**
_____	**Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health**
_____	**Home/School/Community Collaboration**
_____	**Research and Program Evaluation**
_____	**School Psychology Practice and Development**
_____	**Information Technology**

If your current role includes an area that does not seem to fit any of those above, please indicate what it is and where you might have ranked it if it had been included.

_____

_____

_____

Please turn page...

2) Now, please rank, **in terms of emphasis**, the same skill areas based on the emphases of **your school psychology graduate program**, with 1 equaling most emphasized to 11 equaling least emphasized. (For a more complete description of each area, please refer to the separate sheet entitled "NASP's Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice.")

Rank 1-11	Domain
_____	**Data Based Decision Making and Accountability**
_____	**Collaboration and Consultation**
_____	**Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills**
_____	**Socialization and Development of Life Skills**
_____	**Student Diversity in Development and Learning**
_____	**School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate:**
_____	**Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health**
_____	**Home/School/Community Collaboration**
_____	**Research and Program Evaluation**
_____	**School Psychology Practice and Development**
_____	**Information Technology**

If your graduate training included an emphasis area that does not seem to fit any of those above, please indicate what it was and where you might have ranked it if it had been included.

_____

_____

_____

Please continue...

3) **In your current job,** how much time do you devote to each of the following activities in a typical week? Please estimate the number of hours (assuming a 40 hour work week):

_____Team meetings (e.g., multi-disciplinary, IEP, and pupil services meetings)

_____Consultation (case or systems consultation)

_____Paperwork (e.g., report writing, IEP development, and form completion)

_____Assessment (e.g. individual, group, norm-referenced, curriculum-based)

_____Counseling (individual or group)

_____Intervention planning (e.g., behavioral, crisis, academic)

_____Driving

_____Telephone Contacts

_____Other (Explain:_____)

4) **Ideally**, how much time would you prefer to spend on each activity in a typical week? Please estimate the number of hours (assuming a 40 hour work week):

_____Team meetings (e.g., multi-disciplinary, IEP, and pupil services meetings)

_____Consultation (case or systems consultation)

_____Paperwork (e.g., report writing, IEP development, and form completion)

_____Assessment (e.g. individual, group, norm-referenced, curriculum-based)

_____Counseling (individual or group

_____Intervention planning (e.g., behavioral, crisis, academic)

_____Driving

_____Telephone Contacts

_____Other (Explain:_____)

Please turn page...

5) **Demographic Information:**

~Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

~Age: _____years old

~Ethnicity:
☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American
☐ Asian American ☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Native American ☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Other_____

~Number of years as a school psychologist: _____years

~Highest degree held: ☐ M.S. ☐ M.S.+12 ☐ M.S.+32 ☐ Ed.S. ☐ Ph.D. or Ed.D.
☐ Other

~Graduate school and state of training:_____

~Employment status: ☐ full time ☐ part time

~Psychologist to student ratio in your district or agency:
☐ 1-500 ☐ 501-1000 ☐ 1001-1500 ☐ 1501-2000
☐ 2001-2500 ☐ 2500+

~About how many initial evaluations and re-evaluations did you conduct last year?

Initial: _____ (number) **Re-evaluation:** _____ (number)

~Are you a member of any of the following professional organizations?
☐ Your state's school psychology association
☐ NASP ☐ APA
☐ Other_____

~Are you a Nationally Certified School Psychologist?
☐ Yes ☐ No

~Are you required to attend most annual IEP meetings?
☐ Yes ☐ No

~Please characterize the type of school district in which you work:
☐ Rural
☐ Suburban
☐ Urban

~How many schools do you serve? _____ (number)

THANK YOU!!!!

APPENDIX B
NASP's Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice

NASP's Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice

1. Data Based Decision Making and Accountability: School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and methods of assessment that yield information useful in identifying strengths and needs, in understanding problems, and in measuring progress and accomplishments. School psychologists use such models and methods as part of a systematic process to collect data and other information, translate assessment results into empirically based decisions about service delivery, and evaluate the outcomes of services. Data-based decision-making permeates every aspect of professional practice.

2. Collaboration and Consultation: School psychologists have knowledge of behavioral, mental health, collaborative, and/or other consultation models and methods and of their application to particular situations. School psychologists collaborate effectively with others in planning and decision-making processes at the individual, group, and system levels.

3. Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills: School psychologists have knowledge of human learning processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of cognitive and academic skills. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and consultation.

4. Socialization and Development of Life Skills: School psychologists have knowledge of human developmental processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of behavioral, affective, adaptive, and social skills. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop appropriate behavioral, affective, adaptive, and social goals for students of varying abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to, consultation, behavioral assessment/intervention, and counseling.

5. Student Diversity in Development and Learning: School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, and disabilities and of the potential influence of biological, social, cultural, ethnic, experiential, socioeconomic, gender-related, and linguistic factors in development and learning. School psychologists demonstrate the sensitivity and skills needed to work with individuals of diverse characteristics and to implement strategies selected and/or adapted based on individual characteristics, strengths, and needs.

6. School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate: School psychologists have knowledge of general education, special education, and other educational and related services. They understand schools and other settings as systems. School psychologists work with individuals and groups to facilitate policies and practices that create and maintain safe, supportive, and effective learning environments for children and others.

7. Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health: School psychologists have knowledge of human development and psychopathology and of associated biological, cultural, and social influences on human behavior. School psychologists provide or contribute to prevention and intervention programs that promote the mental health and physical well-being of students.

8. Home/School/Community Collaboration: School psychologists have knowledge of family systems, including family strengths and influences on student development, learning, and behavior, and of methods to involve families in education and service delivery. School psychologists work effectively with families, educators, and others in the community to promote and provide comprehensive services to children and families.

9. Research and Program Evaluation: School psychologists have knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods. School psychologists evaluate research, translate research into practice, and understand research design and statistics in sufficient depth to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of services.

10. School Psychology Practice and Development: School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of their profession; of various service models and methods; of public policy development applicable to services to children and families; and of ethical, professional, and legal standards. School psychologists practice in ways that are consistent with applicable standards, are involved in their profession, and have the knowledge and skills needed to acquire career-long professional development.

11. Information Technology: School psychologists have knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their work. School psychologists access, evaluate, and utilize information sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of services.

*From the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (2000).