

**EDS 245:
Psychology in the Schools**

An Introduction to School Consultation


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**School Consultation:
A Primary School Psychologist Function**

- As a consultant, the school psychologist strives to assist “consultees” (e.g., teachers, administrators, and/or parents) identify and understand “client” (e.g., student, classroom, school, district) learning challenges, and assists the consultee begin the process of overcoming these client difficulties.
- “Consultation is a voluntary process in which one professional assists another to address a problem concerning a third party, typically a student” (Friend & Cook, 1996, p. 40).


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**School Consultation:
A Primary School Psychologist Function**


- Consultation aims at improving the functioning not only of the client, but it also strives to facilitate the development of new consultee knowledge and skill (and in doing so to improve consultee functioning as well).
- There are a variety of consultation models, however, common to all types of consultation is the use of a problem solving process.
- Question: What do you think this “problem solving process” involves?*

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**School Consultation:
Collaborative vs. Directive**

- School consultation is most likely to be successful when it is collaborative
 - Facilitative and supportive, vs. prescriptive and directive.
- Collaboration has been defined as
 - "...a style of direct interaction between at least two *coequal* parties *voluntarily* engaged in *shared decision making* as they work toward a *common goal*" (Friend & Cook, 1996, p. 6, emphasis added).




**School Consultation:
Collaborative vs. Directive**

- There are situations where collaboration may be counter productive and a directive approaches to consultation is needed and appropriate. These situations include:
 - Consultee's request may be an isolated and very specific request for information (e.g., to understand a specific test score in a psycho-educational evaluation).
 - Caseload and available time, may not allow collaboration (e.g., special education assessment mandates have filled the caseload).
 - Consultee knowledge may not allow collaboration (e.g., lacks the basic skills to facilitate client change).
 - Consultee may not have the resources to collaborate (e.g., emotionally and/or physically drained).




**School Consultation:
Collaborative vs. Directive**

- School consultants need to recognize that while a collaborative approach is preferable, there are situations where a directive approach is needed.
- Sometimes a given consultation will call for both approaches.




**Consultation and Collaboration:
A Credentialing Standard**

- NASP Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice
 - Standard III: Consultation and Collaboration
 1. School psychologists have knowledge of varied methods of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems and used to promote effective implementation of services.
 2. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate with others during design, implementation, and evaluation of services and programs.




**Consultation and Collaboration:
A Credentialing Standard**

- Examples of areas in which school psychologists have **knowledge** include the following:
 - a) Varied methods of consultation in psychology and education (e.g., behavioral, problem solving, mental health, organizational, instructional) applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems
 - b) Strategies to promote collaborative, effective decision making and implementation of services among professionals, families, and others
 - c) Consultation, collaboration, and communication strategies effective across situations, contexts, and diverse characteristics
 - d) Methods for effective consultation and collaboration that link home, school, and community settings




**Consultation and Collaboration:
A Credentialing Standard**

- Examples of areas in which school psychologists demonstrate **skills** include the following:
 - a) Apply consultation methods, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others as part of a comprehensive process that permeates all aspects of service delivery
 - b) Consult and collaborate in planning, problem solving, and decision-making processes and to design, implement, and evaluate instruction, interventions, and educational and mental health services across particular situations, contexts, and diverse characteristics
 - c) Consult and collaborate at the individual, family, group, and systems levels




**Consultation and Collaboration:
A Credentialing Standard**

- Examples of areas in which school psychologists demonstrate **skills** include the following:
 - d) Facilitate collaboration and communication among diverse school personnel, families, community professionals, and others
 - e) Effectively communicate information for diverse audiences, for example, parents, teachers, other school personnel, policy makers, community leaders, and/or others
 - f) Promote application of psychological and educational principles to enhance collaboration and achieve effectiveness in provision of services



**Consultation and Collaboration:
A Credentialing Standard**


- What are you getting into?
 - In small groups discuss the elements of this credentialing standard with particular reference to how you think it will affect your school psychology practice.
 - Be prepared to share your thoughts with the larger group. Use the [handout](#) to document your conversation.



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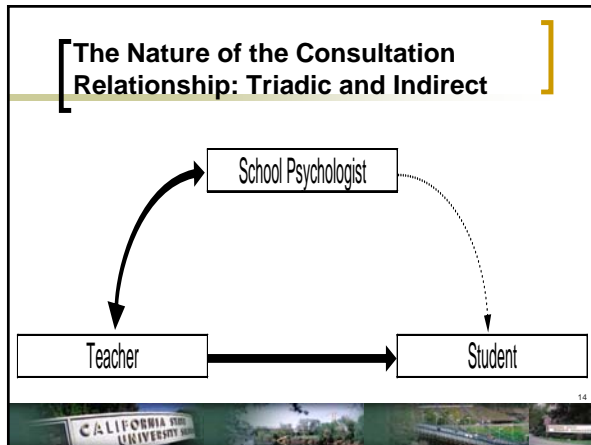
The Theory of School Consultation



The Nature of the Consultation Relationship


- The relationship ...
 - is triadic and indirect.
 - is voluntary.
 - is non-hierarchical.
 - involves mutual problem solving.
 - has differentiated responsibilities.






The Nature of the Consultation Relationship: Voluntary

- Ideally, it is a relationship solicited by the consultee.
 - A **worst-case** consultation scenario occurs when the consultee is required to work with the consultant.
 - The **best-case** consultation scenario is one where the consultee independently seeks out the assistance of the consultant.
- Given the voluntary nature of the relationship, the consultant must be prepared to have recommendations rejected.




The Nature of the Consultation Relationship: Non-hierarchical

- The consultation relationship requires that the consultant and consultee have similar status within the school.
 - They are professional colleagues.
- Both members of this cooperative partnership must view the other as professionals (collaborative partners), each with special areas of knowledge and expertise.




The Nature of the Consultation Relationship: Non-hierarchical

- Failure to meet this expectation might disrupt the flow of important consultation information.




The Nature of the Consultation Relationship: Mutual Problem Solving

- Consultant and consultee collaborate to solve the client's problems.
- The consultant has special knowledge/skills, but recognizes that the consultee already has, or can rapidly develop, the skills needed to address presenting problems.




The Nature of the Consultation Relationship: Differentiated Responsibilities

- It takes two to tango!
- Both consultant and consultee must meet their responsibilities if client challenges are to be addressed.
 - The consultant is responsible for guiding the problem solving process and for sharing expert knowledge needed to address client problems.
 - The consultee is responsible for facilitating consultant understanding of client problems and for faithfully implementing agreed upon interventions.




Consultation Goals

- Primary and Secondary Prevention
 - Primary prevention includes activities designed to "counteract harmful circumstances before they have a chance to produce" learning challenges (Caplan, 1964, p. 26).
 - Secondary prevention includes activities shortening the duration of learning problems "through early diagnosis and effective treatment" (Caplan, 1964, p. 89).




Consultation Goals: Primary Prevention

- Prevent learning challenges from occurring in the first place.
 - Empower consultees with knowledge that will not only address the presenting learning challenge, but that will also allow them to prevent the occurrence of future similar problems.



**Consultation Goals:
Secondary Prevention**


- Identifying client problems and ensuring the provision effective treatments.
 - By providing such early identification and treatment, school consultation strives to mitigate learning challenges.



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Consultation Skills and Abilities




Consultant Skills and Abilities

- The effective school consultant has ...
 - special expertise or background knowledge.
 - the ability to establish an effective rapport.
 - the ability to collaborate and work with or build a team.
 - the ability to effectively communicate.
 - the ability to solve problems.




Consultant Skills and Abilities: Expertise

- Consultants have special expertise and are able to share such with consultees. This background knowledge has the *potential* to address client problems.
- Consultation can be directive and effective consultants are able to appropriately share their expertise with consultees. However, the consultant must know how and when to give such direction (Zin & Erchul, 2002).
- Expertise is necessary, but not sufficient.




Consultant Skills and Abilities: Rapport

- Earning the right to be directive.
 - By virtue of his or her title the “school psychologist” begins to earn the right to consult.
 - This is, however, only part of the equation.
 - Also, involves the establishment of a relationship or “rapport” with the consultee.




Consultant Skills and Abilities: Rapport

- Discussion: “Establishing Effective Helping Relationships”
 - From the assigned reading (Erchul & Young, 2010; Coddling et al., 2010) what is your understanding of the factors important to facilitating and effective relationship.
 - Discuss both personal attributes and specific helper skills.




Consultant Skills and Abilities: Collaboration

- The effective consultant knows how to collaborate with others and build a sense of "team."
- Collaboration and team building involve:
 - mutual respect and shared status (equality).
 - the mutual identification of goals.
 - the sharing of resources.
 - shared responsibility, decision making, and accountability.




Consultant Skills and Abilities: Communication


- The effective consultant is able to listen to and empathize with consultee concerns.
- The effective consultant is able to express special knowledge in a coherent manner.



Consultant Skills and Abilities: Problem Solving

- The effective consultant has knowledge of the problem solving process.
- The effective consultant has a specific model of problem solving.





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A Problem Solving Model


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**The Consultation Process:
A Problem Solving Model**

1. Entry
2. Contracting.
2. Problem Identification and Analysis.
3. Intervention Planning.
4. Intervention Implementation.
5. Resolution/Termination.





Rosenfeld (2008) 32





**A Problem Solving Model:
Entry**

- Making consultation available and educating potential consultees about its utility.



**A Problem Solving Model:
Contracting**

- Making sure that consultees understand the nature of the consultation relationship and the problem solving process.





**A Problem Solving Model:
Problem Identification & Analysis**

- Through data collection and dialogue, consultant and consultee, mutually construct a definition of the problem, determine what is the expected level of functioning, and assess the barriers that interfere with the client's attainment of that level of functioning.




**A Problem Solving Model:
Intervention Planning**

- Once the problem is defined and understood, consultant and consultee jointly develop a plan to shrink the gap between current (or actual) client functioning and desired client functioning.





**A Problem Solving Model:
Intervention Implementation**

- The agreed upon plan is implemented by the consultee, and the consultant ensures that treatment integrity is maintained.




**A Problem Solving Model:
Resolution & Termination**


- Through data collection and dialogue, consultant and consultee determine if the gap between pre-intervention functioning and desired functioning has been sufficiently closed. If so the consultation problem solving process is concluded.

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The Practice of School Consultation



The Types of Consultation



- The practice of consultation is based on several different theoretical models that define the types of intervention the school psychologist is likely to recommend.
- Different lectures/courses will address the theory of these models.
 1. Behavioral (10/7/15; EDS 240)
 2. Instructional/Clinical (10/7/15; EDS 246a)
 3. Mental Health (10/14 & 10/21/15; EDS 241; EDS 246b)
 4. Organizational (9/23/15; EDS 231)
- Common to each of these forms of consultation is the use of a basic problem solving model



The Types of Consultation: Behavioral

- Consultation strategies that focus on specific behavior problems.
- Involves very prescribed, specific, well defined tasks.
- Typically used to address the behavior problems of individuals students.



Employs the principles of applied behavior analysis. Involves identifying problem behaviors and selecting replacement behaviors, understanding the environment that cues and supports these behaviors, and developing a plan to change the environment so that problem behaviors are discouraged, and replacement behaviors are encouraged

The Types of Consultation: Instructional/Clinical

- Consultation strategies that focus on academic achievement.
- Typically used to address the learning problems of individuals students.

May employ behavioral and/or psycho-educational assessment to better understand the student's learning difficulties, and form such data generate for the teacher specific instructional recommendations.

The Types of Consultation: Mental Health

- Consultation strategies that focus on psychological well-being.
- Typically used to address the mental health challenges of both individual students and groups of students.
- Employs the psychodynamic and interpersonal frameworks to understand and respond to mental health challenges.



The Types of Consultation: Organizational

- Consultation strategies that focus on the overall work environment of an organization, such as a school or school district.
- Typically used to address the job functioning challenges of an entire organization.
 - It is designed to assist a school staff (the consultee) improve the entire school organization (the client).
- Employs the techniques such as needs assessments, teacher interviews, and observations.




Case Study: Case 1. Jorge

■ It is the beginning of the year and Jorge is behind in reading. Jorge's parents are from Mexico and have been living in CA for 3 years. They plan to stay here permanently. Jorge has three older brothers and one younger sister. Jorge is generally an attentive student in class, but sometimes is more active than the teacher would like. He likes to have fun and often plays silly games with his friends. Jorge's siblings are performing within the average range for their classroom, but below what is considered basic on state proficiency tests in Language Arts and Mathematics. The school is 60% Hispanic and the Free and Reduced Lunch rate is 80%. The school has not improved its API scores in reading and is in danger of state intervention. They have made good improvements in math. Jorge's teacher is in her second year of teaching and is feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the needs of the children. She does not speak Spanish. She feels that it is important for the children to have their basic needs met prior to learning academics. Therefore, she spends a good deal of time on helping the children develop "positive self images." She is using a state adopted curriculum in reading, but is unsure what to do with children who are not able to work in the third grade curriculum.



Questions and Topics for Small Group Discussion


1. To what extent do you feel that this consultation will be collaborative and to what extent do you think a more directive approach will be needed?
2. What do you think will be the essential elements of a collaborative consultation relationship with this teacher?
3. As a consultant what are your goals for working with this teacher?
4. What do you think are the important consultant skills and abilities for working with this teacher?
5. Discuss how you think the problem solving process might unfold for this case study.



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Legal & Ethical Issues in School Consultation




Confidentiality

- Facilitates an open and honest dialogue between consultant and consultee.
- Consultations are not typically considered privileged communication.
 - Even if it were, there would be limits to the confidentiality.
- Clarify in advance the limits of confidentiality within the consultation relationship.
- How would you handle the situation where in a principle wants a detailed report of the teachers consultation communications?




Use of a Collaborative vs. Directive Approach

- Consultants should not be directive in situations where they don't have the necessary background knowledge.
 - Don't be an expert unless you really do have special knowledge.
- Consultants should not be collaborative if the consultee does not have the background knowledge needed to implement the necessary interventions.
 - Collaborative consultation assumes that the consultee can quickly acquire the knowledge/skills needed to address client learning challenges.
- In an effort to maintain a collaborative relationship, consultants should not allow consultees to function with incorrect information.
 - Don't allow consultees to believe inaccurate information (e.g., that coffee reduces hyperactivity).



The Law


- Consultants are responsible for knowing state and federal law and ensuring that both the spirit and the letter of these laws are addressed when facilitating client change.
 - For example, behavioral recommendations must not include interventions that are banned.



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Special Considerations in School Consultation




[Consultation and Culture]

- Multicultural Consultation
 - A culturally sensitive approach in which the consultant adjusts consultation services to address the needs and cultural values of consultees and clients of various cultural groups.
- Cross-Cultural consultation
 - A special case of multicultural consultation, in which one member of the consultation triad (the consultant, consultee and client) differs culturally from the others.




[Consultation and Culture]

- Cultural values may affect communication.
- People differ in how they view problems.
 - We need to be sensitive to these differences. We also need to be sensitive to our own cultural lens.
- Differences within cultures exist due to individual experience.
 - However, there are general patterns
 - Nevertheless, there will be considerable diversity within each group



[Questions?]



9/13	3. Team Consultation	1. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Data-Based and Collaborative Decision Making</i> , Sylvia Rosenfield, Chapter 33. Best Practices in Instructional Consultation and Instructional Consultation Teams. 2. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Data-Based and Collaborative Decision Making</i> , Matthew K. Burns, Rebecca Kanitz & Abbey C. Karach, Chapter 31. Best Practices in Implementing School-based Teams Within a Multitiered System of Support.	
9/20	4. Systems-Level Consultation	1. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Systems-Level Services</i> , Jose M. Castillo & Michael J. Curtis, Chapter 1. Best Practices in Systems-Level Change 2. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Systems-Level Services</i> , Howard M. Knoff, Chapter 2. Best Practices in Strategic Planning, Organizational Development, and School Effectiveness.	Paper 1 due
9/27	5. Academic & Behavioral Interventions	1. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Student Level Services</i> , Rebecca S. Martinez, Chapter 1. Best Practices in Instructional Strategies for Reading in General Education. 2. <i>Best Practices in School Psychology: Student Level Services</i> , Leticia M. Joseph, Chapter 7. Best Practices on Interventions for Students with Reading Problems.	

