

Welcome to Getting Schooled - our series on the role of consultation in school psychology. Dr. Gabrielle Wilcox and Dr. Charlene Barva have continued our exploration of this area by providing us with a description of two popular consultation models used within schools, as well as highlighting some of the key aspects of consultation, and the importance of consultation services within a comprehensive school psychology services model.

Shawn Crawford, PhD. (R. Psych.)

On Behalf of the PAA School Psychology Committee

Consultation in Schools

The PAA School Psychology Committee has been advocating for an expanded role for School Psychologists to embrace their full Scope of Practice as framed by the CPA (2007). For school psychologists looking to expand their impact in schools, consultation may be a meaningful focus as the role of consultation in educational settings has expanded significantly over the past two decades. Consultation, which involves a mutual problem-solving process, has become an important component in the shift from traditional, assessment-driven practices to a more ecological, problem-solving paradigm of school psychology (Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) lists consultation as the first step in referring students for psychological services in schools (CPA, 2007). Additionally, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) lists consultation and collaborative skills as one of the foundational competencies for practitioners (Ysseldyke et al., 2006). Consultation is important as it broadens school psychologists' positive impact on students and school systems. Individually delivered services, while necessary for a percentage of the population, are time-intensive; consequently, supporting teachers' skill development to increase their effectiveness in supporting common student problems, allows school psychologists to support a larger proportion of the school population and to devote more time to those students who require more intensive services.

Consultation Components and Skills Across Models

Consultation models generally focus on solving a problem and include three parties: consultant (school psychologist), consultee (teacher), and client (student). While there are a variety of consultation models, there are commonalities. Across consultation models, consultants utilize similar skills including interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, strong knowledge base, and cultural awareness. Alberta Education has supported this framework with its Collaborative Practices model, which has an accompanying demonstration video series that highlights possible roles for school psychologists (<http://towardcollaborativepractice.ca/action-videos/whats-your-role/>).

Effective school-based consultants establish collaborative relationships rather than authoritative or expert ones. Zins and Erchul (2002) highlight the collaborative nature of consultation: "Consultants and consultees work together to solve problems, and it is highly desirable for them to do so in the context of a partnership that emphasizes trust, openness, and cooperation" (p. 625). Thus, consultation is not merely a task that school psychologists complete. It involves relationship-building, a coming alongside

teachers, parents, and others that transcends many of the other roles and functions of the psychologist in schools.

Although they may have different names and levels of specificity, most consultation models have four general stages: 1) entry - establishing the consultative relationship; 2) diagnosis - operationalizing the problem, defining goals, and identifying interventions; 3) implementation - implementing the chosen intervention and data collection; and 4) disengagement (Dougherty, 2009; Rosenfield, 2013). This article focuses on two consultation models, which are commonly used in schools: Instructional Consultation and Behavioural Consultation. Both of these consultative models focus on teacher skill acquisition, may provide direct interactions with the student, measure treatment integrity and student outcome, and promote generalization of teacher skills.

Instructional Consultation (IC)

Instructional Consultation (IC) is based on the assumption that focusing only on student deficits is ineffective as it fails to consider ecological contributors to student challenges. IC, as a result, focuses not only on remediating student deficits but also on addressing potential challenges with task demands and instructional approaches through the collaborative relationship between the consultant and the consultee. One of the primary goals of IC is to build capacity in teachers to implement evidence-based practices and, in turn, to improve student learning. The focus on changing teaching practices requires that the consultant invest time to establish a collaborative relationship, to understand the consultee's definition of the problem and goals for consultation, and to develop a shared language prior to examining potential interventions. Developing a shared language is important because school psychologists and teachers sometimes have different terminology for similar phenomena, increasing the chance of miscommunication. While the labels for the IC stages differ from the general stages (1) entry and contracting, 2) problem identification and analysis, 3) intervention design and planning, 4) intervention implementation and evaluation, and 5) closure), the basic tasks are similar (Rosenfield, 2008).

IC is a team-based, school-level model of consultation in which one member of the IC team provides individual consultation to a teacher. The IC team is comprised of a variety of school personnel including school psychologists. It requires training in IC and includes a systematic evaluation of implementation integrity and effectiveness of the school-level IC team. This systemic evaluation includes examining the extent to which the five stages are implemented, as these are considered critical components of the IC process (McKenna, Rosenfield, & Gravios, 2009).

Behavioural/Conjoint/Direct Behavioural Consultation

Behavioural consultation involves applying the principles and procedures of behaviour modification and social learning theory to the work-related problems of the consultee. Bergen (1977) first described this model and Kratochwill and Bergan (1990) subsequently elaborated on it. Briefly, behavioural consultation is a four-step problem-solving model where a consultant (school psychologist) helps a consultee (teacher) solve a client (student) related problem (academic, social, emotional, or behavioural). Sheridan and Kratochwill (1992, 2008) developed *conjoint behavioural consultation* in

which school psychologists works simultaneously with parents and teachers (co-consultees) to solve student-related problems. In this model, parents and teachers serve as joint consultees (i.e., consultation with parents and teachers occurs together, rather than in a parallel fashion). Thus, conjoint behavioural consultation emphasizes a collaborative home-school relationship, and interactions between home and school systems are focal. Watson and Robinson (1996) described *direct behavioural consultation*, a variation of behavioural consultation, which focuses on teaching *skills* to the teacher via direct interactions with the student throughout the consultation process.

Implications

As schools increasingly implement the Response to Intervention (RtI) service-delivery model to meet the needs of a diverse student population, consultation will increase in importance. Consultation fits within all tiers of a three-tier, school-based service delivery model. For example, if school psychologists implement a school-wide academic or social behavioural program within a RtI model (Tier 1; universal level), they must work with other school personnel through consultation to determine which behaviours to measure and how to measure them, providing support to school personnel to ensure they have the skills to measure it correctly. School psychologists also support the process of analyzing the results and translating them into educational programming. Likewise, at Tier 2 (the targeted level), school psychologists use consultation to assist school personnel in making data-based decisions about student performance in creating and implementing targeted interventions for at-risk students. Through this process, school psychologists consult with teachers to define the problems, to design and implement interventions, and to monitor the treatment integrity and effectiveness of the interventions. Finally, consultation is also applied at Tier 3 (the individualized level) focusing on remediating deficits at the individual student level that remain after the less intensive supports have been attempted at Tiers 1 and 2.

Consultation can be an extremely valuable and satisfying role for the school psychologist and a particularly valuable resource for teachers and other school personnel, addressing both existing problems and preventing future problems. In spite of the importance of consultation in school psychology, most graduate programs offer limited coursework on consultation, and school psychology faculty often have varied levels of applied experience in providing consultation services. Consultation training must include not only a deep understanding of the process but also skills in working in an interdisciplinary group, working within the unique organization of school systems, developing collaborative relationships, and implementing interventions within classrooms (Rosenfield, 2013). Expanding the use of consultation in schools will require increased pre-service and in-service training, and support, to ensure that school psychologists have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectually provide school-based consultative services.

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Gabrielle Wilcox, PsyD, NCSP, RPsych
University of Calgary

Charlene J. Barva, PhD, RPsych
Calgary Board of Education