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Parental Satisfaction With Psycho-educational Consultation

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Parental Satisfaction With Psycho-educational Consultation

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By

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the consumer satisfaction of the Psycho-educational consultation. The method of data collection was a survey consisting of ten questions to be answered using a Likert type scale and one question asking for opinions for program improvements. The instrument was based on a measure of effectiveness for School Psychologists (Barnett, 2004). At the end of the meeting to discuss the results of the psycho-education evaluation, parents were asked to complete the survey. Parents and students remained anonymous and the completion of the survey was voluntary. Parents were asked to place their survey in a sealed envelope to protect their anonymity and return them to the supervisor. The information requested was structured to provide both qualitative and quantitative data. The data were analyzed using SPSS descriptive statistics. The Practicum III students did not have access to the surveys nor the name of the parents completing the survey. The results of the study indicated that parents were satisfied with the psycho-educational consultations.

Acknowledgements

Please, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have encouraged and supported me during the completion of this project. I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Fred Jay Krieg, Committee Chairperson, Dr. Stephen L. O'Keefe, Committee Member, and Dr. Sandra Stroebel, Committee Member for giving me their assistance, their kindness, their knowledge, their patience, and their understanding. Also, thank you to the 2005 School Psychology Practicum students for administering the psycho-educational testing and the parents who completed the survey, How am I Doing? I would like to thank my best friend, Connie Liebsch, for her encouraging words and positive support. Without all of you this project would never have been completed.

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Literature Review

An evaluation is the process of systematically and objectively collecting and interpreting information to determine the accomplishments, strengths, weaknesses, merit, worth or significance of an object (Williams, 2003; McNamara, 2000). Evaluation is the process of assigning worth or value to a program or activity (Suvedi, 2000). When evaluating a program's actual inputs and/or outcomes and then comparing that information to some pre-set standards or expectations a judgment can be made about the level of success of that program or activity (Suvedi, 2000). The general goal of most evaluations is to gain information in order to provide useful feedback and aid in decision-making about the program (Williams, 2003).

Suevedi (2000) said this is era of accountability. The demand for program evaluation is growing. For practical purposes, evaluations can be classified in two broad categories, process evaluation and impact evaluation. Process evaluation is also known as formative evaluation and focuses on providing information for program improvement. Formative evaluation is designed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the object being evaluated (McNamara, 2000). Impact evaluation is sometimes referred to as summative evaluation and focuses on determining program results and effectiveness (Suvedi, 2000).

Summative evaluation occurs at the end of a time period (Healy, 2000). It sums up what has occurred in the program, asks for end-of-program reactions and attempts to assess success in meeting program objectives. It is conducted after participants have finished their involvement with the program. This type of evaluation looks for longer- term benefits of a program (Suvedi, 2000).

Competencies of teachers and other educators have become increasingly scrutinized by American society. Higher education program assessment is therefore of interest to evaluators not

only as professionals but also as citizens. Program evaluation is an accepted practice for identifying areas where professional competence, educational program design, or its outcomes are deficient in meeting the needs of a profession. Evaluations are capable of producing data for use in external periodic accreditation reviews, such as professional or regional accreditation, or it can be used by the faculty for collegiate program updating and redesign (Canter, 1990).

It is the responsibility of graduate training programs in school psychology to provide students with the building blocks for effective practice (Ysseldyke, Dawson, Lehr, Reschly, Reynolds& Telzow, 1997). It is presumed that each institution is engaged in an ongoing quest for quality and can demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated purpose (Whittaker, 1993). The quality and effectiveness of educational programs provided by an institution are major considerations in accreditation decisions (Williams, 2003).

An effective school psychology program has an integrated system of graduate level preparation that includes coursework, laboratory and field practica, and internship experiences (Knoff & Curtis, 1997). These three interrelated components have been shown to produce an effective, integrated training program. (Williams, 2003). The program should also be approved or accredited on the state and national levels allowing graduates to qualify for credentialing (Knoff & Curtis, 1997).

The two major accrediting bodies for school psychology programs, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) set forth the requirements necessary for effective school psychology programs. NCATE has six standards by which a quality program is measured. Standard two, assessment system and unit evaluation has a professional responsibility to ensure that its programs and graduates are of the highest quality. It is this unit that examines alignment of

instruction and curriculum with professional, state, and institutional standards and efficacy of courses, field experiences, and programs.

NASP is a member of the NCATE Specialist Organization and operates within NCATE credentialing. The NASP Standard for Training and Field Placement in School Psychology contribute to the development of effective services through the identification of critical training experiences and competencies needed by candidates preparing for careers in school psychology. These standards serve to guide the design of school psychology graduate education by providing a basis for, and a foundation for recognition of programs that meet national quality standards through the NASP program approval process. Marshall University Graduate College (MUGC) implemented changes in the school psychology program that encompasses NCATE standards and NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement in School Psychology (School Psychology Program Handbook, 2004). MUGC is accredited by both NASP and NCATE.

MUGC school psychology program has adopted NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice. Summer practicum students must demonstrate skills in the domain, Home/School/Community Collaboration: School psychologist have a 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 (Standards for School Psychology, 2000).

Practica and internships are designed to be both developmental and graduated because students are required to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. Field placements

serve to introduce new skills and training requirements. It is the responsibility of university trainers to assess how well students and the program meet both theory and practice goals established by the state and national standards, and accreditation requirements. Thus, a focus on field experience has become paramount to the practical training in school psychology (Hinkle, et. al., 2004).

Training programs typically employ a variety of procedures for gathering information relevant to the effectiveness of practicum and interns: site visits, conferences with administrator and supervising psychologists, seminars, and logs but procedures for soliciting feedback from consumers are often overlooked as additional sources of information (Fairchild, 1985). Little information exists in the literature regarding accountability effort directed at the internship/field experience with the intent of gathering information of its effectiveness (Fairchild, 1978). The type of information to be collected for accountability purposes include information regarding how effective an object was achieved, as well as information regarding efficiency and communication skills. One method of gathering accountability information should involve systematically soliciting feedback from various consumer groups (Fairchild, 1985).

Fairchild (1980), thought accountability efforts are often discontinued because they become unmanageable. They become unmanageable when efforts are made to evaluate all services and involve all consumers without adequate resources to accomplish such a task. The evaluation process is more manageable when a plan is created that targets different services and consumers (Fairchild & Seely, 1996).

School psychologist work closely with consumers such as administrators, teachers, and parents to address the needs of children in schools (Gimple & Huebner, 1994). Consumer feedback is essential when determining how well services have been delivered and how effective

they are (Fairchild & Seely, 1996). School psychologist must be skilled and competent, so they can assume the responsibilities now being expected of them by parents (Tidwell & Witter, 1978).

An accountability study evaluated parental satisfaction of psychological services received by their children in the San Diego, California school system (McDavid & Reifman, 1997). One area evaluated was the explanation of information about their child, or problem clarification: Was the psychologist able to present and integrated assessment information to help the parents and school staff gain and understanding of the child's problem and their implication for school performance? Parents have been reported to be satisfied with the educations their children are receiving but are they satisfied with school psychological services (Gimpel & Huebner, 1994)?

The expectations and degree of satisfaction of parents who have direct interactions with educational personnel have been shown to affect their children's learning and development. One element of direct interaction between parents and educational personnel is the analysis and understanding of a psychological evaluation, the ultimate product of the assessment procedure. Parents tend to view the information they receive from psycho-educational evaluation as most important and helpful for themselves, rather that for their child's school personnel (Tidwell& Wetter, 1978).

One requirement of practicum students at MUGC is to administer a battery of psycho-educational tests to identified children. Once these tests have been given and analyzed the practicum student must review the results with the child's parents. During this meeting practicum students are expected to effectively communicate with parents in a clear and understandable manner the findings of the psycho-educational assessment so that a proper educational placement can result for the student.

In order to determine how effective the MUGC practicum student is with the psycho-educational meeting an evaluation should be completed to measure parental satisfaction. Students in the MUGC School Psychology program have a varying age range. Since the MUGC School Psychology program has a broad age range of students, parental satisfaction with the psycho-educational meeting should also be evaluated based on the age of the practicum student to determine if older students are more effective than younger students.

The question to be answered is: How satisfied is the parent with the psycho-educational meeting and does the age of the practicum student have any bearing on the student's credibility?

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Methods

Participants:

The subjects included in this survey analysis include parents of children who were given a psycho-educational evaluation by school psychology students of the summer, 2005 MUGC School Psychology Practicum III.

Instrumentation:

An eleven question survey entitled, How Am I Doing? was developed for this research. The first ten questions are designed on a Likert format rating scale of zero through five and produce only quantitative data of the parents level of satisfaction from the service received. The eleventh question allows parents to voice any qualitative concern about service received. The scaled scores are five, strongly agree; four, agree; three, somewhat agree; two, disagree; one, strongly disagree; and zero, does not apply.

Procedures:

The surveys were made available to current Practicum III students. They will gave a survey to parents at eligibility and/or IEP meetings. The consumers completed the survey, place it in a sealed envelop and return it to the Practicum supervisor. The researcher then collected the surveys for final data analysis using descriptive statistical measurements.

Results

There were 16 Practicum III students participating in the Summer, 2005, MUGC School Psychology practicum. Parents completed 24 evaluation surveys. For question number one, the School Psychologist was friendly and approachable, the minimum score is four and the maximum is five resulting in a mean score of 4.9583 with a standard deviation of .2041, which is not significant.

Question number two, I believe the psychological evaluation done on child was accurate, clear and understandable had a minimum score of three and maximum score of five. The mean score is 4.8333. The standard deviation is .4815, which is not significant.

For question number three, the School Psychologist explained the test results to me in a way that I could understand, the minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.8333. The standard deviation is .3807 and is not significant.

Question number four, the School Psychologist seemed to understand my child's problem(s), the minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.833. The standard deviation is .3807 which is not significant.

Question number five, I was given ideas as to how the school might be able to help my child, the minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.833. The standard deviation is .3807 which is not significant.

For question number six, I was given specific and helpful ideas for activities myself and my child could perform at home to help my child be more successful, the minimum score is three and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.7500. The standard deviation is .5316, which is not significant.

Question number seven, the School Psychologist showed respect for my ideas, the

minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.9583. The standard deviation is .2041, and is not significant.

For question number eight, I believe the program my child was placed in was appropriate and the restrictive environment, the minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.8750. Standard deviation is .3378 and is not significant.

Question number nine, my due process rights were explained to me in a manner that was understandable, the minimum score is three and the maximum mean is five score is five. The mean score is 4.7917. The standard deviation of .5090 is not significant.

For question number ten, I would feel comfortable talking to the school psychologist again if I needed to, the minimum score is four and the maximum score is five. The mean score is 4.9167. The standard deviation score of .2823 is not significant.

The median score for each question was 5.0000. The mode for each question was five. The frequency for question one is 23 strongly agree and one agree. Frequency for question two is 21 strongly agree, two agree, and one somewhat agree. Question three frequency is 20 strongly agree and four agree. Question four frequency is 20 strongly agree and 4 agree. For question five the frequency is 20strongly agree and 4 agree. The frequency for question six is 19 strongly agree, four agree, and one somewhat agree. Question seven frequency is 23 strongly agree and one agree. For question number eight the frequency is 21 strongly agree and three agree. Question nine frequency is 20 strongly agree, three agree, and one somewhat agree. The frequency for question ten is 22 strongly agree and two agree.

Table I

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	24	4.00	5.00	4.9583	.2041
Q2	24	3.00	5.00	4.8333	.4815
Q3	24	4.00	5.00	4.8333	.3807
Q4	24	4.00	5.00	4.8333	.3807
Q5	24	4.00	5.00	4.8333	.3807
Q6	24	3.00	5.00	4.7500	.5316
Q7	24	4.00	5.00	4.9583	.2041
Q8	24	4.00	5.00	4.8750	.3378
Q9	24	3.00	5.00	4.7917	.5090
Q10	24	4.00	5.00	4.9167	.2823

Eleven surveys were returned for the group of practicum students who were born after 1980, hereafter, known as group one, and 13 surveys were returned for the practicum students born after 1980,hereafter, known as group two. On question one, group one mean score is 4.9091 and group two mean score is 5.0000, with neither group having a significant standard deviation. For question two, group one mean score is 4.8182, group two mean score is 4.8462, with neither group having a significant standard deviation. On question three, group one mean score is 4.9091 and group two is 4.7692 resulting in neither group have a significant standard deviation. For question number four, group one mean score is 4.8182 and group two mean score is 4.8462 with neither having a significant standard deviation. For question number five, group one has a mean of 4.8182 and group has a mean of 4.8462 with neither having a significant standard deviation. On question number six, group one has a mean score of 4.6384 and group two has a mean of 4.8462 with neither having a significant standard deviation. For question number seven, group one has a mean score of 4.9091 and group two has a mean score of 5.0000 with neither having a significant standard deviation. On question number eight group one has a mean score of 4.8180 and group two has a mean score of 4.9231 with neither group having a significant standard deviation. For question nine group one has a mean score of 4.8182 and

group two has a mean score of 4.7692 and neither has a significant stand deviation score. The mean score for group one on question number ten is 4.9091 and group two mean score is 4.9231 and neither has a significant standard deviation score.

Table II

Group Statistics

Birth	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1 born after 1980	11	4.9091	.3015	9.091E-02
born before1980	13	5.0000	.0000	.0000
Q2 born after 1980	11	4.8182	.6030	.1818
born before 1980	13	4.8462	.3755	.1042
Q3 born after 1980	11	4.9091	.3015	9.091E-02
born before 1980	13	4.7692	.4385	.1216
Q4 born after 1980	11	4.8182	.4045	.1220
born before 1980	13	4.8462	.3755	.1042
Q5 born after 1980	11	4.8182	.4045	.1220
born after 1980	13	4.8462	.3755	.1042
Q6 born after 1980	11	4.6364	.6742	.2033
born before 1980	13	4.8462	.3755	.1042
Q7 born after 1980	11	4.9091	.3015	9.091E-02
born before 1980	13	5.0000	.0000	.0000
Q8 born after 1980	11	4.8182	.4045	.1220
born after 1980	13	4.9231	.2774	7.692E-02
Q9 born after 1980	11	4.8182	.4045	.1220
born after 1980	13	4.7692	.5991	.1662
Q10 born after 1980	11	4.9091	.3015	9.091E-02
born before 1980	13	4.9231	.2774	7.692E-02

A t-test for Equality of Means was completed. This two-tailed test of significance assumed equal variances and not equal variances for each of the ten questions. For the equal variances assumed significance test, the significant scores range from .287 to .907. Each score is below the significance level.

For the equal variances not assumed, the significance scores range from .341 to .908. These too, are below the significant level. When looking at the statistical difference between group one and group two mean, there is none to be found at either the equal variances assumed or equal variances not assumed.

When the t-test for the Equality of Means was performed, the ordinal Likert Scale was assumed to have equal interval between each category which therefore makes the data interval (Levels of Measurement, Online, August 8, 2005).

Each survey has a comment section for the parent to voice their views about the School Psychology student. Six comment sections have responses. No response was negative. The comments praised the effort and the work of the School Psychologist. Some comments how positive the experience was for their student and the good relationship between the School Psychologist and student.

Table III

T-test for Equality of Means

		significance (2-tailed)
Q1	Equal variances assumed	.287
	Equal variances not assumed	.341
Q2	Equal variances assumed	.891
	Equal variances not assumed	.895
Q3	Equal variances assumed	.382
	Equal variances not assumed	.367
Q4	Equal variances assumed	.862
	Equal variances not assumed	.863
Q5	Equal variances assumed	.862
	Equal variances not Assumed	.863
Q6	Equal variances assumed	.347
	Equal variances not assumed	.373
Q7	Equal variances assumed	.287
	Equal variances not assumed	.341
Q8	Equal variances assumed	.461
	Equal variances not assumed	.477
Q9	Equal variances assumed	.820
	Equal variances not Assumed	.815
Q10	Equal variances assumed	.907
	Equal variances not assumed	.908

Discussion

The results of the survey, How Am I Doing?, seem to indicate that the School Psychologists are friendly and approachable. The psychological evaluations were accurate, clear, and understandable and the results were explained in a manner that was understandable. Parents think the School Psychologists understands their child's problem and the ideas on parental help for the child's success both at home and at school were helpful. The parents thought the School Psychologist to be respectful of their ideas and would be comfortable talking with the psychologist again if needed. Parents felt their child had been placed in an appropriate and least restrictive environment.

Parents who completed the qualitative portion of the survey expressed positive comments for the School Psychologists and the practicum program. However, due to the low response on this item, the results should not be considered conclusive. Perhaps the comment section should have been eliminated from the survey.

It is suggested that further studies should be completed with the summer practicum program. Studies could be expanded to include more in depth examination of the psycho-educational evaluation meetings as well as other services offered by the practicum students. In addition, a follow-up study could be completed using the Summer, 2005 practicum students as participants. This follow-up study could be completed at the beginning of their year-long internship and another study could be completed at the end of their internship. The two studies could be compared to analyze the their professional growth.

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Appendix A

How Am I Doing?

Following is a short survey I would like you to complete as apart of a research project concerned with the effectiveness of School Psychologists. Please take the time to answer the following questions and return this survey to the psychologist sealed in the envelope provided. Another school psychologist will calculate results of the survey. I will not see your survey. Your answers will be confidential.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply
5	4	3	2	1	0

1. The School Psychologist was friendly and approachable. 5 4 3 2 1 0

2. I believe the psychological evaluation done on child was accurate, clear and understandable. 5 4 3 2 1 0

3. The School Psychologist explained the test results to me in a way that I could understand. 5 4 3 2 1 0

4. The School Psychologist seemed to understand my child's problem(s). 5 4 3 2 1 0

5. I was given ideas as to how the school might be able to help my child. 5 4 3 2 1 0

6. I was given specific and helpful ideas for activities myself and my child could perform at home to help my child be more successful. 5 4 3 2 1 0

7. The School Psychologist showed respect for my ideas. 5 4 3 2 1 0

8. I believe the program my child was placed in was appropriate and the. restrictive environment. 5 4 3 2 1 0

9. My due process rights were explained to me in a manner that was understandable. 5 4 3 2 1 0

10. I would feel comfortable talking to the school psychologist again if I needed to. 5 4 3 2 1 0

Please feel free to write further comments about how your interaction with the School Psychologist could have been made better

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_____

Appendix B

Consent to Participate in Parental Satisfaction with Marshall University College Practicum III Psycho-educational Meeting Process survey

Dear Parent(s):

You are being asked to participate in a research study. You were selected because your child was evaluated by a School Psychology practicum student.

This research involves an anonymous questionnaire that I am asking you to complete. By participating, you may be an integral part of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the Psycho-educational Report meeting process.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you must be 18 years old. By returning the survey in the provided sealed envelope to the practicum supervisor you are consenting your participation in this study. You may refuse to participate at all. There will not be any negative consequences to you or your child if you chose not to participate or to withdraw. We will do our best to make sure that the information you provide in this survey is kept confidential. If we publish the information we learn from this study, you will not be identified by name or in any other way.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Fred Jay Krieg, PhD at (304) 746-2067 or email fred.krieg@marshall.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, please contact Dr. Stephen D. Cooper at the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-7320. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this study. It is my desire that the results of this study will help Marshall University Graduate College Practicum III students in the future. Please keep this copy of the consent for your records and use if you should have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Fred Jay Krieg, PhD

Practicum Supervisor

Sincerely,

Larry G. Lester

Student