



THE TEXAS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Newsletter of the Texas Association
of School Psychologists

<https://txasp.org>

Affiliate of the National Association of School Psychologists

Vol. 15

No. 3

Winter 2006

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Selecting an Internship: Key Elements

Michael J. Parker, Ph.D.

Thirty graduate students met on the evening of October 20, 2006 at the TASP 14th Annual Professional Development Conference. I had the pleasure of speaking to them about how to select an internship program. Given the timing of this article's release so close to the APPIC Match deadline, this might be too late for predoctoral students who seek an internship for the fall of 2007. I hope it will assist LSSP interns and future predoc interns. The guiding points presented at the meeting are here in synopsis. Interested readers can use them to make a spreadsheet to compare sites.

Philosophy: Does the district view the program as an internship that ensures a variety of experiences, or is it just a job? Internship is intended to be a time to refine skills learned during courses and practica. The district should have a commitment to its interns to assure that they have time and opportunity to practice skills to a level of autonomy. (Don't fail to approach the internship as a job, however, with the proper work ethic and responsibilities that employees assume.) Most internships will state a philosophical model such as Behavioral, Scientist-Practitioner or Practitioner. Investigate how the program's structure is designed accordingly and what that means for you in terms of training.

Range of Opportunity: Seek a setting that provides you the diversity of populations, particularly low incident populations, essential to getting the broad experience you will need to practice. Ask if interns are allowed to select settings and rotations in order to tailor the internship to the practice skills you want to emphasize. Applicants should be certain that the site offers the chance to work with students and other professionals in their areas of personal interests and prior training. If you are positive that you want to specialize through an internship that targets a specific population, that is fine. Understand, however, that you are making an enduring commitment to limit your practice and probably your employment possibilities.



Supervisors: Professional ethics will not allow you to practice skills that your supervisor does not have. Get a list, such as vita, of potential supervisors' backgrounds. Their training and experience should match what you want to learn. Do not attempt to learn too many new skills during your internship. Make certain you sufficiently refine the ones you have. The number of supervisors on site will, of course, broaden the possibilities for you.

Continued on page 2

Structure Internships should have a stated organizational infrastructure and model. This should be clearly articulated in writing. Find out how the internship year is designed to evolve.

Model: Internships typically have a focus, such as Assessment, Intervention, Consultation, a Continuum of Services, or Special Education. Does the emphasis match your desires? Some internships even have a structural model, e.g. Developmental.

Resources: In addition to supervisors, you will need equipment. Resources range from test kits to paper for your printer. The district's commitment to the internship is often visible when you see possible work stations, computer access, and the availability of other resources. Access to a professional library is a plus.

Compensation: Ya gotta eat! After all those years as a student, it can be tempting to sell yourself to the highest bidder. Keep your priorities focused on training, yet be realistic about compensation. No one expects you to starve. Benefits packages including insurance are not to be overlooked.

Location: You will spend a year of your life with the district or agency that selects you. Delay of gratification for one more year is admirable. But a year with no possibility of social, athletic, or culinary outlets could be too depressing for you to be effective. Choose a location that gives you a chance to just be you once in a while.

Future Employment: Last and far from least in your selection process is the possibility of using your training at the site where you trained. You should be a good match for employment the year after internship, if they will be hiring. You might ask how many current staff did their internships at the site and what the perspective is on hiring former interns. How well the site supports the LSSP trainee and the post-doctoral year for licensure are also important.

The presentation ended with tips on how to get an internship to select you. In summary, stay focused. Be positive. Be honest. Be professional, but be yourself. And please try to relax; the program would not have invited you to interview if they had not already recognized your talents.

The Texas School Psychologist is published three times a year. Articles, announcements, advertising, employment notices, and letters should be submitted to:

The Editor:

Coady Lapierre
1901 S Clear Creek RD
Killeen TX 76549
(254) 519-5428
lapierre@tarleton.edu

Associate Editors: Nkechi Agukoronye, Ashley Arnold, John Furnes, Casey Langford, and Robin Pollack

Deadline for receipt of material by the Editor

No. 1 Fall July 30
No. 2 Special Online Conference Update Edition Dec. 1
No. 3 Spring April 15

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Advertising Deadlines

Camera ready artwork or Employment Notices must be received prior to deadline date for desired publication. All camera-ready artwork and notices must be on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. It is recommended that response deadlines in advertisements be no earlier than the 15th of the month following the month of publication.

A Lesson in Empathy

Joseph Kunkle, Graduate Student Representative

Hello fellow graduate students! It was great to meet so many of you at the conference. I hope that everyone enjoyed the conference and found it to be informative. I was particularly pleased with the turnout at the graduate student meeting and the number and quality of students' questions. Dr. Parker gave a great presentation about finding the right internship site and getting the most out of the internship year. He has also written an article about internship for this issue of the newsletter and I would encourage all current graduate students (especially those that were unable to make it to the graduate student meeting) to take time to read it. We were also able to raffle off a copy of Best Practices in School Psychology IV courtesy of NASP. Finally, the graduate student meeting provided an opportunity for the students currently running for graduate student representatives to introduce themselves and say a few words. They each did an excellent job and I look forward to "passing on the torch" to the one elected. The election results should be available around mid-December.



One of the projects that I will be passing on to the new graduate student representative is the student member listserv. We currently have 18 student members that have joined and it is my hope that the listserv will continue to grow. So far, I have mainly been using the listserv to post information about internship sites. However, I believe that the listserv has the even greater potential to become a tool that will provide a means of communication between the graduate student representative and the membership.

I have greatly enjoyed my year as the graduate student representative and I hope that students are happy with my work. I would like to end by encouraging student members to continue to support TASP as they move on to internship and beyond. Many individuals become members as students but then let membership lapse once they begin a career. Life has a tendency to become hectic and people sometimes do not realize the importance of staying involved in TASP. However, being on the TASP board this past year has taught

me just how much work goes into running such an organization and how much depends on a strong membership base. For example, putting on the annual conference requires a great amount of planning, funds, and help from willing volunteers.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to serve on the board.

Webmaster Report

Francis Chen, Webmaster

Hello and warm wishes this winter.

I am writing a brief update as webmaster and also as the coordinator of volunteers for the 14th Annual TASP Professional Development Conference in Irving.



First, the webmaster report.

There were issues with our service provider that interfered with our online registration process and getting information to the TASP members. Although these situations were beyond the control of TASP, it was none-the-less a frustrating experience for me as well as the rest of the Executive Board. The service provider has made changes to prevent their previous problems from occurring.

It is our hope that the posting of information and online registration will not be an issue for the next conference in Austin!

As this year's volunteer coordinator, I was amazed at how much the membership came to the line to assist with their conference. I would like to thank the university training programs, the students of these programs, and our regular members that volunteered at the registration table, the memorabilia table, and of course, the individual workshops. Thank you very much for all that you did.

We are working to smooth out this process as well and I look forward to working with the next crop of volunteers. See you in Austin!

Trainers of School Psychologists Annual Meeting at TASP

By Dr. Laurie Klose

The Trainers of School Psychologists had a very successful and informative meeting during the annual TASP conference. Representatives from Abilene Christian University, University of Houston-Clear Lake, Baylor University, Tarelton State University, Texas Women's University, The University of Texas Pan American, The University of North Texas, Texas A & M University and Texas State University-San Marcos participated in the event.



Jennifer Schewmaker, Abilene Christian University, and Gail Cheramie, University of Houston, Clear Lake led a discussion on Practicum Programs and Procedures in response to concerns raised by both trainers and school district supervisors about the lack of continuity in practicum experiences. Many great and promising practices were shared by all present. Some of these successful practices include: Sitting down with field based supervisors and site personnel to lay out specifically the expectations for the scope of experiences; Discussion with field supervisors about the expectations of supervision, including training regarding what constitutes effective and appropriate supervision; Practicum experiences tied to specific coursework; Combination of on campus training in a clinic setting and application of skills in the school based setting; and with regard to internship- Presenting internship as an integral part of training, not entry level practice of all aspects of an LSSP. Some concerns that trainers continue to address included balance of experiences in rural settings, availability of appropriate individuals to provide supervision, and variability of experiences from one site/district to another. In all, programs feel that students are having varied practicum experiences that prepare them for internship.

Some promising ideas that were discussed included making available (prior to beginning a practicum) to potential field supervisors, a brochure that details expectations and responsibilities for practicum; investigating financial contracting between University and school districts; holding on campus training/ symposium events to raise funds for

clerical support for on campus clinic for practicum experiences, and electronic logging and portfolio systems (e.g. TaskStream) to help manage data and create data bases that can be used to aggregate data for accreditation and approval processes.

Dan Miller, Texas Women's University, shared with the group the steps that TWU followed to obtain approval to begin awarding the specialist degree. The degree will be called, "Specialist in School Psychology". Trainers were given the information and contact persons at the state level to seek this designation after following the requirements of the individual universities. Congratulations to Texas Women's University for this important advance in school psychology training in Texas. Maybe next year, many more programs will be able to make the same announcement!

Several other topics were discussed. Legislation- Upcoming legislation seeks to disallow charging course fees. This could impact many courses. Individuals are encouraged to be in touch with legislators regarding views on this matter.

Informed Consent- The issue of "informal consultation" with teachers has not been resolved with any degree of certainty. Further clarification is needed on this topic.

Praxis/ETS- The National Advisory Committee for the Praxis School Psychologist Exam has met. Significant revisions in the specifications for the exam are underway. This information is not yet available. The new forms of the exam should be ready for Fall 2007.

The extended format of the trainers meeting was initiated by Marsha Harmon, Sam Houston State University, two years ago. This change from a one hour evening meeting to an almost full day has received a very positive response. Most participants appreciate the chance to spend time interacting with other trainers in a collaborative setting where all programs can share their trials and successes so that all programs can grow and training in Texas can continue to be at the highest level. Ideas for next year's meeting included the use of online courses or hybrid courses in School Psychology training, on line data management systems, professional issues in collaboration between school districts and universities and ethical issues for trainers of school psychologists. Making the meeting a half day during the pre-conference was discussed and seemed to be acceptable to most participants.

TSBEP's Verdict on TASP Petition

Written by Brad Shields. Reviewed and edited by Michael Parker and Al Mayo.

On November 9, 2006 TASP was represented at the TSBEP board meeting by Michael Parker, President; Al Mayo, Past-President; and Brad Shields, Legislative Liaison. The TASP contingency met with TPA President Melba Vasquez and their ED David White over dinner on the evening before. It was a cordial and respectful evening, but it became clear that TPA was going to oppose the TASP request to remove language from the board rules that does not allow LSSPs to refer to themselves verbally as a "School Psychologist." TPA feels that it would dilute the public's perception of the title "Psychologist."

The TSBEP board meeting began with an historical review on the LSSP title history from Dr. Emily Sutter, who worked on the original law that transferred the regulation of school psychology from TEA to the state board. Michael, Al and Brad followed with a brief recap of TASP's request. They reminded the board members that TASP was not asking for an official name change, but simply the removal of one sentence that says LSSPs may not refer to themselves as "school psychologists" verbally unless they have the second license as a Psychologist. Brad reminded the board that this happens every day in every school setting and the TSBEP has chosen not to enforce the rule. Brad also reminded the board that in the past five years of him attending board their meetings he has heard every member of the board casually refer to LSSPs as "school psychologists" at every meeting... Even Dr. Sutter referred to LSSPs as "school psychologists" during her presentation that morning, as did David White of TPA at dinner the night before.

The board's staff presented the board with a proposed rule that would have removed the sentence from the rule. Art Hernandez, who is licensed as an LSSP and a Psychologist, lead the opposition to the rule. He either intentionally or mistakenly lead the discussion in a direction that TASP never requested. The discussion focused on persons other than LSSPs using the term "school psychologist" to introduce an LSSP. Stating that the board had no authority over the free speech of school administrators or parents, the rationale that LSSPs are not required to correct other people who improperly use the school psychologist term was the basis to defeat the petition. The actual request by TASP to allow LSSPs to refer to themselves as "school psychologists" was never addressed. Art Hernandez also stated that since there have been no complaints filed against LSSPs, then there was no problem to correct. Art Hernandez and Carl Settles moved to not propose a rule change and, with the two PA members voting against the motion (favoring the TASP position), the board voted 4-2 to not propose the rule change.

The board discussed a draft of a "policy" that would have sent out a statement to all LSSPs that they would not be responsible for correcting others who misidentified them as school psychologists, but they deferred the issue until a committee of board members and representatives from TPA and TASP could discuss the issue further.

It is very unfortunate that our endeavor came to vote over a related matter rather than what the petition requested. The rule change was defeated nevertheless. TASP will need to decide if it wants to take the issue further, which would require legislative change.

KEEP INFORMED!

Let TASP know your E-mail address.
Send your E-mail to TASPorg@aol.com or call TASP at their toll-free number:
1-888-414-TASP(8277)
or in Austin at 836-1001

Texas Woman's University Becomes the First Public Institution in Texas to Award the Specialist in School Psychology Degree

Dr. Daniel C. Miller, Department Chair at Texas Woman's University (TWU), and Dr. Kathy DeOrnellas, Director of the Specialist in School Psychology Program are pleased to announce that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has granted TWU the authority to become the first public university to award a Specialist Degree in School Psychology (SSP). Texas was one of the few states in the nation that did not award a specialist degree that falls between a typical 36-hour master's degree and a typical 90+ hour doctoral degree. Graduates of public university school psychology training programs in Texas have only been granted a Master's degree, despite the fact that most of our Texas training programs are modeled after the NASP specialist-level of training.

Dr. DeOrnellas stated that "the SSP degree reflects the level of training that the students are receiving". The Specialist in School Psychology degree will replace the Master's in School Psychology degree effective September 1, 2006. The SSP degree is consistent with national training standards that requires a specialist-level of training and consistent with our licensure title, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology.

At the recent TASP annual conference, Dr. Miller shared with the other training programs around the state the documentation that was used to obtain the SSP degree from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. It is hoped that all public school psychology specialist-level training programs in the state will apply for the SPP degree within the next year. If a training director was not at the trainers meeting at the TASP conference and would like more information about how to obtain the SSP, contact Dr. Miller at TWU.

Increasing the Effectiveness of Prevention and Intervention Teams

By Dr. Jennifer Shewmaker

As the field of school psychology and the educational system in general continues to focus on prevention and early intervention, it is vital that we understand how to make these efforts most effective.

According to Rathvon (1999), the intervention assistance movement focuses on developing Intervention Assistance Programs (IAPs) which are based on a consultation model of service delivery. They are designed to help teachers provide interventions within the regular classroom to help difficult-to-teach students become more successful. These types of systems work to create a collaborative problem-solving process at the school level and are designed to provide consultative help to teachers, facilitate compliance with the Least Restrictive Environment principle of IDEA, serve both remedial and preventative functions, and provide immediate help to the teacher.

The most effective models of IAPs involve three components (Witt, 2006). The first component is universal screening. Screening instruments are curriculum based measures that provide information about where the child is functioning in the curriculum and developmentally. Shapiro's text book (1996) and workbook (2004) walk the reader through the process of curriculum based assessment in very practical terms. Universal screening in the early grades helps to identify children who are struggling to develop basic academic skills and those at-risk for developing academic problems in the future. They provide the teams with important information about where the child is functioning in the curriculum which leads to targeted, empirically supported interventions designed to address that child's particular needs. This component of the program is effective in helping both regular and special education teachers because it provides the teacher with specific aid for that individual student while also establishing data regarding the child's academic skills, the interventions which have been systematically used, and the progress of the skill. Statements by a national commission suggest that

intervening with students at risk for both academic and behavioral problems at this level reduces long-term referrals to special education (Donovan & Cross, 2002).

The second component of effective IAP's is effective intervention selection (Witt, 2006). This involves using either the problem-solving or the standard protocol method of intervention selection. The problem-solving method focuses on problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation while the standard protocol method uses empirical data to lead the team to choose an intervention that has been proven to be helpful for that specific child's needs (Gresham, VanderHeyden & Witt, 2005). Another important consideration is intervention fidelity. To increase the likelihood that the intervention will be implemented as intended, Witt (2006) recommends using an implementation protocol, using permanent products as a monitoring tool, and periodically reviewing the implementation with the professional putting it into place.

Lastly, effective IAP's monitor progress to determine the effectiveness of the interventions in individual cases and evaluation of the program as a whole. Without the systematic analysis of the student's progress one cannot know if that student's skills are improving. In the same way, without the systematic analysis of the data generated by the school's intervention team as a whole, it is unclear whether the time and effort being put forth is meaningful. As Gresham et al. (2005) stated, "The most important concept in any RTI model is the idea of matching the intensity of the intervention to the severity and resistance of the problem." Using the three tier model of RTI in a systematic way allows prevention and intervention teams to meet the needs of each student through both regular and special education services.

Recently a new tool has been developed for use in Texas from one used for several years in the state of Arizona (Ferro, Davidson, Pukys, Oakes, & Flores, 2002). The Texas School Evaluation Tool (TxSET) is an assessment system that can be used by schools engaged in the process of systems change, particularly those developing or reevaluating their prevention and intervention teams. It allows schools to examine each of the core systems

involved in prevention and intervention as a part of an ongoing continual self-assessment which leads to increasing effectiveness in addressing a wide range of student behavior as well as academic success. (The TxSET is currently in its first year of piloting. To find out how your school district can be a part of future pilot programs, contact me at Jennifer.shewmaker@acu.edu.)

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Paid examiners needed NOW for nationwide standardization of new Spanish-Bilingual Edition of the Test of Auditory Processing Skills, 3rd Edition. Individual testing of Spanish-speaking children from regular-education classrooms (without auditory processing difficulties) is starting now and continues at least through March, 2007. Contact Jill Youens at Academic Therapy Publications, Novato, CA 800-422-7249, TAPS-SBE@academictherapy.com.

Conference Reflections

Loretta Allen, 2006 President-Elect

The 2006 Professional Development Conference, *Interventions: A Step in Time*, is but a distant memory by now and yet the overall impact will be with me for a very long time. In my professional career, I have attended any number of professional conferences on a variety of topics, but it was not until I became involved with the Executive Board of TASP that I came to understand the full magnitude of such a conference. Previously, conferences, to me, were a collection of experts who were scheduled at different times to provide their information for the benefit of those attending the conference. I moved from one session to another gathering notes of the speakers' talks, enjoying snacks at break times, visiting with colleagues and friends, and making sure to get my certificate to count toward my CEUs. I am quite sure it all sounds very familiar, and you may be wondering, "What could be so hard about that?"

As I think back on our 2006 TASP Professional Development Conference, it seems not unlike the holiday meals that were so much a part of our recent Thanksgiving and Christmas Breaks. For those who had the pleasure of participating in the meals without actually hosting them, perhaps bringing only a side dish or dessert, it was likely a time of enjoyment with most, if not all, of the expectations of a grand holiday meal met – everything done perfectly, on time as scheduled and expected. Oh, the unforeseen events may have occurred such as an overdone turkey, dear Aunt Sally's brussels sprout casserole, that no one really likes, and maybe not having your favorite fruit salad this year, but for the most part it was probably a pleasant, fun experience. But, if you have ever hosted one of the grand holiday meals, you know something about the weeks and months of advanced planning necessary, the contacts to get the family together, the menu planning to address everyone's preferences and maybe special needs, the cooking, cleaning and structural preparation, the necessary cleanup, and concerns about your guests having a good time. It can all be quite exhausting, no matter how exhilarating the actual event or how rewarding the family time!

I will forever view conferences in the same way as I view hosting a special holiday or other celebratory event and/or meal. Months of planning and preparation are involved and the number of details that must be considered is incredible! TASP has had the privilege of having Robb Matthews chair the conference for the past two years and several others in years past. He has become a master in the planning, coordination, and general presentation of our conference! This year, Al Mayo worked closely with Robb as co-chair and I had the privilege of serving on that conference committee along with Gail Cheramie, Mindi Jeter, Donna Black, and Francis Chen. We also had a host of volunteers from our membership who worked tirelessly to help with so many of the last minute details. It was definitely a team effort and according to reports from those who attended, the conference came off seamlessly, much like those well-planned holiday meals we have all enjoyed! And just like those holiday meals, we are already looking forward to and planning for the 2007 big event in Austin. It will be fantastic with some of the old familiar things and some new and exciting ideas as well. You are definitely invited, and we look forward to seeing you there!

Texas State University - San Marcos School Psychology Program

TSU offers a specialist level, Master of Arts Program in School Psychology, accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The program endorses the scientist-practitioner training model and leads to institutional recommendation for certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) by NASP and for licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. TSU also offers a Respecialization Program for individuals who already hold a Master's degree in a related field and wish to re-specialize in the area of school psychology.

For more information, please contact:

Cynthia Plotts, Ph.D.
Coordinator, School Psychology Program
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666
(512) 245-3086
(512) 245-8872 (Fax)
Visit our web site at: www.eaps.us/

Awards and Honors

Gwen Carter - Awards and Honors Chair

Numerous recipients received deserved recognition at the 2006 Annual TASP Conference.

- Dr. Mark Schmidt from Birdville ISD was awarded the “Outstanding School Psychologist Award”. Dr. Schmidt “consistently demonstrates outstanding service provision, exceptional knowledge and skills, and superior leadership. He possesses a love for children, a fabulous sense of humor, and the ability to foster warm and respectful relationships with his colleagues.”
- Maureen Hicks from Texas State University – San Marcos won the “Outstanding Graduate Student Award”. Maureen has also been elected as a NASP Student Leader. She has “taken advantage of every opportunity offered to learn, grow, and become the best intern possible. Maureen goes above and beyond in pursuit of furthering her knowledge base and understanding of the profession of school psychology.”
- Katy ISD was recognized and awarded the “Outstanding Delivery of School Psychological Services” award. Katy ISD is the fastest-growing school district in the Houston area and one of the fastest-growing in the state. Katy’s LSSP’s provide a wide range of direct and indirect psychological services to all students in the district, including early intervention assistance, behavioral consultation, psychological assessment, crisis response, and staff development training.
- Robb Matthews was awarded the “Outstanding Service to the Profession of School Psychology Award”. For the past 12 years, Robb has been involved in school psychology as both a clinician and a leader. As the only LSSP in the Big Four Special Education Co-op in Olney, Texas, Robb works collaboratively with school staff, parents, and community members in seven school districts to provide psychological services to public school children who otherwise might not receive services at all. As a leader, Robb has been actively promoting school psychology in Texas through his ten years of involvement with the Texas Association of School Psychologists, as well as through his participation with numerous affiliated organizations and committees. Robb also had represented TASP on five different stakeholders groups for TEA and co-chaired TASP’s Sunset Task Force in 2005. Currently, Robb serves on NASP’s Executive Council.

Texas Woman’s University School Psychology Graduate Programs

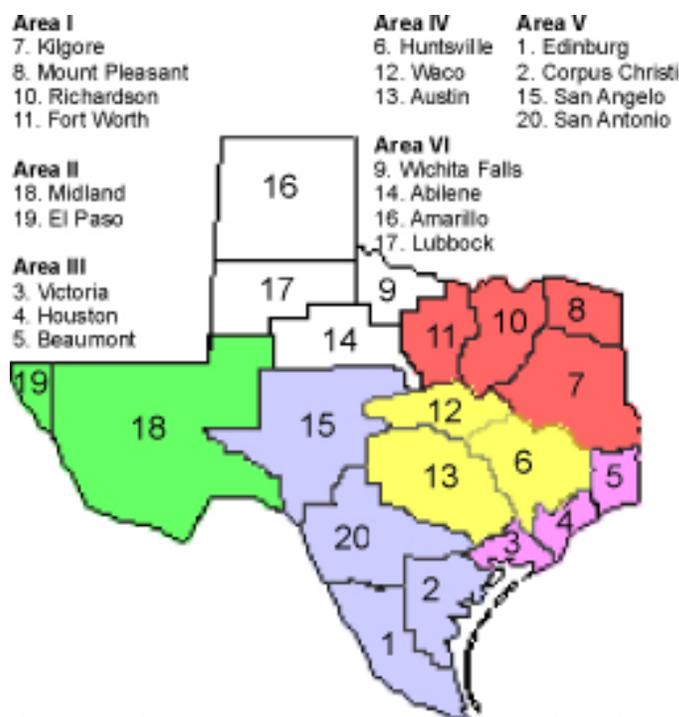
TWU offers three graduate programs in school psychology, Doctoral, Master’s, and Respecialization. All programs are accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The doctorate in school psychology leads to licensure as a Psychologist or a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) and certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). The Master’s in school psychology leads to licensure as a LSSP and certification as an NCSP. The Respecialization program is intended for those professionals who have a previous Master’s degree in a related field and want to get the national NCSP and the Texas LSSP.

For more information contact:

Daniel C. Miller, Ph.D.
Director, School Psychology Graduate Programs
Texas Woman’s University
P.O. Box 425470
Denton, Texas 76204
(940) 898-2303 (Department Phone)
(940) 898-2301 (Departmental Fax)

Visit our new Web Page at:

www.twu.edu/as/psyphil/sppc/





At the Texas Association of School Psychologist’s 2006 Annual Conference

**Reflections on our
Annual
Conference: Our
profession is in
Good Hands**

Martha Blanton - Area IV Representative



When Coady asked each of us to share some thoughts about this year’s conference, a unifying theme emerged for me. I was so impressed - perhaps because I’ve reached “that age” – by our new-to-the-field colleagues. Whether they were assisting with registration (thank you Jennifer Shewmaker of Abilene Christian for enlisting their help!), attending conference sessions, or receiving awards (Congratulations to our very own Area IV Maureen Hicks, recipient of the Outstanding Student Award) – I was struck by their vibrance, enthusiasm, and downright “smarts”. Our profession is in good hands...

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