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A descriptive analysis on the effect of the congruency between national and state guidelines for school psychology training programs

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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECT OF THE CONGRUENCY BETWEEN NATIONAL AND STATE GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMS

by
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A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Advisor: John Klanderman, Ph.D

School Psychology

Each of the 50 states has independently developed guidelines for the minimum training required of school psychologists, providing for variation among the required curriculums. NASP has developed guidelines for training and experience at a national level as a means of establishing uniformity in training . The purpose of this study was to determine whether the congruency between national and state training guidelines has an effect on the percentage of nationally approved school psychology programs. The training guidelines of the 50 states were obtained. A listing of school psychology training programs as well as those nationally approved by state was acquired. The percentage of programs with NASP approval within each state was then calculated. The training guidelines of the states with the highest percentage of NASP approved schools was compared against the guidelines of the states with the lowest approval rate. The findings indicated that those states whose requirements for school psychology training programs are more congruent with the national requirements tend to have a higher percentage of school psychology training programs with NASP approval.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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This project is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend...

Carolyn Theresa Hassmiller

Chapter One

School psychology emerged in the late 1800's as a result of newly developed compulsory schooling laws. For the first time, children of all ages and abilities were required to attend school. This naturally led to the development of special education for children who were different from the majority. It was this development which spurred the need for school psychologists. Fagan and Wise felt it was reasonable to hypothesize that among primary reasons for securing and employing school psychologists was the specific notion of having them help educators sort children reliably into segregated educational settings where exceptional children might be more successful individually, and where their absence would help the system itself function better for the masses of average children (Fagan & Wise, 1994). From this it can be drawn that early on, the basic role of the school psychologist was to administer and interpret tests.

Over the years the field of school psychology has shown rapid growth. Accompanying this growth was an increase in the functions and responsibilities that go along with the title school psychologist (Phillips, 1990). The role of the school psychologist has become increasingly unclear. Presently, not only do school psychologists perform assessment activities, but they may also spend time on interventions, consultations, and on research.

To meet the growing needs now placed on them, school psychologists must be highly competent. The effective deliverance of the services required of them will depend on the training they receive. A thorough training in a variety of areas is essential for proper adaptability to the roles expected of them.

NEED

The ability of the school psychologist to be effective at his career is dependent on his professional preparation. Due to the general confusion as to what a school psychologist is or should be, which underlies the question as to how he should be trained, there has been great confusion as to the quality and quantity of graduate training for school psychologists in the United States (Jones, 1977).

Over the years, credentialing requirements have been developed in all fifty states. These standards have evolved to ensure that school psychologists possess minimum qualifications needed to be effective providers of professional services to the public (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). Each state, however, developed its guidelines independently, providing for variation among the required curriculums. This in effect deters the growth of the profession. It allows for no reciprocity between states because no valid assumptions can be made about a practitioner's training based on the degree obtained (Phillips, 1990).

The National Association of School Psychology (NASP) felt the need not only to improve the quality of training, but also to bring a new level of uniformity and clarity to the profession of school psychology (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). As a means of achieving this goal, NASP developed national standards for training and experience in school psychology.

In order for a school psychology program to become nationally accredited, it must submit to being reviewed and approved by NASP as to meeting their minimum curriculum standards.

There are various benefits to being trained by a nationally accredited program. Not only can one be assured of quality control within a program, but also of uniformity. This uniformity allows for reciprocity between states, making it easier to move from state to state with no discrimination occurring due to the training received in the field (Jones, 1977). Being trained by an accredited program, also makes it easier to become nationally certified. Keeping these benefits in mind, it is important to determine if the national standards are having an impact on the regulation of the training of school psychologists.

PURPOSE

Since its inception in 1988, the National Certification system has prompted school psychology training programs and state credentialing bodies to amend their training requirements to be consistent with NASP training standards (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). The purpose of this study was to see if the congruency between national training guidelines and individual state training guidelines has an effect on the percentage of nationally approved school psychology training programs within each individual state.

HYPOTHESIS

States whose requirements for school psychology programs are more congruent with national requirements will have a higher percentage of school psychology programs with NASP approval.

THEORY: History of Training

During the late 1800's, when school psychology first emerged, there were no specific training programs established for the profession. From 1896 to 1920 there were no formal preparation programs for psychological practitioners in the schools (Fagan, 1986). Most of the practicing school psychologists received their training through psychological clinics which worked in cooperation with the school districts. Most practitioners at that time held subdoctoral levels of training although a doctoral level of training was considered most appropriate.

The lack of formal training programs forced students with an interest in school psychology to pursue related fields. The education and psychology programs of the time were being relied on for training. However, these programs offered limited amounts of suitable coursework and practical experience in the field.

The first formal preparation program for school psychology was introduced between 1920 and 1930 at New York University. By 1940, various other colleges had developed school psychology programs of their own. Despite this sudden growth of training programs, the overall outlook on school psychology training still lacked clarification. The training programs lacked systematic preparation for a defined profession. Each state developed their own definition of a school psychologist and trained them accordingly. There were no formal training requirements, no set standards, no levels of preparation, in short, nothing to help school psychology mature into a profession. The training was characterized by the fulfillment of specific course requirements. One could begin work as a school psychologist if the courses which that particular state deemed necessary were completed. A training philosophy based on the roles for which personnel were being prepared, well articulated goals and objectives, an integrated sequence of courses and field experiences, and the assignment of clearly identifiable school psychology faculty were uncommon (Curtis & Zins, 1989).

There were three major historical events which can be considered turning points in the development of school psychology training programs. The first one occurred in 1945, when the American Psychological Association developed division 16- the division of school psychology. The intent of this branch was to provide some long needed clarification. Consensus was reached regarding specific requirements of preparation, and feedback became available on the extent of such training programs and their effects on the field. This division developed professional training standards. What the APA believed in however, others necessarily did not. This sparked the growth of other professional organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists. The second event was the Thayer Conference in 1954. The conference examined roles and functions, titles, manpower needs, ethics and standards, levels of preparation, curriculum and accreditation, and gave additional impetus to the developing field (Gutkin & Reynolds, 1990). The third event which contributed to the development of school psychology was the establishment of the professional Journal of School Psychology in the early 1960's. The journal provided a primary source of scholarly communication among school psychologists (Gutkin & Reynolds, 1990).

DEFINITIONS

School psychologist-

A psychologist who specializes in the problems associated with elementary and secondary educational systems. Specifically, he may counsel or advise children, may help to plan curricular units, is alert to serious behavioral disorders, administers tests, and assists in the interpretation of results to children and parents.

Training-

The systematic series of activities-instruction, practice, review, examinations, etc.-to which the individual being trained is subjected.

Certification/Credential-

Receipt of a written statement which attests to completion of training requirements established and authorizes one to serve as a school psychologists.

National Association of School Psychologists-

A professional organization of school psychologists.

Accreditation-

The granting of approval to an institution of learning by an official review board after the school has met specific requirements.

Standard-

A degree or level of requirement, excellence, or attainment.

ASSUMPTIONS

NASP accreditation status is on a voluntary basis. The researcher is assuming that programs which meet national training standards have applied for and gone through the approval process.

LIMITATIONS

For this study the researcher relied solely on the information obtained through publications. No interaction with state or national officials was involved, other than requests for necessary information.

OVERVIEW

Chapter two, the review of the literature, will focus on the establishment of regulatory practices in the training of school psychologists. An in-depth presentation of research and literature pertaining to the development and advancement of the field will

be presented. The role that the NASP plays in the evolution of graduate study in school psychology will be addressed. The sample as well as the design of the study will be discussed in chapter three. Chapter four will look at the results obtained from the comprehensive analysis, while chapter five will be a discussion.

Chapter Two

Throughout the last two decades, the field of school psychology has tremendously grown and dramatically changed. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has been a major stimulus for the development and advancement of the field (Curtis & Zins, 1989). This chapter will focus on the establishment of regulatory practices of school psychology, particularly in training. The role that NASP plays in the evolution of graduate study in school psychology will be addressed.

ESTABLISHING AN IDENTITY

From the beginning, school psychology never had a true identity. The field formed as a hybrid with roots in both education and psychology. Ever since it originated, school psychology has been faced with the dilemma of successfully integrating the two differing disciplines. Each state had their own idea of what the roles and functions of a school psychologist was, and developed their training programs and credentialing standards accordingly. The result was no clear definition of the profession and a lack of internal consistency throughout training programs. School psychology was a new phenomenon with practitioners widely scattered, unregulated, and without identity (Fagan, 1986).

Over the years, the demand for school psychologists increased, as did the

functions and importance of their roles. This was obvious by the growth in the number of training programs available. Institutions offering training in school psychology grew from 28 in 1954 to 79 in 1964, to 174 in 1974, to 211 in 1984 (Fagan, 1986). The 1989 edition of the NASP training program directory identified 231 institutions offering school psychology training programs. The most recent edition identifies 233.

In 1969, NASP recognized there was a growing need for school psychologists, and realized that it was time to start establishing a professional identity. The primary means by which they accomplished this was by developing program standards. They developed standards for training, standards for credentialing, and guidelines for professional conduct. The standards contributed to a professional identity by:

specifying the educational level and competencies necessary to enter professional practice

identifying training requirements necessary for continued professional practice

describing the range of services offered by practitioners

committing the profession to the improvement of services and describing best or exemplary practices

prescribing safeguards for the protection of consumers of the professions services

reflecting currency with the profession as it evolves through periodic review and revision (Thomas & Grimes, 1995)

TRAINING STANDARDS

NASP training standards were developed to promote consistency in the levels and content of training among professionals which had never before been present. The standards were developed at a national level. NASP hoped to influence individual states into adopting the national standards. The standards for training significantly raised the expectations for entry level training, and have broadened preparation to include various

types of assessment and intervention (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). The training standards are reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed. The current entry level expectation of the specialist degree or its equivalent is more than twice the expectation published in the original NASP training guidelines of the early 1970's (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). The current NASP training standards are as follows:

> a minimum of 3 years of full-time academic study or the equivalent beyond the baccalaureate degree, including at least 60 graduate semester hours or the equivalent
>
> doctoral programs must consist of a minimum of 4 years of full time academic study or its equivalent beyond the baccalaureate degree...and shall include a minimum of 84 graduate semester hours or the equivalent
>
> both doctoral and 6th year specialist programs must include at least one academic year of supervised internship experience consisting of a minimum of 1200 clock hours...at least 600 of the 1200 hours must be in a school setting
>
> at least 48 graduate semester hours of the 6th year specialist program and 72 hours of the doctoral program must be exclusive of credit for the internship and any terminal doctoral project (NASP, 1994)

The National Association of School Psychology reviews school psychology training programs periodically. If a program has adopted the minimum training standards required by NASP, then the institution will become nationally accredited. Programs that identify themselves as accredited have passed a rigorous review and by supposition can be relied upon to provide quality preparation (Fagan, 1993). The achievement of accreditation is a clear indication that a field has progressed to a point where its practitioners require various forms of regulation (Fagan, 1993). NASP accreditation is one of the more powerful symbols of professionalization; it recognizes an institution as having a school psychology training program with a certain level of quality. The most recent edition of Best Practices in School Psychology recognizes 117 institutions with

NASP approval. The APA also accredits training programs, but only at a doctoral level. A total of 157 institutions are accredited either by NASP or APA (Curtis & Zins, 1989). As noted earlier, there are 231 institutions that offer school psychology training at one or more levels. This means that almost 70% of the colleges and universities with school psychology programs have at least one program accredited at the national level. This also means however, that about one out of every three institutions offering school psychology training programs holds no accreditation by either of the major national accrediting organizations.

LEVEL OF PREPARATION

Since the development of program standards, there has been an increase in the level of professional preparation. A survey distributed to practicing school psychologists in 1970, and another distributed to practicing school psychologists in 1986, reflect the changes in preparation levels. In 1970, only 4% of the practicing school psychologists responding to a survey by Farling and Hoedt (1971) reported having been trained at the specialist or doctoral level. By 1986, 71% of the practitioners responding to a survey by Reschly, Genshaft, and Binder (1987) had been trained at the specialist level or beyond (Curtis & Zins, 1989). The upward trend in the levels of preparation of school psychologists is also supported by studies of graduate enrollments in school psychology training programs. Almost 40% of school psychology students were enrolled at the doctoral level for 1983-84. A comparison of the number of students enrolled in doctoral programs in 1976-77 and 1983-84 indicates a 38% increase in doctoral students in that 7 year span of time (Curtis & Zins, 1989). Data also indicate that a combined 81% of school psychology trainees were enrolled at the specialist or doctoral level during 1983-

84 (Brown & Minke, 1986). The number of institutions offering one or more levels of training grew from about 28 in the 1950's to more than 100 by 1970, to more than 200 by the 1980's (Fagan, 1986).

PROGRAM CONTENT

The standards for training have also increased the programs content. The content of training programs was largely unregulated until the late 1960's (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). Many of the programs established in that era combined traditional core psychology or core education courses specialty training, including psychoeducational evaluation, but with limited emphasis on intervention (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). By 1975, intervention training was readily apparent. A 1975 study by Goh showed that school psychology programs placed the strongest emphasis on assessment, consultation, and other active intervention techniques in their training curriculum.

Over the years, a number of studies have been done to assess specific areas of training which researchers believed to be of importance in the changing evolution of the field of school psychology.

In 1982, a survey done by Sullivan and McDaniel was distributed to 172 school psychology training programs. The purpose was to assess the content of special education coursework in preparation programs. Results indicated that most programs required few courses dealing with specific handicapping conditions, and 25% did not require any courses specifically designed to develop knowledge related to handicaps. In recent years there has been a greater emphasis on special education in training.

In 1987, Carlson and Sincavage performed a study to assess the level of family oriented training among school psychology programs. Results indicated that the level of family training was increasing among programs.

In 1992, a study by Rogers was carried out to assess multi-cultural training in school psychology programs. A national sample of 121 directors of training programs responded to a survey measuring the extent to which programs integrated multi-cultural themes into core courses, offered minority related courses, exposed students to culturally diverse clients during practica and internship, provided minority issue research opportunities and represented culturally diverse groups among faculty and students. Results indicated that programs typically offer one or more multi-cultural courses.

In 1993, a study was done by Ross and Goh to examine preparation of school psychologists in supervision. A sample of 331 trained school psychologists were surveyed. Results indicated that one quarter of the sample had some graduate coursework or training in supervision. However, only 11.2% of this sample received this training in school psychology programs.

Who would know better what content a training program should contain than a practicing school psychologist. Armed with this thought, in 1987, Copeland and Miller distributed a survey to practicing school psychologists who were NASP members. The purpose was to examine present and future training needs of school psychologists. The results showed that although assessment remains the dominant training need, roles for school psychologists have greatly expanded. The practicing school psychologists felt a need for coursework in consultation, legal issues, neuro-psychological assessment, and infant and preschool assessment. An increased emphasis on computer related coursework and program evolution was also found to be needed.

Throughout the past several decades there has been an improved balance of psychology and education courses. Very noticeable changes have been the expansion of field experience requirements, including practica and internships, and the infusion of faculty specifically prepared as school psychologists (Thomas & Grimes, 1995).

The credentialing of school psychologists has been the responsibility of individual state departments. They have set up minimum training standards and experience requirements in order for school psychologists to be able to practice in their state.

CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

In 1946, only 7 states (CONN, MN, NB, NY, OH, IND, PENN) certified school psychologists (Horrocks, 1946). By 1956, the number had increased to 20. Although 20 states certified school psychologists in 1956, approximately 75 different titles were used by individuals who practiced in the schools (Tindall, 1979). In 1967, the number had risen to 38. By 1969, 38 states had already enacted credentialing standards through independent state departments of education (Tindall, 1979). In 1979, all but one state certified school psychologists at some level (Brown, Horn, & Lindstrom, 1980). By 1988, all states and the District of Columbia had some process or title to recognize individuals who provide school psychological services.

Over the years, as the number of states credentialing school psychologists grew, so did the variation between them. Because each state established its own criteria for credentialing, there existed a wide range of academic and experience necessary to attain credentialing in school psychology (Batsche, Knoff, & Peterson, 1989). NASP, in its goal of uniformity of the profession, felt a need for consistency among credentialing standards as well. The primary role of NASP in credentialing has been to influence the credentialing process to attain uniformity of standards across states which credential school psychologists (Batsche et al, 1989). At the present time, 20 states adhere to NASP's credentialing standards.

NASP developed national credentialing standards in 1978. These standards identify academic and experience requirements which would produce a

full range of school psychological services, regardless of the state in which they were credentialed (Batsche et al, 1989). Just as the training standards are reviewed and adjusted periodically, so are the credentialing standards. The current entry level required to be fulfilled in order to use the designation Nationally Credentialed School Psychologist (NCSP) are as follows:

> completion of a 6th year specialist or higher level degree program in school psychology with a 60 graduate semester hour minimum consisting of coursework, practica, internship, and an appropriate graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning
>
> preparation in psychological foundations, educational foundations, assessment, interventions, statistics/research design, and professional school psychology
>
> successful completion of a 1200 hour internship in school psychology of which 600 hours must be in a school setting. The internship must be supervised by a credentialed school psychologist or a psychologist appropriately credentialed for an alternate setting and be recognized through institutional documentation
>
> attainment of a passing score on the National School Psychology Examination administered by ETS (NASP, 1994)

Becoming a nationally certified school psychologist holds many benefits for both the professional, and the consumer of his services. It is a major symbol of professional status. Certification virtually assures the right to use certain titles and practices. It is a recognition of a quality preparation. NCSP allows for easy movement across states through the use of reciprocity.

To attain national certification, one of the requirements is to be trained by a nationally accredited program. Training programs which are not currently accredited must revise their standards in order for their students to be able to achieve national certification. If the states are more willing to revise their standards to correlate closer to the national standards, the training programs would have more pressure to change as

well.

SUMMARY

Over the years, the field of school psychology has made tremendous strides. It has grown from having no clear identity, no consistent training, and differing credentialing standards into a uniform profession. The National Association of School Psychology was a major factor in this development. NASP developed program standards at a national level with the hopes that they would influence the individual states corresponding areas of standards due to the benefits of national recognition.

Chapter Three

SAMPLE

The sample for this study consisted of all states which have developed and published guidelines for the training programs of school psychologists at the sub-doctoral (specialist/master) level. The sample was comprised of all fifty states.

MEASURES

In order to ascertain the congruency between national and state level standards for training, it was necessary to obtain the published guidelines. The national level standards for training and field placement programs, developed by the National Association of School Psychologists, were obtained through the office of NASP. The state level standards for training and field placement programs of each of the fifty states were obtained through the mail. Phone calls to the appropriate state offices were made in order to acquire the necessary information. The researcher focused specifically on the national and state requirements developed for the sub-doctoral (specialist/master) level training programs. The standards at both national and state levels identify critical content and training experiences needed by students preparing for careers in school psychology.

In order to establish the percentages of nationally approved sub-doctoral

(specialist/master) level school psychology training programs within each state, both a listing of all current training programs as well as a current listing of nationally approved programs were obtained. A table of school psychology programs listed by state was acquired thorough the NASP's Best Practices in School Psychology III. A copy of the most recent nationally approved program list was obtained through the office of NASP.

DESIGN

A descriptive analysis of the national and state guidelines for sub-doctoral (specialist/master) level training programs was performed. The state guidelines were compared to the national guidelines in the areas of credit hours required as well as required internship experience. The total number of school psychology programs offered as well as the number which are currently NASP approved were calculated by state. The states were then placed into a rank order based on the percentage of school psychology programs offered which have attained NASP accreditation.

TESTABLE HYPOTHESIS

Null: The congruency between national and state requirements for school psychology training programs will have no significant effect on the percentage of school psychology training programs with NASP approval within each state.

Alternative: States whose requirements for school psychology training programs are more congruent with national requirements, will have a higher percentage of school psychology training programs with NASP approval.

ANALYSIS

A descriptive analysis of the guidelines developed by the states with the highest

percentage of NASP approved schools with the requirements developed by the states holding the lowest percentage of NASP approved schools was performed.

SUMMARY

The sample for this study consisted of each of the fifty states. Published guidelines for school psychology training programs at the sub-doctoral (specialist/master) level, at both the national and state levels were acquired. A current listing of all school psychology programs offered in the United States as well as those currently NASP approved was attained. The states were then rank ordered according to the percentage of schools offered with NASP approval. A descriptive analysis of the guidelines developed by the states with the highest approval rates with the guidelines of the states with the lowest approval rates was performed. A thorough account of the results will be provided in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Each of the fifty states have developed minimum requirements which must be met in order to become a credentialed school psychologist. Considerable variation exists among the content of state regulations. The basic requirements for state credentials are summarized in Table 4.1. This table includes the amount of graduate credit hours required as well as internship requirements by state. It is suggested that the reader review the notes appearing at the end of the table which serve to clarify the information in the table. In order to assess the congruency between national and state guidelines, the reader should keep in mind that NASP requires 60 graduate hours and a 1200 hour internship.

There are currently 44 states which offer programs to train school psychologists. Throughout these states there are a combined total of 223 programs. Out of these programs 107 are approved by NASP at the specialist level. Table 4.2 displays the total number of school psychology programs and the number of those programs with NASP approval by state. In table 4.3 the states are rank ordered according to the percentage of programs offered which have attained NASP approval. Table 4.3 is divided into half, displaying the states with the highest percentage of approved schools on the top, while the states with the lowest approval rate are located on the bottom.

> Hypothesis: States whose requirements for school psychology programs are more congruent with national requirements tend to have a higher percentage of school psychology training programs with NASP approval.

Table 4.1

Basic Credentialing Requirements By State

State	Credit Hours	Internship
Alabama	66	300 hours
Alaska~		1200 hours
Arizona	60	1000 hours
Arkansas	60	1200 hours
California	60	required
Colorado	60	1200 hours
Connecticut	60	1200 hours
Delaware	60	1200 hours
Florida	60	1200 hours
Georgia	60	1000 hours
Hawaii*		
Idaho	60	300 hours
Illinois	60	1200 hours
Indiana	60	1200 hours
Iowa	60	600 hours
Kansas~	60	1200 hours
Kentucky	60	1200 hours
Louisiana	60	1225 hours
Maine^	60	1200 hours
Maryland	60	1200 hours
Massachusetts	60	600 hours
Michigan	60	600 hours
Minnesota~	60	600 hours
Mississippi	60	6 semester hours
Missouri	60	1200 hours
Montana~	60	4 semester hours
Nebraska	60	1000 hours
Nevada	60	1000 hours
New Hampshire	60	1200 hours
New Jersey	60	450 hours
New Mexico	60	1200 hours
New York	60	required
North Carolina~>	60	
North Dakota~	60	350 hours
Ohio	60	9 months
Oklahoma	60	1000 hours
Oregon	60	9 weeks
Pennsylvania**		1000 hours
Rhode Island~	60	None
South Carolina~>	60	1200 hours
South Dakota~		None
Tennessee~	60	1 semester
Texas	60	1200 hours
Utah~	60	1200 hours
Vermont	60	1200 hours
Virginia	60	1200 hours
Washington~		240 hours
West Virginia~>		1200 hours
Wisconsin	48	600 hours
Wyoming	45	1200 hours

~ Indicates the credit hour requirement is the basis of completion of an approved program

> Indicates the internship requirement is the basis of completion of an approved program

* Indicates the requirement of a doctorate degree

^ Indicates the requirement of NASP certification

**Indicates the requirement of a bachelor's degree

Table 4.2
School Psychology Programs By State

State	Total Programs	NASP Approved Programs
AL.	4	1
AR.	1	1
AZ.	3	1
CA.	18	6
CO.	3	2
CT.	4	1
DE.	1	1
FL.	9	3
GA.	4	3
IA.	3	2
ID.	2	1
IL.	8	5
IN.	5	3
KS.	5	2
KY.	3	3
LA.	6	3
MA.	5	4
MD.	2	1
ME.	1	1
MI.	7	2
MN.	2	2
MO.	2	0
MS.	2	1
MT.	1	1
NC.	5	3
ND.	1	0
NE.	3	3
NJ.	7	1
NV.	1	0
NY.	19	6
OH.	12	8
OK.	2	0
OR.	2	1
PA.	16	3
RI.	3	1
SC.	3	2
SD.	1	0
TN.	9	3
TX.	14	4
UT.	3	1
VA.	5	4
WA.	6	1
WI.	9	5
WV.	1	1

States which do not have school psychology training programs include:
AK., HI., NH., NM., VT., WY.

Table 4.3

Percentage of Schools with NASP Approval By State

States withthe highest approval rate

100%	**80%**	**75%**	**67%**
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Georgia	Colorado
Delaware	Virginia		Iowa
Kentucky			Ohio
Maine			S. Caroline
Minnesota			
Montana			
Nebraska			
W. Virginia			
63%	**60%**	**56%**	**50%**
Illinois	Indiana	Wisconsin	Idaho
	N. Carolina		Louisiana
			Maryland

States with the lowest approval rate

			50%
			Mississippi
			Oregon
40%	**33%**	**32%**	**29%**
Kansas	Arizona	New York	Michigan
	California		Texas
	Florida		
	Rhode Island		
	Tennessee		
	Utah		
25%	**19%**	**17%**	**14%**
Alabama	Pennsylvania	Washington	New Jersey
Connecticut			
0%			
Missouri			
Nevada			
N. Dakota			
Oklahoma			
S. Dakota			

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Within the top 22 states, 10 meet NASP requirements of both 60 credit hours and a 1200 hour internship. One state requires that a school psychologist be NASP certified. This in itself ensures that any programs developed in that state will meet the national requirements. Four states requirements for credit hours are the basis of the completion of an approved program. Approved programs in 3 of those 4 states require 60 or more credit hours. This data indicates that 91%, a total of 20 of the top 22, states developed guidelines or approved programs which require 60 or more credit hours. Two states require a 1000 hour internship. Three of the states requirements for internships are a result of the completion of an approved program. Approved programs in 2 of those 3 states require an internship of 1200 hours. A total of 13 of the top 22 states regulations or approved programs require an internship of 1200 hours. Fifty five percent of the NASP accredited programs lie within the top 22 states.

Among the 22 states with the lower percentage of NASP approved programs, only 5 require both 60 credit hours and a 1200 hour internship. One state's credit hour requirements are nothing more than a bachelor's degree. Six states base their credit hours on the completion of an approved program. The approved programs in 4 of those 6 states require 60 or more credit hours. A total of 19 of the 22 states guidelines or approved programs require 60 credit hours of study. Only 6 of the lower 22 states require a 1200 hour internship. Sixteen of the 22 either do not require any internship or the hourly requirements are substantially less then NASP's. Forty five percent of the 107 NASP approved programs lie within the bottom 22 states.

After careful analysis of the data, the hypothesis must be accepted. States whose requirements for school psychology training programs are more congruent with national requirements tend to have a higher percentage of school psychology training programs

with NASP approval. This becomes evident when the guidelines of the 22 states with the highest percentage of NASP approved programs are compared against the guidelines of the 22 states with the lowest approval rate.

DISCUSSION

The guidelines developed by the top 22 states appear to be similar if not congruent with NASP's. This is likely to be the main factor in why the majority of school psychology training programs in those states have acquired national recognition. When a states regulations are close to the national criteria, schools may adjust their programs to meet NASP standards without a major reformation of the program. The ease at adopting NASP standards may be a motivational factor for all schools which are aware of the benefits. This is reflected in the fact that more than half of the 107 approved schools are found within the top 22 states.

Conversely, the regulations for school psychology training programs in the bottom 22 states are less congruent with NASP's. As a result, each of those states have a fewer number of nationally approved programs. When a state doesn't place professional standards on the training of school psychologists, it seems less likely that the schools will. The area in which the most discrepancy lies is in the amount of hours required for the internship. NASP places great importance on the experiential side of training. They believe that the internship is the culminating experience in school psychology graduate preparation.(NASP, 1994). As a result, the national standard is a minimum of 1200 hours. Seventy three percent of the lower 22 states do not meet this requirement. For the states which meet both the 60 credit hour and the 1200 hour internship standards but still have a low approval rate, the problem may lie in the courses that are being required. The focus may not be on the same areas that NASP deems essential.

SUMMARY

Overall, the data supports the proposed hypothesis. States whose requirements for school psychology programs are more congruent with national requirements tend to have a higher percentage of school psychology programs with NASP approval. The state seems to play a key role in the foundation of school psychology programs. When a state doesn't place professional standards on the training of school psychologists, it seems less likely that the schools will.

Chapter Five

SUMMARY

The basic role of the school psychologist when the field first emerged more than a century ago was to administer and interpret tests. As time passed, the services required of them grew tremendously. At the present time, a school psychologist may be expected to perform anything from assessment activities to research, depending on the needs of the district in which they are employed. The skills enabling the effective deliverance of the responsibilities required of them will be determined by the training they receive.

Each of the 50 states has developed training standards to ensure that school psychologists possess minimum qualifications. These standards have evolved independently providing for tremendous variation among preparation programs. The National Association of School Psychologists is currently striving to bring a new level of uniformity to the profession. NASP has adopted an integrated set of comprehensive training standards which promote consistency in the levels and content of training across professionals. These standards identify academic and experience requirements which would produce a full range of psychological services regardless of the state in which they were trained in. It is NASP's hope that each individual state education agency's standards will become consistent with those promulgated by the professional organization. This would result in training programs nationwide offering a quality

uniform training which would allow for reciprocity between the states.

It was hypothesized that states whose requirements for school psychology programs are more congruent with national requirements will have a higher percentage of school psychology programs with NASP approval. This hypothesis was supported by the data, suggesting the important role the state plays in the development of the profession.

CONCLUSIONS

As the school population increases both in number and in diversity, the school psychologist will be in greater demand. This demand will undoubtedly be reflected by an influx in school psychology preparation programs. The data indicate that the quality of the training programs will in part be determined by the guidelines of the state they are located within. In attaining one of their main goals, a quality uniform training, it would therefore seem essential that NASP promote the professional standards they have adopted to the individual state agencies responsible for program regulation. If the states require the national training standards, all programs within these states would be guaranteed to have acquired national accreditation. This means that the quality and content of the school psychology training programs would be consistent across all levels. This consistency would allow for valid assumptions to be made about a practitioner's training based on the degree obtained.

The average number of programs offered by each state is 4.5. There are 5 states however in which 10 or more school psychology programs exist. Out of those 5 states, 4 are located among the 22 with the lowest NASP approval rate. Together these 4 states offer 67 training programs, 30% of the existing total. Of those 67 programs 48, are not recognized by NASP. This in itself is bound to be a hindrance to the growth of the profession. There are a vast number of school psychologists being variously trained throughout these states. The regulations developed by 3 of these 4 states are not

congruent with the national standards.

In promoting their professional standards, it would therefore be suggested to NASP to focus their primary energies on working with the regulation agencies within these 3 states. If NASP could influence the state departments to adjust their guidelines to be more congruent to national standards, there would be an increased probability that a large number of the programs with in these states would become nationally accredited.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research in this area should focus on the role that program directors have in the number of nationally accredited training programs. It seems likely that the attitude held by the department head towards NASP standards will have an effect on whether that program will be nationally recognized. If the head of the department was trained by a NASP accredited program, is a member of NASP, or believes strongly in NASP's objectives, it would seem more likely than not that the school psychology program in that school would be developed in accordance with the national standards, thereby achieving national recognition regardless of state regulations.

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