Identifying tacit knowledge use among experienced school psychologists

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A Dissertation

entitled

Identifying Tacit Knowledge Use Among Experienced School Psychologists

by

Michalene Lozinski

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Psychology

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May 2012
Stimulated recall procedures are used to identify tacit knowledge use among experienced school psychologists as they navigate through a school-based problem-solving process. Once tacit knowledge is identified through stimulated recall, inferred capability statements are developed to account for skills the school psychologist is likely to employ in other problem-solving meetings. Employing this procedure allows insight regarding the procedural knowledge employed by experienced school psychologist during the consultation process.
For Ellison. You will always be my greatest accomplishment. However, I hope that this accomplishment serves as a reminder for you that you can attain any goal as long as you believe in yourself. I love you with all my heart!

For Aunt Marty and Uncle Bob: I will never forget the profound impact that you had on my life. I miss you every day and think of you often. Watching our beloved Blue Devils and Wolverines will never be the same.
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Table I. General characteristics describing each participant in the study including their identifying number, gender, and years of experience as a school psychologist. ........................................... 61
List of Abbreviations

FAPE........................Free, Appropriate Public Education
IAT..........................Intervention Assistance Team
IDEA ........................Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEP............................Individual Education Plan
IQ ..............................Intelligence Quotient
LRE ............................Least Restrictive Environment
MFE .............................Multi-Factored Evaluation
NASP  .........................National Association of School Psychologists
NCLB  ........................No Child Left Behind Act
P.L.94-142 .................Public Law 94-142
RTI  ............................Response to Intervention
SDE  ............................State Department of Education
Chapter One

Introduction

Tacit knowledge has been investigated in many professional fields including medicine, education, law, and sales (Sternberg & Horvath, 1999). Schön (1987) referred to this type of knowledge as “knowledge in action” and suggested that it, rather than the technical rationality of formal school knowledge, supports the elegant, artistic-like performance of the highly competent professional such as a doctor, teacher, lawyer, or salesman. The reason is that the types of “problems” practitioners are faced with in the “real world” are not problems at all but a series of “messy, indeterminate situations” (Schön, 1987, p. 4) that require much more than technical knowledge to solve. Polanyi (1966) defined tacit knowledge as what we know but cannot explain.

For example, a psychologist may be presented with a new patient that has a series of unexplained (not described in various trade books) issues or a reading teacher may be presented with a student that has a unique set of challenges that makes the acquisition of strategy use for reading comprehension very difficult. Both professionals are faced with the challenge of deciding “now what” in terms of how to proceed with treatment or intervention. As Schön (1987) states, “the case is not ‘in the book’” (p. 5). Therefore, in order to proceed, professionals will need to devise new ways of handling the unique problems set before them (Schön, 1987). This new way of “handling the case” will be a compilation of knowledge the professional has gained over many years of experience, through on-going introspection, and a need to become more proficient in the field. Ultimately the knowledge that will be needed is considered tacit knowledge.
Sternberg (1998) described tacit knowledge as having three major characteristics. They are as follows:

1. Tacit knowledge is procedural knowledge that directs behavior.
2. Tacit knowledge is practically useful in that it aides people in attaining goals that they value in real life situations.
3. Tacit knowledge is acquired without direct help from others.

While tacit knowledge is considered procedural, it is not “readily available for introspection” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 231). This type of knowledge is what professionals use to guide their fluid-like decision-making when faced with various circumstances. Tacit knowledge allows the professional to recognize certain conditions and execute a series of actions (Sternberg, 1998). The effective utilization of tacit knowledge is a necessary component for success in any field. While the utilization of tacit knowledge can be a “source of highly effective performance in the workplace . . . the efficacy of tacit knowledge depends on it being acquired and then being effectively used” (Sternberg, p. 236).

Sternberg, Wagner, Williams, and Horvath (1995) further discuss the acquisition of tacit knowledge in regard to the extent of “direct help” from others. Tacit knowledge is usually acquired on one’s own. It is knowledge that is unspoken, underemphasized, or poorly conveyed relative to its importance for practical success. Thus, tacit knowledge is acquired under conditions of minimal environmental support. Environmental support refers to either people or media that help the individual acquire knowledge. When people or media support the acquisition of knowledge, they facilitate three knowledge acquisition components: selective encoding, selective combination, and selective
comparison (Sternberg, 1985, 1988). That is, when an individual is helped to distinguish more from less important information, is helped to combine elements of knowledge in useful ways, and is helped to identify knowledge in memory that may be useful in the present, then the individual has been supported in acquiring new knowledge.

Scholars agree that in any field two different types of knowledge exist, knowledge that is able to be articulated and knowledge that cannot be articulated but appears to be based upon instinct and information regarding procedures (Patel, Arocha, & Kaufman, 1999). The latter knowledge being described is tacit and, while it often cannot be articulated, it is a major requirement in the ability to make necessary decisions that far exceed formal textbook knowledge. While the acquisition of tacit knowledge is not dependent on direct help from others, it does require certain circumstances in order to be effectively utilized.

Patel et al. (1999) suggest that in order for professionals to obtain tacit knowledge they must be immersed in real-world situations that require timely decision-making under dynamic circumstances involving many different and confounding facets. However, it is not merely experience that fosters the acquisition of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is most optimally acquired in environments that promote inquiry by gaining respect for others with opposing views (Minstrell, 1999). An individual must possess an innate interest in examination and in learning in that it is how one utilizes their experiences when acquiring knowledge from within the environmental context that encourages the development of tacit knowledge (Sternberg, 1999). Eraut (2000) suggests that “knowledge of contexts and organisations is often acquired through a process of
socialization through observation, induction, and increasing participation rather than formal inquiry” (p. 122).

As individuals become more experienced within a field they tend to compile a wealth of tacit knowledge that they can then use in other situations. Marchant and Robinson (1999) contend that when that happens, the most difficult aspect becomes knowing which tacit knowledge to utilize in a given situation. Being able to utilize the correct information (tacit knowledge) in a given situation is what makes the experience a success or failure (Spaeth, 1999). The successful use of tacit knowledge is often considered “highly pattern driven” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 234), suggesting that when presented with a particular arrangement of conditions, an individual will choose specific tacit knowledge to handle those conditions and enact a response (Patel et al., 1999).

School psychology is one of the fields in which the effective utilization of tacit knowledge is a must. While some school psychologists may work in private facilities, the majority of them work in public school settings assisting students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. A recent study indicated that the majority of school psychologists (77.5%) work in public school settings; in addition, 6.8% work in private schools, 6.3% in a university setting, 4.3% in private practice, 0.9% in hospitals and other mental health facilities, and 0.8% in state departments of education (Curtis, Grier, & Hunley, 2004). School psychologists work to find the most appropriate solutions for each student’s situation by employing different strategies to address individual student needs and to improve school and district-wide support systems (NASP, 2010). They work in collaboration with teachers, parents, related service staff (e.g., speech-language pathologists, reading intervention specialists, occupational therapists) to
find effective solutions for academic and behavioral concerns. This is accomplished by assisting others in understanding child development, strengthening working relationships among teachers, parents, and other community supports, identifying strategies that work for students and schools, and developing programs to allow for more effective learning to take place (NASP, 2010).

Collaboration among school staff and parents most often occurs in the form of a school-based intervention or problem-solving team. These teams have also been referred to as intervention assistance teams, student assistance teams, and building level assistance teams, to name a few. Regardless of the name, the expectation is the same: the team work together to find solutions for student problems. Whether the school-based team is ad hoc (membership varies depending on the referral source and problem) or standing (consistent membership), two key members of the team include the building school psychologist and the referring teacher (usually a general education teacher but could also be a reading specialist, intervention specialist, or art, music or physical education teacher).

The purpose of the school-based intervention team is to develop and maintain student progress within the general education setting by supporting the classroom teacher (Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996). To accomplish this purpose, consultation is employed. It is the method of school psychology service delivery in which problem-solving and selection and/or development of evidence-based interventions are discussed (White & Kratochwill, 2005). During consultation, school psychologists are viewed as consultants whereas teachers are viewed as consultees who then deliver services directly to students (Kratochwill, 2008).
A key component of consultation involves the relationship that exists among members of the team in which the consultant functions as the team facilitator while focusing on the collaborative problem-solving process (Kratochwill, 2008). While there are various models of consultation, the three most common being mental health, organizational development, and behavioral (Kratochwill, 2008; Zins, Kratochwill & Elliot, 1993), at the heart of all models is the problem-solving process. Problem-solving consultation is a process in which school psychologists deliver assessment, prevention, and intervention services to students via their teachers or parents through a progression of meetings (Kratochwill, 2008). During this process, the school psychologist’s role is to assist the team in defining the problem, analyzing the problem to determine why it may be presenting itself at this time, developing a structured plan for intervention, and implementing a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan once it is implemented (Kratochwill, 2008).

As the team engages in problem solving, the team member expected to match the academic or behavioral skill areas of the student with expected levels of achievement and intervention planning is the school psychologist (NASP, 2010). The school psychologist has received extensive training in the areas of child development, curriculum, effective instruction, learning styles, behavior, mental health, intervention, and student diversity and is expected to use that knowledge to guide the team in intervention implementation (NASP). This makes the school psychologist’s involvement in the consultation process very important. The school psychologist’s role on the team is to assimilate all the information shared by parents, teachers, and other team members, develop a hypothesis regarding why the student is experiencing difficulty, and provide appropriate intervention
ideas to improve student performance for the team to discuss and decide upon for implementation.

While school psychologists have a critical role on problem-solving teams, they continue to spend the majority of their time involved in assessment activities as opposed to consultation. However, school psychologists consistently report the preferred activity of the two is consultation. Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford, and Hall (2002) surveyed 400 school psychologists who reported that they spent about 46% of their time in assessment activities and only 16% of their time in consultation. Hosp and Reschly (2002) found consistent results in their study comparing the actual versus preferred role of school psychologists indicating that school psychologists spend 55% of their time involved in assessment and 23% of their time in consultation. However, they would prefer to spend less time in assessment (32%) and more time in consultation (33%) (Hosp & Reschly).

The most recognized setting for consultation is the problem-solving team meeting in which the teacher has requested assistance from a larger group. It is within this setting that a school psychologist will be expected to utilize not only formal “book knowledge” but also tacit knowledge that will guide the team to decision-making while considering various characteristics, concerns, and issues being discussed. That is, it is not just the knowledge of child development, curriculum expectations, or intervention design, but also how that information interacts within the context of the present consultation meeting.

While problem-solving teams have been utilized in school settings since the early 1990s, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 placed great emphasis on effective
intervention planning for students with consistent academic problems, especially for those students whose poor academic performance resulted in below proficient scores on state and federally mandated achievement assessments (McNamara, Rasheed, & Delamatre, 2008). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) set the groundwork for the development and implementation of a data-driven system to establish, implement, and evaluate interventions that differ in intensity depending upon student need. When the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act was reauthorized in 2004, it incorporated similar language and principles from NCLB supporting the need for early intervention prior to the identification of a student for special education services. Both pieces of legislation shifted federal attention from the process of service delivery to the outcome of intervention programs for students (Reschly & Bergstrom, 2009). Further, they challenged school districts to change their practices from “wait to fail” to early intervention regardless of whether special education assessment or placement becomes part of the discussion for a student’s continued under-achievement. This system has become known as Response to Intervention (RTI).

RTI is a framework for providing research-based intervention to all students based on data, monitoring response to the intervention, and modifying the intervention based on the data (e.g., providing a more or less-intense intervention). RTI demands the involvement of school psychologists because it requires using the very knowledge and skills school psychologists possess. The RTI process forces problem-solving teams to focus on those conditions that can be changed in the educational environment to improve student outcomes, not fixed environmental situations or student traits and conditions (Reschly & Bergstrom, 2009). This priority only exacerbates the need for school
psychologists to effectively integrate all types of information in order to make decisions that will have a positive impact for students.

The interaction of both formal knowledge and tacit knowledge that a school psychologist considers during a consultation meeting is very similar to the interaction between content knowledge (understanding of curriculum areas, concepts, relationships) and pedagogical knowledge (knowledge about motivation methods, classroom management, assessment, personal knowledge about students and families, etc.) that a teacher considers daily when making classroom decisions (Berliner, 1991). Shulman (1987) refers to the integration of content knowledge and pedagogy as pedagogical content knowledge. Further, just as “pedagogy and content are linked, and to separate them is to miss something about the intimacy of that relationship” (Berliner, 1991, p. 147), so too is the link between formal knowledge and tacit knowledge that a school psychologist uses at consultation team meetings. While formal knowledge provides a framework of information, tacit knowledge allows for the quick, on-the-spot, fluid-like decision-making necessary to arrive at solutions for individual student concerns, just as a teacher will alter the course of a lesson or adjust the schedule to optimize student engagement. It is the employment of this type of knowledge that allows the school psychologist to make necessary comments, questions, notations, and recommendations during a team meeting.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the utilization of tacit knowledge among experienced school psychologists. In that the role of the school psychologist is heavily dependent upon the ability to assist with choosing appropriate intervention strategies in an effort to support at-risk learners as per federal guidelines, it is imperative
that they are able to efficiently problem-solve through individual case needs. The ability to utilize “knowledge-in-action” as described by Schön (1987) takes on increased importance for today’s school psychologist. That is, to what extent do experienced school psychologists employ tacit knowledge during consultation meetings? Further, are school psychologists aware of various aspects of their tacit knowledge? Finally, what do school psychologists believe are the teaching/learning implications of their tacit knowledge?
Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter will describe tacit knowledge more specifically as well as highlight various research endeavors regarding the study of tacit knowledge within different domains, such as leadership, management, medicine, and education. Additionally, the concepts of wisdom (which some contend is another form of tacit knowledge), practical intelligence, and g-factor will be discussed as they relate to tacit knowledge and the ability to effectively utilize tacit knowledge. In studying tacit knowledge it is also important to address the concept of expertise as it relates to the development of tacit knowledge. Further, this chapter will illustrate different methods of studying expertise for the purposes of making tacit knowledge that is utilized in various situations explicit. Finally, this chapter will highlight the field of school psychology as well as the role of the school psychologist in the consultation process and the need to study tacit knowledge within the field.

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is the knowledge that guides our behavior and assists people in attaining goals. Furthermore, possessing this type of knowledge is a necessity if one wants to experience success, regardless of the field of study (Marchant & Robinson, 1999). However, one of the difficulties in studying tacit knowledge is the inability of experienced professionals to articulate what they are doing or why they are doing it. As Wagner, Sujan, Sujan, Rashotte, and Sternberg (1999) suggest, this type of knowledge is the proverbial “rule of thumb” (p. 170) as it tends to shape what we do under given...
circumstances. There are a number of reasons why this type of knowledge is difficult to codify. First, the more automatic the response, the more difficult it becomes to determine what type of information is being used. Also, while formal knowledge tends to be “well-structured” and easy to describe, tacit knowledge tends to be ill-structured, making it much more difficult to articulate, albeit codify (Dunn, Taylor, & Kleshinski, 2011; Dunn, Taylor & Shriner, 2001; Dunn & Shriner, 1999). While tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate, researchers agree that a person must possess it in order to demonstrate competence in any field of study.

While the focus of this study is investigating the significance of tacit knowledge within a profession, it is important to understand that within any field, two types of knowledge exist, explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988; Ericsson & Smith, 1991) consists of the knowledge of concepts within the field. This type of knowledge is easy to verbalize (made explicit) in that it primarily consists of the information obtained through book learning and course work. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is the knowledge of “how to do things” (Patel et al., 1999, p. 76). Tacit knowledge is acquired through experience in real world situations and difficult to articulate because its utilization is often considered a routine response of how to act or react in a given situation. Tacit knowledge is referred to as implicit knowledge due to the difficulty in articulating why certain actions were taken in various situations. While explicit or declarative knowledge (Anderson, 1983) is the knowledge of “that” within the field, tacit knowledge is the “marriage” of both formal knowledge and implicit knowledge which is required to make fluid-like decisions when faced with new on-the-job experiences and situations.
Polanyi (1966) suggests that the reason it is so difficult to articulate tacit knowledge is because it is so ingrained into everyday social life. Further, he contends that the knowledge of doing can never fully be articulated because people always know more than they can tell or explain (Polanyi, 1966). While tacit knowing develops by way of the interaction of formal knowledge and experiences over time and is continually exhibited in the repeated engagement of an activity (e.g., sales, teaching, diagnosing a medical condition), Polanyi (1966) suggests that it can never be completely verbalized because tacit knowledge becomes a reality or way of being, not a conceptual framework that is easily explained.

Research Exploring Tacit Knowledge

As suggested earlier, tacit knowledge has been studied in many fields including sales, medicine, teaching, and law to name a few. For example, Horvath, Forsythe, Bullis, Sweeney, Williams, McNally, Wattendorf, and Sternberg (1999) conducted a study in which they explored the utilization of tacit knowledge among various levels of military leaders within the Army. Eighty-one Army officers were interviewed in which they were asked to describe an experience in which they learned something about leadership while on the job. It is important to note that the interviewers explained that they were interested in a specific example involving informal knowledge at work as opposed to the formal knowledge they may have read or learned about either in an Army manual (such as Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership, Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1990) or in a class.
The 81 officers interviewed possessed various years of experience in the area of leadership: platoon level leaders held between one to three years of experience; company level leaders had experience as platoon leaders plus additional coursework and had considerably more power (Horvath et al., 1999, p. 49); and battalion level leaders had between 16 to 20 years of experience as military officers and held a great deal of power in an indirect manner as they often had between 500 to 700 hundred soldiers under their command but due to size of the group, did not have daily, individual interaction. After each interview, the researchers documented the information obtained in a written summary containing the different stories and lessons learned by each participant. Two members of the research team independently read each story identifying the information shared as tacit based upon criteria noted by the research team. After reading each story and rating it independent of each other, the two researchers then “coded” each event with an antecedent event, a subsequent action, and an explanation statement (Horvath et al., 1999). The codifying experience resulted in 174 items that illustrated the tacit knowledge identified by all 81 participants.

Regardless of the level of command, the research findings indicated that tacit knowledge existed as it was “embedded in the stories that leaders tell about their experiences” (Horvath et al., 1999, p. 47). However, the tacit knowledge that was shared was indicative of the level of command and was developed as a result of the experiences had at that particular level. That is, battalion level leaders had developed “knowledge-in-action” to handle the indirect type of leadership required to manage 500 to 700 soldiers with various levels of rank, as opposed to a platoon level leader who is primarily responsible for managing 25 to 45 soldiers through direct contact on a daily basis.
As a result of this study, Horvath et al. (1999) constructed a content validation study by using the 174 items of tacit knowledge and formatted the “Tacit Knowledge Survey” (TKS), in which all of the items were reformatted into brief statements and a measurement scale was developed for each item. The list of rewritten items was then divided into three different levels (battalion, company, and platoon) in order to construct three forms of the TKS. The participants were asked to respond to survey items in which they rated various leadership situations describing instances of tacit knowledge (Horvath et al., 1999). This would then allow the researchers to construct an instrument to assess tacit knowledge.

The results of their work did confirm the construct of tacit knowledge within the field of military leadership as a privileged form of job knowledge (Horvath et al., 1999). However, their findings also suggested that the items developed for the survey, as well as their efforts to interview military leaders asking them to tell what they had learned from their experience as a company commander, were not as meaningful or intense as the experiences shared during the original interviews. In turn, being able to answer an item on a survey or answer a question about what was learned from experience is not an indicator for effective, in this case, military leadership. Therefore, the researchers shifted their attention back to actual workplace settings that provided authentic and robust experiences in the development of tacit knowledge.

Another field of study in which tacit knowledge was investigated is in the area of management; specifically, what accounts for levels of managerial success. The “model of managerial tacit knowledge” (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987) is a framework for understanding the content, context, and orientation of tacit knowledge as it relates to the
field of management. Tacit orientation refers to the differences between idealistic versus pragmatic. Idealistic orientation describes the idea of knowing when to implement the ideal versus practical solution to a problem, even if the ideal takes more time or requires more planning. Conversely, pragmatic orientation requires the manager to determine how feasible an idea is regardless of the ideal solution or outcome. Reprimanding a subordinate for arriving late to a meeting in private after the conclusion of the meeting instead of in front of the entire group is an example of idealistic orientation whereas deciding to work through lunch to complete a task knowing that you are falling short on time is an example of pragmatic orientation.

Wagner and Sternberg (1987) also distinguished between two different contexts of tacit knowledge within the field of management. First, local tacit knowledge refers to a circumstance in which the goal is a short-term accomplishment. In the area of management, a circumstance in which managers are involved in a situation that requires the delegation of a task because results are needed quickly and they do not have time to address the issue themselves is an example of local tacit knowledge. Global tacit knowledge, on the other hand, explains the circumstance in which a long-term accomplishment or broader outlook is the focus. Again, in the area of management, circumstances in which new employees will be given a task that they are not quite “ready” for and will require a great deal of support is an example of global tacit knowledge in that the long-term benefit of that employee being able to handle that task in the future exceeds the immediate reaction to do the task themselves. Both forms of tacit knowledge are crucial in that knowing what to do is necessary, but knowing how to focus
on the local and global issues, in any field or situation, is paramount to continued growth and success.

Wagner and Sternberg (1987) explain three different forms of content within their managerial model of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge about managing oneself, managing others, and managing tasks are three distinctions that are apparent for success within the field of management. Managing one’s self while utilizing tacit knowledge is a person’s ability to self-motivate and organize to overcome the struggle of procrastination (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987, p. 302) to begin or complete a managerial task. Managing others involves the ability to manage others and interact accordingly (with both superiors and subordinates) to accomplish two important components of managerial success: 1) increase work efficiency and 2) maintain job satisfaction among subordinates. Finally, tacit knowledge of managing tasks is the ability to complete specific tasks correctly and effectively.

In an effort to explore tacit knowledge among managers, Wagner and Sternberg (1986) began developing the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers utilizing work-related experiences shared by experienced managers as well as their model of managerial tacit knowledge. A series of work-related scenarios were constructed including a set of responses with alternative outcomes or choices. Following is an example:

You have just been promoted to head of important department in the company. The previous head has been transferred to an equivalent position in a less important department. Your understanding for the move is that the performance of the department as a whole was
mediocre. There were not any glaring deficiencies, just a perception of the department as so-so rather than as very good. Your charge is to shape up the department. Results are expected quickly. Rate the quality of the following strategies for succeeding your new position.

__ a. Give your superiors frequent progress reports.

__ b. Avoid making major changes until you have had time to examine the situation for yourself.

__ c. Be severely critical of the first instance of mediocre work you come across to set an example for others (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987, p. 305).

Having developed an instrument for measuring tacit knowledge, Wagner and Sternberg (1987) then conducted a series of studies regarding tacit knowledge and managerial success. The results of the first study indicated that performance on the inventory was able to differentiate individuals based upon the amount of managerial experience they possessed, and that performance was related to the standard of managerial success but not associated with IQ.

The second study (Wagner & Sternberg, 1986) compared bank managers’ performance appraisals in the areas of personnel management, generating new business, following bank procedures, and merit salary increases with their performance on the tacit knowledge inventory. The researchers concluded that a moderately strong relationship existed between performance appraisals and tacit knowledge.
In the third study, three different groups of managers were represented with varying amounts of managerial experience: a business group included managers from both Fortune 500 companies and non-Fortune 500 companies, a business graduate student group included graduate students from seven business schools, and an undergraduate group included sixty Yale undergraduates. The participants completed a revised tacit knowledge inventory in which performance was “scored by comparing an individual’s response to a prototype derived from the averaged responses of an expert group” (Wagner & Sternberg, 1986, p. 309). The researchers determined that differences in tacit knowledge existed based upon the level of experience the participant possessed. That is, the business professional scored better than the graduate student; the graduate student scored better than the undergraduate student.

Dunn, Taylor, and Lipsky (1996) studied tacit knowledge among physicians to determine if physicians were aware of the tacit knowledge they employed when diagnosing a patient. In this study, physicians were videotaped conducting a preliminary examination of a standardized patient whose presenting concern was chest pain discomfort. Upon completing the evaluation, the physicians then participated in a stimulated recall session at which time the researchers would stop the videotape every two minutes and ask “what were you thinking about at this moment?” in an effort to capture the knowledge the physicians used to navigate through gathering medical history and arriving at a diagnosis for a patient. Results of this study indicated that experienced physicians were able to stay focused throughout the examination on patient comments that related directly to the presenting problem and were able to assist the patient in staying focused on the presenting problem throughout the examination. In addition, they
were able to gather important information under time constraints, were able to keep track of the information provided without taking notes, and were able to judge the reliability of what patients reported.

The results of the Dunn et al. (1996) study indicated that experienced physicians engaged in the process of “forward reasoning” (the ability to work “forward” from the information provided toward a solution), which is able to occur because the physician possessed tacit knowledge that could be employed during the relatively common examination. Forward reasoning only occurs because a person possesses a highly structured knowledge base that is easily employed allowing problem-solving to be efficient and effective (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Most important, the results of this study suggested that the participating physicians were unable to articulate the benefits of using their tacit knowledge with their students in a “teaching” capacity. They simply did not have much to say about the possible teachable moments that could come from focusing on tacit knowledge during patient intake.

Another area in which tacit knowledge has been studied within the field of medicine was surrounding the issues of time and the time constraints faced by today’s physicians. Kleshinski, Dunn, and Kleshinski (2010) conducted a study in which five physicians (each with more than 10 years of experience) were observed three times in their respective medical offices and interviewed twice to determine how their utilization of tacit knowledge assisted in the time constraints surrounding the time they have for patient examinations. The first interview (based upon observed events that may have had time implications) consisted of stimulated recall in which the researcher asked, “What were you thinking at that time?” The second interview consisted of general questions
surrounding the issues of time that the physicians faced including how they manage those
time issues, what time management strategies they use, and how they developed those
strategies (Kleshinski et al., 2010).

The results of this study suggested that experienced physicians utilized both tacit
knowledge and explicit strategies to assist them in handling the time constraints they are
faced with on a daily basis. Kleshinski et al. (2010) identified the tacit knowledge used
by the physicians including the ability of the physicians to multi-task, prioritize, plan
ahead, and minimize interruptions. In addition, these physicians demonstrated self-
efficacy regarding their ability to work with patients. Conversely, explicit strategies
identified during this research included (but not limited to) the use of purposeful
scheduling, use of medical staff (medical assistant, nurse, etc.), use of color coded filing
systems, use of standardized forms, and punctuality (Kleshinski et al., 2010). Further,
this research also identified a tacit capability statement, an inferred prerequisite
knowledge developed, and related advice strategies surrounding the issue of time
management for physicians.

Within the field of education, Dunn and Lozinski (2005) examined tacit
knowledge among experienced teachers specifically in the area of classroom
management. Thirty-four teachers were interviewed and five questions were asked of
each teacher. Question #1, “Tell me about a situation regarding classroom management
or classroom discipline that you feel you handled very well.” was identified as the most
important because it was most likely to include elements of tacit knowledge. In that tacit
knowledge is procedural and will have condition-action components, the researchers
determined question #1 would most likely elicit condition-action sequences of successful classroom management.

An example identified during this study (Dunn & Lozinski, 2005) indicated that a teacher was able to intervene in a situation in which two students became upset in the classroom and one threw a chair. The teacher took the students into the hallway, mediated the conflict by asking “open-ended” questions, and remained neutral as the students hashed out their differences. In this particular instance, the teacher assigned a consequence to the behavior (i.e., detention for both students). The tacit knowledge used included the ability of the teacher to mediate a dispute between the students (without taking sides) in a relatively short amount of time and without the need for additional building level support (principal, guidance counselor, school psychologist).

Another example described in the study conducted by Dunn and Lozinski (2005) included the ability of a teacher to anticipate a problem before it occurred and intervene in a discrete manner. The teacher described a situation in which she was watching her students line up at the door and noticed a male student who “was about to goose” a female student in front of him. The teacher looked right at him and said, “I am not going to see you do that,” and he immediately put his hand down and did not touch the student (Dunn & Lozinski). In this example, tacit knowledge was likely employed when the teacher classified the situation as one in which she would take care of the impending problem with a quick and efficient verbal prompt paired with eye contact.

The results of this study (Dunn & Lozinski, 2005) indicated that teachers do possess tacit knowledge and utilize it accordingly when managing their classrooms or
handling specific instances of behavior. When asked, “How did you learn to do that?” most of the 34 teachers identified experience (as opposed to formal instruction) as the method that enabled them to successfully manage a potentially difficult situation in their classroom. This research highlighted many of the tenets of tacit knowledge including it is procedural and is acquired through authentic experiences.

The aforementioned research described how tacit knowledge has been studied among various professional fields as well as illustrated the existence of tacit knowledge. Further, the research also highlighted the significance of the effective utilization of tacit knowledge within the fields of leadership, management, medicine and teaching. However, is knowing “how to” successfully negotiate through a series of work related experiences (albeit positive or negative) simply the ability to use tacit knowledge well or is there more to the discussion?

**Intelligence**

Intelligence has been described in many different ways. Gardner (1983) describes intelligence and suggests that it must entail a set of skills of problem-solving--enabling the individual to resolve genuine problems or difficulties that he or she encounters, and, when appropriate, to create an effect product and must also entail the potential for finding or creating problems--thereby laying the groundwork for the acquisition of new knowledge (p. 60-61).

Wechsler (1958) defined intelligence as “the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally and to deal effectively with his [or her]
Regardless of an agreed-upon global definition of intelligence, each of them emphasize that individuals must possess the ability to adapt to their environment, learn new information, and perform abstract thinking using visual symbols and verbal concepts to problem-solve. Therefore, it is important to address the issue of intelligence as it relates to the acquisition and utilization of tacit knowledge.

The triarchic theory, as developed by Sternberg (1985), attempts to describe the relationship between individuals and their internal worlds, external worlds, and their ability to mediate between both of them. This particular theory of intelligence makes an effort to realize intelligence based upon the successful utilization of the workings of information processing to an individual’s life experiences. This interaction allows the individual to adapt to existing environments, select new environments, and alter existing environments into new ones (Sternberg, Wagner, & Okagi, 1993). Accordingly, the triarchic theory describes the cognitive aspect (componential subtheory) as the basic unit of intelligence. However, the interaction between the componential area and the context of everyday life (contextual subtheory) is most relevant to the understanding of intelligence.

Sternberg (1985) describes various examples of what this interaction, or lack thereof, would look like in the real world. Imagine (a) a person who scores very well on a standardized IQ test but is unable to handle a new set of circumstances well or (b) a person who is very perceptive and able to manage new circumstances quite well but is not very intelligent, as measured by a standard IQ test. How are these two people perceived by their peers? Person A may be perceived as very knowledgeable but not creative while Person B may be perceived as creative but not very bright. Furthermore,
imagine Person C who is both very knowledgeable and creative but does little to assimilate to his or her environment. Person C may be considered stand-offish or hard to work with. Accordingly, “the point to be made, then, is that intelligence is not a single thing” (Sternberg, 1985, p. 327). Intelligence, according to Sternberg (1985), is a combination of many different abilities as well as the ability to successfully interact with and assimilate to new and existing environments.

Tacit knowledge is paramount within the triarchic theory because it is the procedural knowledge that directs an individual’s behavior and it is practically useful in that it aids people in attaining goals that they value in real-life situations. Accordingly, Sternberg, Wagner, and Okagi (1993) suggest “it is the knowledge base that enables us to face the everyday world” (p. 207). The triarchic theory is the framework on which the idea of practical intelligence is supported. Sternberg (1998) described practical intelligence as the ability to function successfully in real-world situations that is consistent with a person’s goals.

Why is tacit knowledge a key factor in practical intelligence where a person is expected to apply information-processing components to everyday experiences in order to adapt to, shape, or select a new environment? Further, why is tacit knowledge not as important when solving academic problems as opposed to solving practical problems? First, tacit knowledge is vital in solving problems or handling situations that are directly linked with different environments because different environmental situations require different types of responses (Sternberg, 1998). That is, how a person responds to a minor problem among same level peers at work may be very different from how that same
person responds to a significant “problem” at work among superiors. Knowing that each situation requires a different response is vital to the person’s success on the job.

Sternberg (1998), when comparing academic and practical problems, emphasizes that academic problems are most often designed by others, are not considered very interesting to the person “solving” them, require minimal information or extension of knowledge because all the necessary information is right there, are not connected to the “solvers’” experiences, are very defined by what the person asking the question wants to know, have one correct response, and usually only require one means of obtaining an answer. On the other hand, practical problems are most often not formulated ahead of time; they occur on the spot and in the moment, are interesting to the person who is expected to solve it, do not have all the needed information readily available to reach a solution, are related to daily experiences, are not easily defined or prescribed, have many appropriate solutions, and usually have many different ways to choose a solution to the problem (Sternberg, 1998; Sternberg et al., 1995; Neisser, 1976). Therefore, the procedural knowledge that guides a person’s behavior in order to attain goals is a key factor in applying practical intelligence to everyday occurrences.

As important as tacit knowledge is to the study of practical intelligence so too is the concept of wisdom. Sternberg (1998) describes the balance theory of wisdom as the “interaction between a person and his or her context. . .” (p. 353) wherein the success of the interaction is based upon a person’s ability to balance the wisdom they possess and the situation in which they are functioning. Sternberg (1998) defined wisdom as
the application of tacit knowledge as mediated by values toward the goal of achieving a common good (a) through a balance among multiple intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests and (b) in order to achieve a balance among responses to environmental contexts: adaptations to existing environmental contexts, shaping of existing environmental contexts, and selection of new environmental contexts (p. 353).

Therefore, wisdom is tacit knowledge that guides a person’s behavior in difficult or unusual circumstances which allows the person to continue to achieve the goals believed to be important, not only as an individual, but for the good of other members as well. Just like tacit knowledge, wisdom is also acquired through experience and does not require direct assistance from others to attain.

However, Sternberg (1998) makes the distinction that while wisdom is related to the concept of practical intelligence because it requires individuals to make decisions based upon their needs, others, and environmental circumstances, it is simply a part of the tacit knowledge needed in practical intelligence. The application of practical intelligence usually focuses on the result of the decision for the individual, regardless of any other circumstance. Wisdom, on the other hand, is employed when individuals are not just focused on their own concerns, but the balance between their self-interest, the interests of other people, and the influences of the environment (e.g., work, family, city, etc.); albeit the balance between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal dynamics all holding significance within the decision needed to be made. Undoubtedly, tacit knowledge is
embedded in both the theory of practical intelligence and the theory of wisdom however other theorists attempt to explain a person’s ability to function within the day-to-day experiences of their life (work, family, society at large).

Spearman (1927) created the theory of the “g-Factor” to account for general mental ability or intelligence. Spearman considered “g” to represent general mental energy required to solve problems involving deductive skills or reasoning (Sattler, 2001). This theory of intelligence includes a person’s ability to determine relationships between two or more concepts as well as the ability to find additional concepts associated with a previously stated one (Sattler). In contrast to practical intelligence which again, is the efficient utilization of tacit knowledge, general intelligence is not considered to be acquired knowledge (whether from formal or experiential learning). Instead, g-Factor is a person’s ability, when faced with a new task or situation, to quickly and accurately process newly presented information, remain attentive to the task, and manipulate information efficiently through working memory. According to Jensen (1979), Spearman’s “g-Factor” represents the “inventive” and “reproductive” aspects of a person’s overall mental intelligence.

The similarities between both the theory of practical intelligence and the “g-Factor” of intelligence rely on the tenets of the information-processing model. That is, the more successful people are in efficiently and accurately “sizing up” a new problem, the more efficient they are in arriving at a decision or response. The researchers that subscribe to the tenets of practical intelligence would indicate that the knowledge at work is tacit knowledge or “knowledge in action” (Schön, 1987) and experience enables a person to become more efficient over time in handling similar types of scenarios. The
researchers that subscribe to the tenets of g-Factor would argue that a person’s ability to (simultaneously) quickly process information, attend to a task, plan according to a goal, and accurately utilize working memory enables an experience to be deemed successful.

Raymond Cattell (1963), a student of Spearman’s, further enhanced the understanding of “g-Factor” by introducing the concepts of crystallized versus fluid intelligence. According to Cattell (1963), crystallized abilities are abilities that have become crystallized due to a prior learning experience. $G_c$ (g-crystallized) is dependent upon a person’s ability to draw on prior knowledge or information stored in long-term memory that is the result of a previous learning opportunity. Conversely, $G_f$ (g-fluid) is how a person goes about solving a new learning experience that is not dependent on a previously acquired skill. $G_f$ is also related to how quickly a person arrives at a solution to a novel task (Jensen, 2002). Fluid and crystallized intelligence “emerge as group factors . . . just below g” (Jensen, 2002, p. 46) wherein fluid intelligence can be measured by nonverbal/performance subtests and crystallized intelligence can be measured by verbal subtests of a given intelligence test. Specifically, a short-term memory task (e.g. digit span on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 4th Edition) could give an indication of $G_f$ whereas a vocabulary task (e.g. vocabulary on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 4th Edition) could provide insight into $G_c$ of the child.

Age and experience factor into the discussion of $G_c$ and $G_f$ for two reasons. First, the older a person gets, the more robust $G_c$ becomes. Undoubtedly, the more exposure and experience a person has, the larger the capacity of $G_c$. However, as people age $G_f$ is impacted in that they may not be as apt to quickly and accurately solve novel problems or acquire new information. Cattell (1971) described the concept of investment theory by
indicating that the more a person invests $Gf$ to gain new knowledge and skills, the greater $Gc$ becomes; thus, people that innately possess higher $Gf$ attain a higher level of $Gc$ (Jensen, 2002, p. 47).

With regard to the utilization of conventional ability assessments (e.g. IQ tests) to measure the acquisition of tacit knowledge, Sternberg, Forsythe, Hedlund, Horvath, Wagner, Williams, Snook, and Grigorenko (2000) contend that they are not able to predict such acquisition. Sternberg et al. (2000) indicate that “instruments such as IQ tests and similar tests, which are intended to measure so-called general intelligence (g), are composed of problems that are characterized as largely academic or abstract” (p. 111). As discussed earlier, academic problems are well-defined and do not reflect real-world situations that would require tacit knowledge. Subsequently, Sternberg et al. (2000) contend that IQ tests measure general problem-solving skills which are unlike those needed to solve everyday practical problems one may encounter in an authentic workplace environment.

Further, Wagner and Sternberg (1987) illustrated the point of views of informants who agreed that IQ tests (and other types of ability measures) are not reliable predictors of managerial success. Their interviews with highly successful managers highlighted the idea that high IQ scores do not ensure positive managerial success in that some highly intelligent (based upon an IQ score) managers only experience moderate success within their field. Part of the reason for this includes the discussion that some managers with high IQs tend to be less patient with their peers and superiors as well as tend to rely on their analytical skills while resisting or disregarding advice from others (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987).
Regardless of which theory (practical intelligence or g-Factor) is “correct” and that it may be difficult to measure tacit knowledge with conventional IQ tests, it is vital to understand that a series of automatic, fluid-like responses is occurring that allows for artistic-like performance in given circumstances. Further, those responses are very difficult if not impossible to articulate or make explicit. Tacit knowledge allows a person to act or react in a given situation that may not be easily explained. G-factor is what guides behavior regardless of outside influences or distractions that may not be easily articulated, even when asked the question “how did you know to do that?” Fluid and Crystallized intelligence further highlight the notion that with experience comes a more robust skill set that allows for fluid-like decision-making in similar situations.

**Expertise**

While the focus of this research is not centered around the concept of expertise or the development of expertise among school psychologists, a general discussion of expertise is necessary as it relates to the study of tacit knowledge. This section will define expertise, describe how it is generally studied, and how it is developed. Further, this section will explain how expertise is related to tacit knowledge, specifically when comparing the performances of novices versus experts within a particular field.

Expert performance, similar to tacit knowledge, has been studied in many fields including medicine, teaching, and sports. In the briefest definition of an expert, it is a person who far exceeds competency in any given field (Sternberg, 1996). However, what sets the expert apart, from either a novice or experienced colleague, is the ability to quickly create an efficient course of action given a certain circumstance (Patel et al.,
Within any field, a practitioner needs to have a sound understanding of formal knowledge as well as tacit knowledge in order to respond to given circumstances. In the area of medicine, Patel et al. discussed the importance of domain-specific knowledge that comes from formal training opportunities and also the practical clinical knowledge that is learned from experiences in various clinic settings such as hospitals, clinics, etc. This distinction holds true in other professional settings as well (i.e., teaching, law, sales, etc.) in that two knowledge-bases (formal and tacit) are put to work when faced with a new set of circumstances.

Some of the original work of expertise began in the area of chess by deGroot (1946; 1978) and over the course of many years began appearing in what is considered “ill-structured” (Dunn & Shriner, 1999, p. 633) domains of study including medicine (Patel et al., 1999). Further studies of expertise are highlighted in the edited works of Ericsson (2009), Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, and Hoffman (2006), and Ericsson and Smith (1991). It is significant to note the differences between a well-structured domain and an ill-structured domain with regard to the distinction of expert performance. Well-structured domains of study are those in which improvement is relatively easy to recognize and assess by comparison to a formal performance or standard (Dunn & Shriner, 1999). Further, a person can participate in practice activities that are easily recognizable and observable. An example of practice in a well-structured domain would be in the area of golf. A professional golfer participates in practice opportunity after practice opportunity to perfect his golf swing off the tee (driving the ball to the fairway). His performance, both during practice opportunities and actual play, is easily observable,
comparable to his prior performances as well as to a standard example of “good” golf performance.

On the other hand, a doctor who completes his first examination of a patient does not get an immediate do-over. While he may see that patient again for similar symptoms, it may be a few days, weeks, or months before he sees that series of problems again. While he will also have opportunities to practice and get more efficient in handling inordinate amounts of information, they will not always be as easily observable, measurable, and consistent as the activities of the professional golfer as described above. However, both the golfer and the doctor may develop expertise in their respective areas; one in a well-structured domain that is relatively easier to study, the other in an ill-structured domain which is more difficult to observe and “study” (Dunn & Shriner, 1999).

In highlighting the research and edited volumes above, the significance of the work lies in the characteristics that have been identified as continually demonstrated among experts, regardless of the domain. Specifically, experts are able to:

1. perceive extensive patterns of pertinent information,
2. quickly process necessary information while utilizing the necessary skills to solve the problem,
3. utilize knowledge within their long- and short-term memories relative to their domain,
4. understand the problem at a complex level without having to spend considerable time searching for underlying causes and,
5. expend time evaluating the presenting problem rather than expending time solving it. (Patel et al., 1999).

Among much of the research surrounding the nature of expertise, issues regarding the differences between novice and expert performance have also been studied. Two fundamental occurrences continue to emerge among experts including the issue of enhanced recall and forward reasoning. Enhanced recall was described early as pattern recognition. Patel and Groen (1991) indicate that “experts have superior memory skills in recognizing patterns in their domain of expertise” (p. 93). However, not only do experts possess more extensive information that allows them to distinguish a pattern, they are better able to access it efficiently (Jeffries, Turner, Polson, & Atwood, 1981). Chi et al. (1988) also highlighted this characteristic in their research suggesting that experts are more adept at considering and processing large amounts of information because the mental organization structure they possess allows pattern recognition to occur efficiently.

Forward reasoning is the ability of experts to solve problems while working “forward” from the information provided toward a solution. Patel et al. (1999) suggest that forward reasoning is “characterized by drawing inferences from available data (i.e., a patient’s symptoms) and sequentially moving toward the solution of a problem” (p. 82). Forward reasoning occurs during the interaction or exchange of information between, for example a doctor and patient, without the need to consult the patient’s file or order more tests before arriving at a decision-point. The ability to employ this strategy effectively is strengthened the more a person engages in the activity. The more experience a person has the better able they are to forward reason due to recognizing similar patterns or situations based upon a well-organized knowledge base.
In contrast to forward reasoning, backward reasoning is a process of developing a hypothesis (unknown explanation) first and then working back to the symptoms identified by the patient (Patel & Groen, 1991). The major differences between the two types of reasoning lie in the amount of time that it takes to work from hypothesis back to symptoms as well as the demands placed on working memory due to the large amount of information (symptoms, hypotheses, characteristics of illness, etc.) that must be processed while employing backward reasoning techniques. Simply, forward reasoning takes less time and mental effort than backward reasoning due to the amount of information being processed during the latter. The ability to employ forward reasoning versus backward reasoning is what distinguishes the performance of an expert from a novice in a given domain because experts tend to possess a wealth of tacit knowledge that can be easily employed due to the pattern recognition that comes from their experiences. Expert practitioners easily engage in fluid-like decision making because their ability to employ knowledge-in-action is well developed. The novice works from a hypothesis backward without a huge knowledge base to draw inferences and conclusions. That is not to say that novices are not good practitioners, the research simply highlights the differences between novices and experts with regard to efficiency and timeliness; both may arrive at the same diagnosis or solution.

In order to be considered an “expert” regardless of the domain of study, a person would need to have at least 10 years of experience in said field. The ten year rule came about based upon the original works of Simon and Chase (1973) among expert chess players and has been supported in many other domains including (but not limited to) musical composition (Hayes, 1981), mathematics (Gustin, 1985), and medical diagnosis.
(Patel & Groen, 1991). Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) suggest “... the highest levels of performance and achievement appear to require at least around 10 years of intense prior preparation” (p. 366). However, it is important to note that expertise does not develop from simply having experience within the field alone. The experience would need to occur in an authentic environment in which “real-life” problem-solving takes place. According to Patel et al. (1999), “decisions in real-world environments do not represent end points” (p. 86) in that, the act of arriving at a decision, in a real-world situation, may just be the beginning of a series of decisions or additional problems and/or concerns. With regard to experience, it is not just the experience itself, but what a person does with the experience that sets them apart from others in their search to acquire more skilled-like performance, albeit expertise. Simply being there is not enough; a person would need to engage in experiences that allow for effortful improvement. Basically, a person would need to engage in practice activities that pave the way for positive changes in their future performance.

Deliberate practice is a process in which professionals engage in activities with the expectation or goal of improving their performance; the practice activity is a deliberate attempt to get better at their craft, thus the term “deliberate practice”. As indicated earlier, experience within a domain is not what provides for the development of expertise but rather the “consequence of structured learning and effortful adaption” (Dunn & Shriner, 1999, p. 632) that occurs during the experience. Most important to the utilization of deliberate practice is identifying what specific tasks are to be practiced. Ericsson et al. (1993) indicate deliberate practice activities as those which a) require a great deal of effort and commitment, b) are performed over and over again, even if a level
of proficiency has been achieved and, c) are not necessarily enjoyable or pleasurable. Typically, deliberate practice also includes the use of feedback either by a coach or teacher who can provide direct criticism or advice on the performance.

While some may argue that play and work would constitute practice, the distinction is quite clear that neither of those opportunities are considered deliberate practice. Specifically, in the area of play, amateurs may engage in an activity for many hours over the course of a decade ultimately seeing improvement in their performance; however, those types of activities are not considered deliberate practice. Ericsson and Charness (1994) contend, through their survey research, that many who engage in popular activities, such as tennis and golf, never really participate in deliberate practice because the criteria listed above were not met during the activities of play. Specifically, while people participate in a great deal of generalized play (a complete tennis match or full round of golf), they do not engage in similar experiences time and time again to improve, for example, their forehand swing or tee shot. Engaging in deliberate practice with a coach or trainer would allow for multiple opportunities to “perfect” the forehand swing or tee shot.

Work is another example of practice opportunities that provide for refinement of skills. However, the activities of work are not typically considered deliberate practice. While work provides monetary and social rewards as well as opportunities for learning, the goal is often to develop a “product” (Ericsson & Charness, 1994, p. 738). On the other hand the focus of deliberate practice is simply to improve performance, to make it better than it was before. Further, as indicated earlier, in a work setting the practitioner must provide a solution to a problem to the best extent possible given the circumstances.
at that time. It is, most often, impossible for a person to “practice” skills during actual work time without that goal in mind; “do-overs” are not typically an option within the workplace. However, while the utilization of deliberate practice is not a viable option in many work settings, expertise can be developed, specifically in “ill-structured” work situations (Dunn & Shriner, 1999).

Specifically, Dunn and Shriner’s (1999) research with teachers suggested that while they may not be able to engage in the “redoing” aspects of practice because they teach, they are able to approach the activities of teaching in a deliberate manner. This research indicated that teachers are able to develop expertise in their domain by engaging in planning and evaluation of lessons, student progress, and possibly most important, an evaluation of themselves. Further, the study suggests that teachers engage in these processes in a mindful way (Dunn & Shriner, 1999). Specifically, if teachers are truly focused on the effectiveness of the lesson planned, the students’ responses to the lesson, and their delivery of the lesson, they will be better able to recognize when they need to make necessary changes within the lesson. Another component of this research that allows teachers to refine their skills includes the utilization of feedback, similar to a coach. Basically, having a mentor teacher or other colleagues who are able to support the concept of feedback and provide constructive criticism will further enhance the progression of a teacher toward expertise.

As indicated previously, experience alone does not make a person an expert. Rather it is how a person utilizes those experiences that helps one become an expert. Dunn and Shriner’s (1999) research highlights this point exactly in indicating that if teachers approach the task of teaching in an effortful and mindful fashion, they will
become better at their craft. Conversely, if teachers simply “go through the motions” of teaching because they have done it that way for so many years, then refining their craft may not happen. The importance of being effortful and mindful of performance in order to become better can be generalized to other ill-structured domains including medicine, law, sales, etc. Regardless of the domain (well- or ill-structured), the development of expertise occurs through effortful processes that support the accumulation of tacit knowledge that is efficiently stored and easily accessed so to recognize patterns quickly and allow for effective decision-making as various situations and circumstances arise.

Capturing Expertise as it Relates to Tacit Knowledge

Articulating the tacit knowledge that guides behavior and decision-making can be very difficult. The idea of capturing tacit knowledge has proven to be difficult for two reasons. First, it is nearly impossible to ask professionals to explain why they are making the decisions they are making during a performance as it alters the flow of the performance. Second, upon reviewing a performance captured on video (for example), it is very difficult for a person to “put into words” why they made the decisions they made. Specifically, when asked, “why did you do that?” or “what were you thinking?” the response often elicited is “I don’t know” or “I just knew”. According to Dunn et al. (2011), “expertise is acquired from experiences in actual professional practice and as a result might not have been stored in long-term memory in a form that is readily verbalizable” (p. 1). However, Ericsson and Smith (1991) contend that interviews remain the most conventional way to obtain information from experts with regard to knowledge-in-action. Accordingly, “the purpose is to engage in conversations with experts so that they can reveal the objects in their domains of expertise, how those objects are related or
organized, and the process used in making judgments, solving problems, or designing solutions” (Ericsson & Smith, 1991, p. 243).

de Groot (1946; 1978) set the ground-work for studying expert performance when studying masters of chess by asking them to “think-aloud” as they selected their next move during a game of chess. The process of asking performers to explain their thoughts during the game allowed the researcher to begin identifying the knowledge used among experts. de Groot’s research (1946, 1978) was the first to begin highlighting some of the characteristics of expert performance such as pattern recognition. Further, his research began using verbal protocols to contrast the performances between master and expert chess players in order to make comparisons in their approaches to the game. Charness (1981, 1989) continued to study expert chess performance utilizing the same techniques that de Groot introduced. Both researchers identified aspects of expert chess performance including the ability to recognize patterns, to systematically select their moves, and to plan their next move(s) based upon an assumption of their opponent’s next move. The utilization of think aloud and verbal protocols has been replicated in many studies of expert performance for the last twenty years (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; 1993; Patel & Groen, 1991; and Patel et al., 1999).

During think-aloud participants are not expected to explain every thought in its entirety but rather to identify their course of action while accessing previously acquired information that is allowing them to achieve their goal(s) (Reitman Olson & Biolsi, 1991). Most often during a think-aloud session, participants are encouraged to verbalize contents of working memory as they navigate through the decision-making process. The participants’ remarks are recorded and later analyzed to determine the categorization of
pattern recognition, inferences made, and thought-processes utilized that allow for the study of the knowledge-in-action used in their respective domains. From the remarks recorded, “objects are identified, along with their relationships and the causal inferences the experts drew moment by moment” (Ericsson & Smith, 1991, p. 345).

Dunn and Taylor (1990) conducted a study in which teachers were asked to engage in think-aloud as they planned a lesson by a familiar author (Stephen Crane); however, the teachers had not yet read the short story of which the lesson was to be the focus. The researchers discovered that expert teachers were able to plan a lesson utilizing tacit knowledge because they knew of the author, they had taught his work in the past, and they had a firm understanding of their students’ needs with regard to teaching strategies that would have the most impact. The researchers were able to elicit the utilization of tacit knowledge among expert teachers by asking them to think-aloud during a planning session which highlights the effectiveness of this strategy to study expertise (and the underlying tacit knowledge needed).

Another method of capturing performance is the use of retrospective verbalization (Ericsson & Simon, 1980) in which participants are asked to comment on their behavior after the conclusion of a performance. This method is also known as stimulated recall and is most often obtained by asking a research participant to view his or her performance immediately following that performance. Stimulated recall is used in research situations that would be disrupted by the use of the think-aloud method, such as the act of diagnosing a patient, completing a sale, or trying a case in front of a jury. Initially this method calls for participants to be video recorded during an actual performance. Then they are asked to review their performance (immediately upon the
conclusion of the performance) as the researcher stops the video recording, intermittently, to ask a probing question such as “what were you thinking?” (Dunn et al., 2011). Regardless of the method, the focus is the same and that is to make “implicit knowledge” more explicit in order to determine the tacit knowledge utilized in given domain-specific circumstances.

Ericsson and Charness (1994) suggest that when studying expertise in order to obtain maximum performance of the expert, it is necessary to have subjects participate in naturally occurring situations so to minimize the amount of experimental influence. Specifically, “if the tasks designed for research are sufficiently similar to normal situations, experts can rely on their existing skills, and no experiment-specific changes are necessary” (Ericsson & Charness, 1994, p. 732). Much of the research surrounding the studies of tacit knowledge as it relates to superior performance focuses on participants engaging in real-life situations while utilizing either think-aloud or stimulated recall as the primary method for studying “knowledge in action” (Schön, 1987). The focus of this study will be on using stimulated recall as it allows for the undisrupted study of a school psychologist’s navigation through a school-based consultation meeting for the reasons described above.

School Psychologists – History and Training

The field of school psychology is relatively new, having been in existence for just over a century but being a structured professional organization for only a few decades (Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel, 2006). Fagan and Wise (2000) contend that the field’s historical development can be separated into two different eras: the hybrid years and the
thoroughbred years. The hybrid years range from 1890 to 1969, which includes the emergence of the field as it began to develop an identity; the thoroughbred years range from 1970 to 2000 (and beyond), and depict an established field with a strong professional identity (Merrell et al., 2006). Many factors contributed to the development of school psychology as an established profession including (but not limited to) the formation of psychology as its own distinct discipline by the late 1800s, the changing social conditions that emerged due to the industrialization and urbanization of America, and the formation of public education as compulsory schooling emerged, both in the early 1900s (Merrell et al., 2006).

During the hybrid years (1890-1969) there were a few influential events that led to the overall emergence of the field of school psychology. First was the development of two different psychological clinics that worked primarily with educators to better understand children (Merrell et al., 2006). The first was Sir Francis Galton’s laboratory clinic at University College in London (1884), followed 12 years later by Lightner Witmer’s psychological clinic at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896 (Merrell et al., 2006). The function of both clinics was to assist public educators to better understand students’ unique learning needs with the intent to either classify them or solve their problems.

In addition, the development of the first IQ test by Alfred Binet and Theophile Simon in 1905 furthered the development of the field of school psychology. The utilization of IQ testing became popular during World War I to place service men (based upon their performance on a test) into various assignments within their respective branches of the armed forces. By the end of the war increased confidence in the use of IQ
tests began emerging within public education (Merrell et al., 2006). Furthermore, Merrell et al. (2006) suggest “the early history of school psychology became inextricably linked to intelligence testing and individual assessment and classification” (p. 29).

Another contributing factor in the development of the field of school psychology was the inception of the mental health field in 1910, which intended to assist in preventing or combating the effects of what had become known as juvenile delinquency (Merrell et al., 2006). During the early 1900s, some public schools in urban areas had begun to establish special education programming to support students that experienced learning difficulty. Around that time, William Healey created a clinic in Chicago for children involved with the juvenile court system which may have been the precursor of special programming for today’s students with emotional and behavior disabilities (Merrell et al., 2006). In response to all of these events, “the terms ‘school psychology’ or ‘school psychologist’ emerged, indicating that the field was becoming increasingly established, with the signs of a distinct profession” (Merrell et al., 2006, p. 30).

The field of school psychology continued to develop through the 1940s and 1950s. Two separate conferences were held that impacted the future of school psychology including the Boulder Conference on Clinical Psychology in 1949 and The Thayer Conference in 1954 (Merrell et al., 2006). The Boulder Conference is credited with the emergence of the “scientist-practitioner” model of training and credentialing future school psychologists. The Thayer Conference was conducted for the purposes of improving the training, credentialing, and practice of school psychology (Merrell et al., 2006).
The creation of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) began the shift into the thoroughbred years and is significant because it ensured that the field itself had achieved a solid professional identity and structure. The thoroughbred years include two important aspects that have further defined the field of school psychology. First, the passage of Public Law 94-142 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1975 assured that all students with disabilities have the right to receive a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE). Second, this assurance included mandates for assessment that increased the need for more school psychologists thus training programs were expanded (Merrell et al., 2006). Merrell et al. indicated that between 1970 and 1990 nearly 200 training programs were established and NASP membership more than doubled. Since that time, training programs have continued to evolve in an effort to include coursework that meets the demands of the legal mandates set forth from subsequent reauthorizations of PL 94-142 (IDEA, 1990, 1997, and 2004).

Today the specialist level training standards supported by the NASP require a minimum of 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits and include a full-time internship (1,200 hours) under a licensed school psychologist. In 2005, there were 121 approved specialist level programs in school psychology (Merrell et al., 2006). According to Merrell et al., full-time enrollment in a specialist-level program usually requires two years of full-time coursework on campus (in which student’s complete 12-16 credit hours each term) prior to internship. Curricula requirements and coursework are set by the individual training programs. However, there is a great deal of similarity among them based upon NASP’s required training standards (Merrell et al.). Specifically, the following 10 domains of training practice have been established by NASP (2010):
Since the practice of school psychology occurs in an educational environment, a school psychologist receives training in a variety of areas in order to gain a broad understanding of the dynamics of both education and psychology. Training programs generally consist of coursework in core areas such as cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, measurement, neuropsychology, special education, curriculum standards, and educational law (general and special). Further, training programs offer coursework in the areas of assessment, behavior analysis and planning, consultation, counseling, and family systems (Fagan & Warden, 1996). Based upon the NASP training requirements, after completion of a minimum 60 semester credit hour training program, the prospective school psychologist participates in a 1,200-hour internship program under the direct supervision of a licensed school psychologist and indirect supervision of a university representative, typically a School Psychology faculty member.
School settings in which a school psychologist could be employed include public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools, as well as residential facilities. Typically these settings provide both general and special education services for students. Most often, school psychologists are employed by public school districts but sometimes may be employed by special education cooperatives such as an educational service center, in which local school districts will contract for psychological services. What distinguishes the school psychologist from other professionals, either in the fields of psychology or education, is the ability to blend psychological and educational applications within an educational setting in order to “promote optimum learning for students” (Fagan & Warden, 1996, p. 347). Currently, there are approximately 35,400 credentialed school psychologists in the U.S., with approximately 29,400 employed by public schools (NASP, 2010).

In order to serve as a school psychologist within a public or private school setting, licensure must be obtained through a state department of education (SDE). However, school psychologists can also obtain licensure through the state board of psychology; obtaining or not obtaining licensure through the board of psychology has no bearing on obtaining licensure through the SDE. School psychologists are invited to join local, state, and national organizations in order to keep abreast of current trends within the field. Further, school psychologists who are licensed through their state board of psychology can join the American Psychological Association under Division 16 or as an affiliate member if licensed under their state department of education.
School Psychologists – Role and Function

The role of today’s school psychologists is defined by three main areas of practice including problem-solving, intervention, and assessment. While school psychologists are trained to handle a variety of roles, the main function of a school psychologist is the ability to determine if a disability is present and interfering with a child’s learning. According to Merrell et al., (2006), “the early history of school psychology became inextricably linked to intelligence testing and individual assessment and classification” (p. 29) and the field has yet to shed that reality. While other specialists (i.e., reading specialists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists) are able to diagnose a problem in their respective areas, they are not expected to make recommendations regarding eligibility for special education services. That is the primary responsibility of school psychologists and one that continues to define their role and function within a school setting.

However, since the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the reauthorization of IDEA (2004), a major shift in how school districts address student concerns has occurred which has impacted the role of school psychologists. While both pieces of legislation addressed various issues related to student progress, they both stressed the importance of using effective prevention measures to ensure student success. Utilizing a prevention approach to academic and behavioral difficulties ensures that the needs of all students are considered, not just those who are experiencing concern (Shapiro, 2000). No longer are schools permitted to continue to allow students to fall further and further behind without implementing appropriate intervention strategies. Consequently, the utilization of effective problem-solving became paramount for all school districts.
Deno (2002) suggests that enrollment in school for all children is a universal intervention that is implemented across our society. Therefore, all children who participate in school are a part of a universal intervention designed to change their cognitive, affective, social and physical development (Merrell et al., 2006). Within that framework Deno contends that the purpose of problem-solving is to “eliminate the difference between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’ with regard to student development” (Deno, 2002, p. 38). Therefore, problem-solving begins when a group of professionals come together to determine the discrepancy that exists between where a student is and where that student is expected to be because skill mastery does not occur at the same pace for all students (Deno, 2002).

While there are different models of problem-solving, the most effective incorporate a series of stages and questions. Merrell et al. (2006) illustrate the model to include the following steps:

- Step 1: What is the problem (Problem Identification and Validation)
- Step 2: Why is it occurring (Problem Analysis)
- Step 3: What should be done about it (Intervention Development and Implementation)
- Step 4: Did it work (Intervention Evaluation and Follow-up)

Merrell et al. (2006) contend that “the data-driven problem-solving model is outcome-focused, data driven, integrally linked to intervention and context-specific” (p. 155). School psychologists are a key part of this process as their pre-service training incorporates skill attainment in the area of data-based decision making, which is a
fundamental component of effective problem-solving for student development across domains.

Since schooling itself is a universal intervention that alters a child’s development across domains (Deno, 2002), it is essential to have a system in place to assist students who do not meet the necessary benchmarks at a given time. Intervention is a method of providing a “treatment” for a child experiencing academic or behavioral difficulty. School psychologists are integral in the development and selection of necessary interventions and can be involved in a variety of ways with regard to the delivery of an intervention. Specifically, interventions can be direct or indirect (Reynolds, Gutkin, Elliott, & Witt, 1984). Direct interventions are those that involve the direct interaction of school psychologist and student (e.g. counseling a student with depression), while indirect interventions are those that involve the school psychologist in the development or choosing of an intervention but not in the day to day administration of an intervention (e.g. developing a behavior contract for a student to minimize classroom outbursts). While intervention has historically been considered a responsibility of the school psychologist, the focus of intervention has become a requirement for all students with continued reauthorizations of PL 94-142, with the most recent being the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Prior to 2004, intervention was regarded as something that districts should do to help students prior to referral for special education services; however, intervention was loosely defined, specified, or documented prior to consideration for special education services. As of 2004, the utilization of intervention strategies was not merely a notion but a direct requirement described in the reauthorization of IDEA act subsequently to be carried through the state standards (e.g.
Intervention must be implemented and documented in order to proceed with an evaluation for special education services.

An additional expectation of school psychologists is the ability to administer, score, and interpret assessment information. Fagan and Warden (1996) define assessment as the “process of identifying problems and making decisions to remediate those problems” (p. 27). School psychologists spend an extensive amount of time during their training program learning about various assessment tools, including curriculum-based assessments, standardized assessments, informal assessments, observations, interviews, record review and criterion-referenced assessments. It is important to note that assessment is not to be confused with testing; testing is a form of assessment that may be used in order to determine an area of strength or weakness of the learner (Fagan & Warden, 1996).

The ability to understand the various types of assessment tools, student performance as a result of assessment, and expected performance of an average learner based upon age or grade level is paramount to the diagnostic, intervention, and consultative role of a school psychologist. Whether a school psychologist is interpreting assessment information or considering another professional’s information in order to determine what decisions need to be made to remediate a problem, the knowledge and understanding of assessment information is a necessity in order to fulfill roll expectations. A 2002 survey indicated that school psychologists spend one-half to two-thirds of their time involved in special education related interests, most specifically assessment (Fagan, 2002).
Public-Law 94-142 (or the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), which was passed in 1975, mandated services for students age three to twenty-one. The law introduced the language of free, appropriate public education (FAPE), least restrictive environment (LRE), individual education program (IEP), and due process. In addition, it also introduced the original handicapping conditions including mental retardation; visual impairment, including blindness; hearing impairment, including deafness; other health impairment; specific learning disability; multiple handicapped; speech and language impairment; and emotional disturbance. Other key aspects of PL 94-142 included the expectation of child-find activities in which the district must provide opportunities for children starting at the age of three to be evaluated for special education services, nondiscriminatory assessment practices, multi-disciplinary teaming, and due process. Since 1975, PL94-142 has been reauthorized (in 1990, 1997, and 2004) to expand on the basic tenets, include new initiatives, and further enhance the requirements for the appropriate education for students with disabilities.

While school psychologists had been a part of the educational system since the 1930s, the passage of PL 94-142 was an important consideration within the field for two reasons. First, it gave school psychologists a home within the district’s department of special education which had become increasingly reliant upon them to ensure that assessments were conducted in accordance with federal and state policies and procedures. Second, the demand for school psychologists increased dramatically in an effort for districts to fulfill the necessary mandates of PL 94-142. Subsequently, the number of training programs increased to meet the demands from local districts. The subsequent reauthorization of the law has continued to shift the role of the school psychologist in
response to new trends and mandates including the concepts of inclusion, intervention, early childhood identification, and the need to address behavioral concerns for students with disabilities. However, while the role and function has seen a shift in expectation and contribution, the primary responsibilities of a school psychologist are the ability to engage in effective problem-solving, assist in the development of appropriate intervention strategies, and assess students for possible special education eligibility all in an effort to improve student performance.

**The School Psychologist as Consultant**

The aforementioned activities require school psychologists to function as a member of a school-based team for problem-solving, intervention design, or eligibility for special education in which they consult with various school personnel. Consultation is the interaction that occurs between the school psychologist and other professionals including teachers, parents, administrators, and other related service staff members, including the speech-language pathologist (SLP), occupational therapist (OT), physical therapist (PT), and work-study coordinator (WSC) to name a few. According to Gutkin and Reynolds (2009), “the ability of school psychologists to serve children has always been, and probably always will be, mediated to a large extent by their ability to function effectively as consultants” (p. 592). Consultation can occur in an informal dyad situation (e.g. between school psychologist and teacher), or in a formal group situation such as an intervention assistance meeting in which parents, teachers, related service personnel, administrators and school psychologist work together to help assist a struggling learner.
In that school psychologists by and large have the most extensive training within a public education system, specifically in the areas of assessment and child development, consultation is an important responsibility (Fagan & Warden, 1996). According to the NASP (2010), the standards for training and field placement ensure that school psychologists develop specific skills in the areas of consultation and collaboration that ensure that they are able to engage in the consultation process effectively and meaningfully. NASP (2000) reiterates the need for school psychologists to possess effective consultation skills in that those skills “facilitate communication and collaboration . . . among teams of school personnel, families, community professionals and others” (p. 24). Further, school psychologists employ their consultation skills by listening, adapting, addressing ambiguity, and acting patiently in adverse situations. Finally, the ability to effectively engage in the consultation process allows the school psychologist to “clearly present and disseminate information to diverse audiences, such as parents, teachers, school boards, policy makers, community leaders, colleagues, and others in a variety of contexts (NASP, 2000, p. 24).

**Consultation within Response to Intervention (RTI)**

As indicated previously, one of the requirements that emerged from both the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was the implementation of school-wide approaches to consider the learning needs for all students. According to Gutkin and Reynolds (2009) the mandates of this legislation have primarily been responsible for the emergence of school reform that requires each district to implement a problem-solving or response to intervention approach intended to meet the needs of all students.
Response to intervention (RTI) refers to a tiered system for the delivery of research-based interventions that vary in intensity based upon a data-based problem-solving process (Reschly & Bergstrom, 2009). While the terms problem-solving and RTI are used interchangeably, essentially the RTI process requires effective problem-solving (PS) at each tier or level (Reschly & Bergstrom, 2009).

According to Gutkin and Reynolds (2009), “to be successful within the context of the PS/RTI model, school psychologists must have expertise in . . . consultee-centered and small group consultative problem-solving procedures” (p.594). Further, utilizing consultation services in an RTI model affords school psychologists the opportunity to effect the development of many students, not just those with disabilities (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009). Indirect service delivery is the method utilized by school psychologists in an RTI model or framework.

In an indirect service delivery model, school psychologists do not provide direct services (e.g., counseling, intervention, support) to the students. Instead they function as consultants for parents, teachers, etc. (who are referred to as consultees) who work directly with the clients (students) (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009). When functioning as consultants, school psychologists work with consultees who then, in turn, work directly with clients (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009). The goals of any consultation model include the need to provide immediate support for a presenting problem or concern of the consultee while an underlying goal or outcome is the ability to improve the functioning of the consultee to more effectively handle similar situations in the future (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009).
Safran and Safran (1997) identified three reasons why pre-referral (prior to assessment for special education consideration) consultation had and continues to require school psychologist involvement. They are:

1. to reduce the number of students referred for special education services while increasing accuracy rates in identification,
2. to improve student performance in learning and behavior, and
3. to improve teacher collaboration and satisfaction.

The focus of a pre-referral consultation meeting is to prevent subsequent problems, concerns, and ultimately referral for or identification of a special education need. Therefore, the ability of the school psychologist to effectively engage in a problem-solving team is paramount for the goals of any type of consultative meeting to be attained.

The ability of a school psychologist to utilize “knowledge in action” (Schön, 1987) when engaged in consultation is extremely important. This type of interaction (consultant and consultee) highlights the “real world” problems faced by struggling learners (clients) that require fluid-like decision making and tacit knowledge to both solve an immediate concerns as well as improve the functioning of the consultee for later issues.

School Psychologists’ Perception of Consultation

Scholten (2002) conducted a study in which 20 school psychologists were interviewed to describe the manner in which the term “consultation” was understood and used in a large metropolitan school district. Results of that study suggested that school
psychologists considered the concept of consultation in one of four ways including a) the psycho-metrician view, b) the diagnostician view, c) the assessor’s view or, d) the problem-solver view. The psycho-metrician considers consultation in a limited capacity and most often includes some form of assessment in order to “fix a problem”. School psychologists who practiced employing this view reported that consultation was not a function of their role outside of providing information for consideration based upon assessment (i.e. classroom observation, file review, etc.). Diagnosticians also viewed the role of consultation with strong emphasis on assessment. However, they would engage in pre-referral (pre-assessment) meetings to determine what types of assessments were needed. Accordingly, school psychologists who subscribed to the psycho-metrician or diagnostician viewpoints tended to perceive consultation (and the manner of a requesting consultation) as a very formal, structured process.

On the other hand, assessors preferred to be involved with a case “right from the beginning” (Scholten, 2002, p. 94) of the concern. While they did devote a great deal of their time to assessment, school psychologists employing the assessor view utilized the assessment data to help teachers find ways to assist struggling learners. Finally, the problem-solver viewed all aspects of their role in terms of consultation and only utilized assessment for special education services as a last resort, often explaining to their colleagues that they are not just “testers”. Both assessors and problem-solvers indicated that “consultation” could be put into place following either a formal or informal referral framework. Further, school psychologists wanted to be involved in the consultation process to assist teachers in either preventing and/or alleviating student concerns.
According to Fagan and Warden (1996), “the blending of psychological applications within an educational setting directly or indirectly to promote optimum learning for students is the purpose of school psychology” (p. 347). School psychologists best fulfill the challenge of this definition through the consultation process in talking with teachers and other related service staff members about student learning needs and weaknesses. However, being able to engage in the consultation process effectively and efficiently takes time and experience. While the coursework devoted to consultation during a school psychology training program provides a knowledge base regarding the reason for consultation as well as how to theoretically engage in consultation (i.e. building trust, open communication, being supportive), the actual practice of efficient consultation does not come readily; it takes experience as well as deliberate reflection on the interactions that occurred during a consultation session. In order to become efficient, a school psychologist would need to engage in many of the same events (deliberate practice, feedback, etc.) as an experienced or expert practitioner in any other field. However, if those experiences are meaningful and purposeful, “the experienced school psychologist becomes a finely calibrated professional and therefore serves as the most reliable instrument in his armamentarium” (Bernauer & Jackson, 1974, p. 158).

Summary

Undoubtedly, tacit knowledge is paramount to fluid-like decision-making in any domain, although it is not easy to explain or articulate. Sternberg and colleagues have devoted much of their research to expand the understanding of tacit knowledge in leadership and management; Dunn and colleagues have studied tacit knowledge in the field of education and medicine. Tacit knowledge is embedded in the theories of
practical intelligence and wisdom as both theories are predicated on the utilization of tacit knowledge to guide behavior. Expertise is developed over time, with deliberate practice and the ability to successfully employ tacit knowledge to recognize patterns and execute decisions. The most used methods to capture tacit knowledge include think aloud and stimulated recall, both of which encourage research participants to verbalize what they are thinking during various moments within a performance. School psychologists have many responsibilities with regard to their role and function in public school settings. The training of school psychologists focuses on the development of effective consultation skills that allow them to listen, adapt, and address ambiguity in a positive manner with all team members in order to bring about change (at an individual, building or district level).

This research will expand the study of tacit knowledge into the field of school psychology. At this time, the role of tacit knowledge within the field of school psychology has yet to be studied. However, school psychologists develop tacit knowledge and employ it in a way that is similar to teachers, doctors, military leaders, and managers. The researcher will determine if experienced school psychologists rely on the consultation skills described by NASP to effectively navigate through a collaborative meeting by answering the question “Did those skills (listen, adapt, and address ambiguity in a positive manner) become tacit?” Further, are school psychologists aware of various aspects of the tacit knowledge that they possess? Also, what do school psychologists believe are the teaching/learning implications of their knowledge-in-action? Finally, the results of the study may be used as the beginning of future research to distinguish differences between how novice and experienced school psychologists navigate through a consultation meeting.
Chapter Three
Method

While it is difficult to capture tacit knowledge utilized in ill-structured domains (Dunn & Shriner, 1999), many researchers have attempted to study procedural knowledge used in verbal reporting, think aloud procedures (Ericsson & Simon, 1993), and stimulated recall. In expanding the study of tacit knowledge to the field of school psychology, the method utilized will include stimulated recall. The focus of this study will be to capture tacit knowledge being employed by an experienced school psychologist while engaged in a school-based consultation meeting.

Participants

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the procedures in all areas including: obtaining informed consent for all potential research participants, maintaining confidentiality during video recording of each consultation meeting, storing data for analysis, and minimizing risk to participants during involvement in the study.

The names of potential participants were obtained from the Maumee Valley School Psychologist Association (MVSPA), a local association of area school psychologists. Additional names were obtained based on the researcher’s knowledge of area school psychologists who may not have been members of the local organization. A total of 25 school psychologists were invited to participate. Potential participants had a variety of reasons to opt out of participation including the cancellation of the problem-solving meeting due to weather, parent refusal, lack of time to complete all aspects of participation, or failure to respond to the researcher after multiple contact attempts. For
example, one of the school psychologists agreed to participate, obtained parent agreement, and scheduled the meeting. However, a calamity day was called and the meeting was rescheduled; the rescheduled date was agreed upon and then that meeting was subsequently cancelled due to school psychologist’s illness. The researcher was not available during the final reschedule date in which the meeting did occur. Another example involved a school psychologist who agreed, in person, to participate while both the researcher and she attended a local in-service training. At that time, the researcher explained the reason for the study and all aspects involved. Within a few days, the researcher began contacting the school psychologist via telephone messages and email attempts to arrange her participation. The school psychologist never responded to any request made by the researcher. Due to time constraints, she was ultimately disregarded as a participant. Table 1 provides information regarding the participants in the study including gender and years of experience at the time of participation.

Table 1

*General Characteristics of Each Participant*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #1</td>
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<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #3</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist #8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participating school psychologists had at least 10 years of experience working in a public school system in Northwest Ohio. While they currently had to be working in a public school system, their years of experience did not need to be in the same school system. Upon receiving names of possible participants, the researcher made contact either through email or telephone describing the study and the time commitment involved with participation. If the school psychologist agreed to be involved in the study, a time was set up for the initial interview.

The purpose of the initial interview was to determine how school psychologists viewed their involvement in the school-based consultation team process. Accordingly, the utilization of either an assessor or problem-solving view of consultation was preferred for this study (Scholten, 2002). That is, in order to study tacit knowledge within the field of school psychology, participants had to be immersed in a situation in which they were expected to process information while directing solicited information toward a decision-point, much like physicians do during a patient interaction requiring diagnosis. The employment of tacit knowledge is much more limited in a psychometric or diagnostic consultation process. In those types of consultation, the school psychologist would be sharing data with colleagues in order to make a decision about eligibility for special education while sharing developmental, academic and, environmental concerns is limited because those discussions have occurred prior to the assessment of students.
Once it was established that a school psychologist did view the role as that of an assessor or problem-solver, an agreed upon time was set in order for the video recording of a team meeting to occur. The researcher explained the confidentiality aspects of the video-taping process in order to ensure that other team members (including parents) would not be seen during the videotape. The researcher was responsible for all videotaping and ensured that the camera was only focused on the school psychologist. All other participants were kept out of the frame.

Upon agreement to participate, the school psychologists were asked to discuss their participation with the building principals and were encouraged to contact the researcher with any questions prior to the meeting. In the event that parents were to participate in the meeting, they were contacted prior to the meeting in order to obtain parental consent for video recording.

**Procedures**

“Think-aloud” procedures are often utilized in studies of tacit knowledge in which participants are asked to describe what they are thinking *during* a performance or task. As Ericsson and Smith (1991) indicate, the participants are not expected to provide full explanation or commentary, they are simply asked to utter their thoughts (i.e., contents of working memory). However, this method of study often interrupts the flow of the performance or task and may not be ideal for instances of capturing tacit knowledge in some professional contexts. Such was the case in this study with school psychologists.

As stated previously, Ericsson and Charness (1994) suggest that when studying expertise in order to obtain maximum performance of the expert, it is necessary to have
subjects participate in naturally occurring situations to minimize experimental influence. Specifically, “if the tasks designed for research are sufficiently similar to normal situations, experts can rely on their existing skills, and no experiment-specific changes are necessary” (Ericsson & Charness, 1994, p. 732). Much of the research surrounding the studies of tacit knowledge as it relates to superior performance focuses on participants engaging in real-life situations while utilizing either think-aloud or stimulated recall as the primary method for studying “knowledge in action” (Schön, 1987).

The procedures used in this study were similar to those carried out by Dunn and colleagues (Dunn et al., 1996; Dunn et al., 2011; Kleshinski et al., 2010). In the Dunn et al. (1996) study, they video recorded physicians during a patient examination. Immediately after the examination the physician and researcher viewed the video recording together. During this viewing the researcher periodically stopped the video and asked the physician: “What were you thinking at that time?” Ericsson and Simon (1993) described this type of recall as retrospective verbalization (or stimulated recall) in which a research subject is probed for information after the completion of a task.

In this study there was a video recording of a consultation meeting, followed by the school psychologist and the researcher viewing the video recording together during a stimulated recall session.

With regard to the consultation meeting, the researcher asked that the team allow the researcher 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting to explain the purpose of the video recording and to answer any questions. At that time, the researcher distributed informed consent forms for signatures. There were two informed consent forms (both
approved by IRB), one for school psychologists (Appendix A), and one for other team members (Appendix B). While the camera was only focused on the school psychologist during the video recording, the other team members’ voices were recorded but the information they provided was not analyzed. The researcher was present during the video recording in order to troubleshoot any technical issues as well as to have a better understanding as to when to ask questions during the subsequent stimulated recall session.

As discussed previously, tacit knowledge is procedural and requires instances of “if-then” components. Specifically, “if” certain conditions are met, “then” specific actions are enacted. The specific actions carried out are often rather explicit so it is the satisfying conditions component (i.e., the “if” component) of tacit knowledge which is actually tacit. Essentially, it is the knowledge the school psychologist accesses and uses to make decisions, to answer questions, and to carry out actions that are tacit.

As a general guideline for when to ask questions during stimulated recall, the researcher kept track of:

- questions asked by the school psychologist
- questions asked of the school psychologist
- decisions
- transitions
- unusual events or interactions (especially involving parents)
- emotional reactions (especially involving parents)
At the conclusion of the team meeting, the researcher and school psychologist viewed the video recording together during a sequence of stimulated recall in which the researcher stopped the recording at certain times to ask the school psychologist, “What were you thinking at that time?” Ericsson and Simon (1980) describe this type of recall as retrospective verbalization in which a research subject is probed for information after the completion of a task. The researcher used information derived from observations during the consultation meeting (i.e., decisions, questions, and transitions), to determine when to stop the recording and ask the stimulated recall question.

For example, during the video recording of School Psychologist #6, the researcher noted that she basically sat back in her chair and no longer looked toward the referring teacher who was sharing concerns about the student. The researcher made note and asked the school psychologist during stimulated recall what she was thinking at that time. During the video recording of School Psychologist #3, the researcher noted that the school psychologist smiled (but did not look up) while she was taking copious notes as the science teacher shared his concerns regarding the student. The researcher made note to stop and ask the school psychologist what she was thinking during stimulated recall. During the video recording of School Psychologist #4, the researcher noted that the school psychologist began shifting in his seat and appeared to have a look of concern or possible frustration as the parent was describing the after-school routine of her children. The researcher noted the change in behavior and made sure to ask what he was thinking at that time during stimulated recall.

The stimulated recall sequence was also audio-taped. The video recording of the team meeting demonstrated the explicit actions of the school psychologist while the
stimulated recall provided an indication of the implicit cognitive processes being used, including tacit knowledge, to arrive at the explicit action. Ericsson and Smith (1991) described this type of interview indicating that “the purpose is to engage in conversations . . . so that they can reveal the objects in their domain of expertise, how those objects are related or organized, and the processes used in making judgments, solving problems, or designing solutions” (p. 243).

Data Analysis

There were two data sources in this study, the video recordings of the team meetings/conferences, and the transcribed protocols of the stimulated recall sessions. The following steps were followed in analyzing the data:

a) The researcher and another individual (a professor of Educational Psychology) independently analyzed transcribed protocols documenting occurrences of tacit knowledge. Both of these individuals found it helpful to review the video recording while following the transcribed stimulated recall protocol. The transcribed protocols included the time that the video-tape was stopped and the researcher asked, “What were you thinking?” The participants responses to each of the “What were you thinking?” questions were written in narrative, paragraph form (see Appendix C). During the independent data analysis of each protocol, both researchers noted the time that the possible incident occurred (for example, at 2:45 seconds). In addition, they highlighted that portion of the protocol and noted within the paragraph “PTK” which stood for possible instance of tacit knowledge. As discussed earlier, tacit knowledge is procedural and requires instances of “if - then” components. Specifically, “if” certain conditions are met,
“then” specific actions are executed. The specific actions carried out are often rather explicit. It is these actions that can be seen on the video recording and it is also these actions that the researcher monitored during the recording so she knew when to stop the video during stimulated recall and ask: “What were you thinking at that time?” If the school psychologist’s response indicated that he/she was using knowledge that is relatively imprecise and learned more from experience, as opposed to relatively explicit learned in a more formal educational setting, then it would be considered to be an instance in which tacit knowledge was used.

Essentially, this analysis indicates how the school psychologist classified a situation before activating an action or response. When the researcher and other reviewer met, they discussed their notations of “PTK” for each protocol as well as watched that portion of the video when discussing their identification of possible instances of tacit knowledge. Results were compared, discussed, and agreed upon for each instance identified on the individual stimulated recall protocols for every participant. The average duration of video recordings was approximately 31:00 (range 15:25 and 55:24); the average duration of audio recordings was approximately 42:00 (range 22:45 and 80:43).

b) Following the identification of an instance of tacit knowledge, the researcher then converted this instance into an inferred capability statement. The purpose here was to consider that this particular condition–action sequence belongs to a class of condition–action sequences (Dunn et al., 2011). Capability statements include both a “class” of stimulus situations and a “class” of performances. This format is
very similar to capability statements for intellectual skills, especially rule learning (Gagné, 1985).

c) Once an instance of tacit knowledge was identified and then converted to a capability statement, the researcher carried out a modified learning hierarchy analysis. This type of analysis identifies the prerequisite knowledge that supports the learning of the aforementioned capability (Dunn et al., 2011). The modified hierarchical analysis procedure shares many of the same characteristics as described by Gagné (1962; 1968; 1985) who wrote extensively on how to develop and use learning hierarchies. The prerequisite question to be asked when developing a hierarchy is fundamentally the same in the procedure detailed here: “What capability should the learner already know how to do and be able to recall when faced with the task of learning this new capability?” (Gagné, 1985, p. 272).

The analysis that follows is considered a modified hierarchical analysis as it begins with an inferred capability (Dunn et al., 2011). However, while the results obtained can neither be considered all-encompassing or specific enough to stand up to thorough validation (e.g., Gagné, 1968; White, 1974), Gagné’s recommendations were used in that: a) all the prerequisite elements are intellectual skills, representing what individuals are able to do, rather than verbal information; and b) the intellectual skills will adhere to particular hierarchical relationships (Gagné, 1985).

The completed analyses included the following information for each school psychologist:

a) Instances of tacit knowledge use during the conference.

b) Inferred capability statements for these instances of tacit knowledge use.
c) Inferred prerequisite knowledge which supports tacit knowledge use.

The researcher carried out member checks with the school psychologists to verify the validity of inferences and interpretations.
Chapter Four

Results

After independently reviewing the video recording, while following along with the transcribed protocol, the researcher and other reviewer met to compare their findings of possible instances of tacit knowledge. When analyzing the data independently, possible instances of tacit knowledge were noted if characteristics noted by Sternberg were evident in the school psychologist’s responses during stimulated recall. Sternberg (1998) described tacit knowledge as having three major characteristics. They are:

1. Tacit knowledge is procedural knowledge that directs behavior.
2. Tacit knowledge is practically useful in that it aides people in attaining goals that they value in real life situations.
3. Tacit knowledge is acquired without direct help from others.

With regard to the first characteristic, procedural knowledge is quite common as it would include any actions or decisions carried out by the school psychologist. Regarding the second characteristic, the researcher and other reviewer assumed that knowledge accessed in these problem-solving situations would at least be potentially useful for dealing with the issues being discussed. Indeed, that was why it was accessed. However, it was not practical, nor realistic, to determine if that knowledge was ultimately useful in solving a particular problem. With regard to the third characteristic, the issue here is whether or not the knowledge accessed was explicit enough so that it could have been taught directly. As such, the researcher and other reviewer also included the tenet that tacit knowledge would be difficult for the school psychologist to articulate or make explicit. Therefore, a fourth characteristic was considered upon analyzing possible
instances of tacit knowledge. The follow-up interviews after the video recording and stimulated recall sessions provided an opportunity to verify whether or not the knowledge in question was learned in a formal setting or from practical experience. Since one of the researchers was a licensed school psychologist with 12 years of experience as a practicing school psychologists she was able to answer any question from the other researcher regarding whether a possible instance of tacit knowledge could be information that was learned through formal training. This type of question occurred rarely as many of the instances that occurred due to formal training were quickly disregarded as possible instances of tacit knowledge.

Upon analyzing each protocol, the researcher and other reviewer did not have parameters set that would include having to find a set number of instances of possible tacit knowledge per participant. Instead, they analyzed the data with the intent that each participant would have used tacit knowledge during the problem-solving meeting, at least once. The number of instances identified per participant varied considerably. For example, upon analyzing the data provided by school psychologist #1, eight possible instances of tacit knowledge were identified whereas upon analyzing the information from school psychologist #7, five possible instances of tacit knowledge were identified. Variables that influenced the number of possible instances identified included the length of the meeting in that the longer the meeting, the possibility of instances increased; the number of participants at the meeting because the school psychologist was expected to process more information; and, parent involvement at the meeting added an emotional element requiring more attention from the school psychologist hence the need to possibly use additional types of tacit knowledge.
Upon reviewing their individual findings and comparing identified instances of tacit knowledge, initial agreement between the researcher and other researcher was approximately 80%. In cases of disagreement they discussed their reasons and worked toward consensus. One possibility of disagreement was the identification of formal, explicit knowledge use versus the possible use of tacit knowledge. During the conversation, they each indicated their rationale as to the reasons it was or was not a possible instance of tacit knowledge. Each instance identified had to meet all of the criteria (described above) in order to be considered possible tacit knowledge. Therefore, when discussing their rationale, possible instances were only identified if they met all of the four criteria, not two of the four or three of the four. The discussions were not very lengthy. Many of the instances not initially shared, by either the researcher or the other researcher, were marked as possibilities during the initial independent analysis. However, they were not initially identified because they did not appear to meet one of the criteria although, upon discussion, it was determined that the possible instance did meet all four criteria described above. At that time, the instance was included as one in which an inferred capability could be identified. Subsequent agreement reached 95% and total agreement as to the specific examples reported here.

An example of disagreement during the independent analysis surrounded an instance that was determined not to be an instance of tacit knowledge. Specifically, during a discussion of the independent findings surrounding data analysis of school psychologist #4, the researcher identified a possible instance of tacit knowledge because it appeared to meet the criteria described above. The school psychologist provided rationale for a decision he made that appeared to be tacit to the researcher. The
university professor did not include that particular instance as one that would be tacit in nature because he believed it was too explicit and therefore did not meet the criteria. Upon discussion of whether the school psychologists information was an instance of tacit knowledge, it was determined that it was not because it was explicit in nature and did not meet the criteria.

While the types of problems discussed in these meetings did vary, as did the number and nature of participants, there were some common themes regarding the nature of the tacit knowledge accessed and used.

First of all it was very clear that all school psychologists had to deal with multiple sources of information which required that they access and use knowledge, some of which was tacit, related to what tests and assessments were being discussed, various interventions, knowledge of students in general and in particular, how to deal with other colleagues, and how to deal with parents. For the most part, the school psychologists had to access and use this knowledge “on the fly” so to speak, with little time for planning. Also, they had to make relatively immediate decisions as to which information from multiple sources was necessary or unnecessary to the decision-making process.

Second, there were similarities in how they considered information with regard to exclusionary factors and factoring new information with regard to those areas when making decisions.

A third theme dealt with how several school psychologists opted to disregard their agenda (specifically a line of questioning) because team members might either be
derailed from the problem-solving that was occurring or it may have shifted the focus away for the team process, which appeared to be working well.

An important fourth theme concerned the school psychologists’ interactions with parents and their concern that parents’ comfort level with the team and feeling supported by the team was paramount to the effectiveness of problem-solving and intervention planning.

A fifth theme identified was the ability of school psychologists to trust the information being shared by teachers and parents. That is, experienced school psychologists were able to determine that certain participants were “good historians” and that their comments could be used without reservation in the problem-solving process. Included in this last theme was classifying nonverbal behaviors as information that required a follow-up with an explanation or comment.

These themes will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter but will also be evident in the detailed narrative to follow for each school psychologist.

The results of this study will be reported using a narrative format to describe instances of tacit knowledge. While entire transcripts of the stimulated recall sessions for the eight participating school psychologists are provided in Appendix C, the following information will be included for each of the participating psychologists:

a) Brief background information about the school psychologist.

b) Purpose of the IAT meeting.

c) Identification of two instances of tacit knowledge. For each instance the following will be included:
1) A quote from the transcribed protocol.

2) A brief explanation as to why this is an example of tacit knowledge.

3) A restatement of the instance as a capability inferring that the school psychologist would be able to respond to a class of stimulus situations (and not just this one event) with a class of responses.

4) An indication of the prerequisite knowledge that supports this capability.

d) An account of the follow-up interview with the school psychologist.

School Psychologist #1

At the time of this consultation, he had 35 years of experience as a school psychologist. He had worked for a particular district almost the entire length of his career. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the concerns of a 5th grade student, “Pam”, who was struggling with reading comprehension. This is the first meeting to discuss her needs and the concerns of her teachers. The team members present included the school psychologist and two general education teachers, as Pam is in a co-teaching classroom setting the entire school day. This district utilizes a consultation model that begins with a discussion between the referring teacher(s) and school psychologist before a formal Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) meeting. He shared his frustration about not being included in various levels of decision-making when it came to data-collection, intervention implementation, utilization of research-based resources, etc. with the leadership of the building during stimulated recall. He indicated that he would not ask to be involved but expected the building principal to include him due to his training and years of experience being involved in those types of activities.
A possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred as one of the teachers talked about Pam’s progress within the new reading curriculum of “Story Town”. The researcher noted that he asked a general question about the reading curriculum during the video recording and made note to follow-up during stimulated recall. In a response to a stimulated recall question, he indicated the following:

So we got a district initiative to uh use DIBELs and Maze 3 times a year and we have a couple people in that building, especially the reading teacher, who are trying to torpedo the stuff and so I wanted to find out what this teacher, what her take on it was so I am inserting a hidden agenda that Lynda (teacher) doesn’t know about or Kelly (other classroom teacher) doesn’t know about cause I want to know what these 2 teachers that I respect think and that is what I was doing before when I asked her about the Story Town and what her current opinion of it was. That was my whole purpose so I get the “lay of the land” so I know the politics of what the teachers in the building are thinking and doing about things so then I can relate that to the kid who I meet on and work with.

The reason this example may be an instance of tacit knowledge is in regard to his use of the problem-solving venue to gain additional information about building issues that are totally unrelated to the current case. As discussed previously, in order for tacit knowledge to be used, a “condition” must be met in order for the professional to engage in a particular “action”. In this case, he recognized the condition as one in which he could trust the information he would obtain from these teachers and therefore, initiated
the action of questioning them regarding their understanding of the new reading program. He used procedural knowledge (questioning during a meeting) to gain further understanding about issues surrounding the implementation of a new language arts curriculum. This understanding will assist him in future meetings (both formal and informal) as his questioning provided information about sensitive building-level issues.

Capability Statement:

- During problem-solving meetings able to ask unrelated questions to teachers in order to gain a better understanding of general building-level issues.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to ask political questions at appropriate times.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify the situation as one in which he can trust what teachers will say.

A second instance of tacit knowledge surrounds his ability to rule out various exclusionary factors as he continues to “get to know the student” through his line of questioning with the teachers. The researcher made a note to ask “what he was thinking” when he appeared to write down more notes as the teachers provided information; he did not ask any questions during this time. After a great deal of discussion surrounding Pam’s current academic strengths and weaknesses, work habits, and social functioning, he stated the following in response to a stimulated recall question:

Now we are getting some more information about life situations, cause I am thinking early on you know, you go into these things, at least I do (maybe it’s wrong) go into these things thinking about . . . well are they
interested in looking to see if the kid has a disability? Well now we are talking about kinds of exclusionary factors, OK, so I am trying to cover some ground about all of that stuff which is always the hard part -- cultural, socioeconomics, all those kinds of things. We have some information, as I say these girls are pretty reliable, but sounds to me like they are telling me now that the kid is on her own quite a bit or she doesn’t have too much in the way of adult support so I am a little, not getting any “aha moments” here.

The reason that this example may be tacit knowledge is that he implemented fluid-like decision-making (indirectly ruling out exclusionary factors for LD consideration) during the course of the meeting as he recognized the “new” discussion as one in which certain areas were being addressed, without necessarily asking specific questions related to cultural, socioeconomic, or environmental issues or asking “do you think this student is learning disabled?” The teachers were simply providing more background information and he used that discussion as a means to indirectly rule in or out important exclusionary considerations. As Wagner et al., (1999) suggest, this type of knowledge is the proverbial “rule of thumb” (p. 170) as it tends to shape what we do under given circumstances. Furthermore, and just like in the previous instance of tacit knowledge, conditions (background information was being provided addressing cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic issues) were met and an action (ruling in or out their impact on Pam’s learning) was executed. In this case, he was quickly able to rule out certain conditions that are necessary in the decision-making process; specifically,
whether or not he will suggest that the team move forward with an evaluation for a suspected disability.

Capability Statement:

- During problem-solving meetings, able to rule out exclusionary factors, without engaging in specific question-answer dialogue, while deciding if the student may be a child with a disability.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to classify types of information as it relates to possible exclusionary factors for LD determination.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information from multiple sources as necessary versus unnecessary in the decision-making process.

In a follow-up interview with him the researcher asked the following questions:

1. During the meeting, I noticed that you balanced a lot of necessary information. Do you realize that you do that?
   
   His response: I think it is somewhere in between automatic and conscious. I have a goal, plan of action, and focus on what is important and what isn’t. I want to reach a conclusion or diagnosis or theory. I usually am looking for an endpoint – not just casting about aimlessly.

2. How did you learn to handle large amounts of information?
   
   His response: Good question. Whew, I guess I was trained in the consultation model (one that is based on the team concept) and as a team member. But, a lot of it came from practice and the pressure to do the job and come up with a constructive action. The team wants something to change and that is where the
motivation comes – from taking the unknown and making it known. While I was trained as a team member, I also, I guess learned to be a team leader to help the process become known. And, I guess a sense of responsibility to help make things better.

3. How do you decide what to focus on (relevant vs. unnecessary)?

His response: Wow another really good question – I guess I look at all of the information and find what is salient. I look for patterns or a “model” that fits. I guess I go from general to hypothesis to gathering information but not just asking questions that fit – asking the ones that don’t. I guess the reason I am not answering your question very well is that it is like second nature. My goal is to find/seek the truth, to figure it out like detective work – to discover the unknown.

4. You also indicated that you utilize the consultation process to investigate building policies/procedures.

a) Do you engage in that type of investigation often?

His response: No, not that often. However, I was doing that for me. I had the benefit of working with two smart ladies and I wanted them to teach me. I planned to file it (the information about the new reading curriculum) away and use it later. Not being a teacher I need to learn/live vicariously through them.

b) When did you begin doing that?

His response: From the beginning (without hesitation). You have to identify strong people to get information from, especially since I wasn’t a teacher. If you were a teacher in the building and became a school psychologist your background would be different so I see myself needing to “go to school” at
times. It is important to network and hook-up with smart people who can help you out at times. We (districts) tend to look at outside “experts” to figure stuff out; we should look to our own people, the ones who are getting it done and ask them how they do it! Then replicate that in other places!!

5. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

His response: A lot of hands-on experience – send them out on their own and help them to shape the skills. It is important that we are not with them all the time because they will be afraid to say something for fear of being embarrassed. Place them with strong people (teachers, etc.) who are patient and not in a hurry to “get kids tested”. Put them out there and then ask “what did you learn” or “what about this”. There is no substitute for being on their own.

School Psychologist #2

At the time of the meeting, he had 16 years of experience as a school psychologist. His entire career was spent in the same urban school district. The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs of a 3rd grade male student, “Michael”, who was having difficulty in all academic areas. Further, the student was experiencing attentional and organizational difficulty which appeared to be impacting his academic performance. Team members included the school psychologist, the student’s mother, the referring teacher, a special education teacher, a guidance counselor, and a 1st grade teacher. The school psychologist was handed an academic protocol to score immediately prior to the start of the meeting. Although he did not demonstrate any frustration during
the meeting, he did share his concerns during the stimulated recall session immediately following. Due to that event, he spent approximately the first 10 minutes of the meeting scoring the protocol.

A possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred after the school psychologist described the results of the Kauffman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT). This was not the assessment he was scoring at the beginning of the meeting that caused frustration. However, the researcher noted that as he was explaining his results to mom, he stopped and said “Let’s start over”. It appeared that mom was having difficulty understanding the information that was shared by the school psychologist. In response to the researcher’s question, he indicated the following:

I am thinking that mom wants to make sense out of what I said and she is going more toward the feeling side where here I am talking more about the empirical side of the reporting. She doesn’t hear that, she has checked out. That really doesn’t . . .that what I just explained to her she is sort of missing the whole point of what I just tried to say. So we go back and we have to try and clear mom’s thinking as to what we just said. I apparently was not clear and I need to re-explain it.

The reason this may be an instance of tacit knowledge is that his ability to recognize mom’s misunderstanding, exclusively through her nonverbal behavior, most likely occurred after years of working with parents in a variety of different meetings and settings. Additionally, the use of tacit knowledge is “highly pattern driven” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 234) and suggests that when certain conditions are met, such as in this case a pattern of behavior on the mother’s part, an individual will execute actions to handle
those conditions and engage in a response (Patel et al., 1999). The procedural knowledge that he possesses directed his behavior in that he took time to re-explain the testing information so the parent had a firm understanding of how her son performed on a particular assessment. The parent’s understanding will ultimately help the problem-solving process as certain decisions may be made based on those results. Therefore, her understanding is very important in this process and prompted him to stop and re-explain before moving to the next step.

**Capability Statement:**

- During problem-solving meetings able to read non-verbal cues in order to determine when information needs to be re-explained to a parent for further understanding.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to classify parent nonverbal behavior as indicating confusion as opposed to impatience, anxiety, etc.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to anticipate what topics will be confusing to some parents.

The second instance of tacit knowledge is his description of his thought process surrounding the team’s decision to move this case to a formal Multi-Factored Evaluation (MFE). The decision came about 35 minutes into the meeting after the team had described Michael’s academic, motivational, and social concerns. At that time, the researcher noted that the school psychologist sat back in his chair, put his pen down, and asked if the team had any additional information. After being asked a question during stimulated recall, his comments were as follows:
I feel like I have an internal checklist that I go through in my head. If there is a problem with grades, then I look to see how it affects the home and if the student is getting homework done, if they have supportive learning there then that says to me that a 504 plan wouldn’t be an option. I try to go to those first. And if I think there is gonna be enough support, now, this particular teacher, the other piece that we do not have here is the intervention piece, it is not strong. This teacher is not good doing interventions. The older ones (teachers) have had a harder time with that; the younger ones (teachers) have been better. Our district put into place a teacher in every elementary to be an intervention specialist and it comes from the Obama . . .(meaning grant money). . . Back to ‘internal checklist’ is it happening at home, at school, how long has this been going on? What information we hadn’t even talked about the DIBELS (reading assessment) and I want that piece there. I want to see the intervention and how the student responded to the individual intervention. We have an intervention specialist and I want information from her; I would like to see her at the meeting but so often she is not invited.

The reason this example may be tacit knowledge is that he, like school psychologist #1, implemented fluid-like decision-making (indirectly ruling out exclusionary factors for various plans) during the course of the meeting as he recognized the discussion as one in which certain areas were being addressed, without necessarily asking specific questions related to accommodations in place, cultural, socioeconomic, or environmental issues or asking “do you think this student is learning disabled?”. The
team was simply providing additional information and he used that discussion as a means to indirectly rule in or out important considerations. As Wagner et al. (1999) suggest, this type of knowledge tends to shape what we do under given circumstances. Furthermore, and just like in previous instances of tacit knowledge, conditions (i.e., background information was being provided addressing cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic issues) were met and an action (ruling in or out their impact on Michael’s learning) was executed. In this case, he was quickly able to rule out certain conditions that are necessary in the decision-making process.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to rule out courses of action based upon categorical information (pursue a 504 plan, implement intervention)

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information such as accommodations, environmental concerns, socio-economic factors, etc.) as to their impact on student’s progress

In a follow-up interview with him the researcher asked the following questions:

During the meeting, you indicated that you were frustrated with the team because someone handed you a protocol to score as the team was assembling. Yet, your frustration was not observable.

1. Do you have many instances where you deal with emotion during the course of a meeting?

His response: Absolutely, I find that I am continuously sublimating feelings during a meeting. As a matter of fact, I had a meeting this morning in which I did
just that (sublimate my emotions). A parent caused a lot of anxiety regarding a reevaluation for special education services and involved not only the principal, but the superintendent and an outside advocate agency. Even though I was doing all that I could to locate her, complete the reevaluation and stay with state guidelines, she was still unhappy. So, finally today, we had the meeting. Mom showed up ten minutes late with her son who was just released from jail this past week. The entire team (Assistant principal, SE teacher, GE teacher, SP, and advocate from the Ability Center) was present and we were able to complete the evaluation. I was very nice to mom throughout the entire meeting, shook her hand at the end and thanked her for coming in. Sublimating our feelings as school psychologists is the nature of the job; we have to do it in order to work with team members and get things done. I was very frustrated with the mom because she does not respect the system or what I was trying to do for her son. The lack of respect really bothers me and yet it is part of our daily lives sometimes. Even though I explain that I am here to help and work with you, parents still remain disrespectful of the process. Our only choice in those instances is to sublimate our feelings and proceed through.

2. How did you learn to manage emotion/frustration and yet stay focused on information?

His response: My intern supervisor was a master at that, hiding her feelings. She would stress over and over how important it is to hide your feelings during the meeting.
You also indicated that you “have an internal checklist” that you go through in your head during a meeting to rule out exclusionary factors/irrelevant information.

1. How do you manage to handle large amounts of information and still engage in problem solving or scoring?

His response: Umm, take notes, listen intently, observe body language, preview the file before coming into the meeting. Having the background information, current teacher information, and listening intently at the meeting allows me to combine all 3 sources of information and come up with a hypothesis.

2. How did you learn to handle large amounts of information presented at a meeting?

His response: Primarily through experience and doing the same things over and over again (active listening, taking notes, identifying the problem). Some of it also came from my school psychology training program. The program coordinator was adamant that we identify a problem, not admire it. So, we spent a lot of time practicing how to do that, take lots of information and define the problem.

3. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

His response: Well, shadow an experienced school psychologist for a period of time (like a semester), watch them, monitor them (what they say, what they do, how they respond); then switch and have the novice or intern take the lead and the experienced school psychologist watch and monitor them. After meetings, then debrief about what occurred, what you saw, how things went, if they could have
been improved. Basically, observe the master, have the master observe you, and then debrief about what was observed in both situations.

School Psychologist #3

At the time of this IAT meeting, she had 15 years of experience as a school psychologist. She was currently working part-time for a rural school district. The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs of a 6th grade student, “Ann”, who was struggling with reading comprehension. There were also concerns with attention and an inability to focus in the classroom. IAT team members included the school psychologist, principal, parents, the student’s social studies, science, and math teachers.

A possible example of tacit knowledge surrounded the discussion of Ann’s volume in the classroom upon being asked to answer a question. At approximately 3:09 minutes into the video recording, the science teacher said that the student rarely speaks in his class and that when she is called on she is so soft spoken that he can barely understand her. He asked mom if she sees the same things at home. During this exchange, the school psychologist smiled as she continued taking notes. At that time, the researcher stopped the video and asked, “What were you thinking”. She indicated the following:

I was going to say as far as in the classroom to that when she is so soft spoken maybe it is a focusing issue that she really wasn’t on track with the teacher and so when they ask her she really isn’t sure about the response so she says it very quietly hoping they don’t catch it all. I think that is just a thought.
This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that she was able to classify information that may not be considered typical of a particular disorder as pertinent to a possible outcome or area of consideration. Accordingly, tacit knowledge allows the professional to recognize certain conditions and execute a series of actions (Sternberg, 1998). In this situation, she recognized that Ann’s behavior may be due to another issue, which she discusses later as a lack of confidence, not just an attention problem. Therefore, she chose not to ask additional questions about focusing, or lack thereof, in science class. Undoubtedly, this is a pattern of student behavior that she has most likely observed over many years of experience and it may not be the direct result of an attention problem.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to classify behavior both within the context of a disorder (ADD) as well as other issues that may impact the student.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) Able to consider the context of behavior when arriving at a possible hypothesis.

Another possible example of tacit knowledge surrounded the discussion of Ann’s response to an intervention. At approximately 6:36 minutes Ann’s math teacher, with her science teacher adding a few comments, was discussing her organizational skills and that she was a little concerned, especially because as a 6th grader she is expected to change classes every 45 minutes. The researcher stopped the video and asked “What were you thinking” due to the nature of the discussion and that the school psychologist stopped taking notes as the teacher was sharing information. However, upon responding she referred to information that was shared about 40 seconds prior and stated:
I guess I am not as worried about her organization, she seems to, I mean, I have a lot of kids at this grade level (6th grade) that teachers say they just don’t follow through on anything. I hear that she is following through so I guess I would not be as concerned about organization as in fact it sounds like if she could see herself and could see her progress, by using the graphs, I think that was a really good intervention, so I would probably tap into that with other classes and maybe with other teachers, that maybe she needs a visual (support) to see her progress which may help her with her self-confidence.

The comment about the graph was shared by the math teacher who informed the team that she was using graphs to encourage students to “beat” their multiplication facts timed assessments. Further, she shared that Ann had made significant improvement upon utilization of the graph and that she really seemed to respond positively to charting her scores.

This may be an example of tacit knowledge in that she, the school psychologist, was able to recognize the value of a statement made by the math teacher, almost in passing, as a plausible intervention strategy for the student to use in other classes. Even though the math teacher’s comments appeared to be just general information about the student, she was able to zero in on the importance of the statement and identify it as a viable intervention strategy. As discussed previously, in order for tacit knowledge to be used, a “condition” must be met in order for the professional to engage in a particular “action”. In this case, she recognized the condition as one in which the behavior Ann
was demonstrating a pattern of behavior that may not be related to ADD. She then determined that the information shared may be used as a possible intervention strategy for another class.

*Capability Statement:*

- During a problem-solving meeting able to determine that a particular intervention meant for another purpose, but that provided feedback to the student about her progress, was providing indirect evidence that a student’s organization problems were not a major issue.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During a problem-solving meeting able to identify key information that may lead to further intervention and student progress.

2) During a problem-solving meeting able to classify necessary from extraneous information as large amounts of information is being shared.

In a follow-up interview with her the researcher asked the following questions:

1. During the meeting, I noticed that you were able to identify key pieces of information, however, you did not necessarily ask follow-up questions until a few minutes later. Are you aware that you do that?

   *Her response:* No, not at all. There is so much information being presented at the time that I was processing it; hearing other things that were said. As new information came out then I acted on it because it was pertinent.

2. Do you do that often, “hold” onto information for awhile before asking additional questions?
Her response: That is hard to say – I tend to like to put all the information on the table and then do something with it instead of just acting on one thing. I tend to be more global and get lots of input and then prioritize the information – round robin and input ideas, then zero in on key pieces of information.

3. How did you learn to do that?

Her response: Raising 5 kids!!! I don’t know, definitely did not learn it in college. School psychology programs did not focus in on specifics, more general. Probably I learned it in management before becoming a school psychologist. I worked in an office setting for 12 years and all but three of them were in a leadership/manager position.

During the meeting, I also noticed that you were able to take the information and develop a hypothesis about a possible intervention.

1. Do you do that often?

Her response: I probably take the lead on that more than not. However, the information leading to the hypothesis came from the input of others (team). I worked with a great reading interventionist and special educators who often helped in the development of an intervention or what intervention we should focus on but that hypothesis often came from me.

2. How did you learn to do that?

Her response: Again, being in management before school psychology helped me learn how to listen and lead a meeting. School psychology programs did not tell you how to manage a meeting, at least not during my training. So, my background really helped in this aspect of my job. Another thing that helped was
my internship. Their IAT process was great. The meetings were organized and very well structured. I often used their structure (assigning everyone a task – facilitator, time keeper, recorder) in my schools to help the meeting stay focused.

3. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

Her response: I think in terms of structuring a meeting, giving them a matrix to follow really helps – like the one from my internship. That keeps things much more organized and on track. They need to realize that many meetings take place during teacher planning time so you don’t have a lot of time and you must be organized. I also think they need to observe a lot of meetings, both good and bad. This will help them see the benefit of a really well-run meeting versus one that is chaotic and unorganized.

School Psychologist #4

At the time of this IAT meeting, he had 28 years of experience. He had been working for the same Educational Service Center (ESC) throughout the course of his career; however, he had served many different districts that utilize the ESC for school psychology services. He had served as a school psychology intern field supervisor for over 10 years. The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs and concerns regarding a 3rd grade female student named “Ashley”. The team (not including the school psychologist) previously met and put a few interventions in place to address her attitude, motivation (lack thereof) and effort. Ashley was retained in 2nd grade. The team
included the principal, parent, school psychologist, school psychology intern, referring
teacher, and guidance counselor.

During the meeting he seemed somewhat frustrated in that it was taking too much
time to get anywhere and when he thought that the team had made some progress,
something new would be added. He did lean in the direction of an “attention” problem
and that it did come up from various sources but he was not convinced that it was a
clinically significant issue. One matter that came up in the discussion was that last year
Ashley would go to her grandmother’s house after school and it seemed she was able to
get her work done. Now Ashley does not go to her grandmother’s as much. He thought
that Ashley’s mother may not be seeing the relationship between getting more work done
and going to her grandmother’s house after school. During this time, the school
psychologist appeared to convey a look of confusion in his facial expressions. Following
is what he said, during stimulated recall, in response to the question: “What were you
thinking at that time?”

I was thinking that mom um said they don’t go to grandma’s as much
and I’m thinking well wait a minute going to grandma’s helps the kids
and now they’re not going to grandma’s as much so are things at home
better than they were in November so that we don’t need to go to
grandma’s anymore? Or is this just a random, this has nothing to do with
helping the kids it’s just random that they’re not going to grandma’s and
it seems to be just a random thing (oh, we don’t go there as much
anymore) and its OK you are not going there as much anymore but that’s
when they got their work done so are they getting their work done at
home? I am trying to get mom to see the association between going to grandma’s and getting the work done and I’m trying to find out from mom also is that still a problem at home.

This is likely an example of tacit knowledge in that he classified the situation as one in which Ashley’s mother may not be recognizing an important factor affecting her child and he wanted her to understand what may be going on. His classification is likely based on tacit knowledge in that it is doubtful that he could be very precise as to exactly why he thought that Ashley’s mother did not perceive the implications of Ashley’s behavior at her grandmother’s house. He classified the situation, that is, certain conditions were met (mom was not acknowledging the importance of a support system for her daughter) and an action (additional questioning) was executed. Undoubtedly, he has participated in many parent meetings in his career and has learned the importance of parents acknowledging situations that may help improve their child’s academic performance.

Capability Statement:

- During problem-solving meetings able to determine (classify) when parents are not understanding the importance of a factor affecting their child.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to determine a parent’s reaction to information being shared.
2) During problem-solving meetings able to acknowledge when a student positively responds to a support structure.

A second possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred about half-way through the meeting. The team was discussing concerns of the student when the parent began sharing her frustrations that she tries to have her children follow a schedule but that her husband lets them do whatever they want. The school psychologist’s focus shifted from the team to mom as he changed body positions and looked directly at her as she shared her concerns. Following is what he said during stimulated recall:

I’m thinking that this mom needs a little propping up because she’s been telling us the whole meeting how difficult it is to get the kids to do anything and then she drops on us that dad just lets the kids do whatever they wanted to. And so it’s mom that kinda holds the kid’s feet to the fire and I’m acknowledging that to her by saying well you know the price that you pay for that is that makes you the bad guy in your kid’s relationship and to acknowledge that there’s a price to pay for that. (pause) Just supporting mom, giving mom some support there.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that the school psychologist was able to quickly and efficiently switch his focus from problem-solving to supportive for Ashley’s mother. He was able to classify the parent’s comments as information that required support and attention in order to indirectly assist the student. After all, if the parent feels supported and continues to follow-through with rules and expectations the
student is likely to improve in school. As Sternberg (1999) described and as demonstrated in other examples of tacit knowledge in this study, the utilization of tacit knowledge is “highly pattern driven” (p. 234) and suggests that when certain conditions are met, an individual will choose actions to manage those conditions and engage in a response (Patel et al., 1999). His procedural knowledge directed his behavior in that he spent time validating mom for her efforts to make things better at home. Again, it is unlikely that he could be very precise in describing why he thinks it necessary to switch from a problem-solving orientation to a supportive orientation. It is probable that he has learned to do so from years of experience.

**Capability Statement:**

- During problem-solving meetings able to effectively shift from a problem-solving orientation to a supportive orientation based on parents’ needs in order to validate their issues or concerns which indirectly impact student success.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to recognize parent concerns/needs
2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify situations that may require different courses of action

In a follow-up interview with him the researcher asked the following questions:

During the meeting, you appeared to spend a great deal of time gauging the parent’s reaction to information being shared.

1. Are you aware that you devote a lot of time observing and responding to parent reactions?
His response: Yes, I think I do it consciously. I monitor all team members during a meeting but really focus on parents because of the emotional attachment. If there is going to be a problem it is usually because the parent will have an emotional response.

2. Do you feel you engage in this activity a lot during parent meetings?

His response: No, because sometimes I miss it. I will look over and the teacher will be handing the parent a box of Kleenex. I try to be conscious of it but I don’t overdo it either by asking the parent every 2 minutes, “How do you feel?” So, I monitor it without letting it interrupt the meeting.

3. How did you learn to do that?

His response: Probably in my training in counseling, both individual and group, in terms of learning to be sensitive to group processes. And, that you have to pay attention to nonverbal behaviors.

During the meeting, you also appeared to “switch gears” and move from problem-solving to supporting the parent. You said, “I’m thinking that this mom needs a little propping up. . .”

1. Are you aware that you switch gears during meetings and move from one mode to another?

His response: It just happens – I don’t think I’m going to switch gears, it just happens.

2. Do you find that you do that with other team members (teachers, principals, etc.)?

His response: I suppose I do, again, I just flow with the meeting and provide
input but don’t think I am in problem-solving mode and now I need to shift and be supportive.

3. How did you learn to do that?

   His response: Hmmm, I don't know. Probably through practice and experience in working with groups and many problem-solving teams. Working with so many teams through the years is probably how I learned.

4. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

   His response: During the meeting, I take notes about verbal and nonverbal behavior as well as the pros and cons of the meeting. Then I meet with the intern(s) and we debrief and talk about the questions.

School Psychologist #5

At the time of the IAT meeting he had 25 years of experience. He had spent the majority of his career working for a large, urban district. The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the concerns of a 5th grade male student, “Luke”, who was experiencing difficulty at school. Luke appeared to be very unmotivated and angry while at school. He was not completing any homework and often was observed to disrupt the class (talking out, out of his seat, etc.). He had returned to the school at the beginning of the year after having moved to Alabama the previous spring. Meeting participants included the school psychologist, the assistant principal, two special education teachers, an occupational therapist, a 1st grade teacher and the referring 5th grade teacher.
A possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred near the beginning of the meeting as the team was discussing an issue they felt was important. The researcher noted that he sat back in his chair and looked up toward the ceiling. During stimulated recall, he responded to the question “What were you thinking?” as follows:

I’m thinking now, should I go somewhere with this, this whole thing about the gloves and the mittens? Should I start asking them questions about… do you guys see any meaning in this? Do you think there’s a reason? And then I had the thought well, I’m not going to do that because I’m afraid I’ll go off on a tangent. And, I’m worried the team tends to go off on tangents sometimes so I don’t want to be the source of a tangent.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that he was able to classify a situation (pattern recognition) as one that may go off course of discussion by simply asking a question. He refrained from asking a question in order to keep the team on course, as they were navigating through problem-solving, knowing they had limited time and much more to cover before completing the meeting. Further, he acknowledged that the team “. . .tends to go off on tangents. . .” which suggests that he has observed this behavior before and realizes the consequences of allowing it to occur.

**Capability Statement:**

- During problem-solving meetings able to classify a situation as one in which team members will be likely to get distracted from the important issue and go off on a tangent.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:
1) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information that is not necessary and does not require additional questioning.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to recognize when team members might get easily distracted by irrelevant information.

Another possible source of tacit knowledge is his decision not to participate in the discussion out of concern that it would put the focus on him to solve the problem. As the discussion continued and the team began brainstorming possible intervention ideas, he became increasingly quiet and stayed out of the discussion. He literally sat back in his chair for a few minutes and did not take notes or volunteer information. During stimulated recall, he indicated the following:

That again, I am not feeling like I have to say something, I don’t need to say something, because as long as they’re leading that’s exactly what I want them to do. And I’m deliberately not commenting because I don’t want to pull the focus onto me. ‘Cause one of my concerns has always been that when there’s a concern, they always turn to me and want me to solve it. So I kinda set this whole thing up when we originally did it but then I’m not trying to hold back deliberately to give them ownership…and that’s always a challenge.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge because he decided to withhold comments in order to allow the team to solve the problem. He has learned that it is very easy for team members to “look to the school psychologist” to solve the problem by providing an intervention idea or suggestion. He classified the situation (pattern recognition) as one in which his active participation could be a distraction and perhaps
prevent the team from being more effective. His disengagement from the process is paramount for that to take place.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to effectively disengage from the problem-solving process in order that teachers step up and take the lead with planning stages of intervention design.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to recognize when teachers are taking the lead.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify when it is appropriate to step-back and refrain from volunteering information.

He was unavailable for the follow-up interview at the time of data analysis and interpretation.

School Psychologist #6

At the time of the meeting, she had 35 years of experience as a school psychologist. She spent the majority of her career working for an ESC and serving a small, rural school. She has served as a school psychology intern field supervisor for over 10 years. This was an initial IAT meeting for a second grade student, “Lauren”, who had been failing since the beginning of the year. She was familiar with Lauren as she had noticed a few concerns last year during an unrelated classroom observation. She reported her concerns to the principal and the nurse became involved. She did not share any of her information from last year during this team meeting as she did not feel it was the appropriate venue. However, she did indicate that it appeared that the behaviors were
still occurring. The team included the principal, speech-language pathologist, school psychologist, school psychology intern, Title I reading teacher, intervention specialist, 1st grade teacher, Kindergarten teacher, and the referring teacher. Parents were not involved with this meeting.

A possible source of tacit knowledge surrounds the interaction that she had already encountered with the student. During stimulated recall she explained that she had indirectly interacted with the student last year. She was in a 1st grade classroom observing another student and noticed some atypical behavior from Lauren. She reported her observational findings, concerns, and impressions to the principal who followed through with a course of action. Upon discussing similar concerns with the student this year, she commented as follows when asked the question, “What were you thinking” which was asked at that point because the researcher noted a change in her body posture during the meeting:

Well seeing as there is a good question I really wish we weren’t such a, I really wanted to deal more with what is… what has been going on with her. I didn’t think it was the venue to do it. Um and I really saw that as the crux of the issue. (pause) and I thought Paula raised a question, could she be… um if there was some follow through and if there was some counseling going on and the state support services… there was this whole part to me that was unknown about what might be critical for her (long pause) and it didn’t seem like the venue to deal with it. And I think sometimes you have that you know especially with social… with possible issues at home, you know it’s not the venue.
This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that she was able to classify the situation as inappropriate to share sensitive information with the team. While this information may be pertinent to the student’s academic functioning, she determined that it was better to withhold the information for possible issues such as privacy, judgment of the parent by team members, etc. While some may contend that she should have shared the information, she used her professional judgment and opted not to under those circumstances. Since tacit knowledge is “highly pattern driven” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 234), her experience has shaped her decision in that when a condition was met (pattern recognition), her response was not to disclose the information she had about Lauren as she decided it was more a risk than a benefit to the problem-solving process.

**Capability Statement:**

- During problem-solving meetings able to classify appropriate venues to discuss certain behavioral concerns and/or environmental issues.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to refrain from adding crucial information to a meeting that may be harmful in the end for the student and/or family.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information that may cause harm to the student.

A second possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred near the beginning of the meeting and it included her ability to tune out information. She was observed to have “removed” herself from actively listening to the teacher as this teacher continued to share information that was irrelevant to the process. The information appeared to be general
complaints as opposed to information that could be used to help design intervention strategies. During stimulated recall she explained the following:

I think I tuned her out because this is where I’m beginning to really process and think about that whole social and emotional… how much are consistency? How much are focus? I mean that’s kind of what’s becoming primary in my mind. Okay how do we adjust that? And what’s being done to adjust that? Um I think that’s when Carmen brought up that she was seeing Kelly, the counselor. Which I was saying okay that’s good. So I mean that’s what I was kind of going through… I was kind of tuning her out. [Prompt: so at this point you are kind of switching, you’re moving away from what she’s saying about the academics and more towards…] yeah, well it had no value for me and so I was kind of going somewhere else…I think…at that moment in time you know…

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that the school psychologist classified information as not helpful and therefore “tuned out” additional information that was being shared by the teacher at that time. This ability has been developed over many years of being involved in a process in which one learns to identify what information is useful to the process and what information is just general information the teacher feels is necessary to share but has no bearing on the decision-making process. Classifying information as not helpful, even though imprecise, is a result of pattern recognition. While sometimes the reasons to classify information as unhelpful may be explicit, there
are no doubt many instances when the information is not that explicit. It would be in the latter instances when tacit knowledge would be used.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to disregard information that does not lend itself to effective intervention design.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to process information previously shared while team members continued to add new information.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information that requires active listening.

In a follow-up interview with her the researcher asked the following questions:

During consultation, I noticed that you did not share information with the team regarding the case. It appeared that the information was sensitive in nature but could have impacted the team’s decision.

1) Do you utilize that strategy often?

Her response: Yes and no. In this case the information that I had was very sensitive to her/about her. However, I have many occasions where I have information that has been shared in confidence and I am left with a dilemma of what to do (share or not). It is hard because we have a role in which people (teachers, administrators, parents) come to us and share a lot of sensitive information and will say “keep this between you and me!” As a professional you need to weigh that and not divulge information. This tends to happen mostly with adults involved in the case, not necessarily the student (like in this case).
2) Why was it so important for this case?

Her response: It was definitely information that was sensitive for the student and it was not information that I could share with this team at the time. Although I trust the team and believe that they are very professional, I did not think it was in the best interest of the child to share the information and it was my opinion that it was not going to impact the decisions of the team.

3) During the meeting, I noticed that you began to “tune” the referring teacher out and concentrate on other information. Do you do that often/regularly in meetings?

Her response: In general, I really have to focus on every individual speaking because I have auditory processing issues and really have to pay attention. However, because I have been around a long time I find that sometimes teacher(s) tend to pull out a “script” and it is kinda the same information being said over again in a different way. That is when I tend to tune things out. I am not so sure with this case that it was because of a script, but what she was saying was irrelevant. No, I don’t do it often.

4) How did you learn to do that?

Her response: Many times you find yourself in the same “situation” even though the student is different. So, experience and numerous times you hear similar things for teachers. Plus, it is also that you spend time with the same people and know what they are going to say because you have heard it before.

5) How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?
Her response: I am not sure! After a meeting, a debrief process/session in which I would share my thoughts, talk about what happened. I would get their input first. I would ask how it might have gone versus how it went. Then I would share what I should have focused on possibly instead of what I did, maybe checking myself to make sure that I did not miss anything or could have done things differently. I never devalue what a teacher shares with the team. However, I would share what I think may have been more beneficial from the teacher.

School Psychologist #7

At the time of this consultation meeting, she had 34 years of experience as a school psychologist. She has worked her entire career for the same school district. The purpose of this consultation meeting was to discuss the learning concerns for a 2nd grade student named “Natalie”. This is the first consultation meeting concerning Natalie. Meeting participants included the school psychologist, referring teacher, and her student-teacher.

A possible instance of tacit knowledge is in regard to her questions surrounding Natalie’s math and written expression skills. She continued to ask questions that were helping her to determine a course of action because she had recognized a pattern between the two areas that are linked to a particular disorder (nonverbal learning disability). During stimulated recall she commented as follows when asked “what were you thinking”:

I was wondering whether the lack of organization and difficulty was just with the writing and the math but it seems to be like a
characteristic of her completely to have a lack of organization…

(pause) not being able to keep track of things.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that the school psychologist classified information being shared as indicative of a larger concern for the student. This ability has been developed over many years of being involved in a process in which one learns to identify information that is related to a specific area (i.e., a math issue, a spelling concern, a reading fluency problem) versus classifying information that impacts the student’s overall academic functioning. Classifying information into a larger context is a result of pattern recognition. While sometimes the reasons to classify information may be explicit, there are no doubt many instances when the information is not that explicit. It would be in the latter instances when tacit knowledge would be used.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to recognize patterns among various academic skill deficits as they relate to nonverbal learning disabilities.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to classify information being shared as indicative of a general functioning problem as opposed to a specific skill deficit.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to begin or continue a line of questioning that assists in accepting or rejecting a hypothesis.

Another possible instance of tacit knowledge includes her ability to arrive at a decision point very early on into the meeting, specifically after only five minutes and forty seconds of talking with the teachers, she stopped taking notes and began putting her things away. During stimulated recall, she indicated the following:
That she’s compliant and doing the reinforcing activities it’s just she can’t seem to… to get everything together. She’s probably doing it with help from mom at home and that she’s not putting it all together here at school. I’m also thinking shit, I’m going to have to test this kid! (laughs) that’s what I’m thinking about right about then going shit! I thought this was going to be a consult for next year (laughs) (prompt: okay so at this point…) you wrote that down! (it’s being recorded. prompt: okay so at this point you’re thinking about course of action) yeah.

Her ability to recognize certain characteristics as indicators that there may be neurological issues impacting the student suggests that this may be an instance of tacit knowledge use. For the school psychologist, recognizing that she struggles with organization of math facts prompted her to ask a question about her organization of written work. Other characteristics that were shared included her confidence in reading but lack thereof in math. Sternberg (1999) indicated that the use of tacit knowledge is “highly pattern driven” (p. 234) and suggests that when certain conditions are met, an individual will engage in an action to handle those conditions (Patel et al., 1999). Her ability to quickly reach a decision point after a very short time talking with the teacher and asking only five questions is a good indication that she recognized a specific pattern of behavior and she was going to initiate an evaluation in response.

*Capability Statement:*
• During problem-solving meetings able to quickly and efficiently ask a series of questions that allow for the arrival of timely decision-making.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to recognize information as possible characteristics of a neurological issue.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to organize questions in a fluid-like manner that elicits necessary information.

In a follow-up interview with her the researcher asked the following questions:

1. During consultation, I noticed that you asked very few questions before coming up with a course of action? How were you able to arrive at that point so quickly?
   
   Her response: In thinking about that case, I remember thinking about the association between math calculation and writing being linked; they occur in the same parts of the brain. Specifically, for that student, I realized as the teacher talked that she was demonstrating a significant gap between her ability to read and her ability to do math. Since math and writing go hand-in-hand I knew that she was experiencing difficulty that may be caused by a learning disability. I recognized a pattern that I have seen many, many times. Although it is unusual to have a math disability, I have definitely seen the pattern over the years.

2. When did you learn to do that?

   Her response: Hmmm, a combination of explicit knowledge (gained through professional development, reading information, classes, etc.) and experience in “seeing” the pattern. I basically just generalize it from case to case.

3. How often do you utilize that skill?
Her response: All the time! The accumulation of cases over the years and my skills that have developed during that time allows me to very quickly come to conclusions even though I don’t ask a lot of questions.

4. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

Her response: I would provide them with a variety of cases to review in which they compare diagnosis with case information. I would also provide them with a list of questions an experienced school psychologist would ask. I would have them use these questions as they read through case information. The key is that they have a variety of cases which is a lot easier in a larger district. I think meeting with them to discuss questions that would be or could be asked as information presents itself is important.

School Psychologist #8

At the time of this problem-solving meeting, she had 10 years of school psychology experience. She was currently working for a suburban school district. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the development concerns for a 2 ½ year old child (“Gage”) as he transitions from early intervention to preschool services (if he qualifies). The meeting took place in the parents’ home and included the mother, Gage, school psychologist, family service coordinator, and primary service provider.

A possible instance of tacit knowledge occurred in regard to the mother’s description of Gage’s behavior in which the school psychologist used follow-up questions and observations of the child in the natural environment to validate (or refute) the mother’s concern. During the meeting, the researcher noted that the school
psychologist stopped taking notes and watched the child as his mom asked him to do something. Upon being asked “what were you thinking?” she indicated the following during stimulated recall:

When a parent says bad attitude, I just note it. But we also know that a lot of it has to do with environmental and not necessarily you know the child but it could also be the mother said he understood everything but the question is does he really understand everything. So there’s a lot of things I let a parent tell me… the child has a bad attitude, but then we go on and describe it a little bit more or see what he’s doing and…you know, it also tells me too if mom is just sitting as opposed to getting up to do things when he’s not complying. So I’m watching how she responds to him and when she says that. So now I’ve got kind of a little thought going through my mind okay let’s keep an eye out for how she handles the situation, how he responds while I’m there.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge in that she was able to classify the situation as one in which you cannot take what the parent says as truth regarding the child’s bad attitude. After many years of working with parents, especially in the natural environment of their home, one learns to recognize patterns in parenting style. As indicated early and in previous instances of tacit knowledge, when certain conditions are met, an individual will choose specific tacit knowledge to handle those conditions and engage in a response (Patel et al., 1999). She recognized that the mother’s description of the child’s behavior may be slightly inaccurate and therefore, she looked to observational data to support her characterizations. Further, she was able to classify that the chosen
parenting style may be ineffective in working with Gage which caused the mother to feel that he has a “bad attitude”.

Capability Statement:

- During problem-solving meetings able to classify parent information as accurate.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to use observational date to validate general descriptions of behavior.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to classify parent as a “good historian”.

A second instance of tacit knowledge includes her decision to move to the floor and sit next to the parent. After a few minutes of talking with the mother about general information and gathering additional background information, she deliberately moved from the couch to the floor. During stimulated recall, upon being asked, “What were you thinking?” she responded accordingly:

Alright I want to have it so that the parent sees directly what I’m talking about. I brought visual charts so that she’s not just hearing it but she’s seeing how the process is going. When I put myself below the parents first of all if we are at a table I would have been across from her or more likely I would have been beside her. But since where she was, I wanted to make sure that I was still in that position that we could share back and forth and have that back and forth conversation as opposed to looking around to other people. So I was putting myself in that situation. So also we find that when you go into the home you have to feel comfortable with how the family is and so
as you noticed when we…going back when we came in we took off shoes and that was a family kind of situation that that’s where they’re feeling and also then um (pause) I had to dress and feel comfortable to sit on the floor. Because often times we do meetings on floors, couches, or whatever so the concept here is trying to meet the family where they’re at to get a sense of where they’re at so that’s…I moved so the conversation would flow back and forth.

This may be an instance of tacit knowledge because she decided to move her position in order to better engage the parent and possibly build trust. She has learned that it is important for the parent to feel comfortable and at ease as the team is “assessing” the student. Because this assessment occurred in the home, she ensured that her physical location was one that would make the parent feel comfortable. She classified the situation (pattern recognition) as one in which her proximity to the parent would assist to establish a positive relationship. Since tacit knowledge is “highly pattern driven” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 234), her experience shaped her decision in that when a condition was met (pattern recognition), her response was to move herself to a different location within the room to better engage the parent in the information she needed to share. Inadvertently this decision may assist in building trust and an effective working relationship with the family.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to classify that in order to engage in a back and forth conversation with the mother, it was important and necessary to move her position.
Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1) During problem-solving meetings able to identify when it is necessary to maintain eye contact with the parent.

2) During problem-solving meetings able to recognize the development of trust as necessary.

In a follow-up interview with her the researcher asked the following questions:

During consultation, I noticed that it was important that you were literally “on the same level” as the parents?

1. Is that something that you engage in often?

Her response: Yes, I find that when I am involved in that type of consultation, I do get down to the parent’s level. So, yeah, because that is where they are and it helps to remove barriers. Physically being at their level also helps to build trust. When I worked as an itinerant teacher it became standard operating procedure, just like when I talk with kids, I get down to their level. I find that while I always dress professional (no jeans like the county agency representatives), I don’t dress in heels and really “dressy” clothes because I want the parents to feel comfortable.

2. You indicated that you listen to the parents’ concerns (child has a bad attitude) but look for indicators throughout the observation to support their “position.” Do you notice that you engage in that often? How often?

Her response: Usually it gives you a feel for how accurate the parent is at reporting their child’s behavior. You can see if the parent is a “poor historian” and if their comments are aligning with the child’s behavior. Plus it allows you to
be objective. I always do this during problem-solving meetings with parents. It is very valuable in gathering data about the student.

3. Where did you learn to do this?

Her response: Regarding observation – during my teacher training, I had to take a course in observation so that has been in place since undergrad. The relationship building stuff I learned in counseling courses. Some of it you do naturally (like sitting on the floor at the parents level) because of your personality. However, you can’t/shouldn’t do that stuff if you aren’t comfortable. Parents will see right through it. You have to establish trust with them. I learned a lot of it through experience (as a teacher, family service coordinator, and school psychologist). I guess a lot of it came from experience.

4. How would you assist an intern or novice school psychologist to develop those skills?

Her response: Providing practice! Have them go and observe, debrief with them and have them explain their experience. The most important thing is that they learn to be objective, be exact and base their ideas on facts and specific things they observed. With families, they must learn that they are people first and how you treat them will help to build trust; they (families) must be treated with respect. I guess just have them “experience” the observation piece as much as possible because those skills (observational) have to honed and that only happens through experience. It is trying to align what they hear with what they see and asking themselves “is it making sense”. So, debriefing with them will help.
While only two instances of tacit knowledge were presented in this section for each school psychologist, many others were noted during data analysis which suggests that school psychologists utilize tacit knowledge to navigate through the problem-solving process. In addition, they were able to verify how they learned to “do” certain tasks during a consultation meeting as well as how they would go about extending that knowledge to intern or novice school psychologists. The next chapter will discuss tacit knowledge that was shared by participants. Further, the chapter will describe how this information is similar to other professions in which the use of tacit knowledge has been studied extensively. Finally, the information obtained will be used to illustrate the importance of tacit knowledge to the field of school psychology as well as how it could be used within the field to guide experiences and facilitate discussions among school psychologists.
Chapter Five

Discussion

This research indicated that school psychologists used tacit knowledge to navigate through the problem-solving process and assisted school-based teams to find solutions for students experiencing academic and behavioral difficulty. While each participant’s experiences within the problem-solving process was different in terms of team composition, presenting problem, and outcome, each one was able to use tacit knowledge to help guide the team through the process. The following section will ascertain common features identified among the participants within this study, find parallels between this research and the research of tacit knowledge within other fields such as management and medicine, and identify the importance of tacit knowledge among the ever-changing role of today’s school psychologists as well as for the school psychologists of tomorrow.

Tacit Knowledge Shared Among School Psychologists

In reviewing all of the protocols and analyzing the data gathered to identify possible instances of tacit knowledge, several commonalities were identified among participating school psychologists. An area in which participating school psychologists exhibited common practices regarding the use of tacit knowledge was in the consideration and ultimate dismissal of exclusionary factors during their meeting. Exclusionary factors must be ruled out as the primary reason for a child’s underachievement or lack of academic progress prior to the determination of a specific learning disability based on the Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies serving Children with Disabilities (2008). Exclusionary factors include: a visual, hearing, or motor disability; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; cultural factors;
environmental or economic disadvantage; or Limited English Proficiency. In addition, prior to suspecting that a child may have a specific learning disability, consultation teams must determine that the suspected learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math. Teams are expected to determine that the child has received appropriate instruction in general education and appropriate assessments were employed in order to measure the student’s progress in general education.

During the course of stimulated recall sessions, two of the participants indicated how they went about ruling out various exclusionary factors as a part of their involvement in the problem-solving process. School Psychologist #1 indicated the following:

Now we are getting some more information about life situations, cause I am thinking early on you know go into these things, at least I do (maybe It’s wrong) go into these things thinking about well are they interested in looking to see if the kid has a disability; well now we are talking about kinds of exclusionary factors OK so I am trying to cover some ground about all of that stuff which is always the hard part -- cultural, socioeconomics, all those kinds of things.

Further, School Psychologist #2 said:

I feel like I have an internal checklist that I go through in my head. If there is a problem with grades, then I look to see how it affects the home and if the student is getting homework done, if they have supportive learning there then that says to me that a 504 plan
wouldn’t be an option. I try to go to those first. And if I think there is
gonna be enough support, now, this particular teacher, the other piece
that we do not have here is the intervention piece, it is not strong.
This teacher is not good doing interventions. The older ones
(teachers) have had a harder time with that; the younger ones
(teachers) have been better.

Both of these participants went about ruling out the exclusionary factors such as
environmental, social-emotional, and cognitive ability levels with indirect questions and
follow-up comments provided by the teacher. The use of tacit knowledge was employed
as each school psychologist began recognizing patterns in the information being shared
that was indicative of an exclusionary factor. This pattern then enabled them to either ask
additional questions or to mentally “check” information off the list. Undoubtedly, they
both exhibited tacit knowledge use that has been developed over many years of
experience. Further, while each participant did not engage in ruling exclusionary factors
in or out of the decision, it is a fair assumption that experienced school psychologists are
able to consider the impact of exclusionary factors rather quickly which results from
fluid-like decision-making when certain patterns present themselves. Tacit knowledge
allows the professional to recognize certain conditions and execute a series of actions
(Sternberg, 1998), which is what experienced school psychologists do when information
is shared during a problem-solving meeting which lends to the ruling in or out of various
exclusionary factors.
Another area in which participants demonstrated similarity was their ability to disregard their line of questioning or course of exploration due to their perception of how the meeting was proceeding. School Psychologist #5 indicated:

I’m thinking now, should I go somewhere with this, this whole thing about the gloves and the mittens? Should I start asking them questions about… do you guys see any meaning in this? Do you think there’s a reason? And then I had the thought well, I’m not going to do that because I’m afraid they’ll go off on a tangent. And, I’m worried, the team tends to go off on tangents sometimes so I don’t want to be the source of a tangent.

Also, School Psychologist #4 stated:

I’ve abandoned my hope of wrapping things up and getting out of there because there’s more areas to investigate or at least discuss ‘cause were not talking about this girl not getting enough sleep or her sleep patterns.

Both school psychologists realized that while they had an agenda, it was better to disregard that agenda in order to allow the team to proceed within the area of discussion. Kratochwill (2008) contends that one of the goals of effective consultation is to either improve the consultation system (as a whole) or the individual skills of the consultee (teacher) so they are better able to handle future problems or concerns without the direct assistant of the consultant (school psychologist). Undoubtedly, both of these school psychologists were working toward this goal during their consultation meeting. Further,
it is a fair assumption that many experienced school psychologists disregard their line of questioning or their agenda in order to indirectly guide the team to more independence and self-reliance rather than on the reliance of the building school psychologist. Tacit knowledge was used as both school psychologists recognized a pattern of behavior and a course of action was implemented. Further, it may be difficult for each of these school psychologists to articulate why they choose each of their ultimate decisions. As noted previously, tacit knowledge is not easily conveyed when asked to describe how or why it was chosen. In the instances described, they both chose to disregard their agenda and allow the team to continue moving forward with discussion.

Another area that many participants shared commonality was in their working with parents. Accordingly, research suggests that when parents are actively involved in their child’s education, children perform better in school. Henderson and Mapp (2002) synthesized 51 different studies conducted between 1993 and 2001. Their findings indicated that students who had involved parents were, among other things, more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, attend school on a consistent basis, graduate from high school, and enroll in postsecondary education. Without a doubt, parental involvement is a huge benefit to a student’s academic performance. During this study, many of the school psychologists demonstrated behaviors that recognized this importance and utilized tacit knowledge to effectively work with and engage the parent in the problem-solving process. For example School Psychologist #4 indicated:

I’m thinking that this mom needs a little propping up because she’s been telling us the whole meeting how difficult it is to get the kids to do anything and then she drops on us that dad just lets the kids do whatever
they wanted to. And so it’s mom that kinda holds the kid’s feet to the fire and I’m acknowledging that to her by saying well you know the price that you pay for that is that makes you the bad guy in your kid’s relationship and to acknowledge that there’s a price to pay for that. (pause) Just supporting mom, giving mom some support there.

In addition, School Psychologist #3 stated:

I think he actually, actually I think he belabored the situation in front of the parent, I guess I think we didn’t need to go into it that far – I think you start counting on those kinds of things then the parent starts feeling really bad and umm I really just wanted to kinda cut it off because you get too much into it and well we could end up with the parent crying so I just OK, she can’t read, we know she can’t read or she’s reading it and not understanding it so I just think it is enough.

Both school psychologists indicated that supporting the parent was essential during the meeting. Further, because they were able to recognize a pattern of parent vulnerability, they each utilized tacit knowledge to effectively intercede and refocus the attention either toward the parent or back to the problem-solving process. Each of these participants recognized a pattern of behavior and efficiently executed a response. Undoubtedly, engaging parents in a positive manner and establishing an effective working relationship is a priority for all school psychologists. However, due to the ability of the experienced
school psychologist to efficiently use tacit knowledge, the parent-school psychologist relationship may be established sooner.

**Similarities to Previous Research**

The first area in which this research suggests that school psychologists utilize tacit knowledge as it is utilized in other fields surrounds the research of Wagner and Sternberg (1987). In their research on management they found that the ability of a manager to employ both local and global tacit knowledge was paramount to continued growth and success. Local tacit knowledge refers to a circumstance in which the goal is a short-term accomplishment. In contrast, global tacit knowledge explains the circumstance in which a long-term accomplishment or broader outlook is the focus. Further, the ability of a manager to manage oneself, manage others, and manage tasks is also necessary for ongoing success within the field (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987). Due to the expectations of school psychologists during consultation meetings, they must be able to employ the skills of local and global tacit knowledge as well as the ability to manage oneself, others, and a task while navigating through the problem-solving process. As identified during stimulated recall, School Psychologist #5 said,

I’m not having to say something, I don’t need to say something, because as long as they’re leading that’s exactly what I want them to do. And I’m deliberately not commenting because I don’t want to pull the focus onto me. ‘Cause one of my concerns has always been that when there’s a concern, they always turn to me and want me to solve it. So I kinda set this whole thing up when we originally did it but
then I’m not trying to hold back deliberately to give them
ownership…and that’s always a challenge.

In addition, School Psychologist #4 indicated:

So I’m looking through the list at the reading, at the language and I
came up with again um it all comes back to the attention for me
because... and I think I’m going to make the comment in just a
moment that the first thing that was checked in the one area was the
attention issues so I think that (short pause) everything that we’ve
been able to discuss up to this point kinda fits right in that whole
mode of the attention seems to be the issue and it is affecting her
getting her work done, it’s affecting her reading comprehension
because she’s not paying attention. So (pause) I see Mark’s going in a
little bit of a different direction. And I also think I’ve done enough
talking already ‘cause I feel like I was hogging the discussion so I’m
going to let Mark go with this for a while.

In both instances, the school psychologists were able to remove themselves from
the discussion in order to allow the team to function without them. This ability not only
parallels the research among experienced managers and the implementation of local
versus global tacit knowledge (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987) but it also illustrates the two
goals of consultation (Kratochwill, 2008). First, to provide preventative or intervention
ideas to the consultant in order to change a system, classroom, or individual student’s
behavior (academic or social) and second, to enhance the system or consultees’ skills so
they can respond effectively to similar circumstances in the future without the direct assistance of the consultant (Kratochwill, 2008).

Another area in which this research parallels previous research regarding the use of tacit knowledge surrounds the ability of the experienced school psychologist to stay focused on the important information being shared during the meeting while filtering out unnecessary information that did not lend itself to the solution. Dunn et al. (1996) investigated the use of tacit knowledge among experienced physicians and found that they were able to stay focused through a preliminary patient examination, regardless of distractions, extraneous and irrelevant information and arrive at a diagnosis. During the follow-up session school psychologist #1 was asked about his ability to handle large amounts of information during the course of a consultation meeting. Specifically, the researcher commented that during the meeting, “I noticed that you balance a lot of necessary information”. Following is the information that was shared during that line of questioning.

Do you realize that you do that?

I think it is somewhere in between automatic and conscious. I have a goal, plan of action and focus on what is important and what isn’t. I want to reach a conclusion or diagnosis or theory. I usually am looking for an endpoint – not just casting about aimlessly.

How do you decide what to focus on (relevant vs. unnecessary)?

Wow another really good question – I guess I look at all of the information and find what is salient. I look for patterns or a model that fits. I guess I go from general to hypothesis to gathering information but not just asking questions that
fit – asking the ones that don’t. I guess the reason I am not answering your
question very well is that it is like second nature. My goal is to find/seek the
truth, to figure it out like detective work – to discover the unknown.

Another example of how a participant filtered out what they considered to be
unnecessary information is evident in school psychologist #6’s stimulated recall session.
Specifically, she explained the following:

I think I tuned her out because this is where I’m beginning to really
process and think about that whole social and emotional… how much
is consistency? How much is focus? I mean that’s kind of what’s
becoming primary in my mind. Okay how do we adjust that? And
what’s being done to adjust that? Um I think that’s when Carmen
brought up that she was seeing Kelly, the counselor. Which I was
saying okay that’s good. So I mean that’s what I was kind of going
through… I was kind of tuning her out. [Researcher: so at this point
you are kind of switching, you’re moving away from what she’s
saying about the academics and more towards…] yeah, well it had no
value for me and so I was kind of going somewhere else…I think…at
that moment in time you know…

Finally, School Psychologist #4 indicated during stimulated recall:

Well I was thinking at first I thought well this whole vision thing’s a
‘red herring’ because she’s already had her vision checked and then I
thought well if she’s squinting maybe she has eye strain and then
when Gene says well maybe she just wants glasses I thought that was funny. So I guess I didn’t really know how to process that thing about the vision other than she’s going to see the eye doctor so if there is a problem there we’ll find out about it so I am not overly concerned about it, I’m gonna let the eye doctor take care of that.

Each of these examples, the school psychologists were able to do exactly what physicians were able to do during a patient examination. That is, they were able to stay focused, disregard necessary from unnecessary information, and arrive at a “diagnosis” or in these cases implement a course of action, to indirectly assist a student toward improved academic performance. They identified a pattern of behavior or information that appeared to fit the “if-then” action sequence associated with tacit knowledge use. Again, the ability to recognize a particular pattern of behavior and engage a fluid-like response is tacit knowledge.

Another area in which the information obtained from this study parallels previous research is in regard to the school psychologists’ ability to determine if they could trust what a team member is saying, especially a parent. Dunn et al. (1996) describe this in their research as the ability of doctors to categorize their patients as “good historians”. Being able to identify a patient or a team member as a “good historian” is important because it saves time in that fewer probing questions may need to be asked. Therefore, professionals are able to move to decision-making in a timely manner. School psychologist #1 describes this event rather explicitly when talking about the teachers he was working with. Specifically, he indicated, during stimulated recall:
Sometimes in conferences like this I am still feeling fairly confused from the type of teacher that wants to bring you the kid and say ‘I have a problem’, ‘what’s the problem’ and they’ll tell you in general terms what the problem is and you’ll say ‘can you flush that out a little bit?’ put some ‘meat on the bones’ and tell me – no they can’t they just want to hand it to me and say ‘I think this and I want you to do something about it’. So, we are not on that path with these girls because they are starting to, they can answer, they can fill in the blanks, they can put flesh on the bones – they just told me, ‘we check’ (I forget the name of it was) but end of the week assessment over the entire weeks lesson – Bingo, this kid gets 0 out of 4, 1 out of 4 even after re-teaching. Not a good sign.

In addition, School Psychologist #8 indicated during the follow-up interview that she actually categorizes the parent in much the same manner. Upon being asked the question “do you notice that you engage in that (i.e., listen to the parents’ concern but look for behavior to confirm their opinions) behavior often” she replied:

Usually it gives you a feel for how accurate the parent is at reporting their child’s behavior. You can see if the parent is a ‘poor historian’ and if their comments are aligning with the child’s behavior. Plus it allows you to be objective. I always do this during consultation meetings with parents. It is very valuable in gathering data about the student.
The ability of school psychologists to make the determination of whether or not they can trust the information being shared is the procedural knowledge that many professionals use to guide their fluid-like, almost effortless, decisions. Dunn et al. (1996) indicated that if physicians determined that their patients were good historians they, in turn, were more trusting of the information being shared. Therefore they could switch to a more focused physical exam and save considerable time. The same holds true for experienced school psychologists during problem-solving meetings. If they can “trust” the information that is being shared, they are less likely to engage in additional lines of questioning. Therefore, they spend less time trying to define the problem and more time in the development of an intervention strategy. Tacit knowledge is involved in the aforementioned examples because each participant identified a pattern of behavior and quickly engaged in a subsequent action inadvertently allowing them more time to focus on a possible solution or intervention strategy, not continued problem identification.

Whether it is compared to management or medicine, it is evident that experienced school psychologists do possess and use tacit knowledge. They understand and are able to function both within the local and global aspects of tacit knowledge like their managerial counterparts as they work with various team members during the consultation process. They are able to distinguish and disregard unnecessary information during the course of a meeting as various team members continue to share their concerns, thoughts, and ideas. And, finally, they are able to determine which team members are good historians and whose information can be trusted to provide an accurate picture of the student, to assist with intervention design, or to eliminate possible exclusionary factors from the decision-making process. While this research has identified tacit knowledge use
among experienced school psychologists, how can we help other school psychologists acquire tacit knowledge more quickly or efficiently?

**Providing Advice**

Since tacit knowledge is learned from experience, without the direct help from others, and it is not “readily available for introspection” (Sternberg, 1999, p. 231), “teaching” tacit knowledge is futile. So although we cannot teach it, there may be a way to utilize the information obtained during this research to facilitate discussion and experiences that are beneficial to the development of tacit knowledge. One option may be to “consider a ‘tacit-explicit’ continuum” (Dunn et al., 2011). Undoubtedly, some of the information shared between professionals in any field would be explicit in nature and provide for immediate gain or payoff. For example, an experienced school psychologist may give the following advice to a novice about working with a particular parent:

If you notice the parent begin to ‘fidget’ with her pen and in her seat that maybe a sign that she is beginning to feel overwhelmed and she may not be listening anymore.

This is really specific advice that a novice school psychologist will be aware of upon walking into that parent meeting. Although this particular piece of advice allows the school psychologist to look for specific behavioral signs, it does not provide information regarding what information or events led the parent to the point of feeling overwhelmed. The experienced school psychologist provided advice that was explicit and easy to observe. What was not readily shared were the events and conditions or patterns of behavior leading up to the explicit behavior demonstrated. Undoubtedly, that
is most likely tacit knowledge that would be used by the experienced school psychologist
to possibly avoid the explicit parent behavior altogether.

Accordingly, as tacit knowledge becomes more ingrained in how the professional
responds to certain events or patterns, the less others would benefit from direct
instruction, because the information is not easily made explicit (Dunn et al., 2011). It is
important to consider the three knowledge acquisition components described by
Sternberg et al. (1995) including selective encoding, selective combination, and selective
comparison. Therefore, can the experienced school psychologist assist the novice to
distinguish more from less critical information, to combine knowledge in beneficial
ways, and to identify knowledge in long-term memory that can be useful in a current
situation (Dunn et al., 2011)?

While the literature suggests that it takes 10 years before expertise can be
developed (Ericsson & Charness, 1994), experience alone does not account for the
development of expertise. While experience is necessary, it is what novices actually do
during that time that leads to higher levels of professional competence, albeit expertise
(Dunn et al., 2011). Research has described this as taking the “high road to transfer,” as
opposed to the “low road to transfer” (Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Salomon & Perkins,
1989). In addition, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) suggest that learners continue to be
mindful and open to new learning opportunities even if they possess efficient cognitive
abilities to manage various situations. Undoubtedly, a professional would need to have
motivation in order to remain mindful of new learning; however, it is important to assist
the learner in focusing this mindfulness. In that regard, Dunn and colleagues have
discussed the use of advice strategies (Dunn et al., 2011; Dunn et al., 1996; Dunn & Taylor, 1990).

An advice strategy is a method of “instruction” that prompts a learner to look for relationships or patterns that assist in the development of knowledge that could be used in subsequent problem-solving situations. While these strategies are not intended to “teach” skills directly, they are intended to “provide guidance about how to best take advantage of domain related experiences” (Kleshinski et al., 2010, p. 52). Further, they are not to be used to promote general reflection regarding an experience but, rather, to promote the acquisition of capabilities that are tacit (Dunn et al., 2011).

Dunn et al. (2011) suggest that the optimal method for creating an advice strategy. When an instance of tacit knowledge is identified, they recommend the following:

a) Restate the instance of tacit knowledge as a capability.

b) Provide the inferred prerequisite knowledge needed to support the development of that capability.

c) Use the tacit capabilities to help plan experiences for novice professionals with regard to what they should be mindful of during an experience.

An example of how this process can work with the data obtained from this research is as follows.

*Capability Statement:*

- During problem-solving meetings able to disregard information that does not lend itself to effective intervention design.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:
1. During problem-solving meetings able to process information previously shared while team members continued to add new information.

2. During problem-solving meetings able to classify information that requires active listening.

Related Advice Strategies:

1. “While you work with team members today see if you can focus on why you think some informants’ reports are more trustworthy than others.”

2. “When faced with a multi-tasking situation, keep track of the rationale for your decision-making.”

Another example of how this process can work with the data obtained from this research is as follows:

**Capability Statement:**

- During problem-solving meetings able to effectively disengage from the problem-solving process in order that teachers step up and take the lead with planning stages of intervention design.

Relevant prerequisite knowledge would include the following:

1. During problem-solving meetings able to recognize when teachers are taking the lead.

2. During problem-solving meetings able to classify when it is appropriate to step-back and refrain from volunteering information.

Related Advice Strategies:

1. “During your involvement with problem-solving meetings, be mindful of the number of times you felt you needed to solve the problem.”
2. “During your involvement with problem-solving meetings, be aware of the number of times a team member offered a solution to the concern being addressed.”

The use of an advice strategy would be to promote the acquisition of tacit knowledge by creating a capability statement that novice school psychologists are made aware of prior to their participation in a problem-solving meeting, not to simply encourage reflection on the meeting itself. The development of capability statements and advice strategies may be an effective way for intern field supervisors to facilitate discussion when consistently asked the question “How did you do that?” by their interns. The one practice that all school psychologists share is the completion of an internship and most interns will ask their field supervisors, at least once during the internship, “how did you do that?” Having a list of capability statements and advice strategies may be beneficial in assisting interns to be mindful of certain experiences throughout the course of that year. In addition, as interns become novice school psychologists and begin working independently for a district, advice strategies could encourage them to be aware of certain instances that will enhance their professional development.

**Conclusion**

This qualitative study confirmed that experienced school psychologists possess tacit knowledge and they do use it while navigating through the problem-solving process. Further, the utilization of tacit knowledge by experienced school psychologists is similar to other fields including teaching, management and medicine. While research indicates that tacit knowledge cannot be explicitly taught, the identification of instances of tacit knowledge allows for the development of advice strategies that encourages a learner to
look for patterns of behavior that assist in the development of knowledge that could be used in subsequent problem-solving situations. As Sternberg (1999) suggests, tacit knowledge has “reinforcement, or survival value” (p. 32). For experienced school psychologists, tacit knowledge use has proven to be reinforcing as many of the experiences identified to be instances of tacit knowledge were common among participants.

While this study provided interesting results that can be used to facilitate some discussion among experienced school psychologists and novices, certain limitations must be discussed. First, further research must be conducted with a greater number of participants before generalizations can be made about various instances of tacit knowledge among experienced school psychologists. Further, including school psychologists who work for private facilities in future research may provide additional information regarding tacit knowledge that may be beneficial for consideration. While all of the participants in this study appeared to be involved in “traditional” problem-solving meetings, including psychologists who are more involved in RTI processes may be necessary to illustrate other instances of tacit knowledge use surrounding data-driven decision making, intervention design, and intervention implementation with integrity. Regardless of the limitations, continued research in the area of tacit knowledge is recommended within the field of school psychology. Sternberg (1999) stated “the efficacy of tacit knowledge depends on its being acquired and then being effectively used” (p. 236). Undoubtedly, continuing to study this concept could assist intern and novice school psychologists to be mindful during authentic experiences that lead to the
development of tacit knowledge. That, in turn, will benefit the entire field as changes within the role of today’s school psychologist continue to be identified.
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Appendix A

ADULT RESEARCH SUBJECT - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Tacit Knowledge Among Experienced School Psychologists

Principal Investigators: Thomas G. Dunn Professor of Educational Psychology, 419 530-2045
Michalene Lozinski Special Education Supervisor, 419 874-3869

Purpose: You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, “Tacit Knowledge Among Experienced School Psychologists,” which is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Thomas G. Dunn, Ph.D. and Michalene Lozinski. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the knowledge that experienced school psychologists use during consultative meetings. It is anticipated that this knowledge is learned from experience and not just from formal educational environments.

Description of Procedures:

This study will involve video recording an actual consultative meeting in which you will be the school psychologist. During the meeting you are encouraged to act as you normally would act in such meetings. The camera will remain focused on you and none of the other participants in the meeting.

Immediately following the consultative meeting you and the experimenter, Michalene Lozinski, will watch the video recording together. Periodically, Ms Lozinski will stop the recording and ask you: “What were you thinking at that time?” The purpose of the question is to identify, retrospectively, what knowledge you may have been accessing and using at particular moments during the meeting. This meeting should take about 45-60 minutes.

At a later date the experimenter may contact you by phone to verify some conclusions that she may have drawn from analyzing the interviews. This follow-up phone interview should take about 10 minutes.

Will you permit the researcher to video record the consultative meeting?
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After you have completed your participation, the research team will debrief you about the data, theory and research area under study and answer any questions you may have about the research.

**Potential Risks:** There are minimal risks to participation in this study, including loss of confidentiality. It is possible, but unlikely, that participating in the video recording session or interviews may result in your feeling anxious or upset. In that regard, remember that you may stop your participation at any time. The school psychologists will be provided with a remote control (to keep with them during the videotaping) that can be utilized at any time during the recording of the meeting, if they choose to suspend their participation for any reason.

**Potential Benefits:**

You may learn more about a) the knowledge that you have learned from experience that you use on a regular basis, b) tacit knowledge, and c) a particular kind of research method. Also, what is learned from this study may help in the professional development of novice school psychologists.

**Confidentiality:** The researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you provided this information, or what that information is. The consent forms with signatures will be kept separate from responses. All data including video recordings will be kept in a secure place. Also, no information will be released in any form which will include the names of participants, students, schools or school districts.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and will not affect your relationship with The University of Toledo or any of your classes. In addition, you may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

**Contact Information:** Before you decide to accept this invitation to take part in this study, you may ask any questions that you might have. If you have any questions at any time before, during or after your participation, or experience any physical or psychological distress as a result of this research, you should contact either Thomas G. Dunn at 419 530-2045 or Michalene Lozinski at 419 874-3869. If you have questions
beyond those answered by the research team or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact the Chairperson of the SBE Institutional Review Board, Dr. Barbara Chesney, in the Office of Research on the main campus at (419) 530-2844.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

**SIGNATURE SECTION – Please read carefully**

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and you have decided to take part in this research.

The date you sign this document to enroll in this study, that is, today's date must fall between the dates indicated at the bottom of the page.

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO**

**SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

The research project described in this consent form and the form itself have been reviewed and approved by the University of Toledo Social, Behavioral & Educational Review Board (SBE IRB) for the period of time specified below.

SBE IRB #: _____________  Approved Number of Subjects: _____________

Project Start Date: _____________  Project Expiration Date: _____________
Barbara Chesney, Ph.D., Chair
UT Social Behavioral & Educational IRB
Appendix B

ADULT RESEARCH SUBJECT - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thomas G. Dunn, Ph. D.
Educational Foundations and Leadership
Gillham Hall 5400K

We would like to inform you that the consultation meeting scheduled for ________________ will be video recorded as part of a research study. The study is entitled, “Tacit Knowledge Among Experienced School Psychologists.” It is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Thomas G. Dunn, Ph.D., and Michalene Lozinski. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the knowledge that experienced school psychologists use during consultation meetings. It is anticipated that this knowledge is learned from experience and not just from formal educational environments. The results of this study may contribute to the professional development of novice school psychologists.

During the meeting the camera will be aimed only on the school psychologist. The focus of this study is the school psychologist (not the student being discussed) and how they process information during a consultation meeting; the information obtained, as shared by various team members, throughout the audio-recording of the meeting will not be analyzed in any way.

All research information from the audio-recording will be strictly confidential. The research information will not include the names of students, parents, teachers, counselors, school psychologists, schools, school districts, or any other school personnel. Only the researcher and participating school psychologists will listen to the audio-tapes. After the researcher and participating school psychologist discuss how he/she processed the information being shared during the meeting, all audio-tapes will be kept in a locked file cabinet. We hope you agree to have the meeting recorded. If you have any questions please feel free to contact either Thomas G. Dunn at 419 530-2045 or Michalene Lozinski at 419 874-3869.

I give permission to have the session audio-recorded.

YES   NO

Initial Here
SIGNATURE SECTION – Please read carefully

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and that you will agree to have the consultative meeting video recorded.

The date you sign this document to enroll in this study, that is, today's date must fall between the dates indicated at the bottom of the page.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
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SBE IRB #: ___________________   Approved Number of Subjects: __________
Project Start Date: ___________   Project Expiration Date: ______________
_____________________________   Date: __________________
Barbara Chesney, Ph.D., Chair
UT Social Behavioral & Educational IRB
Appendix C

School Psychologist #1

The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the concerns of a 5th grade female student who is struggling with reading comprehension. This is the first meeting to discuss her needs and the concerns of the teacher. Team members present include the school psychologist and 2 general education teachers (because she is in a co-teaching classroom setting).

Back when you said it was a “mom only” household and can takes all kinds of forms, as you were sitting there, what were you thinking about?

Well, what I was thinking when I reviewed the record was I wanted to hear what they had to say and not go right into what I learned from reviewing the record because I wanted them to talk first and get a sense of where they were at not only the information that I was referring about the kid but if they were desperate or of they were upset or whatever so anyway she’s telling me that as I was asking some background stuff and they were saying it’s a mom only household and mom just had a baby and I’m like “hmmm” OK that is not gonna really work here so that could mean anything but you can’t rush to a conclusion but – is there a guy there all the time or maybe, I just try to or tried to, in the back of my mind, file that away and think well, cause I’m trying to construct what this kids’ life like when she is not in school and it is a guessing game so you don’t want to (like I say) rush to judgment but what I knew going into it was that is was a very dysfunctional home, at least early on cause to take a mom of a Kindergartener to court for failure to send – something is wrong, even if it is not her fault (poverty or whatever) – things aren’t running smooth at home and who knows what looks like in the home.

What were you thinking?

Well I’m thinking there that I am glad these girls know about this stuff cause I am not up to date on what the different benchmarks is for the grade and I can always count on these ladies to know that stuff and tell me cause there, I think, their a couple of the best teachers we have in the building and their on the front edge of where things are going and I’m not and so I don’t know what the different DIBELs numbers are for each grade level so I’m glad they knew that because I didn’t.

What were you thinking about there?

Well, I’m thinking that OK I am anticipating that I am going to hear something coherent. They are actually started to layout what there, they can actually tell me what they are doing with the kid and then that is not always the case – where, I - so I am just trying to piece it together or what this is – they are telling me that reading comprehension is the problem and I can tell already that they can explain to me how they are trying to teach this kid to read. That is reassuring and I was feeling pretty good about that.

What were you thinking about there?
Well, umm, again I am still kinda in the mindset that these guys have a coherent plan with this kid and when they mentioned “Read Naturally” I kinda filed that in the back of my head and we get back to that later, I think, because that is not something that they do so in my mind I am thinking “oh crap - Read Naturally” because I think that’s kindof this enormous thing around here that no-one can ever tell me who gets it and why and what the results are so I kinda filed that away because I didn’t want to say that because maybe they have a completely different view of it or maybe they know stuff that I don’t know but I kinda filed that in the back of my mind (Read Naturally). So far I am still thinking well these ladies know how they are teaching this kid – that sounds kinda stupid maybe but I have meetings where I really can’t leave the meeting even knowing that my knowledge isn’t (uh uh) 100% on how things are supposed to go when they can’t explain to me how they are teaching the kid but they can say the kid has a problem – that creates a different mindset. Here I am kinda headed down the road that when I’m talking to these ladies I think I can get some good data so we can really be talking about the kid and not having to talk about their teaching so much – if that makes any sense (I am not really explaining that well). I am already starting to pick up which path I am on – what’s my problem; is it the teacher or is it the kid? Alright so in a gross sense that is what I am looking at.

What were you thinking there?

Um, a little bit again, it was kinda of a “on no, skills based” thing because (and again) in my head skills based around here seems to be a code word that the specialist use to come in and do something – what they do I think is they come in and they say “what do you want me to work on?” and I did learn something here in their response because they’ll say these three kids didn’t get this in the lesson so then the specialist goes and takes them and reads and reteaches that so it is something that is pretty popular with the teachers I think they like it and they think it helps their kids and it helps them do well in class and on the test. From my point of view, when I ask the skills based teacher what can you tell me about Suzie or Billy, they can’t tell me anything so I am a little suspicious of it because it seems like it is a little short on the accountable end so when you are trying to establish – trying to gather data and establish patterns it doesn’t tell you much so again I am trying to . . . I have a hypothesis in my mind and so I am trying to investigate I am gonna have to figure out what the skills based . . .

(Follow-up question – so you have a hypothesis about this kid in general or you have a hypothesis about skills based?)

I am not thinking about the kid yet – I am trying to get the lay of the land, I am trying to get the spread out before me what this kids educational program looks like.

Dan interrupted and said, there I’m thinking OK I can get some DIBELs stuff maybe from Denise (Title I teacher) but the problem there is comprehension so I thought well whatever I’ll find out what she can tell me but so far I am not, I don’t think I’m gonna get any numbers or data on comprehension – I don’t have any numbers or data on comprehension.

Ok, so what are you thinking there?
Bingo now we have arrived at some data about their concerns and I am thrilled actually that teacher’s can actually be that coherent about what they are doing. I know this may sound harsh but these gals have a concern, filled out the pink form, now we’re talking about the concern and they actually have some information about it, actually numbers, Yippee. We just heard that the kid they worked for 2 weeks still gets a zero, not a good sign. But it is a good sign diagnostically, I mean I think I can take what they are saying to the bank. So at this point in the conference, sometimes in conferences like this I am still feeling fairly confused from the type of teacher that wants to bring you the kid and say “I have a problem”, “what’s the problem” and they’ll tell you in general terms what the problem is and you’ll say “can you flush that out a little bit?” put some “meat on the bones” and tell me – no they can’t they just want to hand it to me and say “I think this and I want you to do something about it”. So, we are not on that path with these girls because they are starting to, they can answer, they can fill in the blanks, they can put flesh on the bones – they just told me, “we check” (I forget the name of it was) but end of the week assessment over the entire weeks lesson – Bingo, this kid gets 0 out of 4, 1 out of 4 even after reteaching. Not a good sign.

What are you thinking about at this point?

Here I am going to school because Story Town is a new thing this year and so (what I am trying to say) I’m trying to learn. I know something about it but I am trying to learn, what I just asked her “how do you like it” because it’s pretty clear that they are implementing it and so I’m gonna get an answer that is based on experience cause I’m getting when I ask that question or other people, “I don’t like it”, “Well, do you do it?”, “Well, no not really.”

Dan interrupted and said what I was thinking there was I was not thinking about the kid or the case or anything I need to, I am trying to tap her opinion about the Mazes thing because that is a controversy at that school and whether it is worthwhile or not. So we got a district initiative to uh use DIBELs and Maze 3 times a year and we have a couple people in that building, especially the reading teacher who are trying to torpedo the stuff and so I wanted to find out what this teacher, what her take on it was so I am inserting a hidden agenda that Lyndsey (teacher) doesn’t know about or Kim (other classroom teacher) doesn’t know about cause I want to know what these 2 teachers that I respect think and that is what I was doing before when I asked her about the Storytown and what her current opinion of it was. That was my whole purpose so I get the “lay of the land” so I know the politics of what the teachers in the building are thinking and doing about things so then I can relate that to the kid who I meet on and work with.

What were you thinking?

Oh great that was kinda of a she talks and makes no sense but this is where I started to think, well geez, this might be a language problem. That is gonna come up. (Follow-up question, so at this point are you starting to formulate a plan or more of a hypothesis?)

Both actually because to me they don’t really separate them to much; I mean cause it will become apparent in a minute because whatever else is going on yeah, a
hypothesis in maybe we have a specific, underlying language problem, especially since she has had such . . .

What were you thinking?
I am trying to define the language problem – social language or content specific language. They both said she doesn’t make sense during instructional things but she does talk. I am trying to really feel them out on the language problem.

What were you thinking?
I was expecting her to say similar problem in math cause there is so much heavy language content in that math that I thought there might be a similar answer to that so I am a little like “oh crap!” meaning my hypothesis isn’t holding up so we’ll see but it was not the answer I was expecting.

What were you thinking?
Overall confused now. I was glad to hear Lydsey say they make educational decisions to pull her in intervention and then they are like “why did we do that?” so we are adding to the puzzle. So far, my clean-cut little basic the kid is having an underlying language problem is not holding up. So I need to readjust it. But at least I am not like slam dunk you know – sometimes you get a consultation and it is like “oh crap” that is just plain as the nose on your face. We know what to do about that but that is not the case.
(Follow-up: So you are moving in the opposite direction?)
So, I am not moving in a particular direction, I have hit a roadblock on the “wow, this is a clean-cut language problem and I’ll be the hero cause I figured it out!” but we need to find the root cause to cut across a variety of problems then we could fix the root cause and the problem all fades away but now if the language problem is not evident in math subject area but it is in reading . . . .

What are you thinking?
I am kinda punting because uh I don’t remember exactly but I thought my review of her records was very revealing. Because this kids records would say that this kid shouldn’t do shit in school because her first couple of years were practically nonexistent so when I saw her file I thought “well no wonder the kid is not doing well.” And I am actually getting more positive information about the kid then I kinda expected because I think I’ll go into that eventually cause teachers never look in the file so I think I try to . . . I know the file information is telling.

What were you thinking?
That was an interesting piece of information because what I had in front of me was that the kid missed 23 ½ days last year in the 4th grade I am like what in the “f”, did anybody even know that? Did our illustrious principal even do anything about that? She had a real goof ball teacher that is not there, she was on a leave of absence. 23 ½ days is a shit load of days so anyway I am trying to figure out here is this lack of exposure you know or . . . when I looked at that record I was like “oh crap” the kid has missed so many days how can she not be behind! And then 3rd grade it was ok but then all of the
sudden in 4th grade, again last year, you have all these days and it’s like to me, in today’s curriculum, you can’t do that it moves so fast, there is so much of it, it is so easy to get behind.

What were you thinking?

Kinda just trying to casting about so – lice could mean a lot of things or mean nothing, anybody can get lice, usually most associated with low socioeconomics. But they are saying that they mother never comes in, maybe she is really shy – she made cupcakes. If you look at that record you see failure to send, at that point you kinda think “bad mom”; part of you may think well maybe the mom had a horrible situation and she was trying to live. But nevertheless, things weren’t good early on – they seem to be better now. I think they are gonna tell me the aunt. . . I am just trying to piece together, I always try to get as complete a picture of the kid as I can. Like I say, I trust these ladies.

Ok so here I am thinking early on in our conversation we were talking about a specific skill or ability problem and you know I reviewed the file and I looked at deficient background and then specific skill problem – she does a lot of things well and then here is this one thing she doesn’t do to well and even when we kinda define maybe that language problem I thought it didn’t hold up too well: I haven’t rejected it in my mind but it is still not as strong. Now we are getting some more information about life situations, cause I am thinking early on you know, you go into these things, at least I do (maybe its wrong) go into these things thinking about well are they interested in looking to see if the kid has a disability; well now we are talking about kinds of exclusionary factors OK so I am trying to cover some ground about all of that stuff which is always the hard part -- cultural, socioeconomics, all those kinds of things. We have some information as I say these girls are pretty reliable but sounds to me like they are telling me now that the kid is on her own quite a bit or she doesn’t have too much in the way of adult support so I am a little, not getting any “aha moments” here.

I’ve got a 12 year old girl in the 5th grade and a lot of times the issue there is where are we headed in the social-sexual domain particularly. Are we dealing with a kid that is already starting to think about those things or do we still have a little girl. Obviously she doesn’t have a lot of supervision so she seems to kinda like school teachers and her school. She comes when she is sick so obviously that’s a signal that she likes school, she likes being here. I am kinda doing a shotgun approach here – trying to figure out everything I can about this kid.

Once I finally spit the question out – whether she is a “pre-sluttish child”, not the most professional, not the best way to put it but. . . Alright, back to me, we’ve got a 5th grader here, we got 9 weeks left so I’m thinking what are we looking at? . . . what are our issues? Not so much maybe what are the issues, what I am hearing now about she (the teacher) said “sweetly innocent” so sortof a little girl kinda person who wants to be in school, we don’t have “pre-slut behavior”, we don’t have delinquent behavior, none of
that stuff that can mess things up, so I am a little reassured by that – I mean actually very reassured by that cause then my experience particularly with Hispanic girls is that to get them to, their culture generally doesn’t support independent, strong woman who achieve highly in school and go on to take care of themselves and all this and that. I’ve had some of these situations over the years where there are girls that are capable of that sportswise, scholastically and then you found out well they didn’t go to college and they got married to somebody and they’re having a baby. So educational excellence or success I think is a little more upward bound for a Hispanic girl then otherwise.

What were you thinking?
Now I don’t have a good idea. Alright – nothing. I don’t think I did too bad a job of covering a lot of fronted questions about the girl. I think I have a good picture of the girl but nothing is jumping out at me anyway as something obvious so I think I will probably I am gonna say something about a language eval.

What were you thinking?
I was basically saying we are gonna assume that this is a better environment structure wise particularly predictability wise than home and the teacher said “oh yeah” so we know now that school is real primary to the kids overall chances I think of success.

What were you thinking?
Where I am headed right now. . . went back to the tape.

What were you thinking?
Her data, her word recognition skills shows grow so it is not that the kid can’t read but they are saying specifically she is not comprehending what she reads. What is confounding it a little bit is that they are saying she doesn’t make sense when she expresses herself and that would be a nice, neat little package but then how is she doing in the language aspects of math? Ok, pretty good and you’re thinking “OK” there goes that nice, neat theory with the bow on it, you know. But that is life. So anyway I am still gonna pursue this language thing but I have another idea.

What were you thinking (as the teacher asked what is next)?
I am thinking “beats the shit out of me”. OK I am thinking I have 2 ideas. I want to do a language eval. and then I am thinking if that comes back OK then I am really gonna have to get specific, targeted activities for these gals to use for comprehension so to address that specifically and see if we can improve it cause they are not seeing the improvement with what they think will improve comprehension, they are not seeing it. So, if we have a language eval. and it comes out fine then that is where we gotta go. And if it comes out poorly, well then that supports my theory that we might, not that we wouldn’t look at other comprehension strategies but maybe we would look at it from a slightly different perspective of looking at vocabulary development and things like that that would cut across, it would be a major component of comprehension. I want to see what I say next cause I had another thought in there . . .
What were you thinking (Dan asked if the teachers saw her as a student with a Cognitive Disability)?

OK that to me is a very . . .we really answered that question. They do not see her as a slow child and like I say the old-fashioned notion is . . .as you go through your career the last stages of mine, you know, that question is really old. Probably if they showed that in some training programs the school psych teacher would probably mock me and chew me up because I asked that question because it is all about RtI and it is all about response to learning interventions and blah, blah, blah and so I realize that my philosophy or my approach is different but I knew I could ask those girls that question and I’d get, they’d understand and I’d get an answer. Lydsey has taught special ed. so if you believe that special ed is a different learner. I think Lydsey just gave me – there a different learners than the typical kids not just the deprived learner or one that is deprived of good instruction but one that is a different type of learner and she says I know I never think of this kid as CD (cognitively disabled) and she has taught CD but then she is kinda saying but the LD (learning disability) part, you know, she thinks I am teaching special ed again – she is kinda saying the kid reminds her of an LD kids that I’ve taught. I am just trying to get some clarity for myself.

What were you thinking?

I just love working with these teachers because I don’t have to do all the thinking. No really, the one I had yesterday was like (could not hear). . .these girls are smart, these are good teachers.

Dan interjected at this point. . . (as he was summarizing information for the teachers)

Here is where in my mind, I think I defined that pretty well , I think I summarized pretty well that it is gonna be a language problem or it is gonna be or if it is not then I’m thinking I want to do some freaking homework to come up with some specific comprehension activities for these gals to try so we can do the targeted intervention and progress monitoring. If the language eval comes back fine so then that blows the whole theory that she just doesn’t get it, that she doesn’t understand the meaning of the words she is reading or that kind of thing.

School Psychologist #2

The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs of a 3rd grade male student who is having difficulty in all academic areas. Further, the student is experiencing attentional and organizational difficulty which appear to be impacting his academic performance. Team members include the school psychologist, the students’ mother, the referring teacher, a special education teacher, a guidance counselor, and a 1st grade teacher.

What were you thinking?

I was thinking that that did not permit me to listen with intent to the information that was being shared by the parent. I was distracted with the scoring. In knowing that will discuss how to better prepare so that all of us could listen.
What were you thinking?
I was not done; the scoring process takes probably at least 10 minutes and when handed the test then I was not ready. But I am discussing some other tests (the Connors’ ADD rating scale) so I am putting off that in hopes that others will talk so that I can finish (scoring the test).

What were thinking (when mom shared that both she and dad completed the Connors’ parent Rating Scale)?
I was thinking that then had combined input into the process and then I wanted to compare that with what the school/the teacher thought – the home versus the school environment to see if there were consistencies between reports. Follow-up question: Had you seen the Connors’ prior to this meeting?
No, I had not seen any of this information. I think it would benefit us (the team) in the future if a team to review the casework before we meet with the parents; then we could proceed and invite in the parents.

What were you thinking (after you shared the Connors information)?
I am thinking that there does seem to be some similarities in both environments and that the child is at-risk and try to convey that to the parents that a diagnosis would have something we would be able to proceed with. . .in the future

What were you thinking?
That there may be a moment to score (the academic test). I am looking for that opening to get that work done so I’m listening. I want to listen to what the teacher says and give her direct attention but I am also thinking “Oh God” I gotta talk about this test and it is not finished – I haven’t analyzed it yet.

What were you thinking?
This teacher I have a history with and she does make lots of referrals typically at the end of the year. I’d like to see her make these referrals at the beginning of the year so we could be more helpful at that stage. She’s got a lot of years of experience but I go into her classroom and it appears to be well run. And she has no problem presenting kids that she tends to present a lot of them at the end of the year. So, at this point I am listening to what she is trying to say in regards to the inattention.

What were you thinking?
I am trying to explore the support network that he might have at home and the mother is revealing at this point that she is not there for him, specifically when he needs it.

What were you thinking?
I am thinking I wish I could engage in this conversation and not be thinking about scoring the test because the comments that she made would allow us to explore her attitudes about her son cause right here she has the attitude that she does not want to baby him, she said. He may require more support but he is not receiving it from her. Focused, normally I am. There I would have said something like that . . .
What were you thinking?

It looks like I have closed up the manual and now I am done with that (the scoring) and I can listen to what they are discussing there to determine what to do. . .

Follow-up question: What is your thought at this point?

I am just listening to figure out what the two are saying and to build a support network and activities for support to get him (student) more organized.

What were you thinking?

I was listening to these two women (teacher and parent) discuss their schedules and how they can make time for this boy but now I am listening to them make excuses for not doing that - “I leave at 3:00” the teacher says, the parent says “well, I work during the day.” So I see them trying to find a way to help this boy and not getting very far here. Who is going to take responsibility for helping him. I hear the teacher opening the door to the parent by saying you can come in.

What were you thinking now (after sharing the KBIT cognitive ability information)?

I am thinking that mom wants to make sense out of that that I said and she is going more toward the feeling side where here I am talking more about the empirical side of the reporting. She doesn’t hear that, she has checked out. That really doesn’t. . .that what I just explained to her she is sortof missing the whole point of what I just tried to say. So we go back and we have to try and clear moms thinking as to what we just said. I apparently was not clear and I need to re-explain it.

What were you thinking?

Mom is trying to make connections – at this point referring back to the boys fathers grade card and the teacher contesting saying that is not the problem, not the issue. So mom is struggling to understand where, how to help the kid and also typical of a parent to try to figure out the origin, the history of a problem.

Follow-up question: Are you focusing on the origin of the problem or more into suggestions.

Well, I think it is important that we work together discuss it but I don’t want to admire the problem, I want to work toward developing strategies that we can all use. At this point we are still admiring, mom wants to talk about origin and see if what we say supports her theory, her hypothesis which is directed toward the father.

What were you thinking?

. . .observations in the classroom and that is done by members of the team. I wanted to see what she saw (in the observations). Apparently she sees the inattention in the classroom which confirms the Connors’. Sometimes the teacher says “Yeah, he is really focused; he is right with it.” She doesn’t think he is from appearance so I wanted to confirm that.

What were you thinking?

Mom is definitely trying to pin it on dad as the cause or ?? that he son has these issues. It just continues to support the ADD component which is what we started with on
the Connors’. I would like to move past that. Mom is discrediting the interactions in the classroom and it sounds like again she in undermining dad – ability to work with the boy that they don’t have a real trusting relationship. Mom is feeling frustrated that the ?? is not providing the information that she would like or in the way she would like it.

What were you thinking (with the beginning of his reading scores being shared)?

I am thinking that it is on the low side of average and that he is going to need help with his comprehension. Right now I am trying to figure out from my questions since I did not administer this is the conditions under which the student responded to the test material. The section for that to be written on the test and is not and that is what I was looking for when I went in and tried, there is that whole section on observational and unfortunately I have to work with my team later to take advantage of the full descriptive analysis that the test provides. And here I am trying to describe to mom how the student did and I did not have all the information so I have to get help from the administrator of the test. Then again, if we had met before hand and discussed it I would have asked those questions and the parent wouldn’t be frazzled.

What were you thinking?

To be able to respond right then and there is helpful. As you can see I’m, at this point is this 30 minutes in? (referring to the interviewers comments at the beginning that we would preview about 30 minutes of video) I try to get to (we only have as you know at this meetings because they are scheduled back to back) and I am always trying to keep my eye on the clock so that we don’t go over but a lot of times we do and then if parents don’t show we try to have the meeting over the phone. At this point he asks me a question (“do you do the same?”) and I explain FCS process regarding IATs and parental involvement. He goes on to describe his feelings about the new school policies. 

Follow-up question – This case ended up going through to MFE based on team decision, were you comfortable with that outcome?

I feel like I have an internal checklist that I go through in my head. If there is a problem with grades, then I look to see how it affects the home and if the student is getting homework done, if they have supportive learning there then that says to me that a 504 plan wouldn’t be an option. I try to go to those first. And if I think there is gonna be enough support, now, this particular teacher, the other piece that we do not have here is the intervention piece, it is not strong. This teacher is not good doing interventions. The older ones (teachers) have had a harder time with that; the younger ones (teachers) have been better. Toledo put into place a teacher in every elementary to be an intervention specialist and it comes from the Obama . . .(meaning grant money). He asked me another question about my district in terms of doing something like that (again had nothing to do with purpose of the interview). Back to “internal checklist” is it happening at home, at school, how long this has been going on, what information we hadn’t even talked about the DIBELS (reading assessment) and I want that piece there. I want to see the intervention and how the student responded to the individual intervention. We have an intervention specialist and I want their information from the person; I would like to see that person at the meeting but so often they are not invited.
School Psychologist #3

The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs of a 6th grade student who is struggling with reading comprehension. The student also demonstrates concerns with attention and an ability to focus in the classroom. IAT team members include the school psychologist, principal, parents, her social studies, science, and math teachers.

What were you thinking (1:20)?
My first thought is that it is too overwhelming for her and so she just doesn’t do it.

What were you thinking (2:20)?
I think that, again, she has difficulty reading it and understanding what she has read in order to answer the questions that would be my initial reaction to that. I realize that she has problems reading, umm, test taking. When I think of test taking there are 2 factors that come to mind again, difficulty focusing so she doesn’t understand it or is it difficulty being able to understand what she just read.

What were you thinking?
I was going to say as far as umm in the classroom to that umm when she is so soft spoken maybe it is a focusing issue that she really wasn’t on track with the teacher and so when they ask her she really isn’t sure about the response so she says it very quietly hoping they don’t catch it all. I think that is just a thought.

What were you thinking (3:34)?
Ah I have to agree with Mr. Smith, I don’t think there is any parent or home/environment support as far as the study guides and I think if she had – she may just need a lot more reinforcement at home, especially if there is an attention-deficit going on, she in the classroom going over these study guides so if she is not going over them at home where there is not all the distractibility she just may not be getting them so um we could definitely still be looking at an attention-deficit issue here which is really hard to sort out but yeah and so and I’m in the same breath if she has trouble reading and understanding, getting home and looking at the study guides maybe very overwhelming to her and so she doesn’t really understand what’s on it so she just doesn’t do it so its kinda of a you know “catch-can” situation – which is it.

What were you thinking?
Um I guess not to much more other than um in the back of my mind I am starting to think I’m wondering if they can’t give the test orally after they have given it to her in writing and see if she does better answering the questions before they actually give her a grade. So in other words, give it to her in writing first and then also present the test to her orally and see how she responds. She may have more knowledge about what the questions are but if she doesn’t understand the questions in writing so.

What were you thinking (4:08)?
I think what pops in my head to a little bit is are we seeing a little bit of some seizure activity. I always never want to totally rule that out, you know . . . it could be very minimal but the fact that she has some vision issues that have never been addressed umm I don’t . . . I think of everything that might be going on. Maybe its not you know there might be just very small seizures which is staring off, there are all saying she is just staring off - what is she staring off – is it inattention or is it something else, I don’t know?

What were you thinking?
Well, the fact that our nurse has already checked her with and without glasses and she failed miserably I think that could be a huge factor and I am very concerned about the glasses and umm I just feel like at this point I mean she may not be able to read the print so we don’t know that for a fact. I think that is huge. (“Anything else on the glasses?”) Yeah the fact that she doesn’t want to wear them, the mom knows that she doesn’t want to wear them and the fact her mom (at least) admits they are at least 2 years old and maybe too small on her I guess I was kinda taken aback that you know, parents haven’t done something about those glasses.

What were you thinking?
Well, I guess I missed the part when Amy (teacher) said there is some kind of . . . that she keeps her math journal in her lap rather than put it up, is that a vision issue um because maybe she sees things a little bit better farther away. I am not sure but confidence wise umm there is definitely an issue. I umm . . . she is a brand new student, there is whole new environment so if she is exceptionally shy, I think all of that, I’m sure the glasses are an embarrassment as well especially if they are too small for her – she thinks they are ugly and she doesn’t feel good about herself so . . .

What were you thinking?
Well, I guess I am not as worried about her organization, she seems to, I mean, I have a lot of kids at this grade level (6th grade) that teachers say they just don’t follow through on anything. I hear that she is following through so I guess I would not be as concerned about organization as the fact that it sounds like if she could see herself and could see her progress, the graphs, I think that was a really good intervention, so I would probably tap into that with other classes and maybe with other teachers, that maybe she needs a visual umm to see to help her with her self-confidence.

What were you thinking?
Umm I guess as far as the planner is concerned, we use the planner a lot here umm especially in the elementary, we really try and incorporate it in elementary but it goes all the way through high school but try to get them used to it because so many of the parents don’t have computers and there often get the calls to get hold of this parent because they are very difficult to get a hold of so they planner is essential as far as our communication tool with the parent to let them know if work hasn’t been done or if she is sliding or she needs extra work on time tests or whatever umm yeah so that is why I thought the planner was important.

What were you thinking?
Well that fact that she is turning sideways you know and umm I don’t if she has in social studies, a lot of times he uses the umm Smart Board or overheads projector and stuff so if maybe she has a vision, I keep thinking vision again you know it is just hard for her to really focus in on things that you know are blurry. I don’t know for sure umm it is really hard mentally for me to uh really sort out is it focusing issue or is it ah you know something else going on or is it the fact that her vision is so impaired that she’s just you know not with anything that is in writing

What were you thinking?

Again I am thinking the vision, the first part was a time-line, he focuses a lot on the timeline initially to start the year off and she did well on that and he is saying now that they are getting into reading the material and then trying to umm understand it and comprehend it; I am not sure if it is comprehension, I guess in the back of my mind, I am thinking you know she would really need to read it to her and see if that makes a difference, if she isn’t, if she has such an impaired vision, I don’t know, I guess I really have to see that corrected to see where we are at.

What were you thinking?

I mean, I think we really have to investigate it more and umm you know she is saying (the teacher) she thinks she’s got knowledge wise but when it comes to reading the questions she is not being able to answer them. Well if she can’t read them because of her vision or if she can’t read them otherwise you know that may definitely, the thing that is kinda baffling though is that her reading fluency had gone up so I am not, I guess I feel kinda there are some unanswered questions here cause she can read the text you know what I am saying, fluency is going up so she is obviously seeing it so umm I just don’t know if she is just struggling I mean when she does read it – I don’t know what that means, where was she initially fluency-wise and where is she now and my guess is she is still far behind what she should be so I guess I need more information.

What were you thinking?

Mostly that I need more information umm that this is just her initial meeting and there are some unanswered questions still about the focusing issue, about the vision, about the reading - does she understand information if it’s given to her orally rather than if she has to read it and write it down.

What were you thinking?

I am thinking that everybody is saying the same thing, you know that basically she is umm for whatever reason if she reads it she is not understanding what she is reading umm so I just feel like I don’t have information what does the fluency really look like, is she really able to fluently read it and not understand it or can she not actually, is she struggling to decode it –

What were you thinking?

I think he actually, actually I think he belabored the situation in front of the parent, I guess I think we didn’t need to go into it that far – I think you start counting on those kinds of things then the parent starts feeling really bad and umm I really just
wanted to kinda cut it off b/c you get too much into it and well we could end up with the parent crying so I just OK, she can’t read, we know she can’t read or she’s reading it and not understanding it so I just think it is enough

What were you thinking?

Umm basically giving her second Tier, she is in Tier I right now with reading and kinda upping the ante as far as interventions umm Ruth has really been our Title I and she is fantastic so not that Mrs. Uberoth (classroom teacher) isn’t but she is kinda . . .literacy coach and so I just feel like that extra person for a lot of reasons – a second glance at what may be the problem may be helpful and also it will give her a second umm emphasis on comprehension and trying to break things down and she if we can put a little more emphasis on it and see if it helps and see if we start seeing some progress with her test taking.

School Psychologist #4

The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the needs and concerns regarding a 3rd grade female student. The team (not including the school psych) met in Nov and put a few interventions in place to address her attitude, motivation (lack thereof) and effort. She was retained in 2nd grade. The team included the principal, parent, school psychologist, school psychology intern, referring teacher, and guidance counselor.

What were you thinking (56):

In knowing this teacher, if there was not an improvement, the first thing out of her mouth would be how bad things are so right away I knew the meeting was gonna be a positive meeting.

What were you thinking (1:18):

The teacher is already identifying the lack of motivation, lack of caring as her primary concern and I’m comparing that to what Dr. Miller had talked about with the background and what the teacher was telling me was new information because Marty didn’t mention the lack of attitude as being a problem it was more, his was more reviewing the case but now the teacher is the one providing the concern.

What were you thinking (1:29):

When she said that was a huge change, I’m thinking “wow” this is really gonna be a good meeting because she has made a lot of improvement and especially from this particular teacher to be emphasizing the positives I thought was a really good beginning to the meeting.

What were you thinking (1:48):

I was thinking that the teacher is prepping the parent so that when she gets the grade card that she is not going to see stellar grades even though the teacher feels that there is improvement being made and I’m filing in the back of my mind about the grades as far as bringing this up later as an area to target for intervention if that would be appropriate or not because up to now what the teacher has said is her attitude has
improved a lot but we are not seeing that yet in the grades as much so I’m thinking well the next step would be to do some targeting intervention in the area of grades.

*SP stopped the tape (2:02):
At this point I am looking at the referral to look specifically at academics to see what are the deficits in reading, what are the deficits in math because that is the road the teacher kinda opened up there, so I am following that train of thought.

What were you thinking (2:38):
We are reviewing the interventions that are in place, writing in the planner and going to grandmas afterschool and she is doing better at grandmas and I am wondering why is she doing better at grandmas than at home? There is something about grandma’s that is beneficial for this girl to get her homework done.

What were you thinking (3:07):
I forget – when the principal said give me the first letter. (Principal could not remember the name of the student’s sibling who attended the school and he said “give me the first letter”). I am thinking that you (the principal) really painted himself in a corner.

What were you thinking (4:02):
I was thinking that mom um said they don’t go to grandma’s as much and I’m thinking well a minute going to grandma’s helps the kids and now they’re not going to grandma’s as much so are things at home better than they were in Nov. so that we don’t need to go to grandma’s any more or is this just a random, this has nothing to do with helping the kids it’s just random that they’re not going to grandmas and it seem to be just a random thing (oh, we don’t go there as much anymore) and its OK you are not going there as much anymore but that’s when they got their work done so are they getting their work done at home. I am trying to get mom to see the association between going to grandmas and getting the work done and I’m trying to find out from mom also is that still a problem at home. She said “it’s a constant struggle” so I’m confused that mom is not using linear logic here

What were you thinking (5:07):
She kinda bombarded me a little bit - she was retained in second grade and she’s getting her vision checked and it’s like OK, I’m thinking which road am I gonna or kinda like where is this discussion going cause we have 3 or 4 different things hanging out there. He asked “am I talking to much, is this what you are looking for?

What were you thinking (5:40):
Well I was thinking at first I thought well this whole vision things a “red herring” because she’s already had her vision checked and then I thought well if she’s squinting maybe she has eye strain and then when Graham says well maybe she just wants glasses I thought that was funny. So I guess I didn’t really know how to process that thing about the vision other than she’s going to see the eye doctor so if there is a problem there we’ll find out about it so I am not overly concerned about it, I’m gonna let the eye doctor take care of that
SP stopped video (5:52):
I noticed that I haven’t been talking for a little while so I must be processing all of that bombardment that’s coming in talking about, now we’re talking about getting her eyes checked, the vision and so um that is probably why I’m not talking because I am processing all of that.

What were you thinking (6:30):
Well I’m trying to bring the discussion around into academic interventions because I sense that’s what the next logical step for this case is but when I floated a couple things out there they just got chopped down by the teacher. The first thing I floated was reading and I floated out there completion of work. The first thing the teacher said was “Oh, she’s a wonderful reader” so I’m gonna let the teacher talk more and try to ascertain from her what is it about the academics that is a concern because she said the teacher said – and I looked at my notes to try to find the exact words that the teacher said but I couldn’t find them so I just paraphrased her but whenever possible I would try to use the teachers words when I am phrasing a question, I think it makes them feel more comfortable and shows them that I am listening to what they say and that I speak their language so um that’s one strategy I try to use.

I understand that she’s saying there is a concern about her academics but right now I don’t know what that is, she is telling me it is not reading and so maybe it is getting her work done, maybe its math. I don’t know so I’m just gonna listen to what she says.

SP stopped video (6:37):
When she said comprehension, I could see in my eyes it’s like “Eureka” there it is reading comprehension, we finally have something we can target for an intervention.

What are you thinking (7:30):
“She’s telling me all the interventions that she’s already doing for this kid that are working and I don’t think she even realizes that what she’s telling me are interventions like what she talks to the um you know she explains it one-on-one to the student, um she tells her to slow down in her reading and so the teachers not only telling me what the problem… what she sees as the problem but she’s also giving me a nice grocery list of interventions that she’s been doing.”

What are you thinking? (8:00):
“I’m thinking that she’s describing more of an attention issue rather than a comprehension issue (short pause) and I used her words ‘la la land’ ‘cause it’s a humorous way of agreeing with her that that’s what it sounds like.”

SP stopped video (8:13)
“I have my hypothesis here that it has to do with attention and I felt like I got all of that from the teacher so I wanted to test that hypothesis with the mom and I wanted to bring mom into the discussion so I turned to mom and I asked her if she sees that at home as well so she could either confirm or deny the hypothesis that it’s an attention issue (pause) building consensus is what I’m attempting to do.
What are you thinking? (9:10)

“At this point I’m summarizing the information that the teacher had given me and I am checking for my accuracy. I’m saying…revealing that the reading itself was (stumble) not a problem, the reading comprehension is a concern BUT it may be more related to attention issues rather than comprehension issues. So I’m validating with the teacher that that is the information that she’s conveyed.”

SP stopped the video (9:24)

“She said that the problem is focusing while she’s reading and maybe she needs to slow herself down. So the teacher’s telling me this (hits surface for emphasis) is what I think the problem is and this (hits surface for emphasis) is what I think we ought to do about it.”

What are you thinking? (10:07)

“Um (long pause) I see that where the teacher got the idea of her slowing down to improve comprehension is that’s a strategy that she employs herself. And I’m thinking [I’m thinking well… how can I say this nice?] I’m thinking well that this is like the end of one study, starring the teacher. It’s like yeah that worked for you. Um… so I’m just (short pause) I’m just being polite and listening to the teacher tell her story.”

What are you thinking? (11:00)

“Um (long pause) I’m thinking that because the teacher told me that this kid could read but she has a concern with her comprehension rate that maybe because the difference between the two is its highlighting and as a concern for the teacher because overall I don’t hear the teacher saying that she’s tremendously concerned about this particular kid. And I’m thinking that this kid pretty much fits in with the other third grade kids so why is it that we’re having this meeting? Is it because she reads so well orally that the deficits in the comprehension stick out more? Because there is a gap… I’m trying to find out from the teacher you know how is this kid not just a typical third grade kid? With typical third grade problems or concerns…”

What are you thinking? (11:45)

“I’m thinking that this teacher does a lot of the interventions that should be beneficial for this kid if focusing is the issue and I’m thinking what’s the gap between where this kid is and where the teacher wants the kid to be. I’m kind of losing the teacher a little bit. I thought I had a pretty good handle on things up until now and so I’m trying to rework IF (short pause) attention’s the issue, how is it affecting her specifically academically? That’s what I’m going after next. I’m trying to figure that part out.”

*At this point, SP commented “I didn’t realize I did all that”.

What are you thinking? (12:20)

“The teacher’s telling me that what it boils down to is that the kid doesn’t do good on the end of the week tests and she keeps saying that I guess it has to do with her being
focused. So the more the teacher talks, the more she solves her own (laugh) questions, her own problems, so I’m just going to try not to get in her way.

What are you thinking? (13:28)

“I saw how Dr. Miller picked up on the test results. He’s looking at the achievement tests because the teacher (short pause) more or less came to the bottom line that (short pause) her student’s not doing well on the end of the week tests so now he’s looking at how she did on the overall achievement tests. I want to go back to how she’s doing in the classroom though. So I’m looking through the list at the reading, at the language and I came up with again um it all comes back to the attention for me because... and I think I’m going to make the comment in just a moment that the first thing that was checked in the one area was the attention issues so I think that (short pause) everything that we’ve been able to discuss up to this point kinda fits right in that whole mode of the attention seems to be the issue and it affecting her getting her work done, it’s affecting her reading comprehension because she’s not paying attention. So (pause) I see Marty’s going in a little bit of a different direction. And I also think I’ve done enough talking already ‘cause I feel like I was hogging the discussion so I’m going to let Marty go with this for a while. So that’s what I was thinking…”

What are you thinking? (14:33)

“I’m thinking that if my interns were paying attention, she knows exactly what I’m thinking and so I more or less handed the ball off to her and I asked her ‘What do you think, Robin?’ and she pretty much carried on my discussion for me. So it was a way for me to continue the discussion without having me talk AND to involve my intern because (pause) I wanted to get her involved in the meeting as well, as an opportunity for her.”

What are you thinking? (15:35)

“I’m just um processing the information that the teacher’s sharing and I’m thinking (short pause) that (short pause) what she’s sharing sounds like a pretty typical kind of a third grade situation to me. I’m not hearing anything tremendously out of the ordinary and I’m thinking that when we talk about attention or not paying attention, it doesn’t sound to me as if it’s the threshold of like an attention deficit disorder where it’s clinically significant. It sounds to me more like its just a typical third grader [who um.. has a um.. what’s that the word?.. um] temperament… of that being an attentive child.

What are you thinking? (16:11)

“I’m thinking my intern asked her a good question about if she’s able to physically see the kid drifting off and the teacher is going to say ‘no, she doesn’t’ and then I’m going to say that well that makes it hard to know when to intervene (laugh). Which I guess in a way just more or less normalizes what the kid is doing… so I guess I’m thinking that this sounds pretty typical and what I’m about to say lends credence to the fact that well (slight pause) you don’t know when to intervene with a kid that’s acting pretty normal.”

What are you thinking? (17:14)
“I’m thinking that we’re getting close to the end of the meeting and we don’t have any targeted interventions to (pause) monitor, to collect data on, to monitor the progress of an intervention. And so I’m trying to tie in what was done in November to say okay let’s look what we did in November, even though I wasn’t there, to say when you guys did your interventions and you monitored that you know and it was effective, now here we are in January, we want to move the next step forward, so what is it that we want to do from here on out? So I’m trying to lay the foundation of what the next step in our meeting, kinda one of the last steps of our meeting, is to identify what we’re going to do and how we’re going to monitor it.”

What are you thinking? (17:59)

“I’m thinking that I’m not getting the information that I wanted. I’m not getting the answers that I wanted. Um I wanted them to tell me well we did this intervention and we did this intervention and these were the outcomes and what I’m getting is brand new information on things that we haven’t even talked about yet. So, I’m thinking (pause) well were going down a whole… instead of wrapping things up… now we’re going down a whole new road (laughs).”

What are you thinking? (18:56)

“I’m thinking that this mom needs a little propping up because she’s been telling us the whole meeting how difficult it is to get the kids to do anything and then she drops on us that dad just lets the kids do whatever they wanted to. And so it’s mom that kinda holds the kids feet to the fire and I’m acknowledging that to her by saying well you know the price that you pay for that is that makes you the bad guy in your kid’s relationship and to acknowledge that there’s a price to pay for that. (pause) Just supporting mom, giving mom some support there.”

What are you thinking? (19:46)

“I’m thinking that now we have a whole new category, it’s called sleep disorder or sleep disturbance. (pause) I’ve abandoned my hope of wrapping things up and getting out of there because there’s more areas to investigate or at least discuss ‘cause were not talking about this girls not getting enough sleep or her sleep patterns. So that was a concern in November so it’s something we need to revisit to see if it’s still a problem or not.”

What are you thinking? (20:29)

“Shes talking about her daughter staying up late and then I’m asking if that has an affect on her in the morning getting up. I’m thinking if she’s hard to get up, hard to get ready for school, she’s not starting her day off right. Mom said she could be a grump if she doesn’t get her sleep, so I’m thinking well maybe she’s starting her day off kinda grumpy and in a negative frame of mind so that might be some of the problem that they were seeing earlier… That they were talking about earlier with her attitude.”
What are you thinking? (22:00)

“I’m thinking about with the amount of sleep that she’s getting, that if she’s taking naps. She sounds like she’s getting at least eight hours so it’s probably lack of sleep isn’t the issue, but the issue’s more of what her schedule is… As far as going to sleep, taking a nap until eight o’clock and then getting up and then going back to bed at ten o’clock. It sounds like it’s not a concern she’s not getting enough sleep but that it’s when she’s getting the sleep. And the teacher said that she’s a routine person and I’m thinking that (umm… long pause) Faith doesn’t sound like a routine person. So that’s what I’m thinking. There was something else that mom…oh, when mom said that she thinks that she does it on purpose just to annoy mom, that’s when I asked her well what does she do on weekends? Because if she did it just to annoy mom, then on weekends she would get up early and it sounded like, well it wasn’t much different on the weekends. So I really don’t think that she’s doing it just to annoy mom.

School Psychologist #5

The purpose of this IAT meeting was to discuss the concerns of a 5th grade male student who was experiencing difficulty at school. He appeared to be very unmotivated and angry while at school. He was not completing any homework and often was observed to disrupt the class (talking out, out of his seat, etc.). He had returned to the school at the beginning of the year after having moved to AL the previous spring. Meeting participants included: School Psych, assistant principal, special ed. teachers, occupational therapist, 1st grade teacher and the referring 5th grade teacher.

What were you thinking?

“I’m thinking that I don’t remember exactly all the details of the intervention that we set up, that I didn’t take all the details, what I’m trying to do is bring myself back up to speed on exactly how we set it up. And then I’m looking for treatment integrity. Did they do the things that we agreed, that we set up.”

What were you thinking?

“and I think I commented on thinking that this is a case where this is a kid who is partly having trouble because he is getting no home support whatsoever and that the only way we are going to be successful is if the school takes the place of the home.”

What were you thinking?

“I’m not sure (laughs and pauses). I don’t remember to be honest with you… am I allowed to say that? (laughs)”

What were you thinking?

“yeah, (short pause) I’m thinking I gotta get this clarified. Is this kid doing well? Or is he not doing well? I’m getting mixed information here.”
What were you thinking?

“I’m not sure, I think I was thinking that is sounds like they followed through pretty well. And that these are all good components on the intervention. So I’m thinking I’m pleased! You can kinda tell that I’m smiling just a little bit (laugh).”

What were you thinking? #39

“That’s what I’m thinking (laugh) yeah, exactly that. I wanted to give them feedback on the overarching purpose of what we were doing. (short pause) Relates to a bigger issue with . . . is, and you can tell this, they go off on tangents all the time and what I like to do is bring them back to the central theme. And the central theme here is, I forget what I was saying, taking the place of the home. Providing an environment where somebody cares about whether he does his homework or not because no he’s not getting that message anywhere else.”

What were you thinking?

“I’m thinking I’m glad that everybody followed through pretty well and that everyone did their piece.”

What were you thinking?

“(long pause: I just had it and I lost it just a second ago…darn…ummm…again), oh! What.. and I don’t know if it was exactly at this point but along this area I was thinking that I like working with the assistant principal and that she does a nice job and I like the way she handles things. Is what I was thinking…[prompt: is that the one that does the check?] she was the one on the end with the iPAD. [prompt: okay, so she’s directly involved with the intervention as well it sounds like. Okay, and you were impressed by that…] Yeah, and I just remember having thinking I always like working with her, she always does a nice job.”

What were you thinking?

“I’m not sure. I think I was just concentrating on trying to get it down on there so I was thinking about how I am going to word it and so it was more like clerical kinda things.”

What were you thinking?

“I just remember thinking that I was glad that she had handled that situation the way she did and that (pause) I was hoping that this thing could be sustained. [prompt: the interventions?] Yeah.

What were you thinking?

“Well I’m thinking, uh-oh (laughs)…is what I was thinking, that was my first thought, uh-oh. And so I’m thinking well, there’s a discrepancy between what the assistant principal’s saying and what she’s saying so then now I’m curious what it took for her to explain this discrepancy.”
What were you thinking?
“(slight pause) Well, I’m thinking well it does seem like there’s some improvement so I’m a little bit more encouraged from what she’s saying but I’m still curious, as to what’s the rest of the story.”

What were you thinking?
“I’m disappointed because I’m thinking oh, that’s why there’s a discrepancy because he got the points ‘cause she really wasn’t giving much homework so there wasn’t really much to measure him on.

What were you thinking?
“I’m thinking I want to make sure that I understand exactly what the point system is and get a good idea of whether there’s been improvement and whether that’s like valid. In other words does that represent a true improvement or not. (slight pause) Hence all the questions about asking them to explain the structure of it.”

What were you thinking?
“I’m thinking now, should I go somewhere with this, this whole thing about the gloves and the mittens? Should I start asking them questions about… do you guys see any meaning in this? Do you think there’s a reason? And then I had the thought well, I’m not going to do that because I’m afraid ill go off on a tangent. And, I’m worried, the team tends to go off on tangents sometimes so I don’t want to be the source of a tangent.”

What were you thinking?
“I’m thinking there that (short pause) I’m glad that we’re doing it doesn’t sound like we’re getting much support from the home so this just has to be one I think we might as well concentrate our efforts more so on school.”

What were you thinking?
“Basically that…that I remember wondering back, why did she need to be so assertive in what she was promising? ‘Cause I’m thinking with her schedule, I questioned whether she was going to be able to deliver on that. And then I remembered having that thought after that… Is it that she wanted to look good in front of the team? Or was she sincere? Just a question mark in my mind.”

What were you thinking?
“I remember theorizing…was there some impact from being in the home environment with no school influence during that time and was that the cause for the drop-off or not. Not concluding it was or wasn’t, just wondering, could that have been an influence.”

What were you thinking?
“(laughs) that means I’m acknowledging that you had the same thought that I did and you’re just verbalizing what I was wondering about.”
What were you thinking?

“They were going to be able to add him to the piece and they ended up going that direction.”

What were you thinking?

“(long pause) Good job team! They were doing a nice job and I liked the way the flow of the conversation was going.”

What were you thinking?

“Yeah, I’m thinking that my strategy, what I’m doing is holding back, because I want the team…’cause my tendency a lot of times is to always jump in and want to structure everything. So, I remember thinking that’s exactly the next thing I wanted to do which is to talk about how we needed to tweak and they’re already doing that on their own. And again I’m pleased.”

What were you thinking?

“That again, I’m not having to say something, I don’t need to say something, because as long as they’re leading that’s exactly what I want them to do. And I’m deliberately not commenting because I don’t want to pull the focus onto me. ‘Cause one of my concerns has always been that when there’s a concern, they always turn to me and want me to solve it. So I kinda set this whole thing up when we originally did it but then I’m not trying to hold back deliberately to give them ownership…and that’s always a challenge.”

What were you thinking?

“Well… I’m not really sort of part of the conversation. I’m more just making sure I understand the point sheet successfully. So I’d like to say I’m having some sort of an overarching thought. Sort of focusing on what now exactly how did they structure this plan? And did they do it the way they told me verbally? Did it set up and did they do it that way? And I’m saying I think that yeah they did. And I think it’s making sense. Another thing I wondered is does this make sense to the kid, is he understanding it? And I’m sort of wondering about that too.”

“I’m thinking that I don’t remember exactly all the details of the intervention that we set up, that I didn’t take all the details, what I’m trying to do is bring myself back up to speed on exactly how we set it up. And then I’m looking for treatment integrity. Did they do the things that we agreed, that we set up.”

#35 (00:18)

“and I think I commented on thinking that this is a case where this is a kid who is partly having trouble because he is getting no home support whatsoever and that the only way we are going to be successful is if the school takes the place of the home.”

#36 (00:13)
“I’m not sure (laughs and pauses). I don’t remember to be honest with you… am I allowed to say that? (laughs)”

#37 (00:13)

“yeah, (short pause) I’m thinking I gotta get this clarified. Is this kid doing well? Or is he not doing well? I’m getting mixed information here.”

#38 (00:16)

“I’m not sure, I think I was thinking that is sounds like they followed through pretty well. And that these are all good components on the intervention. So I’m thinking I’m pleased! You can kinda tell that I’m smiling just a little bit (laugh).”

#39 (00:31)

“That’s what I’m thinking (laugh) yeah, exactly that. I wanted to give them feedback on the overarching purpose of what we were doing. (short pause) Relates to a bigger issue with is, and you can tell this, they go off on tangents all the time and what I like to do is bring them back to the central theme. And the central theme here is, I forget what I was saying, taking the place of the home. Providing an environment where somebody cares about whether he does his homework or not because no he’s not getting that message anywhere else.”

#40 (00:09)

“I’m thinking I’m glad that everybody followed through pretty well and that everyone did their piece.”

#41 (00:49)

“(long pause: I just had it and I lost it just a second ago…darn…ummm…again), oh! What.. and I don’t know if it was exactly at this point but along this area I was thinking that I like working with the assistant principal and that she does a nice job and I like the way she handles things. Is what I was thinking…[prompt: is that the one that does the check?] she was the one on the end with the iPAD. [prompt: okay, so she’s directly involved with the intervention as well it sounds like. Okay, and you were impressed by that…] Yeah, and I just remember having thinking I always like working with her, she always does a nice job.”

#42 (00:17)

“I’m not sure. I think I was just concentrating on trying to get it down on there so I was thinking about how I am going to word it and so it was more like clerical kinda things.”

#43 (00:20)

“I just remember thinking that I was glad that she had handled that situation the way she did and that (pause) I was hoping that this thing could be sustained. [prompt: the interventions?] Yeah.”
“Well I’m thinking, uh-oh (laughs)…is what I was thinking, that was my first thought, uh-oh. And so I’m thinking well, there’s a discrepancy between what the assistant principal’s saying and what she’s saying so then now I’m curious what it took for her to explain this discrepancy.”

“(slight pause) Well, I’m thinking well it does seem like there’s some improvement so I’m a little bit more encouraged from what she’s saying but I’m still curious, as to what’s the rest of the story.”

“I’m disappointed because I’m thinking oh, that’s why there’s a discrepancy because he got the points ‘cause she really wasn’t giving much homework so there wasn’t really much to measure him on.

“I’m thinking I want to make sure that I understand exactly what the point system is and get a good idea of whether there’s been improvement and whether that’s like valid. In other words does that represent a true improvement or not. (slight pause) Hence all the questions about asking them to explain the structure of it.”

“I’m thinking now, should I go somewhere with this, this whole thing about the gloves and the mittens? Should I start asking them questions about… do you guys see any meaning in this? Do you think there’s a reason? And then I had the thought well, I’m not going to do that because I’m afraid I’ll go off on a tangent. And, I’m worried, the team tends to go off on tangents sometimes so I don’t want to be the source of a tangent.”

“I’m thinking there that (short pause) I’m glad that we’re doing it doesn’t sound like we’re getting much support from the home so this just has to be one I think we might as well concentrate our efforts more so on school.”

“Basically that…that I remember wondering back, why did she need to be so assertive in what she was promising? ‘Cause I’m thinking with her schedule, I questioned whether she was going to be able to deliver on that. And then I remembered having that thought after that… Is it that she wanted to look good in front of the team? Or was she sincere? Just a question mark in my mind.”
“I remember theorizing...was there some impact from being in the home environment with no school influence during that time and was that the cause for the drop-off or not. Not concluding it was or wasn’t, just wondering, could that have been an influence.”

#52 (00:10)

“(laughs) that means I’m acknowledging that you had the same thought that I did and you’re just verbalizing what I was wondering about.”

#53 (00:16)

“They were going to be able to add him to the piece and they ended up going that direction.”

#54 (00:13)

“(long pause) Good job team! They were doing a nice job and I liked the way the flow of the conversation was going.”

#55 (00:27)

“Yes, I’m thinking that my strategy, what I’m doing is holding back, because I want the team…’cause my tendency a lot of times is to always jump in and want to structure everything. So, I remember thinking that’s exactly the next thing I wanted to do which is to talk about how we needed to tweak and they’re already doing that on their own. And again I’m pleased.”

#56 (00:38)

“That again, I’m not having to say something, I don’t need to say something, because as long as they’re leading that’s exactly what I want them to do. And I’m deliberately not commenting because I don’t want to pull the focus onto me. ‘Cause one of my concerns has always been that when there’s a concern, they always turn to me and want me to solve it. So I kinda set this whole thing up when we originally did it but then I’m not trying to hold back deliberately to give them ownership…and that’s always a challenge.”

#57 (00:46)

“Well… I’m not really sort of part of the conversation. I’m more just making sure I understand the point sheet successfully. So I’d like to say I’m having some sort of an overarching thought. Sort of focusing on what now exactly how did they structure this plan? And did they do it the way they told me verbally? Did it set up and did they do it that way? And I’m saying I think that yeah they did. And I think it’s making sense. Another thing I wondered is does this make sense to the kid, is he understanding it? And I’m sort of wondering about that too.”

School Psychologist #6

This was an initial IAT meeting for a student that had apparently been failing since the beginning of the year. The school psychologist was familiar with the student as she had
noticed a few concerns last year during an unrelated classroom observation. She reported her concerns to the principal and the nurse became involved. The school psychologist did not share any of her information from last year during this team meeting as she did not feel it was the appropriate venue. However, she did indicate that it appeared they were still occurring. The team included the principal, speech-language pathologist, school psychologist, school psychology intern, Title I reading teacher, intervention specialist, 1st grade teacher, Kindergarten teacher, and the referring teacher. Parents were not involved with this meeting.

What were you thinking (1:13)

“I was concerned that the second grade teacher was seeing the same thing that prompted a concern to me when she was in first grade. That I think could be an environmental concern.

What were you thinking (1:37)

“At that point I was thinking if she has been failing since the start of the year why are we talking about this young lady in um April..March. Particularly since I know that this is a teacher that um does not always accommodate. Or does not always [I wasn’t like too mean was I?] No, you were not too mean. You asked just the right questions. [laughs] We struggle with this particular teacher in terms of providing intervention at the child’s level.”

What were you thinking (2:13)

“Um I guess that’s a point that I’m realizing you know and I’m trying to process in terms of with this teacher I know that she looks at um qualifying for special services under the old discrepancy formula. You know so she hasn’t made that shift to be able to think in terms of intervention. She came, she really did not have any record of intervention. Um and yeah but at the same token I’m thinking we have a young lady who’s failing across the board how are we going to make a difference for her because at this stage of the game I’m with this teacher. You know so um I was also thinking I think I may have asked a question about what Mr. Tussing was doing because sometimes um depending on the teacher Mr. Tussing might provide or have more documented intervention but it depends on the teacher and it’s directed by the teacher.”

What were you thinking (2:54)

“I was just thinking that it really doesn’t matter where (pause) where whether she’s going to move whether she you know where its going to be you know that we still have concerns.”

What were you thinking (3:02)

“Yes, the reason I asked that question is [prompt: what question did you ask?] I asked if her failure has been just since the start of the year and she said yes that’s where I’m thinking ‘what in the world are we doing here at this point in time?’ you know when she’s been dealing all year long. That’s what going through my mind.”
What were you thinking (4:02)

“I was thinking that that’s really not a significant amount of improvement um in terms of particularly where… you know in terms of where typical children would be improving. And she started so low to begin with and we’re looking at (pause) 68 words per minute. So I wasn’t too impressed with her. (laughs)”

What were you thinking (5:01)

“I guess there I was trying to…she was having trouble finding pages. um I was beginning to process um (pause) the attention issues and was it more uh (longer pause) social emotional concentration and focus versus not really identifying numbers um How much might be one or the other.”

What were you thinking (5:51)

“I’m not sure you know where Joanne said she didn’t think she knew numbers and then I don’t know that I…I don’t know if I had any thoughts there, truthfully.”

What were you thinking (6:32)

So what are you thinking here?

“Well, at that point I…the teacher had already caught me in the hall and told me that she had forgotten to include in the referral that mom had requested a behavior assessment and wanted to take a closer look at that focus and the teacher had already asked me whether that’s something that I thought we would do even if they were moving and I said yeah (laughs). Yeah, you know, definitely.”

What were you thinking (7:08)

“Um, I feel that frustration that we don’t have any systematic intervention that we really, I mean, that is something I was feeling like how can we make that kind of a change to provide more systematic data. You know we’re talking about this young lady but we don’t really…we have some intervention that Joanne is providing in title but we don’t have any other really good systematic intervention and that’s just a frustration for me (pause) I don’t know how to impact that.”

What were you thinking (8:31)

“(laughs) I think I tuned her out because this is where I’m beginning to really process and think about that whole social and emotional… how much are consistency? How much are focus? I mean that’s kind of what’s becoming primary in my mind. Okay how do we adjust that? And what’s being done to adjust that? Um I think that’s when Nanc brought up that she was seeing Kelly, the counselor. Which I was saying okay that’s good. So I mean that’s what was kind of going through… I was kind of tuning her out. [Prompt: so at his point you are kind of switching, you’re moving away from what she’s saying about the academics and more towards…] yeah, well it had no value for me and so I was kind of going somewhere else…I think…at that moment in time you know…”
What were you thinking (9:11)

I did that because I was trying to think okay is she seeing, does she see focus. Is this something that... is it (pause) content based as well I’m just kind of trying to just work on that focus area in my brain. What’s that all about? And kind of get away from reading and on to focus because that’s where I fit in. (laughs) ‘Cause I’m stuck in the focus area. (Laughs)"

What were you thinking (9:54)

“Well seeing as there is a good question I really wish we weren’t such a, I really wanted to deal more with what is... what has been going on with her. I didn’t think it was the venue to do it. Um and I really saw that as the crux of the issue. (pause) and I thought Pat raised a question, could she be... um if there was some follow through and if there was some counseling going on and the state support services... there was this whole part to me that was unknown about what might be critical for her (long pause) and it didn’t seem like the venue to deal with it. And I think sometimes you have that you know especially with social... with possible issues at home, you know it’s not the venue.”

What were you thinking (10:31)

“I think I’m realizing that we’re kind of on our own. Um and probably environment is such that we’re you know it’s limited and we have to move on here (laughs) enough about seeing mom in the hallway.”

What were you thinking (11:16)

“I think this is at the point like I was feeling like boy we have to move this on (laughs) and I think I might have then, I was processing okay. Lots of... there are lots of issues here um (pause) and we need to move forward in this process. I was just feeling it was (slight pause) important information. Once I heard it was a single mom…”

What were you thinking (11:59)

“I think that was the point in which I was trying to shift the gear to find out you know kind of wind things up. Okay, where are we heading with this young lady? Um you know we don’t have... you know we talked about the focus, the concentration. We don’t really have interventions to move forward. I was trying to really struggle with like ‘alright, where are we heading here?’ In the meeting and with the child... kind of both.”

What were you thinking (12:19)

“I was just really feeling that that was so primary. (long pause) [prompt: so you were revisiting the social?] Uh huh. I think that was really primarily in my mind and how do we…”

What were you thinking (13:16)

“I mean I was thinking it is kind of like this little elephant in the room (laughs) that I was kind of uncomfortable talking about. I thought it was really really important um and then
here it was revisiting from what I was gathering from the teacher and yet we really couldn’t be explicit to the rest of the team about what was going on. Yeah. And maybe we could have done, I just wasn’t sure.”

What were you thinking (13:31)

“Big intervention that um we had any data. But I also knew that when I asked that question he probably wasn’t. (long pause) and then I guess I was willing to say okay we cant really move forward in terms of um I’m meeting with Joanne and showing that he…that she was making some gains in terms of the reading intervention and the math we didn’t have any data whatsoever despite the fact that Nick was working with Tiffany.

What were you thinking (14:12)

“Yes, Kim is on my track. Okay, show me the intervention! (laughs) Finally we’re getting there. Show me the intervention. So yeah so that was Kim. [prompt: okay alright so its about 9:20 we’ve been doing this for about 35 minutes now we get into here this whole the idea of. Okay so we can maybe skip through that part. So think about the end instead of going through it, think about the end. So in summary what were you thinking as your pulling everything together with…] I’m thinking about the summary of intervention they receive.”

What were you thinking (20:00)

“We’re going to be looking at considering you know my hope would be that we might be able to move towards a more clinical assessment for this young lady. Um but I’m not very optimistic about that occurring. We use that information to look and try to build a case for or against retention. Because I know the principal likes to do that once we have that kind of data. I guess the bottom line for me was that how it goes for a student depends upon the teacher that they have and their willingness. Because here she is you know she’s had a year of failure (pause) without any intervention within the classroom. Without any differentiated instruction, I’ll use that key word. But then within the classroom, and um she had the same thing in first grade, knowing who her first grade teacher is. And if she’s… you know she could find herself in the same situation as a third grader. Only if she’s out of district then who knows…so I don’t know. Listen, it didn’t feel like a very optimistic meeting to me… bottom line. I think it’s the timing of it. The fact that it’s coming in the march of the year when we’re talking about this young lady when we should have been talking about her in the fall of the year. (pause) But you notice that agenda that the principal had. That’s pretty typical. We have started to try to, my feeling is to…well that brings me to a whole other part of the SAT process.”

School Psychologist #7

The purpose of this consultation meeting was to discuss the learning concerns for a second grade female student. This is the first consultation meeting for the student. Present at the meeting were the school psychologist, referring teacher, and her student-teacher.

What were you thinking? (.52)
So at this point what are you thinking? “I’m thinking that somebody that has word recognition skills and a great growth in reading you know that that’s a real strength for her and that there must be more ability more cognitive ability than what was listed on the group tests and yeah… (pause) because the preferred question was math.”

What were you thinking? (1.04)

“Because she’s at a level 34 most kids don’t come out… they come out with a level 24 to 28 you know with second grade and that’s considered I mean that’s at or above benchmark so she is really far ahead in her reading skills.”

What were you thinking? (1.19)

“Yes, so I’m thinking that maybe she doesn’t have the reasoning skills that she’s maybe more of a word caller or somebody that’s able to obtain the skills for visual memory as opposed to really being able to comprehend and go beyond the text.”

What were you thinking? (2.20)

“Huge discrepancy between her classroom based assessments in reading and her classroom based assessments in math for the teacher. And also um you know with the quantitative reasoning being really really deficit even on her standardized test scores with the verbal being more in the average range.”

What were you thinking? (2.50)

So what are thinking here?

“I guess sort of the same thing it’s just sort of a reiteration of the fact that she’s not making much progress but she also hasn’t had a whole lot of… I know… I mean I’m thinking that I know what’s in place there’s not a whole lot of intervention… math intervention… it goes on with that spiral curriculum with math too.”

What were you thinking? ()

“Not to smack our program but they only have it on…it’s not regular, not a regular intervention for her. Supposed to be two times a week to keep her eye on her. So at that point I’m thinking well you know the math it’s really significantly lower but we’re also not intervening a great deal with it.”

What were you thinking? (3.40)

“Point out that there might be some um (pause) certainly there’s computational problems and there might be some um you know either inattention to detail or maybe some spatial difficulty with a lot of problems on a page or word forming part of it.”

What were you thinking? (4.44)

“What I’m thinking now is…I am, when I know that there’s a correlation between mathematics and writing and non-verbal learning disability so that I continue on questioning about the written expression… and also about the spatial organization and
organization period. (pause) Which to me are components of that non-verbal learning disability.”

What were you thinking? (5.01)

“Again that’s low spatial… (pause)”

What were you thinking? (5.40)

“That’s she compliant and doing the reinforcing activities it’s just she can’t seem to… to get everything together. She’s probably doing it with help from mom at home and that she’s not putting it all together here at school. I’m also thinking shit, I’m going to have to test this kid! (laughs) that’s what I’m thinking about right about then going shit! I thought this was going to be a consult for next year (laughs) (prompt: okay so at this point…) you wrote that down! (it’s being recorded. prompt: okay so at this point you’re thinking about course of action) yeah.”

What were you thinking? (6.07)

“well, I’m thinking right there that even the structures that they have in place in the classroom aren’t really working with her… so that she’s going to need more intensive (pause) interventions to be able to do the things that most kids can do in the classroom… with those accommodations for typical structures you know.”

What were you thinking? (7.00)

“well that’s she’s, you know that she has motivation for the tasks its just that she just doesn’t have the built-in structure to be able to follow through with the sequence of the writing process.”

What were you thinking? (7.42)

“I was wondering whether the lack of organization and difficulty was just with the writing and the math but it seems to be like a characteristic of her completely to have a lack of organization… (pause) not being able to keep track of things.”

What were you thinking? (8.11)

“That maybe she’s not very aware of her appearance or that she maybe doesn’t have as much attention at home as what I thought because of the homework getting completed. Um or maybe they just don’t have much money… you know that’s just what she has available to her. But the fact that she’s not aware of it or doesn’t seem to bother her must mean that its just sort of par for the course.”

What were you thinking? (8.48)

“Yeah there were a lot of pink dots (laughs) she was all over her math skills. So again I mean it’s … just more of the same. That the math is just really very low and she’s making very very little progress whereas without any intervention in reading you know she’s making… excelling actually so…”
What were you thinking? (9.45)

“I’m thinking about the spatial ability…with the geometry, just see whether that’s really a deficit area for her. Because I’m suspecting spatial difficulties…from everything she’s said so far.”

What were you thinking? (10.15)

“I think that she’s (pause) she’s inconsistent still… I mean we’re still on the same level of questioning. I’m really ready to be done because I’ve already made a decision that we have to go ahead and assess her for the possibility of a non-verbal learning disability but she’s you know she’s got some things that she’s able to do but she’s inconsistent with them.”

What were you thinking? (10.45)

“I’m also thinking that there’s not enough intervention for the math knowing that it’s just really not the place for us to be able to re-teach this very well. So you know to me she’s a kid that needs the further intervention but you know they’re not really good job of re-teaching those skills and concepts they’re waiting for college kids to come in and give them fifteen minutes you know so… and doesn’t have them on success maker or any of those things very consistently… not even using the resources that they have consistently.”

School Psychologist #8

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the development concerns for a 2 ½ year old child as he transitions from early intervention to preschool services (if he qualifies). The meeting took place in the parents’ home and included the mother, child, school psychologist, family service coordinator, and primary service provider.

What were you thinking? (.12)

“Okay I was thinking that they uh (long pause) right off the bat we have a child that is non-verbal, I mean well-below. That the family at this point just even getting a sound production is a monumental or a major thing so then that was why they go on and ask how often and how much services we’ve already had.”

What were you thinking? (.30)

“So were basically talking about the differentiation between whether he’s understanding and just not speaking. Now, according to the parent that’s the case he understands um (PAUSE) a lot. That’s something to be further looked at but the other thing is, are there other role models in the home is the first one. She’s saying no I have two other children but they have the same profile. She has other children with the same profile. (pause) I think she then said she had one in the gifted…no that was another room so anyhow she has children with similar profiles so… and also she brought in very quick that he is receiving weekly services (pause) so now we got a pattern here. Intervention has been in place starting…still low and...but role models also.”

What were you thinking? (.47)
“Discussion with the service providers and not to have the discussion of placement prior to evaluation because that has been a concern. Part of it is we know a lot of these children are very significant but um we don’t want to get into promising where they are going to be and having that discussion particularly without the school present because we are the one that are supposed to be discussing this and they have been having this discussion prior to my involvement. So that was why she was very clear that the parent brought up the issue and that they had said it is something to be discussed so we are in that learning process. She’s been coordinator for about a year, just about a year at this point.”

What were you thinking? (1:17)

“What are some of his likes, what are some of the things that they have been using… so I was going to say mom gave him some simple commands for him to do with the expectation that he would follow through and then also she talked about his use of fine motor skills and what the strengths in life.. (Prompt: so what was your thought when she said he likes to play with the phone, he’s real good with the applications…what were you thinking?) (pause) Tell me that there’s at least a cognitive ability that he understands some… more than a one step situation whether he just does cause and effect of a one thing he has an idea that several things may be linked but you have to kind of wait and see. Could still be doing I know if I push this I get this but it appears that he knows several steps.”

What were you thinking? (1:30) “When a parent says bad attitude, I just note it. But we also know that a lot of it has to do with environmental and not necessarily you know the child but it could also be the mother said he understood everything but the question is does he really understand everything. So there’s a lot of things I let a parent tell me… the child has a bad attitude, but then we go on and describe it a little bit more or see what he’s doing and…you know, it also tells me too is mom is just sitting as opposed to getting up to do things when he’s not complying. So I’m watching how she responds to him and when she says that. So now I’ve got kind of a little thought going through my mind okay lets keep an eye out for how she handles the situation, how he responds while I’m there.”

What were you thinking? (2:00)

“As Ellie comes in? (prompt: well as mom’s trying to get him to turn off the…) mom’s trying to get him to turn that off. And I’m trying without seeing him I cant totally remember where he was going with that but um…I don’t think he was compliant. I can’t remember but you know I don’t think he was compliant so that was one thing I was looking at. And of course what I hear from her what I’m hearing from her is a very rough rough situation so you know you get different parenting styles so the parenting style is very direct, very abrupt. But I’m also watching as Ellie comes in to see what kind of a response he has as this is someone he’s been working with and definitely in a one-on-one you have to have a good relationship with the speech therapist if they’re going to be…or any of the therapists that they’re going to have any progress. So I was also kind of looking to see if he would greet her or how he would respond to her being there. I didn’t get a real sense one way or another for him on that.

What were you thinking? (2:23)
“Alright I want to have it so that the parent sees directly what I’m talking about. I brought visual charts so that she’s not just hearing it but she’s seeing how the process is going. When I put myself below the parents first of all if we are at a table I would have been across from her or more likely I would have been beside her. But since where she was, I wanted to make sure that I was still in that position that we could share back and forth have that back and forth conversation as opposed to looking around other people so I was putting myself in that situation. So also we find that when you go into the home you have to feel comfortable with how the family is and so as you noticed when we…going back when we came in we took off shoes and that was a family kind of situation that that’s where they’re feeling and also then um (pause) I had to dress and feel comfortable to sit on the floor. Because often times we do meetings on floors, couches, or whatever so the concept here is trying to meet the family where they’re at to get a sense of where they’re at so that’s…I moved so it was the conversation would flow back and forth”

Observer had to move to a different location in the room, video was shut-off for a moment

What were you thinking? (.17)

“That’s where I’m finding out how long that she’s been providing direct services. So um some of these children have been involved since birth um some comes shortly after two, particularly in the area of speech where they have haven’t picked up that speech. So he started in September (short pause) so he’s had about six months of intervention. It also tells me that they did an assessment at that time to qualify for services so we’re going…it gives me a general idea and I’m going to ask that um where he fell with that information. But it also…so it kind of points us to more eval but it also tells me that we have a baseline okay but it’s not reasoned. So I’m jumping (unable to make out word) my work with its been done just months previous so we would know that so now I know six months out…baseline information, what did it tell us besides his speech?”

What were you thinking? (.41)

“They said they’re providing him with alternative communication at this point with the expectation that he will…that speech will come but we want to reduce his frustration and his ability to communicate. So okay so now we know we already have another intervention besides just verbal communication going, we’re working at a two prong now. (Long pause) And she also confirmed what the service coordinator said. There are no words that there are simply sounds (long pause). (Prompt: what are you thinking in terms of him getting services since September and still no words…are you? Is that?) Well that’s what…well, it’s been progress monitored for this time period and there’s been minimal growth so that we… that’s why she then stepped it up. And you can see that direct service by just modeling and different things she is doing imitation wise was not working so now she brought in another level which was the sign communication um so she’s looking to bring in additional service layers there so… and it also, then that like I said confirmed so I have more than one source. I now have three people saying the same thing, which for preschool services, you have to have more than one piece that would tell you that the child is having it so we have the observation. Right now we already have the
observation from him there and a parent report and a therapist… I mean so we already have a really start of a core to document his speech.”

What were you thinking? (1.27)

“Cling to mom tell her story… uh you know this is very monumental for families and wanting the child to say mama. She’s talking about that but I’m also watching the fact that how is he communicating that he wants something and it’s a cry, whiny kind of thing so um even though we’ve started some signs and more and that he doesn’t have enough that you know… if he is using his behaviors and that to get… also, I got the overall tone for that child um that I didn’t see a particularly happy child that day um and that he… you know, it was when mom said he had, you know, bad behaviors he was more like he was grouchy. He didn’t seem connected. He seemed like he wanted things but I didn’t see you know he didn’t respond to me being in there, he didn’t respond to the service coordinator who’s probably been there at least once a month. And then he was sitting beside the speech therapist but what you saw him was more motivated towards things than he was toward people. That make sense?”

What were you thinking? (?)

“Okay he said that when you look at that you can tell that he’s at the very basic of getting his needs met as opposed to using speech as a means of communicating back and forth turn taking so when you look at his skills is he just going back and forth or is he just driven by what he wants. At this age he’s almost three, in the fall, or he will be in the summer, and we should be seeing much more of that back and forth going on. So we’re looking at where he’s at for that too… or at least I am. (laughs)”

What were you thinking? (2.01)

“Does things, he just grabs for them (pause) because if you have no communication that’s one of the ways along with the verbal whining and sounds um if you notice too his sounds were not… a lot just the same ah ah ah kind of thing… so he doesn’t even have that expanded babbling, which is a very precursor to talking and uh but I also interesting that he could be redirected when they said oh show Ellie, show Miss El your boo boo. And then he quieted and they turned him. So, that’s an important thing to know; can he be redirected? (laughs) (Prompt: why?) Um is he going to go into a full meltdown every time he doesn’t get something or how long would it last but you know and then it would be interesting come back to what he wants or will he move on so we look at what is his attention span on something like that so…”

What were you thinking? (2.41)

“Trying to get him to sign but they also talked about doing it by hand over hand so he wasn’t doing it just by visual imitation he’s also requiring hand over hand for some of that to come in so that’s… (prompt: for the sign language?) For the sign language, so that’s farther back. Okay, you know he should be able to look and imitate. They’re still trying to do it by not just the model but by also hand over hand. And he did come back to it and rather than put it away or move it, it was still there. She is … she pulled out the assessment for Bailey and we were looking at confirming what were the other areas
besides communication. The primary model is supposedly his sign according to the primary need but there may be underlying needs. So he’s working with the speech therapist.”

What were you thinking? (2.54)

“Motor was (pause) within the average. You have to wonder about the fact that when he was waving his hands it was separated instead of usually you find children their hands are together and separating the fingers out is later. So it would be more to come in and see what actually could he do for fine motor so as we’re thinking of further evaluation the fact that he had some motor planning issues um of how to wave that’s a pretty, children are waving bye bye at what about 12 months and stuff and he’s over two and a half and he’s just now getting the hand coordination for that. (Prompt: so you’re thinking fine motor is probably going to be an area you are going to explore?) Yeah, we’ll want to gather more information. Whether he needs a full evaluation at this point I wouldn’t know it. But go in and just do some play activities and things and see where his skills are and look at the overall motor planning.”

What were you thinking? (3.21) “Um there’s a parent figure that’s leaving and they have to prompt him to say goodbye. So again we’re talking that social skills awareness of the language. Language is all social and so they have to do some prompting to get him to do that.”

What were you thinking? (4.20)

“Okay well, his play skills are low. Mom doesn’t really know that he’s upstairs and he’s doing the fine motor banging on the piano but he’s not really functionally playing with anything but again she says she doesn’t know because she’s not watching him. That they’ve moved from the dumping or throwing of objects and what they did with the bowling…they came across this by accident, but they gave him a functional use of throwing something so we may be at that point but that tells you cognitively the child is kind of throwing or if he’s still barely functionally using toys, he’s still in the dumped, throw kind of situation. So that’s about an eighteen month old range.”

What were you thinking? (5.25)

“That’s interesting to him so mom has said oh he likes computers and the cell phone. So we know he likes that and is still a very cause and effect kind of thing but she’s linked it to a game or something that’s on the phone so we’ve taken an interest and tried to move it on to be something a little more functional for him um and getting a little bit more so hopefully kind of link some language and some turn taking with it so, she’s building from his interest. And she did say earlier that she thought well maybe he was using the booths and that was a form of pretend play. Um real low level, where you’ve substituted something for something else and so where… but I would think that he really didn’t connect it with a bowling pin in that kind of a sense I think he was just trying to knock something down and saw that as a cause and effect so even she said eh it could be or not, she’s not seeing anything else.”
Observer had to move to a different location in the room, video was shut-off for a moment

What were you thinking? (.19)

“In this discussion it was kind of interesting that they had a child in their home that had a severe reaction to a substance and they continued to have the substance in the home. So I thought that was a kind of an interesting (pause) thing (laughs) you know what I mean. So that I would be concerned at a child at this age that is under three, grabs what he wants, cannot differentiate, could have access to something that could be you know physically harming to him. So that was kind of an interesting, just kind of a interesting thing to me and on terms of a parenting style and kind of the same thing as like that phone…if you didn’t want him to have it after a point, most parents would have put it up or put it away whereas her expectation was he was just going to leave it alone and that’s the same expectation she has for him (pause) I guess on other things. So it kind of gives you that parenting feel. The idea is we’re not changing the environment to make it child friendly but expecting him to learn the rules and conform to it.”

What were you thinking? (1:22)

“Part of what we, what I have to do, is make sure that nothing visually shows on my face…that I’m listening and nodding because there’s times that what they’re saying or doing it’s really unbelievable in essence (laughs). In her case, she was talking about making others aware of the child’s severe reaction and making it other person’s responsibilities but yet she didn’t see the difference in the fact that she made it available to him or possibilities of it (Prompt: The food?) The food, yeah. (Long pause) That’s people (laughs).

What were you thinking? (2.32)

“So what are we thinking is um just provide information that would be interesting to find out…if that’s the only area, if that’s going to have any impact. um a lot of kids, that whole sound effect and textures can be part of that whole oral motor that a speech therapist might work on to desensitize to get that whole awareness or what, of where the tongue is in that. So it will be interesting to find out if it’s just here or if it goes into the tastes or what. And we can do that as a profile and that would be just background information it wouldn’t necessarily have to be in a direct assessment so hopefully, one of the things we try to promote with the primary model is, provider a model, is even though a person, as you can see, she’s able to talk about his areas and then identify another need and do we need a consultation. And so what were saying is we don’t necessarily need direct services for this but let’s get that consultation in to give us more guidance.”

What were you thinking? (3:00)

“Umm (long pause) I don’t think of it as an overall, I think it’s an important piece to explore the sensory but I don’t know if it’s a little OCD. I mean we weren’t seeing him having to sit in just a place or do…you know what I’m saying? I’m not, I didn’t see enough of him that he was, they were telling me oh he only can wear this shirt or he can he only will eat sitting here…I mean I didn’t hear them talk about other areas about it but
if it’s, where he wants to wear the necklace wouldn’t be so much as a OCD but if he doesn’t want it directly touching him so um it may just be that whole tactile body sensitivity issue that we need to deal with and desensitize but I didn’t see it as an OCD at this point. Because it didn’t give me any other impressions with that also, you notice, he sat on the couch the whole time. So he is focused when he’s doing what he wants and he’s getting that little bit. So that was at least, we know he can focus. He wasn’t running around the room, so he does have some focusing skills so (short pause) which is a good thing for teachers to know (laughs).” (Possible TK in that she classified his behavior as indicating that he can focus when he gets what he wants)