



**EDS 245:  
Psychology in the Schools**

Stephen E. Brock, Ph.D., NCSP  
California State University, Sacramento

Systems Consultation

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**Lecture Outline**

- Introduction
  - Types of System's Level Consultation
- Theory
- Practice
  - Case Study example
  - Guidelines
  - Case Study practice
- Special Issues



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**The Practice of School System Consultation: Types**

- Behavior Management
- School Safety Plans
- Crisis Response Preparedness
- Suicide Prevention/Intervention
- Parent involvement
- Reading improvement
- Accountability



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Systems Consultation Theory

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**Theory of Systems Consultation**

Definitions and characteristics.

- Approaches to systems consultation within schools.
- Important components for success.



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**System Definition**

- A system is a collection of parts (or subsystems) integrated to accomplish an overall goal (a system of people is an organization). Systems have input, processes, outputs, and outcomes, with ongoing feedback among these various parts. If one part of the system is removed, the nature of the system is changed.



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**Characteristics of Systems**

- Parts work together
- Interdependence
- Rules of operation
- Culture
- Power structure



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**Discussion**

- What are the characteristics of schools that fit the definition of systems?
- In your observations of psychologists when did you observe the school psychologist impacting at a system level?  
-OR- What opportunities did you see for the school psychologist to have an impact at a system level?



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**Theory of Systems Consultation**

- Definitions and characteristics
- Approaches to systems consultation within schools
- Important components for success



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**Approaches to Systems Consultation**

- Ultimate goal to increase problem solving capacity of system
- Most follow problem solving model



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**Knoff Problem Solving Model**

1. Problem presentation
2. Problem analysis
3. Goal setting and intervention
4. Evaluation



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**Characteristics of Problem Solving Approach**

- Change process is guided by **unique** aspects of situation or problem
- Focus is on developing solutions to reduce problem
- Setting measurable goals and monitoring progress are integral parts of process



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### Curtis and Stollar Model for System Change

1. Describe problem or concern as concretely and specifically as possible
2. Analyze the specific problem chosen in terms of factors that might help in addressing it and factors that serve as obstacles to its resolution
3. Select one obstacle that is significant in terms of its hindrance to resolving the specific problem identified in Step 1.



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### Curtis and Stollar (cont.)

4. Focusing on the one obstacle selected, brainstorm resources and activities that might be used to reduce or eliminate that specific obstacle.
5. Design a concrete plan of action that reflects accountability for completion
6. Establish a procedure for follow-up and review



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### Theory of Systems Consultation

- Definitions and characteristics
- Approaches to systems consultation within schools

Important components for success



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**Successful School Reform**

- May be idiosyncratic
  - Argued by many that school reform must evolve from constituency
  - No one size fits all
- However, there are some models of school reform that are replicable



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**Successful School Reform**

- Common ingredients of effective programs
  - improving classroom instruction
  - one-to-one assistance for those at risk of failure
  - family involvement in supporting the school and reducing nonacademic problems



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**Accomplishing School Reform (Fullan)**

- Three years at elementary
- Six years at secondary
- Difficulty in sustaining change
  - Study two years after indicated only half schools implementing core elements (Glenman, 1998)



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**Key Elements in Sustaining Reform**

- Communication is central to the ongoing process.
- Changes in leadership at a school can undermine the process.
- Community involvement can provide stability.




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**Key Elements in Sustaining Reform**

- Staff development may be the “life blood” of the process, especially in the face of staff turnover.
- The alignment of standards, assessment, teaching practices, and professional growth is essential.




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Systems Consultation Practice




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**The Practice of School Consultation**

- Types
- Roles
- Case Study



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**The Practice of School System Consultation: Types**

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**The Practice of School Consultation: Roles**

- Planning leader/facilitator
  - Organize and coordinate
- Information and communication link
  - Collecting data, clarifying, synthesizing
- Learning and development specialist
  - Providing “psychological perspective”
- Consultant to management
  - Clarifying problems



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**The Practice of School System Consultation**

- Case Study
  - School District crisis intervention plan
  - School psychologists as change agents

Brock, S. E. (2000). Development of a school district crisis intervention policy. *The California School Psychologist*, 5, 53-64.




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**The Change Environment**

- Rapid growth
- Many changes
- Change agents were not management
  - A bottom-up change effort




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**The Policy**

- The Governing Board sets policy
- The policy itself
  - **Administrative Response to Crisis Situations**
    - The Governing Board recognizes the need to provide support to students in the event of a crisis. A crisis is defined as a traumatic event that affects the health, safety, or social-emotional well being of students. It is the intent of the Governing Board that the Administration shall develop procedures to assist students in these instances. It is the policy of the Governing Board that the District have a plan in place for the provision of immediate counseling and crisis management, as well as for follow-up support.




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## The Policy

**Rules for a Board Policy 5141.5: Administrative Response to Crisis Situations**

- At least annually, school administration will review *Administrative Guidelines for Crisis Intervention* with school staff members.
- A current copy of the crisis preparedness checklist (from the *Administrative Guidelines for Crisis Intervention*) must be on file in the Superintendent's office by October 1 of each school year.
- Once a crisis situation has stabilized, school administration will make efforts to determine facts surrounding the crisis, assess degree of impact on the school, and begin to determine the level of response required.
- The Superintendent's office must be notified immediately following a crisis that occurs at school. District Crisis Intervention Team assistance (if needed) may be requested by contacting the Lead Psychologist.
- Following a crisis, school administration shall implement procedures for crisis intervention as specified in the *Administrative Guidelines for Crisis Intervention*.



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## Attitudes Toward Change

- Skeptical
- Overwhelmed
- A difficulty topic to consider



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## Steps Toward Change

- Initiation
- Implementation
- Continuation



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**[ Initiation ]**

- Getting started: Self education
- Crisis Intervention Planning Committee
- Staff development
- District-level administrative support
- Site-level administrative support
- Governing Board



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**[ Implementation ]**

- Perceptions about what the policy required.
- Schools had difficulty responding independently
- Outcome: The Planning Checklist



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**[ Continuation ]**

- Facilitated by policy requirement
- Required on-going staff development



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**Characteristics That Fostered Success**

- Strong leadership
  - Principals became supportive
- Expectations
  - Planning Checklist
- Communication
  - Staff development and guidelines
- Internal structures and ownership
  - Site-based teams



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**Guidelines for School System Consultation**

- Become involved with the development of a school facilitator team to foster a community of teachers and educators.
- Establish routines of communication and decision making that are focused on the reform efforts, such as newsletters, regular item on staff agenda, and informal teacher meetings.



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**Guidelines for School System Consultation**

- Implement a solution focused, problem solving, model that assists the team in implementing effective interventions.
- Target specific goals related to clear standards.



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### Guidelines for School System Consultation

- Provide a format for the school to gather baseline data on the specific goal area.
- Assist the team in setting benchmarks to identify student progress.
- Establish a simple and useful system of data collection




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### Guidelines for School System Consultation

- Establish a system for communicating progress to staff and parents.
- Finally, establish a grade level articulation team that can monitor progress and identify specific instructional practices to increase student achievement.




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### Case Study for Discussion

Elm Road Elementary is 90% free and reduced lunch. The population is quite diverse: 30% Asian (primarily Southeast Asian immigrants) 15% Black, 40% Hispanic, and 15% White. The school has not met its API target and is in danger of falling under 'identified for improvement.' Overall, 60% of fourth graders are below basic in reading and math. There are a large number of students in special education and the school has been notified by the district that it must reduce the over-identification of minority students. In addition, there are a high number of discipline referrals and last year the school had the largest number of suspensions within the district. Some of the concerns that the principal has identified include: (a) lack of parental participation at the school, (b) low teacher morale, (c) high teacher turnover, (d) poor facilities, and (e) low student attendance




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**Discussion Questions**

- What particular knowledge and skills does a school psychologist have that would be useful in addressing this case?
- Who might be key players in the system consultation process and why?
- In addition to the previous information what additional information would help you to describe the problem as concretely and distinctly as possible?
- Following the guidelines of Curtis and Stollar what one problem would you choose to address first and why?



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Special Issues in Systems Consultation



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**Ethical and Legal Issues**

- Integrity in professional relationships
  - Clearly defined roles
- Respect for the dignity of persons
  - Autonomy, self-determination
- Responsibility to community and society
  - Promoting welfare of all individuals



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**Ethical and Legal Issues**

- Identifying clients
  - Teachers
  - School district
  - Students



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**Special Considerations**

- Cultural diversity
  - Different from dominant culture
  - Within school differences
  - Respect unique characteristics of individual schools and communities
- Cultural values
  - Own cultural lens
  - Needs of school



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**Special Considerations**

- Cultural/ethnic issues within schools
  - Need to address underlying tensions



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[ Questions? ]



Next Meeting (9/27/17)  
Behavioral & Educational Interventions

Read:  
Martinez (2014)  
Joseph (2014)

Paper 2 due 10/4/17, Paper 3 due 10/18/17



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