



Print Chilliwack School District (BC)

EDPS 690 L01 - (Spring 2023) - School-based Intervention and Consultation Learning Task 1 LT1 Posts



Chilliwack School District (BC)

Created by Besart Hysniu on May 9, 2023 11:52 PM Subscribed

Sources used for Learning Task #1

For this learning task, I reached out to a number of different contacts in the Chilliwack School District and was pleasantly surprised to have almost all of them respond, providing a wealth of perspectives and qualitative information that may not necessarily be available on the Chilliwack School District website. Among the respondents are

- two school psychologists (one no longer with the district),
- a resource/learning assistance teacher from a middle school,
- a counsellor serving three elementary schools and
- an elementary school teacher.

The following is a compilation of their answers to the questions on the learning tasks, as well as some additional emerging themes and commentary unique to their respective roles within the district that were role-dependent and quite interesting:

How is the role of the School Psychologist defined (e.g., what is the scope / expected duties)?

A school psychologist is a critical player within our district's educational framework, serving as an expert on the intersection of education and psychology and working to facilitate supportive learning environments for students of all abilities and needs.

Interpreting and Applying Educational Policies: Integral to the school psychologist's role is the comprehensive understanding and application of the Ministry of Education's policies, procedures, and guidelines. These policies particularly pertain to students with disabilities and diverse needs across all educational levels - elementary, middle, and secondary. School psychologists are expected to align their work with the Ministry's current philosophy, effectively implementing its curriculum competencies, teaching practices, evaluation, assessment, and reporting procedures.

Navigating District Information Systems: Familiarity with the district's information systems, including MyEd, Filemaker, Laserfiche, red files, and Learning Assistance (LA)/ Resource Teacher (RT) files, is key for school psychologists. These systems are vital resources for managing student data and coordinating educational strategies.

Facilitating Student Development and Transition: A core duty of a school psychologist involves designating and diagnosing students with diverse abilities and aiding their transition within the educational system. This role requires a blend of compassionate interaction and scientific proficiency.

Keeping Pace with Research and Best Practices: As a science practitioner, a school psychologist is expected to stay current with research and best practice in instructional strategies, programs, and resources to address the needs of a broad range of students; it includes demonstrating an understanding of a systems approach to instruction and intervention, integrating principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Trauma-Informed Practice.

Consultation and Collaboration: Effective consultation with teachers, parents, students, and community agencies forms a significant part of the school psychologist's role; This involves understanding students' strengths and needs, considering the educational implications, and finding ways to enhance learning and interpersonal relations. Collaborative efforts extend to working with school-based and district personnel to collect classroom data and design or implement instructional strategies.

These consultations are continuous and cover various topics, from interpreting assessments to developing Competency-Based Individual Education Plans (CBIEPs).

Educational Pathway Planning: School psychologists often undertake extensive file reviews, such as the Approval of Consent to Modify paperwork. They also play a decisive role in determining a student's graduation path, whether Dogwood, Adult Graduation, or Evergreen.

Coordination with Teams and Community Agencies: A school psychologist operates within a network of teams - school-based, multidisciplinary, and community care - and community agencies such as Community Living BC (CLBC), Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Fraser Valley Child Development Centre (FVCDC), Chilliwack Youth Health Centre (CYHC), and Sto:lo services (Indigenous Services). This coordination ensures a cohesive approach to student support.

Additional Responsibilities: In addition to psychoeducational assessments, school psychologists working for the Chilliwack District often lend their expertise to areas of special education, providing training for Level B, determining Level B qualifications, and assisting new Level B personnel. They also assist with special education audits as needed and determine bi-monthly category eligibility.

What clinical professionals are available to provide services in the school? (e.g., Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Physio-therapists, Behavior Analysts, Counsellors, Social Workers, School Nurses, etc.) . What information can you find on how services are provided? What do you feel is missing?

Schools employ a wide array of clinical professionals to nurture students' development. Chilliwack School District has both onsite and district-level professionals, as well as specialized itinerant professionals.

Onsite and District-Level Professionals include:

1. **School Counsellors** guide students on academic, personal, and social matters.
2. **Occupational Therapists (OT) and Physical Therapists (PT)** address physical and developmental challenges, promoting students' full participation in school activities.
3. **Behavior Analysts** apply behaviour analysis principles to improve students' behavioural strategies.
4. **Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)** aid students with communication difficulties.
5. **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Teachers** support non-verbal students through alternative communication methods.
6. **Indigenous Support Workers** provide culturally appropriate support for Indigenous students.
7. **Child and Youth Care Workers** foster students' social and emotional well-being.
8. **Specialized Itinerant Professionals**
 - **Teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** ensure an inclusive learning environment for students with hearing impairments.
 - **Teachers for the Visually Impaired** cater to students with visual impairments.
 - **ESL/ESD Teachers** assist students for whom English isn't their first language.
 - **Mental Health Team** addresses students' mental health concerns via referrals.
 - **Early Literacy Coordinators** ensure students develop essential literacy skills.

Service provision involves consultations and referrals among professionals, with most specialists working one-on-one with students.

Gaps, Observations, and Additional Information

Services in SD33 are accessed through a referral process via the School-Based Team (SBT); This includes Behaviour Interventionists, OT/PT, SLP, itinerant teachers (specialized in areas such as hearing and vision impairment), and specialized counselling services. The SBT, consisting of caregivers, teachers, Learning Assistance (LA) teachers, Resource Teachers (RT), and administrative personnel, is a problem-solving unit that identifies student needs and initiates necessary referrals. Follow-up meetings may include all service providers referred to the student.

Since the demand exceeds the available resources, a wait list significantly determines when a student receives services. For instance, a student needing Speech and Language (SLP) services may only receive an initial consultation, with a follow-up session delayed for months due to demand. A trained Educational Assistant (EA) might provide short-term support for 12-week sessions, but this support is not continuous as these specialized EAs rotate between schools. The counsellor mentioned during the interview that understaffing for many technical positions is also an ongoing issue across districts and that with a workload of 1:1100, she is only one person and can only do so much.

Given the limited resources, these factors may contribute to inconsistent service provision, making me wonder what better alternative is there.

What other specialty educator positions exist? (e.g., instructional coaches, social-emotional specialists, learning support teachers, community liaison, parent advocates). What are their roles?

Beyond primary education, the Chilliwack School District has a diverse assembly of specialized educators addressing varied student needs listed below:

- **Inclusion Teachers:** Promote accessible learning for all students, adapting curricula and methods to suit individual needs.
- **Curriculum Support Teachers:** Experts in numeracy, literacy, French, and physical literacy aiding in curriculum implementation.
- **English Language Learner (ELL) Educators:** Provide specialized instruction for students learning English as a second language.
- **Indigenous Support Teachers:** Offer culturally sensitive support to Indigenous students and foster the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the school community.
- **Mental Health Support Teachers:** Address mental health concerns, supporting students individually and promoting a mental health-friendly environment.
- **Speech Language Assistants:** Support students with speech and language difficulties under the guidance of Speech-Language Pathologists.
- **Teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** Specialize in assisting students with hearing impairments, using specific teaching strategies and technologies.
- **Teachers for the Visually Impaired:** Cater to students with visual impairments, providing specialized instruction and adaptations.
- **Indigenous Enhancement Teacher:** Enriches curriculum and culture with Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.
- **Child and Youth Care Worker:** Offer social and emotional support to students, fostering emotional resilience.
- **Resource and Learning Assistance Teachers:** Collaborate with other teachers to provide additional academic support, addressing specific student needs.

Innovation in Literacy Support: Roles are continuously evolving at the Chilliwack School District, such as the role of the kindergarten-Grade 1 literacy support teachers. Starting from the academic year 2023/24, these professionals will transition into a new role within the curriculum department, focusing on early literacy intervention. They will rotate among schools, spending 2-3 weeks at each location to enhance the staff's ability to deliver early literacy interventions.

For those interested in learning more about these roles, the district's website's Student Services and Department section provides a wealth of information. Please visit <https://learningservices.sd33.bc.ca/> for more details.

How do you see School Psychologists working collaboratively with the other professionals to support teachers and students? How might other professionals

play a role in school-based interventions? What questions do you have about what this collaboration could look like?

School psychologists are integral to the collaborative educational framework, combining their expertise in education and psychology to promote students' cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Collaborating with professionals like Learning Assistance/Resource Teachers, Specialty Teachers, Speech-Language Pathologists, Mental Health Support Teachers, School Counsellors, Occupational/Physical Therapists, and School Administrators, they ensure a comprehensive approach to each student's needs.

The aim is always to enhance the current collaborative process - it includes improving communication, incorporating school psychologists' perspectives into learning plans, and unifying efforts to cater to diverse student needs. The ongoing commitment is to improve student outcomes through mutual respect, open dialogue, and a shared vision for student success.

Questions and Considerations for Future Collaboration

While this overview gives a sense of how collaboration works, it also opens up questions about how it could evolve to serve students better. For instance:

- How can we enhance communication among all the professionals involved in a student's education?
- How can we ensure that the insights and recommendations from school psychologists are effectively integrated into students' learning plans?
- Could there be benefits to having school psychologists more involved in regular SBT or core meetings?
- How can we ensure seamless collaboration between school professionals and external agencies, especially in transitions?
- Are there additional professionals or resources that could be brought into these collaborative discussions to support students better?
- How can we create a more unified, holistic approach to addressing the diverse needs of students, particularly those with complex or overlapping needs?

Closing Reflections on the Collaboration Process

Collaboration within the educational setting is a complex, ongoing process. It's about more than just meetings and referrals. It's about creating a shared understanding, a unified vision for each student's success. It's about integrating diverse expertise to develop comprehensive, effective strategies. And it's about ensuring that every student – no matter their needs or challenges – has the necessary support to thrive in their educational journey.

These questions indicate the ongoing need for reflection and evolution in our collaborative practices. With the ultimate goal of enhancing student outcomes, our interprofessional collaboration must remain dynamic, responsive, and centred on the unique needs of each student.



Shayla Richards

Posted May 11, 2023 11:03 PM

Hi Besart,

Love the description of School Psychologists operating within networks of teams. I also love to hear of a dedicated role to support AAC!

I love all of your questions, especially the last focused on unified, holistic supports. Sometimes districts get caught up in making sure they can say all these professionals are involved, but it ends up feeling overwhelming for teachers and parents and like there are 'too many hands in the pot' but a unified approach ensures it is one plan that is able to fully support the student.

Like you say so well - a shared and unified vision!

**Besart Hysniu**

Posted Jun 13, 2023 6:50 PM • 1129 Words

**LT#5 - re: Chilliwack School District (BC) - Reflection (2023-Jun-13)**

What additional questions or insights do you have about collaboration between professionals for planning and delivery of school-based interventions?

brief reflection: Looking back at our recent course discussions and lectures, it is becoming clear to me that there is a need to improve how we work together in schools, especially after the challenges brought on by the pandemic, which I believe served as a stress-test and exposed the existing limitations. We need to talk more openly and regularly with everyone involved in a student's education. Clear communication was highlighted by many in my cohort as well in their discussion threads, as a crucial component that ensures we're all on the same page when supporting a student.

The student-to-professional ratios seem to be widespread and concerning as well, something which was brought up by both the professionals I interviewed and the cohort in various discussions for this course. If we had fewer students per professional, we could give each student the time and attention they need. If a school psychologist were able to take part in more regular school meetings it would improve outcomes, since there would be more opportunity to understand each student better and suggest more effective strategies.

Having worked in community support in the past, and now interviewing professionals (i.e. LA/RT teacher in a middle school, explaining reassessments in the last year before high school) I am particularly interested at how we handle transitions. When students move between schools or stages of education, we need to ensure we're collaborating smoothly to maintain their support, especially if they have complicated needs.

Inviting other professionals as guest lecturers, like OTs and SLPs, into our discussions was an eye-opener. It showed how helpful it is to have a range of perspectives when planning supports for students. I think I would like to explore this more going forward.

What became clearer to me as the course went on, is that to cater to the diverse needs of students, we need a united front. We should all work together, communicate effectively, and share a common goal of helping each student succeed.

questions going forward: I am still interested, going forward, to see

- How exactly (practically) can we improve our collaborative practices? Granted, it will vary from setting to setting, but are there any clear guidelines we can follow? *One of the last readings from Lazarus and colleagues (2021) points out, with their dual factor model, that we should aim to address the inequities upstream, before we encounter problems, and this is something to keep in mind regarding the populations we serve.*
- How can we keep each other updated about a student's progress more effectively? *I was told that at least in the district I conducted my interviews, there is an expectation for the school psychologists to be familiar with the systems already in place such as MyEd, Filemaker, Laserfiche, red files, and Learning Assistance (LA)/ Resource Teacher (RT) files, but am curious to see how they are utilized, going forward.*
- What training opportunities are available to us to get better at this? *I think I may become more active with the associations (CPA, BCASP/BCPA, NASP hopefully) once I get access, as well as my other memberships, and seek opportunities for professional development, but I am also curious to see what opportunities already exist that I am not aware of yet.*
- How can we regularly check if our collaborative practices are working well, and how can we use resources better to ensure we're all able to contribute effectively? *If there are some frameworks in place to ensure this I think I would need to become familiar with them soon.*

These were some of the questions I look forward to exploring,, as I move ahead with my education and training.

Provide one example of an intervention you reviewed throughout the course for which you believe that as a school psychologist, you would benefit from collaboration of another professional to effectively plan and/or deliver. Which professional(s) and why?

Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Early Literacy Phonics Instruction: Reflecting on the course, and our presentation, I have been looking more closely at early literacy phonics instruction, and from the case study I chose to write on I began to understand the various aspects of how additional factors weave in to the decisions we make on what we choose based on the needs of the student. I now understand that school psychologists can't tackle this alone; we need to team up with other experts, and that an optimal intervention for a specific student will look different from one tailored to another student the more we understand what is really going on within and around the student. To do this we need an interdisciplinary team with unique domain expertise in various aspects of the student's needs and well being, and I'll narrow it to Occupational Therapist and the Speech and Language Pathologist for this answer.

Role of an Occupational Therapist (OT) in Classroom Observations: An occupational therapist an OT can provide crucial insight into the student's learning environment and how it impacts a student. By observing the student in class, the OT can note how motor skills and sensory processing affect the child's ability to engage with phonics instruction, for example; the classroom layout, the noise level, the amount of visual stimulus, it all can compound and make a significant difference.

Importance of a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Early Literacy: A speech-language pathologist can delve into the intricate workings of speech and language processing. It became evident to me how important the role of a SLP is when most of the research I came across regarding early literacy. Listening to the SLP guest lecturers discuss various aspects of learning both at the brain based level and systemically reinforced my impression that they would be the experts able to dissect how a child hears and articulates phonetic sounds, issues that arise when there is an impairment, and the best course of action, which is key to designing effective phonics instruction.

Unified Approach: The Key to Comprehensive Support - As you mentioned in your reply, Shayla, the unified approach and the unified vision with the child at the center, seem to be the philosophical orientation at least, the mindset and the ideal that will get us there. The unique perspectives and in-depth understanding that many other professionals bring to the table can greatly enrich our intervention planning. By teaming up, we can provide the comprehensive support our students need to succeed in their literacy journey. It's a powerful reminder that in the world of education, we're all on the same team.

Reference

Lazarus, P. J., Doll, B., Song, S. Y., & Radliff, K. (2021). Transforming school mental health services based on a culturally responsible dual-factor model. *School Psychology Review*, 51(6), 755-770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2021.1968282>