President’s Message – Summer 2019
by Ryan Long

Aut inventiam viam aut faciam. (I shall either find a way or make one).

I am thrilled to be writing the President’s Message in the NHASP Summer 2019 Protocol. As I sat down to start it, however, it immediately occurred to me that I had no idea how to start it: what it should say; how long it should be; etc... So, as we often do, I started with a comprehensive file review (I looked up old protocols and read the introductory President Messages from past presidents).

In summer of 2008, Raina Chick may have been feeling how I do now when she questioned why individuals step up into leadership positions at the risk of sticking our necks out, exposing ourselves to criticism, and courting dissension. Her highlights on Defining Leadership from David Shriberg’s presentation at the NASP Conference in New Orleans, were inspiring. A good leader: (1) treats others with respect, (2) is widely regarded as ethical, (3) is widely regarded as competent, (4) has a strong working relationship with teachers, and (5) works well in teams. As this year’s NHASP President, I would like to aspire to those ideals.

Carol Van Loon began with a Dutch proverb in summer of 2009, “From small beginnings come great things,” and went on to highlight the importance of fostering professional partnerships in our roles as School Psychologists. Carol’s first President’s Message inspired me to use a proverb in my introduction as well, but more importantly, I could not agree more with her sentiments on the importance of professional partnerships. After attending the NASP Regional Leadership Meetings last winter, I came to believe that one of our most important priorities for the upcoming year should be to improve awareness among other professionals that we are competent and adequately trained mental health service providers, and not just here for testing.

In summer of 2010, Robert Rodriguez introduced himself with a brief career history and then highlighted the importance of advocacy work with some specific steps association members could take toward advocacy. I too believe that advocacy will need to be a priority if we are to change our strategic position in the state to be seen as critical agents in addressing mental health and trauma in schools. We need to “have a seat at the table” in government affairs that relate to our areas of expertise such as mental health, school safety, and implementing multi-tiered systems of student supports. We have a strong delegate attending NASP training on government advocacy this year and Robert’s tangible examples of what can be done are some things I hope we can continue to provide in the next year.

Megan Slattery started her 2011 introduction with well-written poetic imagery describing autumn and gave me the back-to-school feelings - hard…and it is WAY too early for those right now, Megan!!! Once the anxiety subsided, I saw that her primary goal was to strengthen the functioning of our association.

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Elizabeth Noyes - 2019 Scholarship Recipient
by Amy Bahan

The NHASP Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that the scholarship recipient for 2019 is Elizabeth Noyes. Elizabeth resides in Nashua, NH. She will be entering the graduate program at Tufts this fall to pursue a career in school psychology. Elizabeth currently works at the Pediatric Psychopharmacology and Adult ADHD Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. In addition to being a study coordinator and psychometrician, she was promoted to a leadership role of Research Regulatory Coordinator. Elizabeth graduated from Colby College two years ago. During her time at Colby, she knew she had an interest in psychology and education and even did an internship with the Pediatric Behavioral Medicine Clinic at Maine General Hospital. However, it was post-graduation that Elizabeth had the experience which formed her decision to pursue a career in school psychology. She learned of a trauma that had occurred to a young mentee that she had for all four of her undergraduate years through the Colby Cares about Kids program. In subsequent interactions with the child’s school psychologist, Elizabeth realized that was the precise role she wanted to fill – helping children in adverse circumstances whether at home or in the classroom. The

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Improving Writing Efficiency Using Quick Parts and Auto Text

by Jonas Taub

Quick Parts (QP) and Auto Text (AT) are features of MS Word that enable you to save specific strands of text, including paragraphs, tables, objects and more, and insert them quickly into a document. When you save items to QP or AT, you insert them into your report directly from a drop-down menu. Using QP and AT is quicker and more efficient than copying, pasting or deleting from an existing document or template, or from previous written reports. The Quick Parts button is on the <Insert> Tab in Word, and in the group of <Text> buttons. If you click on the Quick Parts button, it will drop down a menu. As you add Quick Parts and Auto Text items, they will appear in this drop down. But for now, you may only have some menu options. Each individual item you add is referred to as a Building Block. On the drop-down menu, click on <Building Blocks Organizer> you will notice that this contains a list of Building Blocks that are part of MSWord, that you may have used in other menus, such as page numbering, etc. When you add QP or AT items, or Building Blocks, they will also appear in this list. This will also enable you to access the item, edit its properties, etc. But more on that later.

To Add an item to Quick Parts or Auto Text

• Type or highlight some text (i.e., a test name that you use in your list of Tests Administered.)
• Highlight the text
• Click on <Quick Parts>
• Click on <Save Selection to Quick Parts Gallery>

A window will open
○ Give the item a unique name (Hint, for the WISC-V, I simply name it wisc. A different item, which is my canned description of the WISC-V, I named wiscdesc, shorthand for WISC Description).
○ Gallery – The default is Quick Parts, but you can also use this to assign it to another Gallery you create, to Auto Text, or to one of the existing Galleries. I would leave this as is, for now.
○ Category – The default is General, but you can create other categories, if you want. This will be helpful later on, and you can always change and move items in the Organizer.
○ Leave the rest of it as is. Description is optional.
○ Click <OK> and you have created your first Quick Part Building Block.

Now, if you click on Quick Parts, your first item will appear in the drop down. Click on it and it will be inserted into your document wherever your cursor is.

Easy Peasy, Lemon Squeezy.

Keep adding Building Blocks the same way. You can add short entries, such as test names, or complete paragraphs of text. You can highlight text as you write it, or from previous reports and create a Quick Part. It all gets added to the list and is available for Inserting.

To Add an item to Auto Text

• Adding an item to Auto Text is essentially the same as Quick Parts, except that, when you click on the Quick Parts button, there will be as selection for <Auto Text>
• When you put your cursor on the Auto Text link, another drop down list will open to the side.
• At the bottom of the Auto Text list is a link to <Add Selection to Auto Text Gallery>. Click on that selection and follow a similar process. Try to give the selection a simple and memorable name.

• Adding an Auto Text item to your document is easy and does not always need to utilize the drop-down list. As you type the name of the Auto Text item (i.e., my 2 paragraph WISC-V description is named “wiscdesc”), a flag will appear with the first words of the text, and a prompt to <Press ENTER to Insert>. Press ENTER and there it is.

Notes on using Quick Parts and Auto text:

• When you close MSWord, if you have made changes to Quick Parts or Auto Text, you will be prompted that you have made changes to <NORMAL>, or the NORMAL Template. Save the changes. Quick Text is part of the Normal Template that loads features of Word when you open it.

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Kathy Secinaro Named NH School Psychologist of the Year

by Dave Smith

The New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists has selected Kathy Secinaro of Barnstead Elementary School, Center Barnstead, as the 2019 School Psychologist of the Year because she exemplifies to the fullest what it is to be a school psychologist. Secinaro is described by her colleagues as an individual whose “enthusiastic initiative and efforts have made a tremendous positive impact in the lives of the children, parents, and staff at Barnstead Elementary School.” She provides a full range of school psychological services to her community, demonstrates strong communication and collaboration skills, completes comprehensive evaluations, counsels students in crisis, and participates in systems change efforts to enhance the mental health of others. Secinaro is a driving force in positive outcomes for kids and represents the best qualities of the profession.

NHASP Lifetime Achievement Award
Introduction by Tari Selig, NASP Delegate

The New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists has recognized Dave Smith with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Dave has been a vibrant and crucial member of the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists, working with countless children, adolescents, families, and educators in his 30 plus years as a school psychologist in New Hampshire. Please help me in congratulating Dave on this tremendous award.

Remarks by Dave

Thank you, Tari. Thank you, Fred [Bramante], and Sean [McDonald], and the EDies board, for putting on this wonderful event every year. Thank you to the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists, for choosing me for this award. And thank you to my family, three of whom are here with me tonight: my mom, my wife, and my daughter. Nobody does this work alone.
Presidents Message

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This summer the NHASP board will be re-evaluating our strategic plan. Association membership is strong, but one of my goals is to get more members interested in attending meetings, advocating at the statehouse, running for a board seat, and joining a committee. Also, I want to help regional representatives to increase participation in the monthly regional meetings. I want our meetings to be productive, but it does not say anywhere that they can’t also be fun.

Tari Selig’s enthusiasm and congeniality poured off the page in her Summer 2012 introduction. She used her first moment on the podium to remind members that one of NHASP’s greatest benefits to members is offering high quality professional development opportunities. We have already authorized funds to increase our mini-skills workshops, so those should be plentiful this upcoming year. Our Fall 2019 workshop (October 28th), on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy will be very good for members who would like to broaden their knowledge of evidence-based mental health interventions that can be applied to direct services with students, consultation with teachers and parents, and our own self-care.

In 2013, Kate Salvati asked us to align NHASP’s goals with NASP’s goals of Creating Access through Collaboration, Advocacy and Leadership, and she highlighted the importance of collaboration with allied professionals to improve educational and mental health supports for children. Today’s context has evolved from 2013 and we have seen an enormous increase in mental health and trauma sensitive service needs in our schools with school leaders asking how to address them. School Psychologists are some of the most highly trained individuals in schools to help implement these services and we need to carry on Kate’s goal of collaboration to improve awareness of this domain of our practice at the state and local levels. Collaboration with allied service agencies and professionals will be critical.

Nate Jones focused on increased communication in 2014, and he was hopeful that NHASP would help each of us learn a new skill, connect better with a colleague, and become more effective leaders in our schools during his presidency. From Nate’s introductory remarks, I will take away that clarity is sometimes difficult but important.

There are many potential goals that the NHASP board could try to accomplish in the next year and they compete for importance. Nate’s wisdom helps us to focus on a few tangible goals and to accomplish them. Nate’s introduction reminds me that I am an ambitious person in all that I do, and Nate’s wisdom is something I will keep with me during the next year so that I can work with the board on reasonable goals and measurable outcomes.

Christina Flanders wrote her first President’s Message in August of 2015. She summarized her CV and highlighted recent member-benefiting accomplishments of NHASP, of which she had been a board member in different positions for several years. At that time Dr. Flanders and I had been in the same doctoral program cohort as well as being colleagues, study partners, and friends. I recall always wondering how she was able to juggle work, NHASP duties, doctoral coursework, and a family of four without ever appearing stressed. From Dr. Flanders’ first President’s Message, I will take away that even with a baby of 7 weeks, a two-year-old, and a fulltime job, I can accomplish the tasks asked of me as NHASP President this year—hopefully somewhat close to as good as Dr. Flanders did in 2015.

In 2016, Tricia Raymond wrote about her experiences with various NHASP positions leading up to her Presidency. Tricia’s introduction reminded me that she was the one who encouraged me to run for a position and that in most cases, getting people to become more involved in leadership of an association requires the personal touch of

Quick Parts and Auto Text

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• As always with cut and paste – Carefully Check your text to assure that the correct names, genders, pronouns, etc. coincide with the child you are writing about.

• If you create QT or AT from text that has a name in it, use XXXXX or some other such code in place of the actual name before saving it. Then you can Find/Replace or easily identify where names need to be inserted. You can do similar with pronouns.

• I find that, no matter how well I write a QT or AT entry, it is not always a perfect fit in every report. Don’t treat your entry as the FINAL WORD. Personalize the statement to the child, as needed.

• If you want to permanently change a QT or AT item, highlight the text and save as described above, and give it the same name as the item you want to replace/update. You will get the usual <Are you sure you want to save this? You will lose the old version forever> warning before hitting <OK>.

• You can save a chart/table, such as for test scores, in QT or AT. Simply highlight the entire table (remove the previous scores, first) and save as you would any other item.

Quick Parts and Auto Text offer great opportunity to shortcut your report writing without sacrificing your personal voice and style.
The Treasury is Robust

by Dave Smith

I got involved with NHASP after joining in the late 1980s and checking the box on the membership form to indicate an interest in publications. Within a year I was the newsletter editor. I recall renting computer time by the hour at a copy center in Durham to type and print articles, then literally cutting and pasting them to make the newsletter. I started our handwriting addresses and putting on stamps, but graduated to preprinted address labels and a postal imprint. I got a copy of the USPS Domestic Mail Manual and learned to prepare the trays for the bulk mail department, driving from Madbury to Manchester to drop them off. After five years of attending executive board meetings I was ready for a different challenge.

“All you have to do is write a few checks a year,” said outgoing NHASP Treasurer Cary Grant as he handed me the ledger and checkbook at the final executive board meeting of the 1994-95 school year. That turned out to be pretty accurate. Of course, I also had to record and deposit the checks people sent in to pay for membership and conference attendance. Everything got written in the ledger. If there were questions, I just turned the pages and looked up the answer. I balanced the bank statement each month. At the end of the year, the numbers were all added up and put onto our tax form. As a nonprofit, we filed but did not owe any taxes. Things were indeed pretty simple.

After four years, I handed the treasurer’s materials over to my successor and became NHASP President-Elect. Three years later, my presidential duties complete, I stopped attending board meetings.

The Twenty-First Century had arrived.

In the mid-2000s, then NHASP President Carol van Loon called me and asked a favor. The board had parted ways with their treasurer and would I consider taking over? I agreed and finished the term. I got to answer the question, “What happens if we run out of money?” The
short answer is that we wouldn’t be able to buy anything. The board cut down on expenses and our fund balance started to rise. During that time the board established a relationship with Karen Mayo, CPA, who helped us get into the use of QuickBooks software. Not too big a change. Little did I know.

I completed that term as treasurer and turned the large storage box, checkbook, and passwords over to Samantha Broadhead. She quickly modernized us even more, adding a PayPal Account, online banking, and moving us to QuickBooks Online (QBO). She also handed the job back to me after two years as graduate school and marriage took priority. Smart woman.

The treasurer’s role relentlessly expanded over the next four years. We began using association software called Wild Apricot (WA) for membership and conferences, meaning one more system to learn. Members now could log in and check their membership. The “system” sent automatic renewal reminders and receipts, lots of them. There was overlap between QBO and WA, however, and often there was significant sleuthing required to keep it all aligned. When I handed over the three storage boxes and checkbook along with the passwords for five inter-related online financial systems at an introductory meeting with Karen Mayo to new treasurer Alexys Ficek, the simple system that I had started with in 1994 had become far too complex.

After Alexys resigned (the third treasurer to do so in 30-some years) the board convinced Brittany Morley to finish out her term. Brittany did a significant amount of work. Cindy Gilks is now beginning a two-year term as treasurer. We have gotten Karen Mayo to take over more of the software and, hopefully, lighten the load on the treasurer somewhat. The board has asked for and received a proposal from an association management firm that could take on even more of the routine tasks necessary to the smooth running of our association.

Could we simplify? Stop accepting checks and require that all financial transactions be made online? Stop accepting paper registrations for conferences and make everyone register via the website? Stop printing the newsletter and go to an electronic-only version? Have membership and conference registration questions answered by a non-school psychologist? It may be time for us to mature as an organization and become less personal and more efficient. Our membership fluctuates between 150 and 180 over the course of a year; however, a significant number of our members (perhaps 20 percent?) regularly do not renew and we don’t really know why.

I would like to publicly apologize to Alexys, Brittany, and even Cindy for helping to set up and perpetuate such a complex financial system. It is more than a volunteer board member should have to endure. I am hopeful that we can minimize the tasks required of the treasurer without losing the personal touch that I think our members value. Thank you to everyone for putting up with our administrative occasional lapses. We all do the best we can. The treasury is indeed robust—there are plenty of funds. The board will work on continuing to serve the needs of New Hampshire’s students. Feel free to come join us and help out.

I wonder why we are so obsessed with trying to find intelligent life on other planets, when we can’t even find intelligent life here?

Music as Rx for Trauma: An Article Review

by Leo R. Sandy

Juli Fraga wrote a piece in QUED TV News on 7-15-19 entitled How Making Music Can Help Students Cope with Trauma. She noted that many children have suffered from traumas such as child abuse, having an incarcerated parent, being homeless, and other traumatizing situations. According to Fraga, these experiences can negatively impact children through their adulthood, especially if they have suffered multiple traumas called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). In addition to having nurturing and supportive relationships with adults, these children can also benefit from making music, which I call the great humanizer, along with other forms of art.

One school that does this is the High School for Recording Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota (HSRA). Fraga quoted social worker, Tabitha Wheeler, who said that “Writing lyrics feels safer than directly speaking about what she’s been through.” She was referring to a teen who composed a song about her psychological pain and childhood trauma. Fraga also stated that teens do not often find it easy to discuss their traumatic experiences but that they are more amenable to work through their feelings by way of expressive arts therapy that “can calm the body’s stress response, which can help adolescents feel safer in the classroom.” In the recording studio it is a learning lab where students “create brilliant poetry, compose music or play an instrument.” Music helps traumatized students self-soothe, according to Fraga. She also noted that music has played a key medicinal role for centuries and has been used in a helpful method in classrooms with children with various disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder. Students at HRSA also share their narratives which help them see that they are not alone. Some write about their experiences in rap instead of verbalizing them. Putting their experiences into a musical context helps students to feel more understood than judged. When teachers and other adults in school can better understand what students have gone through, they are in a better position to meet...
Music as Rx for Trauma

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their needs. Music appears to be a powerful vehicle for telling one’s story and achieving some degree of healing in the process. (Note: Anderson Sa of Brazil has saved thousands of youth from drug involvement through the use of music).

(ARTQU/iStock)

Studies about the Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have shown that most people have experienced one of these traumas in childhood, such as being abused, having a parent who is incarcerated, experiencing homelessness, among others. The trauma one experiences in childhood can affect adult mental and physical health in later years, especially if a person has multiple ACEs. While the harm can have lasting impacts, health professionals have identified ways to mitigate the effects by nurturing supportive relationships with adult caregivers. According to Joey Cienian, director of educational programming at HSRA, “We see full-on art and music engagement as tools for academic re-engagement.” In the recording studio it is a learning lab where students “create brilliant poetry, compose music or play an instrument.”

Schools can also play a supportive role by helping kids who have experienced trauma. And at the High School for Recording Arts (HSRA) in St. Paul, Minnesota, making music is a means of healing.

It’s crucial for adolescents and young adults to receive mental health care and emotional support. However, teens aren’t always eager to speak about their suffering. But when it comes to treating the continuum of trauma, studies show art and music—known as expressive arts therapy—can calm the body’s stress response, which can help adolescents feel safer in the classroom.

Through the use of art, music and writing, teachers and faculty at HSRA rely on “creative pedagogical practices” to help students connect with their intellectual talents, which can foster academic confidence.

Sponsored

“We see full-on art and music engagement as tools for academic re-engagement,” said Joey Cienian, director of educational programming at HSRA.

For other HSRA students, the recording studio becomes a learning lab where they create brilliant poetry, compose music or play an instrument.

“When talking about their mental health, our students can’t always say, ‘This is how I’m feeling,’ because they’ve been hurt by people in positions of power,” explains Cienian. Engaging in music and art is one way the kids can self-soothe.

(Rap artist Nimic Revenue is a recent graduate of HRSA)

While it might sound unconventional, music has been used as a form of medicine for decades. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks believed the soft, melodic sounds of the flute could heal physical illnesses like gout and sciatica. More recently, music has found its place in the classroom, helping students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention-Deficit Disorder.

At HSRA, music and art allow students to share their narratives. “We want our students to embrace their authenticity, which can come from tapping into creative expression,” says Cienian.

He adds that many HSRA students aren’t comfortable discussing their hardships, but they’re ready to enter the studio and make beats or record a track.

“Recently, a student felt uneasy telling his teachers and counselors about his mental health concerns and family history,” shares Cienian. Instead, he went to the recording studio and began writing rap lyrics in a notebook.

A teacher walked by and saw the student. Taking the opportunity to connect, they sat together while the student shared his writing, which illuminated the family chaos and mental health symptoms he was experiencing.

“After the meeting, the teacher had a better sense of the student’s needs, which made it easier to add additional emotional and academic support,” says Cienian. For this student, the connection was healing because he felt understood, not judged.

Cienian shares that HSRA teachers and faculty strive to bring students into a program where respect, community and education are valued.

“They’re simple values, but they’re profound in action. And when students find their voice, it’s empowering,” he adds.

Scholarship Recipient

Continued from page 1

The committee has no doubt that with her passion and experience she will be quite successful in doing so. Congratulations Elizabeth! In addition to applauding the scholarship recipient, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge all of this year’s applicants. Their accomplishments are commendable and we wish them all well in their future endeavors in the field of school psychology.
NHASP Fall Conference 2019: Learning to Thrive: Enhancing therapeutic and educational outcomes in schools with Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

by Ryan Long

When: October 28, 2019
Where: Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH
Who: Evelyn Gould PhD, BCBA-D, LABA
Child and Adolescent OCD Institute
McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2003) is a behavioral, analytic, scientifically validated approach to enhancing human well-being and increasing values-directed behavior via the processes of mindfulness, acceptance, and committed action. A wealth of research has demonstrated the benefits of ACT-based interventions across a diverse range of clinical and nonclinical populations and issues. Research examining the application of ACT within schools is still in its infancy, however, This workshop will review relevant theoretical and empirical literature supporting ACT-based interventions for children and young people, and the key components of the ACT model are presented. Adaptations for parents, school staff, children, and adolescents will be presented, and the benefits of integrating ACT with more traditional behavioral intervention strategies are explored. The workshop will also emphasize the importance of self-awareness, self-care, and the development of an ACT-based personal practice to maximize performance and prevent burnout. Finally, implications for the development and dissemination of ACT-based treatments within educational settings will be discussed.

Doctor Evelyn Gould is a Clinical Behavior Analyst and Research Associate at the Child and Adolescent OCD Institute (OCDI-Jr), at McLean Hospital | Harvard Medical School. The OCDI-Jr is a residential and partial hospitalization program for children and adolescents struggling with treatment refractory OCD and related disorders. Evelyn also has extensive experience working with families of children with autism across a variety of settings, and is a clinical consultant for FirstSteps for Kids in Los Angeles, and the New England Center for OCD and Anxiety in Boston. Evelyn is actively involved in research on parent and practitioner training, clinical assessment and treatment design, and behavioral interventions for parents and children. She is an Associate Editor of the Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science and is actively involved in a variety of Special Interest Groups and Task Forces within ABAI and ACBS.

Objectives:
1. Define ACT as a behavior analytic treatment approach and describe the potential benefits of integrating ACT into educational settings
2. Describe the role of private events (e.g., maladaptive rule-following and rule-deriving) in problematic patterns of child, parent, and staff behavior in educational settings
3. Explain the importance of considering developmental factors when working with children and adolescents from an ACT perspective
4. Describe how the psychological flexibility model applies to: a. teachers and other school staff b. children and adolescents c. practitioners (self)
5. Identify at least one ACT-based intervention that might be utilized by practitioners to facilitate desired behavior change in: a. Children or adolescents ; b. Parents & school staff c. The self (i.e., ACT as applied to enhanced self-care practices)
6. Discuss common ethical and practical challenges that can arise when attempting to implement ACT interventions in educational settings
7. Describe professional development pathways to build competency in ACT practices

ACT: A Personal Account by Ryan Long

“Thus comes the paradox that a species that has by far the fewest contacts with direct sources of pain…through language is able to suffer with a degree of intensity, constancy and pervasiveness that is literally unimaginable in the nonhuman world. Because we can judge ourselves and find ourselves to be wanting; we can imagine ideals and find the present to be unacceptable by comparison; we can reconstruct the past; we can worry about imagined futures; we can suffer with the knowledge that we will die” (Wilson et al., 2001, p. 215).

Last fall I attended a four-day intensive workshop on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). The abbreviation is pronounced how the word sounds /act/ rather than pronouncing each letter separately /a-c-t/. I was first introduced to ACT in my graduate training program, but I was motivated to sign up for the four-day ACT Bootcamp last fall after watching Steven C. Hayes’ moving TED talk on Psychological Flexibility (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o79_gmO5ppg).

Steven Hayes spoke on the first day of the conference and began by telling the crowd that we needed to prepare to be “challenged” during the next four days. He said that he was going to “push us emotionally.” Initially, I was skeptical that this warning would apply to me. Admittedly, however, I was pushed, challenged, and by the end of the four days, I was affected. I was so affected that I was asked if she would come to New Hampshire and present for NHASP at our fall 2019 conference. Her

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specific topics during the Bootcamp were on Diversity, ACT with Teens, and ACT with parents. Anyone that knows me well will likely attest that I am not generally a Kool-Aid drinker at conferences, and actually I can be rather rigid about my behavioral theoretical orientation to psychology, perhaps skeptical to a fault about most other approaches. To admit in this article that I nearly drowned in the Kool-Aid at this conference is a serious endorsement of what I learned. ACT finally explained to me how to interpret, measure, and address private events like thoughts and feelings within the context of my strict behavioral orientation. It all makes sense. It’s all behavior.

I am not going to attempt to explain the theoretical underpinnings of ACT. Doctor Gould will be doing some of that at our conference next fall (October 28, 2019 at the Grappone Conference Center). What I think would be helpful for me to describe here would be some of my own experiences in learning to think about my work from the orientation of contextual-behaviorism. ACT is based on Relational Frame Theory (RFT). When I initially started reading ACT texts, I found myself struggling to really understand RFT, to the extent that I nearly stopped pursuing the topic entirely. However, I caution those reading this not to make that mistake. It’s more understandable than the diagrams and textbooks make it seem. RFT’s basic premise is that our ability to have language and language-based thoughts, enables us to define thoughts and feelings as behaviors rather than some mystical phenomena that only psychologists have the power to understand. It gives us the opportunity to explain these phenomena to students, parents, administrators, and teachers as behaviors that can be defined, measured, and addressed with behavioral interventions. It allows us to conceptualize how these phenomena act on ourselves and influence our decisions in work and self-care, as well as in other domains of our personal lives. One of the requirements of practicing ACT is to “walk the walk” and apply the concepts to yourself as a clinician. ACT is strictly behavioral and at the same time extremely compassionate and person-centered. Wait until you see how it will improve the objective measurability of your counseling goals!!!!

The presentations at the Bootcamp I attended all involved modeling, roleplaying, and metaphorical exercises that brought ACT concepts to life, because that is how the treatment is done in sessions and in consultations with other professionals like teachers, and with parents. Doctor Gould’s NHASP workshop will also involve exercises with the audience and I hope that we are all challenged like I was at the Bootcamp.

ACT is an approach that lends itself so seamlessly into our work experiences that Doctor Gould debated changing the title of the NHASP workshop to Acceptance and Commitment Training, rather than Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. We ultimately kept with the term therapy, because I didn’t want to create confusion for attendees as most books on the topic use that term. However, I see Doctor Gould’s point that the term therapy itself is too narrow to describe how ACT can be integrated into our work. For example, when doing consultation with a teacher, we are not doing therapy, but we can use techniques and principles from ACT. We are, after all, typically consulting about a teacher’s behavior when we do consultation with them, whether we are recommending a new reading intervention, teaching them an individual or classroom behavior management intervention, or asking them to conceptualize (think) about a student’s behavior from a new perspective. When we consult with parents and teachers we are usually asking them to change something about their behavior, including their thinking, but we don’t say we are doing therapy with them.

Writing this article is extremely difficult because the topic has volumes of texts explaining it and I have a few pages in a quarterly newsletter (and a shaky understanding of the more complex aspects if I’m being entirely honest). I am acknowledging that I am bringing that anxiety into the room here as I’m writing—including some pathological thoughts that I will not get into specifically. However, the ultimate goal of ACT is to work with people (including ourselves) to recognize and commit to behaviors (including thoughts) that will move them toward their defined values and goals and away from pathology. It is very person-centered in this regard. Where I found ACT to differ from CBT was that in CBT

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**The Tao of Teaching**

Continued from page 11

Principle 39 is “Oneness, not fragmentation”. Our schools are still based on the industrial model whereby the school year is split up into arbitrary years Kg to 12, a system of grades A-F and by isolated subjects that have no relationship to each other. Nongraded classrooms, portfolios, service learning, and project-based learning are more in line with Taoistic teaching and learning. For example in project-based learning, all the subjects are integrated into a whole so that students can see their interconnection. The Williston School, a public school in Williston, Vermont, is an example of such a school. Not many other schools could surpass it. Service learning connects what is learned in the classroom with real life experiences in the community and it raises consciousness about social problems that need solving.

Other values in Nagler’s book that express Taoistic teaching include harmony, tranquility, contentment, inner knowledge, respect, goodness, honesty, empathy, caring for others, simplicity, intuition, frugality, the importance of the humanities, compassion, humility, gentleness, moderation, flexibility, sincerity and loving others as oneself. The book is full of wonderful examples of how to practice virtue in the classroom and in the school. With the moral decline that is occurring within our society, we would be wise to heed the lessons of Taoism that also have a lot in common with the world’s great religions and those best practices identified by sound research.

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**NHASP Fall Conference 2019**

Continued from page 9

Correctly, that there will be typos, and that it will not entice people to want to attend our conference on October 28th at the Grappone Conference Center, in Concord.

However, a value of mine is to be a responsible professional, and I made a committed action to get something about the conference in the summer edition of the Protocol. I have executed that action and I feel pretty good about it, despite my uncomfortable feelings and thoughts of self-doubt. I am a little more self-confident that I am a person who can accomplish things I set out to do. I am both nervous and self-confident at the same time. I think that is the ultimate hope of ACT in practice. We don’t need to run away from discomfort, we just need to ALSO do those things that bring us toward our true values and goals.

I hope to see you on October 28th. We expect the conference to fill up quickly so be sure to register early. Kool-Aid will be provided!!! (figurative Kool-Aid). NHASP and BCBA CEs will also be provided (literal CEs).

Reference:


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Save the date for the NHASP Fall Conference

Learning to Thrive:
Enhancing therapeutic and educational outcomes in schools with Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Presenter: Evelyn Gould PhD BCBA-D LABA
Child and Adolescent OCD Institute
McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Date: October 28, 2019
Location: Grappone Conference Center

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Notes from the Field

Leo R. Sandy

I once tested an elementary student who told me that his parents were getting a divorce. I expressed empathy with his situation, and then he said, “no problem, she’ll just get another one.”

On one occasion, a student I was testing told me that he was paid to do chores at home. When I asked him, how he felt about that, he said, “I feel like that if I died, they would just hire someone else.”

A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone.
The Tao of Teaching

by Leo R. Sandy

'The Tao of teaching' is a wonderful book written by Greta Nage and, although it focuses on teaching, it applies well to all the helping professions. It is based on the Tao Te Ching, an ancient Chinese book of wisdom that reflects the philosophy of Taoism.

In a nutshell, Taoism is the consolidation of a number of concepts and practices that make up the ‘Path’, or ‘Way’, of living. The consolidation of ideas and concepts include basic principles or ‘theories’ regarding the body, diet, breathing and physical exercises, uses of herbs, philosophical inquiry and, of course, meditation. All of which the Taoist feels brings a human being into closer alignment with the ‘natural order’ of life and living - a pathway that humankind appears to have gotten derailed from. (http://users.ntplx.net/~bbarrett/intro-tao.html).

Taoism stresses virtue and wisdom with yin (understanding and wisdom) balanced with yang (energy to realize one’s own qualities). A salient value in Taoism is balance - balance between patience and progressiveness and kindness and intelligence. Humor and appreciation of nature are also stressed. The pursuit of gain and fame are not acceptable human aspirations according to Taoism. For the late psychologist, Alfred Adler, these aspirations set human beings against each other in competitive ways that undermine cooperation and the common good. Reminiscent of John Dewey, progressive educational philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer during the late 1880s and early 1900s, an ancient Chinese saying expresses well the spirit of Taoism:

When I hear, I forget
When I see, I remember
When I do, I understand

Nagle listed 81 principles in her book so only a select few will be mentioned here. Principle 1 of Taoistic teaching is individuality expressed by “The Way is nameless: The name is not the way.” This means that we need to avoid following a canned philosophy when teaching, counseling, testing, and consulting. We must learn from our students/clients and develop our own philosophy as we gain experience and reflect on that experience so that we can continue to refine our craft to maximize student/client development. In other words, one size does not fit all. Principle 2 is “Silence is a virtue”. It is much better to model what we want students to do or be like rather than preach at them. One faculty member I knew actually said, “I don’t teach; I preach”. In his approach to education, Adler talked about “quiet action” whereby we deal with situations by more action and fewer words. Principle 3 is that “Wealth breeds competition”. What this means is that when school is a contest and consists of winners and losers cooperation is devalued and a sense of ‘we-ness’ is lost. Schools without a sense of community are more likely to promote bullying. In the Taoistic classroom, children are measured against themselves and their own progress in various subjects. Forced spelling bees, honor roles, and the like create an environment where encouragement and patience supersede cooperation and the common good. Principle 38 says “Virtue is its own reward; Differences arise so they become more autonomous and interdependent learners. Principle 31: “There is no glory in victory.” According to Nagle, “A classroom with a win-lose environment is full of tension, manipulation, and one-upsmanship”. This is why the business model of education is a dismal failure. Children are in the process of developing in numerous ways and they need environments where encouragement and patience supersede competition. Principle 20 says “Do not see things in black and white”. Because schools are skittish about teaching critical thinking, many people graduating from high school think in concrete, dualistic, either/or or black/white ways. Then they vote. Many people do not see gray because they have been raised to believe that something that is one thing cannot be another rather than seeing that there is some reconciliation of opposites in many situations. For example, cognitive theory can coexist with behavioral theory, capitalism can coexist with socialism, national sovereignty can coexist with the common good, and patriotism can coexist with cosmopolitanism. There are also people who are socially liberal and fiscally conservative and vice versa, and religious people who are without spirituality and vice versa. Life is more complex and mysterious than what many people think. Concrete thinkers have all the answers and too few questions. The trend toward decontextualization reflects what Reverend William Sloan Coffin called the “principle of certainty” whereby people have no doubt. Instead, they absolutize everything thereby cutting of communication, i.e., “I’m right and you’re wrong”. People from extremes of any political point of view are guilty of this. Principle 26 says “Take your time; Be attentive and receptive”. Being a good teacher/counselor/school psychologist means being a good listener. When students feel heard, they are more likely to listen. After a while, students learn that they don’t need as much commentary by teachers and they rely more on self-evaluation. They reflect more carefully on their own performance so they become more autonomous and interdependent learners. Principle 38 says “Virtue is its own reward; Differences arise when the way is lost”. Nagle stated that “Wise teachers and other helpers expect to be trusted to continue their hard work. They do not expect to be given status and wealth. They are examples of intrinsic motivation at its best, for when something must be done, it gets done without special reward. Teaching is by itself a reward in the minds of the best teachers.” Many people in the business world do not understand that incentives like merit pay are anathema to good teachers and other school professionals. It undermines collegiality and detracts from good teaching.

Continued on page 10
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Don’t forget to check out our website at www.nhaspweb.org

If you have not renewed your membership, this will be your last issue.

Leo Sandy, Newsletter Editor
lsandy@plymouth.edu

Protocol Newsletter layout & design by Pizzazz Publishing

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