Education Review
Editor ~ Gene V Glass
Reseñas Educativas
Editor ~ Gustavo E. Fischman

a multilingual journal of
book reviews

ER RE
Arizona State University

January 24, 2010 Volume 13 Number 2 ISSN 1094-5296

Alternatives to Functional Behavior Assessments as "Educational Autopsies": An Essay Review

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Steege, M. W., & Watson, T. S. (2009). *Conducting School-Based Functional Behavior Assessments: A Practitioner's Guide (2nd Ed.)*. NY: The Guilford Press. Pp. 270 ISBN 1-60623-027-1

Waterman, J., & Walker, E. (2009). *Helping At-Risk Students: A Group Counseling Approach For Grades 6-9 (2nd Ed.)*. NY: The Guilford Press. Pp. 272 ISBN:1-60623-002-6

Sprague, J. R., & Walker, H. M. (2005). *Safe and Healthy Schools: Practical Prevention Strategies*. NY: The Guilford Press. Pp. 200 ISBN: 1-59385-105-7

Doll, B., Zucker, S., & Brehm, K. (2004). *Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments For Learning*. NY: The Guilford Press. Pp. 165 ISBN: 1-59385-001-8

Citation: Kubick, Robert J. & Mcloughlin, Caven S. (2010, January 24). Alternatives to Functional Behavior Assessments as "Educational Autopsies": An Essay Review. *Education Review, 13*(2). Retrieved [date] from http://edrev.asu.edu/essays/v13n2index.html.

This essay comprises commentary about the genesis and current best-practice related to the management of tough-to-teach children and youth through the lens of four sets of authors publishing Guilford Press texts intended to inform practitioners about effective interventions for use in schools. Three of the books considered here are included in 'The Guilford Practical Intervention in the Schools Series.' This mini-library together and separately provides a substantial and comprehensive recipe for practitioners intending to provide both proactive and reactive services for students and families. These books serve to inform practitioners about evidence-based practices whose scientifically-supported conclusions will help them select and implement interventions for difficult to manage children and youth.

In *Conducting School-Based Functional Behavior Assessments: A Practitioner's Guide (2nd Ed.) (*FBA; Steege & Watson, 2009) the authors demonstrate how the most effective assessments are those that readily lend themselves to implementing effective interventions. In *Safe and Healthy Schools: Practical Prevention Strategies* (Sprague & Walker, 2005) best-practice moves beyond addressing the *individual* nature of functional behavior assessment to embracing systems-level interventions for maximizing results for *groups* of learners. Shifting the system-wide efforts from the school level to the classroom level, three distinguished authors provide a valuable resource for reordering classrooms around promoting resilience among students (*Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning;* Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). After considering the orientations of these three resources in terms of their attention to systems-level change at both the school and classroom levels, practitioner need to respond to students manifesting behavioral symptoms that demand interventions specifically targeted to their needs. Although each of the FBA, 'safe schools' and 'resilient classrooms' manuals provides a layer of primary prevention for the majority of the student population, specific programs are needed for students with more intensive concerns. Such an approach is offered with precision and creativity in *Helping At-Risk Students: A Group Counseling Approach for Grades 6-9 (2nd Ed.)* (Waterman & Walker, 2009). Together these four books provide practitioners with one-stop-shopping to answer their need for proven, effective and realistic interventions for troubled children and youth.

Few responsibilities provide more difficulty for school-based professionals than those that involve intervening with challenging student behaviors. Too often, however, these

interventions occur in response to behavior that has already occurred. Such *ex-post-facto* efforts busy educators and other school officials with retroactive engagement and leave little time or opportunity to avert the problematic behaviors in the first place. The use of functional behavior assessments, as they are often conceptualized and mandated, can unwittingly serve to perpetuate this phenomenon. Though there are seemingly abundant instances in which intensive approaches such as functional behavior assessments are warranted, for each of these there exist multiple opportunities for primary and secondary preventions efforts. These can occur on a school-wide basis, a classroom level, or even across small groupings of "at-risk" students.

Now available to the practitioner who wishes to devote equal time and resources to *all* of these efforts is the new set of volumes in the *Guilford Practical Interventions in the Schools Series*. The four texts from the series that prove particularly useful in this framework are: *Safe and Healthy Schools: Practical Prevention Strategies* (Sprague & Walker, 2005), *Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning* (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004), *Helping At-Risk Students: A Group Counseling Approach for Grades 6-9 (2nd Ed.)* (Waterman & Walker, 2009), and *Conducting School-Based Functional Behavior Assessments: A Practitioner's Guide (2nd Ed.) (*Steege & Watson, 2009). Each addresses at-risk qualities among students and the methods by which schools can ameliorate the impact of risk factors in children's lives. Seen collectively, the volumes can be instructive in terms of helping school professionals adopt a proactive orientation in meeting the needs of troubled students through developing safe schools, building resilient classroom, and implementing targeting programming and positive supports. In so doing, school folks might successfully mitigate problematic behavior *in advance* of its occurrence, thereby lessening the need of the functional behavior assessment *after* its occurrence (i.e., the behavioral "autopsy").

Background on Functional Behavior Assessment

In recent years, there have been many challenges in balancing the need for school safety and the rights of students, particularly those with disabilities, to receive a free and appropriate public education (Drasgow & Yell, 2001). Among the responses taken by policy makers was the inclusion of functional behavior assessment mandates into federal laws as tools for educators in their attempts to understand and reduce problematic behavior in schools. These disciplinary provisions reflect an understanding that a relatively small number of students disrupt the learning of their peers, resulting in diminished educational performance for all involved parties (Smith & Rivera, 1994).

It has long been hoped that by determining the functions of misbehavior (that is, *why* students are misbehaving), school-based teams could then help students to substitute alternative behaviors that could meet these same functions, but in ways that are less disruptive to the educational process (Elliot, 1999; Nelson, Roberts, Mathur, & Rutherford, 1999). This conceptualization has led to functional behavior assessments being included as an essential part of developing safe schools (Dwyer, 2002) and establishing and maintaining effective school environments (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002).

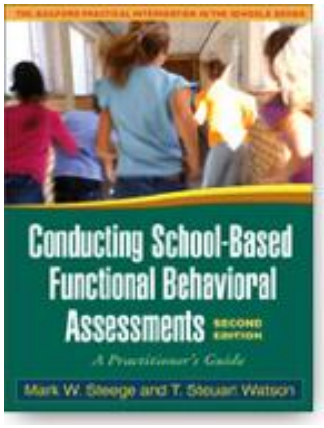
Prior investigations consistently have found that function-based interventions, when well designed and well implemented, are among the most effective methods of supporting students with an array of challenging behaviors (Carr et al., 1999; Horner, 1994; Ingram, 2002; Nakayama, Benazzi, & Sterling, 2004). Indeed, the body of research data from the past 50 years has demonstrated robust support for the value of functional behavior assessments in reducing problematic behavior (Ervin, Ehrhardt, & Poling, 2001). Available literature also supports the use of functional behavior assessments not only in successfully intervening with problem behavior, but also within the context of school-based settings (Elliot, Witt, Kratochwill, & Stoiber, 2002; Knoster & McCurdy, 2002; Kratochwill, Sheridan, Carlson, & Lasecki, 1999; Martens, Witt, Daly, & Vollmer, 1999; Nelson, Roberts, Bullis, Albers, & Ohland, 2000; Repp & Horner, 1999).

Several years into the implementation of the federal and state mandates for the use of functional behavior assessments in schools, professionals in education are charged not only with conducting these assessments, but also with evaluating their relative effectiveness (Knoster & McCurdy, 2002). Given the numerous responsibilities of these school personnel, and recognizing the relative scarcity of behavioral health professionals, there is a reasonable concern about the considerable investment of human resources and training needed to conduct effective functional behavior assessments in these environments (Sterling-Turner, Robinson, & Wilczynski, 2001). Moreover, the efficacy across different school-based providers in implementing functional behavioral assessment and subsequent intervention remains an open question (Dittmer-McMahon, 2001; Hagopian et al., 1997; Peterson, 2002). For example, most empirical support for functional behavior assessments is derived from studies led by individuals with advanced training in applied behavior analysis—a level of expertise that is beyond the scope of what most school professionals can readily offer their students (Nelson, Roberts, Bullis, Albers, & Ohland, 2000; Shriver, Anderson, & Proctor, 2001).

For many years, it has been notably difficult for the scholarly community even to develop consensus as to what constitutes an adequate functional behavioral assessment (Cone, 1997; Ervin, Ehrhardt, & Poling, 2001; Haynes & O'Brien, 1990; Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, Raper, & Hedges, 2000). The applicable laws, regulations and mandates have been of little assistance in this regard, as the term 'functional behavior assessment' has been inadequately defined in state or federal regulations (Lohrmann-O'Rourke & Zirkel, 1999; Zirkel, 2003, 2006). Until quite recently, there has been a lack of specific protocols and training manual for conducting functional behavior assessments, particularly in school settings, which has left unsubstantiated the validity and reliability of these endeavors (Elliot, Witt, Kratochwill, & Stoiber, 2002). There has been broad consensus of the need to move from research to practice in conducting functional behavior assessments in schools (Hoff, Ervin, & Friman, 2005; Quinn et al., 2001).

Conducting School-Based Functional Behavior Assessments: A Practitioner's Guide (2nd Ed.) (Steege & Watson, 2009)

Steege and Watson (2009), in their second edition of *Conducting School-Based Functional Behavior Assessments: A Practitioner's Guide*, have made a remarkable contribution to the goal of moving existing research into practice by providing one of the most relevant and useful tools for assisting field-based professional. The authors compile a wealth of topical literature and complex findings into an accessible and comprehensible practitioner manual and stock their tome with practical, readily-implementable and sufficiently-specific strategies for conducting functional behavior assessments in school settings.



The book is framed around the global concept that the most effective assessments are those that readily lend themselves to effective intervention. This theme is emphasized from the outset in a section titled "Desperately Seeking a Diagnosis." The authors maintain that in the 1970s, there was considerable discussion about labeling children with special needs. Due to the negative connotations of stigma, it was thought that special education identification was to be the last resort. In current formulations, the converse appears to be the norm—special education is rarely regarded as the "scarlet letter"—but rather the "only hope" for many students. Following this line of thought, special education is therefore viewed as the lone vehicle by which additional supports can be brought to struggling students.

Yet, the authors note that in spite of the wealth of assessments being conducted on the behalf of these same students, the same limitations remain. The assessments, particularly those in the norm-referenced family, typically fail to inform intervention. Diagnoses often enable those working with the child to excuse diminished academic progress and "let the student off the hook," a phenomenon the authors refer to as "the blame game." Steege and Watson maintain that school-based teams too frequently "fall victim to the allure of diagnoses" rather than turn to models of effective intervention. In so doing, they fail to consider the adequacy of the instruction, the rate of reinforcement delivered by the teaching staff, the level of organization within the school system, the school-wide behavioral support system (or lack thereof) and so on. The authors recommend, instead, a minimizing of the time-honored (but shopworn) search for diagnoses and subsequent special education placement in favor of reallocating resources toward a collaborative problem-solving model.

Mark W. Steege is professor and program coordinator of School Psychology at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Steege's research focuses on person-centered applied behavioral analysis. **T. Steuart Watson** is professor and chair of Educational Psychology at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He is co-editor of the *Journal of Evidence Based Practices for Schools*.

Steege and Watson begin with a comprehensive overview of the available research literature on functional behavior assessments, and follow with a survey of the legal mandates surrounding functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). In addition, they devote an entire chapter to the theoretical underpinnings of these procedures, humorously titled, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Conceptual Foundations of Functional Behavior Assessments, But Were Afraid to Ask." This portion of the text serves as a primer to the relative novice by introducing the essential behavioral psychology principles inherent in conducting the assessments. In this section, the authors examine existing models of behavior and find them wanting. They improve on the A—I—B—C (Antecedent variables-Individual variables-Behavior-Consequences) model in their first edition and propose what they term "the SMIRC model" (Stimulus/discriminative stimulus—Motivating operations—Individual (organism) variables—Response—Consequence).

Steege and Watson devote a chapter to examining the key elements of an effective functional behavior assessment. For example, they include exhaustively detailed figures illustrating the various motivating antecedents of behavior and reinforcing consequences of behavior. Their analysis of the essential components of model

functional behavior assessments is synthesized via the development of the Functional Behavior Assessment Rating Scale (irreverently abbreviated as "FuBARS"). This tool can be used as both a formative assessment guide when conducting a functional behavior assessment or can be used as a summative assessment tool to evaluate a completed functional behavior assessment. In a sense, the FuBARS can serve as a meta-cognitive tool for practitioners and provide a detailed "assessment of the assessment," thereby increasing the likelihood that the functional behavior assessment enterprise will produce meaningful results for students.

The authors provide a chapter on observing and recording behaviors that, in terms of reviewing key concepts and techniques for the entering practitioner, is at once thorough and succinct. Included are various forms to assess and hypothesize about antecedent variables, individual variables, and consequence variables. Also added is a detailed four-page informant record for teachers. Later in the text, different models for conducting the assessments are offered. The first focuses on brief functional analysis of behavior, and the second illustrates the behavior-analytic problem-solving model. To guide teams in conducting the latter, a reproducible copy of the Behavior-Analytic Problem Solving (BAPS) Recording Form is provided.

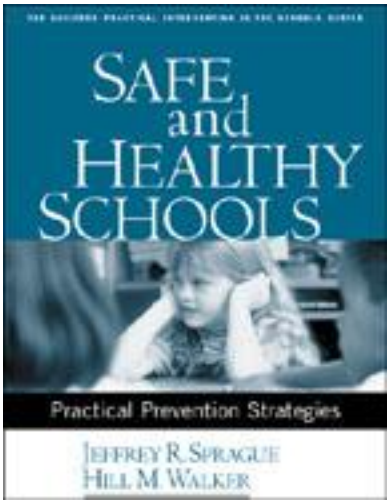
Steege and Watson conclude their manual with chapters on specific function-based interventions and examples, direct behavioral consultation, and resources for reporting on the process. Helpful throughout this volume is the sage advice that *teams must focus on the function of behavior rather than its form*. This concept parallels longstanding recognition that student behavioral not only occurs within a context of environmental events, but occurs for a reason—that there exists a function to the behavior (McComas & Mace, 2000). It has repeatedly been demonstrated that implementing interventions in the absence of determining functions of problem behaviors can decrease the likelihood of behavior change (e.g., Iwata, Pace, Cowdery, & Miltenberger, 1994). The authors detail these and many of the other errors typically made by functional behavior assessment teams (e.g., failure to individualize, errors of generalization, errors of perception).

Safe and Healthy Schools: Practical Prevention Strategies (Sprague & Walker, 2005)

Moving beyond the specific and individual nature of functional behavior assessment, which essentially promotes improved behavioral deportment and increased educational outcomes for the *individual* student, many practitioners have come to embrace systems-level interventions that can maximize these types of results for *groups* of learners. Such

an implementation manual is offered by Sprague and Walker (2009) in an attempt to intervene with problematic behaviors at a more global level. The authors note that the relatively recent advocacy for increased school safety has its roots in the highly-publicized school shootings in the 1990s. These events permanently altered the historic sense (and the present *reality*) that schools are among the safest environments for youngsters. These cognitive alterations collectively spawned the development of books, journals and conferences devoted to the prevention of violence in schools.

The culmination of these initial efforts was manifested in the *Early Warning/Timely Response* guide for schools and communities and the *Safe Schools/Healthy Student* initiative (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998). Complementing this work were efforts by the US Secret Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide profiling data and threat assessment protocols (e.g., Fein et al., 2002). In addition, numerous other enterprises arose to support schools in their efforts to secure the safety of students, as well as their efforts to identify and intervene with troubled youth. The Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior (IVDB), for which the co-authors are principal investigators, serves as a national resource for schools districts and other entities that wish to foster school safety.



After conceptualizing the context in which systems-level change has arisen, Sprague and Walker spend some time synthesizing research on what *is* and *is not* effective in school crime prevention. Included in the former are programs that clarify and communicate norms for behavior by establishing rules, consistently enforcing them, reinforcing positive behavior, and implementing related school-wide campaigns. Included in the latter are simplistic offerings of alternative activities in the absence of more potent programming, or initiatives that focus on arousing fears, appealing to morals, or standard counseling efforts (particularly in the peer group context).

Sprague and Watson identify and distinguish student *risk factors* from *protective factors*, as well as delineate specific and systemic school safety intervention strategies. Among these are securing the school, developing safety and crisis plans, creating a positive and inclusive school climate and culture, addressing the peer culture and its problems, involving parents, and supporting at-risk youth (the last of these being the focus of the Waterman and Walker text, reviewed later in this essay). The authors provide practical

surveys and assessment tools to evaluate the vulnerability of specific schools with respect to violence and safety. These can be used, for example, in the screening and targeted identification of at-risk students.

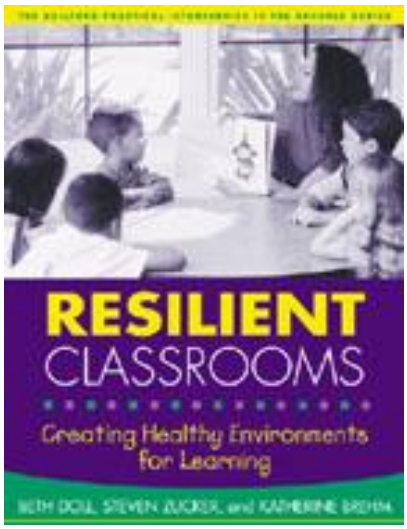
Jeffrey Sprague is an associate professor of special education and co-director of the University of Oregon Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior. His research activities encompass applied behavior analysis, functional behavioral assessment, school safety, youth violence prevention.
Hill M. Walker is the co-director of the University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior.

Beyond considering individual student factors, the volume examines the system-level initiatives that are inherent in educational facilities that provide security and promote the well-being of students. A school-based policy checklist and self-assessment survey is provided to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts. The authors also pay considerable attention to systemic interventions for building 'safe schools.' Key to these interventions are positive behavior supports, which previously have been defined as measures developed to produce meaningful and positive changes in behavior (Horner et al., 1999-2000; O'Neill et al., 1997). Best practice recommendations in developing positive behavioral supports have increasingly been provided in the literature (e.g., Shinn, Walker, & Stoner, 2002; Tankersley, Landrum, Cook, & Balan, 2000) and are examined again in this volume. Also reviewed are the topics of bullying and peer-based harassment and ways to begin supporting antisocial and potentially violent youth.

Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004)

Shifting the system-wide efforts from the school level to the classroom level, Doll, Zucker, and Brehm (2004) provide a valuable resource for reordering classrooms around promoting resilience among students. Resilient children are described as those children who are successful despite the odds stacked against them. The authors note that, although substantial numbers of children overcome considerable risk-factors and obstacles, they do not do so singlehandedly. In spite of being exposed to various *risk factors* and existing in perpetually vulnerable circumstances, these students derive great benefit from (and owe a great deal of their fortunate outcomes to…) a caring and guiding community—in the case of this text, the classroom community which acts as a *protective factor*.

The premise of this book is that school classrooms can become resilient communities that provide essential support and guidance so that vulnerable children can learn and



be successful. The authors advocate for changing classrooms as opposed to individual students, and they use a systems-level framework (albeit at the level of the individual classroom) to make their case. Consider that the authors cite data that 17% of US children live in poverty, over 800,000 suffer from abuse and/or neglect, nearly 600,000 are placed into foster care, and one of every five or six meet the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental illnesses. In a typical classroom of 25 students this yields an average of five children with significant mental health needs, four living in poverty, and one struggling with severe abuse. Schools districts are simply incapable of employing sufficient numbers of mental health providers to meet the vast and complex needs of such children on an individual case-by-case basis; this becomes even more apparent in those school districts with disproportionate numbers of "high risk" pupils. Consequently, instead of adopting intervention models that cater to specific individuals (a practical impossibility if the needs of the many are to be addressed), the authors contend that schools must implement systems-level changes so that children can flourish despite their disadvantages. These changes, the authors illustrate, can occur effectively at the classroom level.

The authors buttress their arguments for developing resilient classrooms with a review of research literature on resilience and protective factors. A striking finding of the studies is that some of the most powerful predictors for positive life outcomes are not individual characteristics of children but rather factors about the family and community in which those children were raised. This reality serves as a basis and catalyst for school professionals to influence existing communities in a manner that positively promotes positive outcomes for their children.

The text's authors note that resilient classrooms are marked by six characteristics that occur across two strands. The first of these strands emphasizes the *self-agency of the students*. In this paradigm, students see themselves as competent and effective learners (academic efficacy), set and work toward self-selected learning goals (academic self-determination), and behave appropriately and adaptively with a minimum of adult supervision (i.e., behavioral self-control). The second strand emphasizes the *caring and connected relationships among members of the classroom community*. In this second paradigm, students and teachers have caring and authentic relationships—students have ongoing and rewarding relationships with their classmates, and families know about and

strengthen the learning that goes on in the classroom. Traditional models conceptualize many of these factors as relevant to individual children. These authors instead stress an ecological perspective that demonstrates that it is the classroom's routines and practices that can determine whether these characteristics will emerge in pupils.

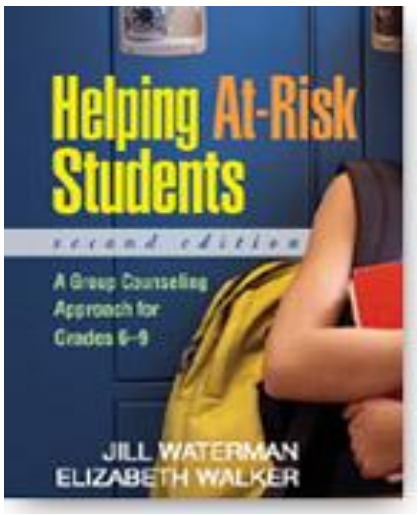
The authors also review sample research measures that can be used to assess the relative strength of each of the six characteristics in a given classroom. Beyond these assessment approaches, the authors describe an alternative assessment strategy they developed called "ClassMaps." These are anonymous socio-metric surveys in which students rate their classroom on the six resilience characteristics—a sample is provided in the Appendix. Extending from the assessment piece is a later chapter that provides effective strategies for intervening across the six characteristics. This is detailed in an 8-step plan for convening systems for change in the classroom.

Beth Doll is director of School Psychology at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Her research interests include school mental health services and program evaluation strategies.
Steven Zucker is coordinator of the school psychology program at the University of Colorado at Denver. His current research explores the efficacy of classroom-based interventions that foster academic and social competence.
Katherine Brehm is Associate Professor of School Psychology, University of Texas at El Paso. Her research interests include consultation and contextual intervention to support emotionally and academically successful students in culturally diverse classrooms.

Doll, Zucker and Brehm also include an interesting chapter on involving students in planning and decision making. This student-centered approach attempts to use a democratic model of student participation in evaluating classroom characteristics in order to increase students' levels of engagement as partners-in-intervention. Also added to the text is a section on designing evaluation mechanisms to gauge the relative impact of these initiatives on students. Another noteworthy supplement is the authors' treatments of how thoughtfully to integrate the resilient classroom within existing school mental health services. The book's final provisions include reproducible worksheets, all commendable in terms of their ease and utility, for goal-setting, planning, and intervention.

Helping At-Risk Students: A Group Counseling Approach for Grades 6-9 (2nd Ed.) (Waterman & Walker, 2009)

After considering the orientations of the preceding resources in terms of their attention to systems-level change at both the school and classroom levels, practitioners will undoubtedly unearth smaller groupings of students (within and across classrooms) manifesting behavioral symptoms that demand interventions specifically targeted to their needs.



Although each of the FBA, 'safe schools' and 'resilient classrooms' manuals provide a layer of primary prevention for the majority of the student population, specific programs are needed for students with more intensive concerns. Such an approach is offered with precision and creativity in *Helping At-Risk Students: A Group Counseling Approach for Grades 6-9 (2nd Ed.)* (Waterman & Walker, 2009).

The authors provide a detailed group counseling curriculum that is specifically designed for grades 6-9. The program, labeled "SPARK", is intended for students who have academic, behavioral and/or emotional difficulties. It is designed to be a 15-20 week intervention, covering an entire school semester. The program name is a reference to its intention to 'spark' increases in student achievement, social-emotional growth, and nonviolent responding (though the authors note their flexibility with practitioners substituting other names for the program).

The goals of SPARK are: (a) To provide a trusting and supportive group environment that facilitates disclosure and discussion with peers; (b) To build competence by teaching specific social skills; and (c) To provide activities that facilitate the exploring of issues of concern to youths. Typical groups are composed of 7-10 students who meet during one class period each week. The first chapter gives very specific guidelines for forming the groups—from enlisting group leaders and recruiting students to participate, and from building cohesion within the group to anticipating problems that may occur. The authors then provide an overview of eight separate modules, each of which typically consist of two or three sessions. They are: Trust-Building and Communication Skills; Anger Management and Emotion Regulation Skills; Ethnic Identity and Anti-Prejudice; Educational Aspirations; Peer Pressure, Bullying and

Gangs; Male-Female Relationships; Exposure to Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Reactions; and Family Relationships.

For each module, the authors provide an overall goal for the module, an overview of each of the sessions within that module (ranging from one to four sessions each), and provide specific instructions for conducting the session—including the activities, materials, and content (i.e., scripted directions). Included in the Appendix are extensive materials and handouts for beginning the groups and providing a curriculum for the meetings. English and Spanish versions are provided.

Jill Waterman is adjunct professor of psychology at UCLA where she is coordinator of the Psychology Clinic. Dr. Waterman has published on child sexual abuse and other areas of child trauma, as well as a school-based empirically supported treatment manual for high-risk young adolescents. She is also a practicing clinician, specializing in treatment of young children and their families.
Elizabeth Walker is a clinical psychologist in independent practice specializing in economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse high school students in Denver, Colorado.

The authors also devote a chapter to sharing their data on the effectiveness of the SPARK groups. It should be noted that the authors conducted their research in eight secondary schools in the Los Angeles area and, as a consequence, the generalizability of their results is somewhat uncertain. The overwhelming majority (85%) of the participants in their studies were grades 6-8, with a 60-40% male-to-female gender ratio. Nearly 90% of the participants were either African-American or Latino, and the majority of them were not from intact families. Moreover, the participants reported high levels of family distress and alarmingly high rates of exposure to community violence.

In evaluating the program, the authors cite results that showed that participants had significantly higher educational aspirations and showed significantly higher English achievement after the program (gains that were not apparent in mathematics). Intervention group members (as opposed to those in the control groups) reported significant gains in psychological adjustment and self-esteem, and they reported feeling more connected with their peers. Of particular interest, participants in the treatment groups reported decreases in their perceptions of external control (i.e., a belief that their fate was in the hands of others). They also manifested reductions in their gang involvement. Nonetheless, although they reported these gains as significant, the authors caution they tended to be relatively modest; specific reductions in physical aggression instances and intensity were not measured.

Summary Comments

This review has considered four relatively inexpensive paperback texts from the same publisher all intended to resolve problems of managing difficult-to-teach children and youth. The intended audience is the practitioner who meets and intervenes with students on a daily basis. All four texts have clear strengths. Together they comprise a veritable library comprehensively addressing the needs of enquiring practitioners. They all receive strong recommendations as source texts for understanding, designing and implementing interventions with reluctant and disruptive learners. That they have a common format, language complexity and generally parallel structure is a bonus which makes them an especially attractive integrated resource for a school's faculty library.

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