

Canadian Association of School Psychologists L'Association canadienne des psychologues scolaires Canadian Psychological Association

Société canadienne de psychologie

PSYCHOLOGISTS IN EDUCATION / PSYCHOLOGUES EN EDUCATION

JOINT NEWSLETTER

January 2011

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Message from the CASP/CPA Psychologists in Education

It is most gratifying to see another CASP/CPA section newsletter so soon after the fall issue. A great way to start the new year. Special thanks to Troy Janzen for all of his hard work and creativity in producing a 'newsworthy newsletter'.

In terms of membership renewal for both CASP and the CPA Psychologists in Education section at the beginning of this new year, heartfelt thanks go to those who have renewed or joined for 2011; this makes planning as well as paperwork much easier. For those who have yet to renew, a CASP membership application is attached at the end of this newsletter. Also, please encourage your colleagues and graduate students to join; in addition to the newsletter, the CASP blog and, of course, the *Canadian Journal of School Psychology* are all part of the package. For online CPA renewals use this link:

https://web.cpa.ca/renewal/index.php. For new CPA memberships, please go to the newly redesigned CPA website at http://www.cpa.ca/ then use the Membership pull down menu to continue.

As a reminder, the CPA Convention will be held in Toronto, June 2 – 4. Among the many activities will be the election of officers to the Psychologists in Education section executive. This occurs as part of the annual section business meeting following our invited speaker presentation, and refreshments will be available. For more information as planning for these events unfolds, please check http://www.cpa.ca/convention/. At this point we have served in a planning-advisory capacity for the 2012 International School Psychology conference to be held in Montréal. We will certainly keep you posted on conference developments.

Finally we encourage you to continue to support CASP and CPA, not only through your membership but also your active participation. We are keen to hear your ideas and suggestions for both organizations. Contributions to the *Newsletter* are always welcome, and there is always room for more support in the activities of the associations. All best wishes in 2011!

Joe Snyder and Don Saklofske

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Message from the Editor

Happy New Year! According to Chinese Astrology we are about to enter into the Year of the Rabbit (on February 3, 2011). The characteristics of the rabbit define the year and these include peace, patience, virtue and ambition. Leaving the Year of the Tiger, which can represent radical change and instability, the Rabbit literally leaps over adversity and conflict. I trust this is good news for those of us who have weathered the storm of economic downturns that has trickled down to everyone in the field of education. This downturn has created a situation where the role and value of school psychologists is once again under the microscope in many provinces in Canada. As we enter a new year I thought it appropriate that we should focus on the importance of the school psychologists' role and training. What is the future for us as school psychologists? This present issue of the joint CASP/CPA Psychologists in Education Newsletter is dedicated to addressing this question. To this end, we have a feature article by Dr. Henry Janzen. Dr. Janzen has served in the field of school psychology for nearly 40 years. He writes and reflects on the school psychologist for both today and tomorrow.

An article by Dawson et al (2004) in the *School Psychology Review* outlined eleven themes from a 2002 conference on the future of school psychology. One of these themes was a recognition of the need for action research and qualitative inquiry. In light of this need, this issue presents an article on the importance of the role of the school psychologist in being a knowledge producer, encourager and disseminator in schools. This article, on the role of school psychologist in creating something called the "Knowledge Institute", is presented by a local Alberta school psychologist, Jay Hetherington.

Finishing strongly, we have a several offerings from our graduate students within this issue. These future school psychologists provide perspectives on pursuing a Ph.D. level of training, on internship experiences, and the connection of school psychologists' role to training.

I believe we need to take the Year of the Rabbit to heart. We need to seek peace and harmony in our work with schools, boards, governments, and each other to know our role and advocate for it. We need patience to make inroads in creating and sustaining a valid role for the school psychologist. We need to demonstrate and extol the virtues of the school psychologist with a balanced form of ambition to see this role as more than it is presently. Let's hope for a happy and prosperous New Year!

Troy Janzen, Ph.D., R. Psych. (AB), CPA/CASP Joint Newsletter Editor **cpa.edexchange@gmail.com**

Feature Article

The Alberta School Psychologist Today and TomorroW by Dr. Henry Janzen, University of Alberta

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Franklin D. Roosevelt was known to say that we have to do the best we know how at the moment. If it doesn't turn out right, we can modify it as we go along. The Greek philosopher Plato said it another way, necessity is the mother of invention (The Republic), but invention can also be the mother of necessity. These thoughts summarize my feelings of the practice of school psychology in Alberta. As a trainer for forty years, I have seen processes and interventions change, as has the work of the school psychologist. In a recent survey of psychologists in Alberta, school psychologists comprise 14% of the work-force of practicing psychologists, with counselling psychologists taking 38% of the psychologist work, and clinical psychologists comprise 18% of our psychological work-force. Roughly 19% practice in two or more areas of psychology and 3% in Health, Neuropsychology, Industrial/ Organizational and/or Research and Teaching fields. I was not surprised at the 14% who identify themselves as practicing school psychologists. The figure should likely be lower. I suspect that some school psychologists have a "mixed practice" and therefore were counted in the 19% figure of "Mixed Practice". If I am correct, that would mean that 33% of practicing psychologists in Alberta do some school-based work, a significant proportion of psychologists indeed!

My work in the schools began in Calgary, in 1967. At that time I was not "a psychologist" but "a psychometrist". However, I was registered as a psychologist in 1969, and it was in that year that I received more challenging referrals from teachers and parents. Regardless of my new status as a psychologist, the assessment process was always, or usually the same. We administered an intelligence test, followed by an achievement test, and perhaps added one or several more instruments. Of course we reviewed files, interviewed and observed, but based our interpretations largely on the results of the IQ test. As I recall, it didn't really matter what the nature of the referral was, the tests we gave largely remained the same.

Today's practice in the schools is very different, much more complex, requiring considerably more skills and knowledge. A recent NASP newsletter (Communique) summarized the Response to Treatment Intervention (RTI) approach used by school psychologists. Tier 1 begins with school-based screening and data-gathering. Tier 2 involves team-based decision making with additional testing by school psychologists. Tier 3 involves extensive consultation and intervention planning, with some school psychologists participating in the actual treatment phase. This is essentially what school psychologists are doing in Alberta. In addition, Alberta school psychologists, trained in cross-battery assessment, are re-examining procedures for screening, and assessing students

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from other cultures. They are also involved in broader mental health assessment, taking a proactive role, and in direct intervention when requested. Many school systems have employed school psychologists as "behaviour specialists". Their work is largely in developing positive behaviour management plans, but also in continuing consultation to teachers and parents as the plan is implemented. Much of this latter work follows the recent development of the AIMS web Behaviour Management program published by PyschCorp and advertised in NASP's Communique.

I suspect that school psychologists of the future will be asked to do less testing and "more doing".

The practice of today's school psychologist in Alberta is guided by several theoretical approaches. Many school psychologists are trained in the Grounded Theory approach to responsible cross-battery and cross-cultural assessment procedures. This approach avoids pre-specified hypotheses and develops a theory of the student and the problem as one moves through the assessment process. Come to think of it, this is really how we functioned in the school in 1967!! Maybe not! This theoretical approach is, in my view, very sensible. Another theory or model that I believe guides the work of the Alberta school psychologist is the Dual Factor Model of Mental Health. In this approach, school psychologists first assess for the presence or absence of significant problems or psychopathology, followed by assessment of subjective well-being indicators. This is another sensible model, in my opinion. This latter approach, based largely on positive psychology theory, focuses on what strengths the students have to cope with the current "problems".

Alberta school psychologists may or may not actively think about their theoretical position when at work, but their actual practices will give them away as to their theoretical thinking. I believe we know how to collect data, but we need to constantly think about what this data is telling us, and what to do about it. I suspect that school psychologists of the future will be asked to do less testing and "more doing". Think of what is required at Tier 2 in the RTI approach – actual intervention – increased consultation/instruction – re-teaching of critical skills (called double-dosing) in the literature – and increased feedback on student performance. I also predict that we will need to improve our services to students, teachers, parents and schools, if our speciality is going to survive! For example, there is evidence that one-time trainings do not lead to consistent behaviour change in teachers, and changes that do occur do not last without ongoing support. We will need to do more "teaching and training" in the future, as well as convince school boards to pay us for this service.

Finally, Alberta school psychologists of tomorrow will need to focus more on the context of the school, rather than broaden mental health goals. After all, our

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context in "the school" includes knowledge and skills in the arena of academics, social, emotional and behavioural functioning as it relates to "school performance indicators". This will include a demand on us to know more about instructional strategies. Assessment should be a means to an end. I am sure we all agree on that. That "end" is, in my view, helping to improve classroom behaviour and academic achievement. If we achieve this "end" we will not need to prove that school psychologists serve a useful role in the schools.

Dr. Henry L. Janzen, Professor Emeritus Department of Educational Psychology University of Alberta and Part-time Practicing School Psychologist.

Suggested Further Reading

Artiles, A. J., & Trent, S. C. (1994). Overrepresentation of minority students in special education: A continuing debate. *The Journal of Special Education*, 27, 410-437.

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- Maddux, J. (2002). Self-efficacy: The power of believing you can. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
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Feature Article

School Psychologists as Knowledge Brokers: Introducing the Red Deer Public School District Knowledge Institute by Jay Hetherington, Registered Psychologist

The *Knowledge Institute* is a group of educational professionals who are interested in actively promoting the acquisition and dissemination of educational knowledge through

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original inquiry and research in our schools. The tool for the acquisition of this knowledge comes from the employment of Action Research techniques with an enhanced emphasis on understanding through empirical interpretation of data.

Many different types of professionals do original and targeted research with the goal of expanding knowledge and improving practice in their profession. Action Research is a way for educators to gain knowledge of teaching practices and techniques that are directly applicable to work in their classroom.

The school psychologist has an important role to play in the general promotion of the "research frame of mind" in understanding the classroom.

The classrooms and schools are particularly data rich environments. The challenge is to make sense of all the information in the classroom so that the educator may then understand what key variables can be manipulated to enhance the effectiveness of classroom practice. It is the goal of every school psychologist, and the goal of the *Knowledge Institute*, to improve the educational outcome for students in the classroom.

The school psychologist has an important role to play in the general promotion of the "research frame of mind" in understanding the classroom. School psychologists have a unique position as brokers of the knowledge to do research, understand research, and try to bring research into the classroom. Educators may benefit from a more vigorous method of satisfying claims of what can be considered true in educational practice. This is especially accurate with respect to the application of concepts that may be specific to a unique population of students in a particular school jurisdiction.

KEY GOALS OF THE KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE

- 1. Promoting a more scientific approach to understanding classroom practices.
- 2. Helping educators who are interested in conducting Action Research (or other research formats) establish a line of enquiry that is meaningful to their particular situation.
- 3. Developing a professional collaboration between school district educators and educators at the post secondary level to promote ethical and sound research practices.
- 4. Sharing knowledge among professionals.
- 5. Partnering and collaborating with district educators (many of whom may have graduate degrees) and with post secondary educators. This collaboration allows access to persons with expertise in terms of classroom practice, experimental design, data analysis and research procedures. In turn, this should provide the academic rigor necessary to provide acceptable levels certainty in the results produced by the research.

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Master's Or Ph.D.? A Survey of Graduates in School Psychology

By Marnie Hutchison & Virginia Tze, University of Alberta

In the October edition of the CASP newsletter, Dr. Janzen highlighted the diversity of training and credentialing standards for psychologists across Canada. This edition of Student's Voice will contribute to this discussion by examining graduate students' perspectives on pursuing a doctoral degree with reference to practicing in the field of school psychology.

It seems that not long after students are admitted to a Master's program they are required to decide whether they are going to pursue Doctoral studies. As graduate students we can all identify with relatives and friends asking "How many more years of school?" This is undoubtedly a complex question that reflects not only how students will spend the next four to five years of life but also their career. We asked graduate students from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta to share their experience with this decision making progress. We found two central themes to be apparent in their answers: *where* they would like to practice and *what* they would like to do in their practice. These themes appear to delineate from the all-encompassing question graduate students ask themselves, "What are my career goals?"

Location

Canada has created the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) to establish conditions under which a psychologist who is licensed to practice without supervision in one jurisdiction will have their qualifications recognized in another jurisdiction. The MRA specifies that only PhD holders benefit from the MRA and thus can move across jurisdictions to practice. Those who hold Master's degree may have to incur additional supervision hours and professional development in order to register in a new jurisdiction. For some, eliminating the need to worry about cross-jurisdiction regulations warrants obtaining a PhD. Thus, students who relocate for their graduate training should start thinking about where they would like to practice psychology as early as the first year of their Master's. Also, certain jurisdictions have distinct school psychology associations. For example, British Columbia is a jurisdiction that requires psychologists to hold a doctoral degree but you can practice as a Certified School Psychologist with a Master's degree. *Tip: Review the MRA document to find out your jurisdiction's requirements:* http://www.cpa.ca/docs/file/MRA2004.pdf

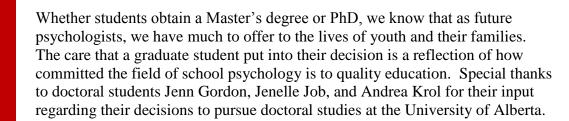
Role

In Alberta, a province that grants registration to Master's level clinicians, it is estimated that 75% of psychologists have Master's degrees and the remaining 25% have doctoral degrees. Although there appears to be considerable career opportunity for clinicians at the Master's level, students pursuing doctoral studies believe the PhD will affect their career options, specifically "where I would be working and what I would be doing". Work setting options could expand from mostly schools to interdisciplinary teams in hospitals, correctional facilities, and community agencies. Historically, school psychologists have specialized primarily in assessment. As many education systems in Canada move away from a test-to-fund model, it is assumed that our role will do the same. We must be cognizant of whether our education provides us with skills beyond this assessment role. Although Master's programs are constantly improving to provide students with counselling and intervention skills, PhD programs provide further training in personality and neuropsychological assessment, evaluation, intervention, and consultation skills.

Tip: Look for advertised positions that interest you and look at the job requirements. Will you have the appropriate training with your Master's degree or does the position require a PhD? Next, review course descriptions of your potential PhD program. Does it provide further training in areas that you are interested in?

A large focus of both the Master's and PhD programs in psychology is research. In addition to theses and dissertation projects, students are afforded the opportunity to assist professors and supervisor on various research projects. One student describes the "involvement in research and development of professional connections" as central to her decision to enter the doctoral program. If one believes that research is something they'd like to pursue in their career, they will receive further training with research methodology and statistics at the PhD level. Likewise, if one sees oneself in a teaching role at the university level, they will most likely be required to have a PhD in the subject area.

Tip: Reflect on whether you want to include research and teaching activities in your repertoire.



From the Classroom...To the Classroom: Student Perspectives on Internships By Emma Climie and Sarah Nugent

In many School Psychology programs, a key component of learning comes through the opportunity for students to develop and hone their practical skills. During these programs, most students complete practicum assignments where they get a small taste of future work experience. However, in other programs, students are offered the opportunity to complete year-long internship placements that provide them with a true hands-on experience in the work world.

Two students from the School and Applied Child Psychology program at the University of Calgary, along with some of their colleagues, are currently completing this internship requirement. Doctoral candidate Emma Climie and Master of Science student Sarah Nugent are both currently completing internships in Calgary. Emma is completing her Doctoral-level internship with the Calgary Board of Education (Learning Support Team) and Sarah is completing her Pre-Master's internship with Foothills Academy Society (Estelle Siebens Community Services). Each student has written a few thoughts about their respective internship placements as they move from the university environment into the work world.

Emma Climie, M.Sc., Doctoral Candidate Internship Site: Calgary Board of Education

This year, I am fortunate to be completing my provisional hours for registration as well as my doctoral internship concurrently with the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). The CBE is one of the largest school districts in Canada, serving almost 100,000 students. As would be expected with such a sizable district, there are a large variety of student situations that arise on a daily basis. As a Provisional Psychologist and intern within this district, it has been a significant learning curve moving from the academic world into the "real"

world, but it has been (and continues to be) a great experience.

My internship experience thus far has been eye-opening for a number of reasons. I am working in a variety of schools throughout the city of Calgary, providing an opportunity to work with a diverse population of students, teachers, administrators, and other support staff. I have been able to gain a better understanding of how schools identify and support children with exceptional needs as well as see how that translates into additional support from district Psychologists and Learning Strategists. The new "Setting the Direction" initiative from Alberta Education has instigated some changes within the Learning Support teams at CBE, resulting in the formation of a multi-disciplinary team with which to support individual students, teachers, and schools.

Within CBE, I am fortunate to have two supervisors who each have their own specific niches of expertise. I have had the opportunity to strengthen my skills in areas that I am familiar as well as expand my abilities in new areas. For example, this year I have had the opportunity to conduct a number of complex assessments, provide intervention support for specific populations (e.g., group focus on health, social skills, self-confidence), work collaboratively with school administration and teachers, strengthening my individual counselling skills, attend professional development workshops, write grant applications to support social-emotional programming for high-needs adolescents, conduct research in a school setting, and gain exposure to therapeutic techniques such as art therapy and hypnotherapy. This range of opportunities cannot be taught in a university classroom and instead requires hands-on experience in applied settings with experienced supervisors and mentors.

I think that the biggest adjustment from university to internship was the real-life implications of dealing with children. In the university classroom, we typically discuss hypothetical situations or nameless children. During the internship, we discuss real children with real difficulties, many of whom require immediate and direct support. The reality of the situation is much clearer and there is a necessity to provide services to support these children in their classrooms and schools, as well as extending this support into their home environment.

I truly believe that the practical work experience that is gained through an internship placement is invaluable. I have met so many people with such broad knowledge and unique experiences and it has opened my eyes to the vast opportunities that are available within our profession. I look forward to the next six months, where I am sure that I will continue to learn and grow both personally and professionally.

Sarah Nugent, B.A., Master's Student Internship Site: Foothills Academy Society

The road to learning is not a linear path but a revolving door to which we gain our knowledge. This became most evident as I began my Pre-Master's internship

at Foothills Academy Society, a private school in Calgary. Foothills Academy Society has a dual purpose: to offer a fulltime School Program for students with learning disabilities and to provide the greater community through a Community Services component. The goal is to provide quality services within a supportive environment and to advocate in our global community for better understanding, acceptance, and respect for individuals and their families who have encountered difficulties. As a Psychological Intern, it has been a significant learning curve applying what I have learned in the classroom to the "real" world, but it has thus far proven to be an invaluable experience.

My internship placement is unlike any other for a number of reasons. I am working at a private school targeted toward children and adolescents diagnosed with learning disabilities as well as a variety of other disorders, providing an opportunity to work with a diverse population of students. As a result, I am fortunate to be able to collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other key support staff to provide assistance and intervention support to these students through the school setting. In addition to my placement at Foothills Academy Society, Estelle Siebens Community Services has contracts with Alberta Employment and Immigration, rural Alberta schools, as well as First Nation schools, thus providing an opportunity to work within a number of different community settings. As well, I am able to strengthen my intervention skills by collaborating with the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta -Calgary Chapter to deliver social skills programming to children and adolescents with a variety of disorders in efforts to help develop and foster appropriate social interactions with others. Taken together, I have come to realize that my role as a Psychological Intern is multi-faceted as it involves conducting assessments, collaborating with teachers, parents, and the community, facilitating interventions, and supporting individuals in their school, work, and/or home environments through the provision of recommendations.

The classroom has equipped me with the foundational knowledge needed to conduct assessments, interpret data, and provide recommendations. However, the biggest adjustment I have encountered thus far in my transition from classroom to internship has been the need to adapt to the social and cultural customs of different communities as well as understand how social and cultural backgrounds influence results of psycho-educational assessments, academic performance, and intervention support. Given the social and multi-cultural nature of Canada, the practical experience of an internship has extended my knowledge surrounding these areas. The classroom tries to prepare the student by teaching how culture and community influence academic performance and/or test scores, however, one does not truly learn how these factors come into play unless they are placed in a "real" life setting.

My internship has taught me the little things you cannot find in a textbook, such as a greater awareness and flexibility of my presence and professional conduct when entering different communities and settings. As well, only though an

internship can you truly become knowledgeable about available community resources or cultural practices, as these are important real life implications when working with children, youth, and adults from a variety of backgrounds. Such factors can often be taken for granted but mean the world to parents, teachers, and support staff when working with a student identified with learning difficulties. Taken together, my experience thus far on my internship has opened my eyes to the role and need for school psychologists as the profession is not about the science of administering assessments and evaluating results but about the act of bringing together people in the community to help foster the development of individuals who require that extra support in life.

Student Perspectives on the NEW Role of the School Psychologist by Wing Sze Wence Leung & Ellis Chan

"What does a school psychologist do?" This is a common question that we often encounter, but are unable to provide a simple answer for. Traditionally, school psychologists provide a broad range of mental health services, functioning primarily through the delivery of assessment, intervention, and consultation for children in school systems. However, having nearly completed our program's coursework and practicum, we realized that the role of a school psychologist has not been bound within these three stereotyped roles. Through this experience we were exposed to a surprisingly greater diversity in the role of the school psychologist than we had first anticipated.

During our first practicum, we had a chance to shadow school psychologists in both public and private sectors. We saw how the school psychologist took on different roles and interacted with different professionals. One of the school psychologists we shadowed had a rich background in teaching. In addition to the core roles of a school psychologist, she also arranged public speaking events and hosted in-service workshops for teachers. Focusing on just assessment and intervention helps just one individual student; however, hosting workshops provides a broader reach, benefitting both teachers looking for additional training and students who do not qualify for services and previously would have fallen between the cracks.

In addition to our shadowing, our school psychology program also offered us both counselling courses and a practicum. This was a surprise for most of us, because upon entering this program, we were expecting to focus on assessment and intervention. However, after completing a portion of our assessment practicum in our second year, we have found a real appreciation for our counselling experience. With our refined, if not newly founded counselling skills, we were better equipped to communicate with students, teachers, and parents. For example, our counselling skills were particularly useful for situations requiring the deliverance of less than ideal news to parents, getting teachers and parents onboard to help the students, or encouraging uncooperative

students to put out their best effort during testing. Having counselling skills also opened up the doors for another career opportunity. For some of us, counselling was an incredible experience, and several of our colleagues have expressed interest on future one-to-one therapy in addition to assessment.

In retrospect to our shadowing and counselling practicum, another surprising element was the amount of social skills required for networking within schools. Although there was limited time for the school psychologist to interact with the office administration, it was clear that the conversations they carried were not just between working professionals, but also fellow colleagues who trusted one another's ability and skills sets. It was clear why the school referred out to this particular psychologist so frequently; instead of simply appearing as an outsider with a specialty, he had developed a great working relationship with the school and was considered part of their team. Certainly our counselling training's focus on developing trust and a relationship with our clients holds a myriad of benefits beyond the one on one therapist role and can be applied to the school system as well.

Although the traditional function as tester is still considered the significant core role of the school psychologist, current demands on school psychologists have greatly expanded their role beyond the conventional stereotype. We appreciate this flexibility in role of our future career. Among its many benefits, it allows us to focus on our own areas of interest, increase our job satisfaction, and prevents us from burning out. Although a complete analysis of the merits of new roles for school psychologists is beyond the scope of this article, we wish to convey our sense of excitement and anticipation for these new roles as those preparing to become the future school psychologists.

NEWS & NOTES

- Don't forget the upcoming CPA convention in Toronto in June 2011. See http://www.cpa.ca/convention/ for details.
- This year's ISPA conference is in Chennai, India, *July 19- 23rd, 2011*. Next year's conference is being planned for Montreal. See http://www.ispaweb.org/Conferences/india2011.aspx for more information.
- Graduate Students! Want to join our newsletter editorial board? Contact me at cpa.edexchange@gmail.com to see how you can become involved.
- Trainers in school psychology, I encourage you as well as your students to get involved and contribute to the newsletter!
- School Psychologists: Share this newsletter with your colleagues.

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Application for Membership

Members can renew and new Members can join for 2011 with this one form. Just select "Renewal" or "New member for 2011". Members for 2011 will receive all 4 issues of the Canadian Journal of School Psychology published in that year. In addition, all memberships for 2011 have the same special, limited-time membership fee of \$50, **extended for 2011**!

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Membership Categories

Regular Member: A person employed or trained as a school psychologist or employed by a university and engaged in work related to the field of school psychology.

Student Member: A person training to become a school psychologist.

Associate Member (non-voting): A person in agreement with the overall objectives of the organization but who does not satisfy the criteria for regular or student membership.

Institutional Affiliate (non-voting): An organization with an interest in the practice of school psychology.

*All members, regardless of category, receive a subscription to the Canadian Journal of School Psychology and additional benefts. To become a member or renew an existing membership, please mail this completed application together with a cheque for the appropriate amount to:

CASP Executive Director

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