



A comparison of problem identification interviews conducted face-to-face and via videoconferencing using the consultation analysis record☆

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ABSTRACT

School psychologists who experience challenges delivering face-to-face consultation may utilize videoconferencing to facilitate their consultation activities. Videoconferencing has been found to be an effective method of service delivery in related fields and emerging research suggests that it may be effective for providing teacher training and support in school settings. In this exploratory investigation, we used the Consultation Analysis Record (Bergan & Tombari, 1975) and its four indices to assess the effectiveness of conducting problem identification interviews via videoconferencing versus face-to-face. Overall, findings indicated significant differences across these two conditions, with videoconference interviews coded as having higher indices of content relevance, process effectiveness, and message control, but lower content focus, compared to face-to-face interviews. As these indices have been positively associated with favorable consultation outcomes, the results provide initial support for the effectiveness of consultation delivered via videoconferencing.

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1. Introduction

The practice model outlined by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2010) denotes foundational competencies, overarching practices, and specific services to guide school psychologists in their role. To engage in prevention and intervention services to support individual students, schools, and families, school psychologists must incorporate overarching practices such as data-based decision making, consultation, and collaboration (NASP, 2010). Further, the nationwide movement toward academic and behavioral multi-tiered frameworks, wherein targeted intervention and ongoing evaluation are designed to ensure more responsive supports for students, has emphasized the importance and increased the necessity of data-based decision making and collaboration (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). These activities, emphasized by NASP and embedded within increasingly

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utilized multi-tiered frameworks, can occur in a structured manner through problem-solving consultation (Erchul & Ward, 2016; Hurwitz, Kratochwill, & Serlin, 2015; Reschly & Reschly, 2014).

1.1. Problem-solving consultation

Problem-solving consultation (the currently preferred term for behavioral consultation; Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990) is an effective and versatile method of providing indirect services that incorporates data-based decision making and collaboration with stakeholders to identify a student concern, collect baseline data, develop a targeted intervention, and monitor its implementation and impact (cf. Frank & Kratochwill, 2014). Across varied reviews, problem-solving consultation consistently has been regarded to be an effective consultation model (e.g., Erchul & Schulte, 2009; Sheridan, Welch, & Orme, 1996). Recent multi-level model analyses indicate that consultants who utilized this consultation method were able to produce substantial improvements in student academic and behavioral outcomes (though there was some variability across consultants; Hurwitz et al., 2015). The problem-solving consultation model has been applied to address a wide range of student concerns related to academics, behavior, and health across preschool, elementary, middle, and high school (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016; Martens, DiGennaro Reed, & Magnuson, 2014; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan, & Mickelson, 2001).

Although consultation is an effective and resource-efficient service delivery method to prevent and remediate student concerns (Kratochwill, Altschaeffl, & Bice-Urbach, 2014), school psychologists indicate they are not able to engage in consultation as frequently as they would like (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Reschly & Wilson, 1995). For instance, school psychologists report acting in a consultative role for 9.2 h per week (23%), while indicating they would prefer to spend 13.3 h per week (33%; Hosp & Reschly, 2002). Within their consultation role, almost half of surveyed school psychologists (47.9%) report being able to support only 1–25 students, while 28.5% indicate being able to serve over 50 students through consultation (Curtis et al., 2008). Although school psychologists' increased involvement in multi-tiered systems of support is related to a decrease in assessment-related activities, there has been limited change to their reported engagement in consultation, despite the potential for consultation to facilitate assessment, intervention, and implementation support within these systems (Larson & Choi, 2010).

For many, the inability to spend more time on consultation is due to role, setting, and/or practical constraints (e.g., Beebe-Frankenberger, 2008; Graeff-Martins et al., 2007). For example, school psychologists frequently indicate that limited time and competing responsibilities (e.g., number of psychoeducational assessments) constitute barriers to engaging in consultation (Wilczynski, Mandal, & Fusilier, 2000). Another consideration is the time spent traveling in congested urban traffic conditions or between two distant locations in rural areas (Simpson, 2009). These barriers suggest that increasing the feasibility of consultation may be an effective way to support school psychologists to engage in consultation more frequently.

1.2. Videoconferencing

Some have proposed delivering problem-solving consultation via videoconferencing (VC) as an alternative to face-to-face (FtF) consultation to increase the feasibility of conducting consultation overall (Beebe-Frankenberger, 2008; Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). VC, also referred to as telecommunication or teleconsultation, connects two or more people through video cameras in real time across the internet (Antonacci, Bloch, Sy Atezaz, Yildirim, & Talley, 2008; Dudding, 2009). For school psychologists, VC could facilitate consultation across multiple sites, being particularly valuable for school psychologists responsible for multiple school sites at disparate locations (Beebe-Frankenberger, 2008). Even for school psychologists assigned to one school, VC could increase the feasibility of consultation with families, experts, other professionals, and out-placement settings. VC has been evaluated as a vehicle for service delivery across varied facets of psychological research and practice, including assessment interviews (Hylar, Gangure, & Batchelder, 2005), treatment studies (Gibson, Pennington, Stenhoff, & Hopper, 2010; Hassija & Gray, 2011), teacher training (Machalicek et al., 2009a; Machalicek et al., 2009b), parent training (Suess et al., 2014), brief functional analysis of behavior (Barretto, Wacker, Harding, Lee, & Berg, 2006; Frieder, Peterson, Woodward, Crane, & Garner, 2009), and clinical supervision (Heafner, Petty, & Hartshorne, 2011). VC has been found to be effective in these varied psychology applications (Simpson, 2009), as well as in applications in related fields, such as nursing (Lindberg, Axelsson, & Öhrling, 2009), speech pathology (Grogan-Johnson, Alvares, Rowan, & Creaghead, 2010), business (Chapman & Webster, 2001), social work (Berger, Stein, & Mullin, 2009), and psychiatry (Fortney et al., 2007).

However, there is limited research on VC in school settings. In several iterations, researchers have applied VC to train and support teachers' implementation of behavioral interventions and procedures. Several non-experimental investigations demonstrate the potential of VC as a means to monitor and support teachers' implementation of preference assessments (Machalicek et al., 2009b), functional analyses (Alnemory, Wallace, Symon & Barry, 2015), and functional communication training (Gibson et al., 2010). Other studies have employed experimental designs to evaluate training and feedback delivered through VC. For instance, in a multiple baseline design, a supervisor delivered real-time feedback (e.g., praise, error correction, modeling) via VC to support special education teachers' implementation of functional analyses with students with autism (Machalicek et al., 2010).

Despite the efficacy of teacher training and support delivered via VC, there is little research to date that directly evaluated consultation via VC within school psychology. Bice-Urbach and Kratochwill (2016) evaluated problem-solving consultation (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990) through VC with six rural Midwestern elementary school teachers of students with disruptive behavior. The study used a randomized multiple baseline across participants design, wherein the introduction of VC was staggered across randomly assigned teacher-student dyads and at intervention start points randomly determined from a pool of potential start points. Through five sessions of VC consultation, the consultant and consultees developed and implemented functional behavior

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