

Retrospect and Prospect Regarding School Psychology Scholarship: Reflections of Lightner Witmer Award Winners

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This article provides reflections on several key elements important for establishing and sustaining successful research trajectories and scholarship within the field. Developed by several Lightner Witmer Award recipients, the article highlights several of Lightner Witmer's experiences and pioneering contributions, including the importance of his own mentors, collaborations with interdisciplinary professionals, and his emphasis on the relevance of scientific research programs and the practical implications for helping children. In an effort to move the field forward, we discuss important elements relevant to developing and sustaining successful research programs in school psychology including the importance of mentorship, collaboration, research methodologies, replicability, extramural funding, and dissemination. Throughout, we emphasize the importance of conducting research within the school context, which is consistent with the important influence of ecological systems articulated by [Conoley, Powers, and Gutkin \(2020\)](#), and reflects the hallmark of school psychology scholarship as an applied science.



Impact and Implications

This article reviewed Lightner Witmer's early pioneering contributions to the field of school psychology, discussed important elements associated with school psychology scholarship, and emphasized the importance of conducting research within the school context, which reflects the hallmark of school psychology scholarship as an applied science.

Keywords: Lightner Witmer, scholarship, school psychology

The use of science to inform best practices in assessment, prevention, and intervention in support of children's social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and academic development is a central component of scholarship in the field of school psychology. Since 1973, Division 16 of the American Psychological Association (Division of School Psychology) presents the Lightner Witmer Award to an early career school psychologist who has demonstrated scholarship that merits special recognition (recipients listed on the Division 16 website). Witmer's emphasis on the relevance of science to promote social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and academic development of children is foundational

to the field of school psychology (see [McReynolds, 1997](#) for a thorough review of Witmer's life and contributions). The purposes of this article,¹ developed by several Lightner Witmer Award recipients, are to (a) provide collective reflections on key elements important for establishing and sustaining successful research trajectories and scholarship in the field of school psychology, (b) highlight Lightner Witmer's experiences and pioneering contributions relevant to the key elements identified, and (c) consider the influence of ecological systems articulated by [Conoley, Powers, and Gutkin \(2020\)](#), which reflects the hallmark of school psychology scholarship as an applied science.

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¹ In 1908, Lightner Witmer published an editorial titled "Retrospect and Prospect," which focused on the past, present, and future of the field. In honor of his work and in keeping with the theme of this special issue, we acknowledge his pioneering work, which has influenced our efforts to this day.

Important Elements in Supporting Successful Research Programs

Although the authors developed successful research programs, our paths were different. Some of us were fortunate to have protected and dedicated time to develop our research programs, whereas others actively engineered service and teaching activities to align with and support their research activities. We believe that it is important to acknowledge that given personal and professional backgrounds, goals, and contexts, other factors may be more important in supporting successful research programs. However, the following sections provide brief descriptions of important elements we collectively identified as relevant to developing and sustaining successful research programs, as well as offer a glimpse into Lightner Witmer's early pioneering efforts relevant to psychological and development science.

Mentoring

In 1889, while teaching History and English at a preparatory boys' academy in Philadelphia, Lightner Witmer enrolled in the graduate program the University of Pennsylvania. Among the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania was a new professor, James McKeen Cattell, the first professor of Psychology in the United States. Cattell had studied with both Wilhem Wundt and Francis Galton. Cattell served as a mentor to Witmer in experimental psychology, which proved instrumental in Witmer's subsequent scholarly development. When Cattell transitioned to Columbia University in 1891, he arranged for Witmer to conduct research with Wilhem Wundt at the University of Leipzig (1891–1892). Following completion of his dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, Witmer joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. The importance of this mentoring is notable, as Witmer is credited with establishing the world's first psychological clinic at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896, and as a pioneer of scholarship in the fields of clinical and school psychology.

As illustrated by Witmer's journey, mentoring is a key component influencing many aspects of the development of scholars, through undergraduate studies, graduate school, and early and midcareer experiences. Indeed, we are each influenced by those with whom we study (Montgomery, Dodson, & Johnson, 2014). Although there is limited empirical research regarding mentoring of scholars in school psychology (Shapiro & Blom-Hoffman, 2004; Swerdlik & Bardon, 1988), there is both anecdotal evidence and research in related fields that highlights the importance of mentoring, and some characteristics of successful and failed mentoring relationships (Sambunjak, Straus, & Marusić, 2006; Straus, Johnson, Marquez, & Feldman, 2013). Mentors are often described as persons who help guide mentees' professional development by offering advice, guidance, knowledge, and challenge. The mentor-mentee relationship is often a powerful bond, and is an important component providing opportunity, enrichment, insights, support, and collaborations that may serve as a foundation and catalyst to promote the development and success of emerging scholars.

A review of previous studies regarding mentoring in academic medicine revealed that mentorship has an important influence on personal development, career guidance, career choice, and research productivity, including publication and grant success (Sam-

bunjak et al., 2006). Results of research regarding mentoring relationships reveals that successful mentoring relationships are characterized by reciprocity, mutual respect, clear expectations, personal connection, and shared values (Straus et al., 2013). Failed mentoring relationships are characterized by poor communication, lack of commitment, personality differences, perceived (or real) competition, conflicts of interest, and the mentor's lack of experience.

Mentoring in psychology is prevalent, with 50–75% of graduate students reporting that they were mentored during their graduate school experience (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Johnson, Koch, Fallow, & Huwe, 2000). In a survey of graduates from one school psychology program, Shapiro and Blom-Hoffman (2004) reported "significant and substantial differences in the perceptions of the mentoring and modeling process by students who are in academic versus nonacademic careers" (p. 365). Respondents who pursued academic careers identified the following as key mentoring considerations: (a) the relationship with one's advisor; (b) opportunities to observe faculty leadership roles in the field; (c) encouragement to present work at national, state, and regional conferences; (d) opportunities to engage in grant-supported research; (e) a collaborative atmosphere; (f) opportunities to present with faculty at national and state conferences; (g) practicum experiences linked to grants; and (h) a qualifying project requirement and other supervised research experiences with faculty. The respondents also identified items they found most helpful related to modeling of scholarly activities, including (a) the faculty communicated high and clear expectations regarding doctoral student performance, (b) the faculty encouraged students to pursue an academic career in school psychology, (c) the faculty supported doctoral students in taking leadership roles within the field, (d) office space within the department was provided, which impacted the frequency of interactions with faculty, and (e) the faculty provided a supportive relationship allowing for the exploration of career options. Each of these warrants careful consideration as related to mentoring and modeling scholarly activities.

Collaboration

In his presentation at APA in 1896, Witmer recommended the establishment of a residential facility to offer "expert psychological and pedagogical treatment" for children in need of intensive care. In 1907, Witmer established the journal *The Psychological Clinic*, emphasizing science informing practice to help people, and he established a hospital school associated with the University of Pennsylvania. In 1908, Witmer established his own private residential school called the Rose Valley Home and School approximately 20 miles southwest of the University of Pennsylvania. Throughout the remainder of his career, in addition to his university responsibilities and studies focused on child psychology, Witmer continued to be highly involved in managing the care of children at the school. As illustrated by the extensive collaborations of Lightner Witmer with physicians, teachers, psychologists, philosophers, and other professionals, collaboration is a key consideration in supporting successful research programs. Among scholarship in school psychology, including that of Lightner Witmer award recipients, there is evidence of extensive collaboration. There are few projects and publications that are limited to a single

scholar; indeed, most scholarly activities involve collaboration with others.

The School Psychology Research Collaboration Conference (SPRCC) is an example of efforts during the past two decades to promote collaboration among scholars (Harris, Kilgus, Jimerson, & Kilpatrick, 2020). Undergirding the development and proliferation of the SPRCC is the recognition that many educational and practice issues require large samples from diverse contexts to support the validity and applicability of findings across diverse populations and contexts. Thus, the SPRCC was designed to facilitate collaboration among early career and senior researchers in the field, and to encourage multisite research. Given the recurrence of the SPRCC every other year, most early career scholars seeking to participate have an opportunity across the first decade of their career. Between 2003 and 2019, 290 early career scholars have already participated in the SPRCC.

There were multiple proposed outcomes of the SPRCC (Jimerson, 2002). Specifically, it was expected that the SPRCC would be instrumental in: increasing collaborative, financial, and mentoring support to many early career scholars in the field of school psychology; exploring important issues and ideas relative to the application of psychological research to education and the practice of psychology in the schools; facilitating friendships and establishing foundations for diverse networks of researchers; increasing the numbers of individuals developing a voice and an outlet for their research energies and talents; promoting constructive dialogues between researchers and funding sources to help establish and/or clarify research priorities; and ultimately, enhancing the quality of psychological research conducted and published.

With sponsorship from the Society for the Study of School Psychology (SSSP), APA's Division 16 (School Psychology), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP), and the Trainers of School Psychology (TSP), the first SPRCC was held in 2003, with subsequent SPRCC's organized every other year since then. A few studies have reported outcomes of SPRCC participants. For example, Jimerson and VanDerHeyden (2004) found that SPRCC participation resulted in increased collaboration and mentoring support, the identification and exploration of important issues and ideas regarding the application of psychological research to education and the practice of psychology in the schools, the development of professional relationships and foundations for diverse networks of researchers, clarification of research priorities, and awareness of research grant support opportunities. Jimerson and Albers (2007) found that following their participation in the SPRCC, 94% of early career scholars had communicated with participating catalyst scholars and/or other early career scholars. Moreover, the vast majority had collaborated on grant proposals, articles, and research projects within one year of the conference. In addition, Rush and Wheeler (2011) conducted a content analysis of qualitative responses from early career scholars following participation in SPRCC, revealing numerous perceived benefits of participating in the SPRCC that would positively impact their future scholarly endeavors. Finally, the most recent study to examine the research productivity of SPRCC early career participants (2003–2015) revealed an overall positive impact on publications, especially for those participants from institutions with the high research activity, as well as participants with more publications prior to SPRCC, and participants who were male (Harris et al., 2020).

Although the SPRCC is a starting point to facilitate infrastructure for facilitating collaborative scholarship across school psychology and other interdisciplinary networks, this is an area that warrants further emphasis.

In addition to the importance of productive collaborations among scholars within the field of psychology, interprofessional collaborations are key to answering scientific questions related to the well-being of children in schools. School psychologists regularly collaborate with researchers in general and special education to answer questions relevant to children's academic success. Less frequently, school psychologists collaborate with researchers in health professions such as medicine, public health, exercise science, nutrition, kinesiology, and speech and language pathology to answer key questions relevant to the well-being of children in schools. These interprofessional relationships are instrumental in asking and answering important research questions because they provide alternative lenses and literatures to consider and methodologies to employ.

Advances in Research Methodologies

Witmer was recognized as an experimentalist, placing a high premium on the importance of scientific contributions, and he was among the first to emphasize that insights gleaned from scientific psychology could have practical benefits for helping people. Witmer was “. . . the first to go beyond the transition from philosophical to scientific psychology and to maintain that psychology, in addition to being a science, could also form the basis for a new helping profession” (McReynolds, 1997; p. xii).

Witmer also pioneered scientific study and support for children. Early in his career, in addition to courses on experimental psychology and experimentation, Witmer taught courses on the study of child psychology and individual laboratory work. His course on the study of child psychology (beginning in 1894–1895) included a focus on experimental work with children at school or in the laboratory. In 1896 he published a series of journal articles in *Pediatrics* on “the common interests of child psychology and pediatrics” and “practical work in psychology,” placing further emphasis on the importance of applying the science of psychology to help support the development of children.

In many of his writings during this period, one can see the underpinnings of special education and school psychology, placing an emphasis on applying scientific psychology within the school context to help support children experiencing developmental challenges. As illustrated by Lightner Witmer, theory and scientific methods are essential in supporting successful research programs. Remaining abreast of new methodologies to continuously elevate the rigor and relevance of our research is an element we believe to be essential in promoting scholarly work. First and foremost, it is important to focus one's research program on topics that are significant to the field, and around which the researcher has a passion. Pursuing relevant directions emanating from one's previous work establishes a line of programmatic inquiry often requiring new and different approaches to answer novel questions. Importantly, flexibility and familiarity with a range of methodological approaches (e.g., single case design, survey methods, randomized controlled trials) provides the means to expand research questions and to utilize appropriate tools to address them.

Significant advances in school psychology research and scholarship are evident. Many of these developments are associated with federal legislation (e.g., *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]*, 2004), educational policies (e.g., Common Core Standards for Literacy), and discipline-specific reform efforts (e.g., 2012 School Psychology Futures Conference) that address improved outcomes for children and youth. However, it is only through methodological and analytical practices that we can advance our field to determine what works, for whom, and under what conditions (Raudenbush, 2005).

Within the past 25 years, rapid developments in research methodological practices occurred. Some of these advances are associated with evolving measurement efforts that include the use of neuropsychological measures such as eye tracking (e.g., Ardoin, Binder, Zawoyski, & Foster, 2018), functional MRI (e.g., Davis et al., 2011), event-related potential (e.g., Lemons et al., 2010), or markers of biological functioning (e.g., salivary cortisol; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Additional advances are associated with methodological improvements to account for complex hierarchical relationships among students, within classrooms and school programs, and potentially other nested structures (e.g., hierarchical or multilevel modeling; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Still others combine qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., mixed method research designs) or embed group research design features (e.g., randomization) within single case research designs (Kratochwill & Levin, 2010). Concurrently, professional groups and societies, including those in school psychology (e.g., SCRIBE; Tate et al., 2016) and psychology (e.g., JARS-Quant; Appelbaum, Cooper, Kline, Mayo-Wilson, Nezu, & Rao, 2018), created reporting standards to elevate the rigor of research and to improve communication. As was noted by Conoley et al. (2020), similar developments occurred in creating systematic mechanisms to synthesize and communicate scholarly educational research findings (e.g., National Center on Intensive Interventions, What Works Clearinghouse).

Another important methodological consideration is the importance of replicating empirical findings, which has drawn increasing attention in the field of psychology and education (Maxwell, Lau, & Howard, 2015; Shrout & Rodgers, 2018). Unlike meta-analytic studies, which are conceptualized as a form of retrospective validation (Laws, 2016), replication studies verify the accuracy of previous research findings (Makel & Plucker, 2014). Given that some theoretical estimates suggest many research findings are inaccurate or false (Ioannidis, 2005; Open Science Collaboration, 2015), conducting replicability studies in school psychology is critical due to systematic efforts that rely upon a strong empirical basis in order to translate research to practice (e.g., implementation science; Forman et al., 2013). Although Conoley and colleagues (2020) purport the existence of a considerable evidence base to inform practice, there are few replication studies in school psychology, except for those incorporating single case research designs. Overall, it is estimated that replication studies account for less than 1% of the total publications in education and psychology (Makel, Plucker, & Hegarty, 2012).

One systemic methodological development, which directly addresses issues associated with replicability, is the Open Science Framework (Open Science Collaboration, 2012). This digital, collaborative platform has the potential to reform the scientific process and how research is conducted. Further, technological ad-

vances associated with the volume, velocity, and variety of data (e.g., Big Data; Laney, 2001) will undoubtedly result in considerable, and potentially unexpected, changes in school psychology research and scholarship in the future. As noted by Plough (2015), access to large and varied data sets may permit researchers to analyze outcomes in unprecedented ways.

Moving School Psychology Scholarship Forward

As former Lightner Witmer award winners, we believe that additional efforts should be directed toward increasing the certainty and veracity of research findings in school psychology. One of our coauthors, Susan Sheridan, who received the Lightner Witmer award in 1993, has engaged in sustained and extensive research, including multiple replications, in the area of conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). As highlighted by Conoley and colleagues (2020), one type of systems change focuses on school-based professionals and families collaborating to develop and implement interventions to improve students' learning and behavior. Early replications of CBC's effects were demonstrated using single case design methods; studies demonstrated replications across participants (Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Elliott, 1990), target concerns (Galloway & Sheridan, 1994; Lasecki, Olympia, Clark, Jenson, & Heathfield, 2008), age groups (Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006), disorders and disabilities (Auster, Feeney-Kettler, & Kratochwill, 2006; Colton & Sheridan, 1998; Garbacz & McIntyre, 2016), and risk factors (Sheridan, Eagle, & Doll, 2006). More recently, multilevel modeling techniques paved the way for efficacy trials using large samples (Sheridan, Bovaird, Glover, Garbacz, Witte, & Kwon, 2012; Sheridan, Ryoo, Garbacz, Kunz, & Chumney, 2013) that were replicated across contexts (Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Coutts, et al., 2017; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Wu, et al., 2017). Although, as noted by Conoley and colleagues (2020) it is important for school psychologists to refocus and work with students' families, this research trajectory was possible only through the growth and incorporation of rigorous experimental single case design methods, proliferation of advances in complex hierarchical modeling techniques, and collaboration between school psychology researchers and methodological experts.

Two of our coauthors, Robin Coddling (2010 Lightner Witmer award recipient) and Tanya Eckert (2002 Lightner Witmer award recipient), are engaged in systematic efforts to evaluate the efficacy of school-based academic interventions that are used as part of multitiered systems of support (MTSS) paradigm. As noted by Conoley and colleagues (2020), MTSS reflects a systems-wide intervention that focuses on preventive and targeted interventions to meet the academic and social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students. Both researchers have used rigorous experimental single case design methods (Coddling, Eckert, Fanning, Shiyko, & Solomon, 2007) as well as randomized controlled trials and complex hierarchical modeling techniques of longitudinal data to systematically examine student and school-level factors that may moderate the effects of school-based academic interventions (Coddling et al., 2007; Coddling, Chan-Iannetta, George, Ferreira, & Volpe, 2011; Hier, Eckert, & Viney, 2019; Koenig, Eckert, & Hier, 2016; Truckenmiller, Eckert, Coddling, & Petscher, 2014). To move this research forward, recent studies have used integrative data analysis to test moderator treatment effects from randomized

controlled trials (Eckert, Truckenmiller, & Petscher, 2020), economic evaluations to evaluate cost effectiveness (Barrett, Truckenmiller, & Eckert, 2020). As noted by Conoley and colleagues (2020), examining variables that may maximize school resources in order to support the social ecologies of everyday school life are necessary.

To advance this research in the area, emphasis on supporting resilience of all students through systems level universal supports is critical. Coddling and her colleagues have advanced this research by evaluating intervention intensity (Coddling et al., 2016; Coddling, Volpe, Martin, & Krebs, 2019; DeFouw, Coddling, Collier-Meek, & Gould, 2019) and technology (Kromminga & Coddling, 2020) as a means to adjust resource allocation, examining evidence-based intervention supports at the classroom level (Kleinert, Silva, Coddling, Feinberg, & St. James, 2017; VanDerHeyden & Coddling, 2015), promoting evidence-based instructional practices (VanDerHeyden & Coddling, in press), and considering stakeholders' acceptability of intervention supports (Silva, Collier-Meek, Coddling, & DeFouw, 2019). Overall, this work has attempted to move the field forward by identifying evidenced-based interventions to improve students' learning and behavior, which is consistent with Conoley and colleagues (1995, 2020) initial and current perspectives on the practice of school psychology.

Additional avenues to advance the future of school psychology scholarship, science, and practice are illustrated in the curated compendiums of stellar interdisciplinary and international scholarship featured in contemporary handbooks. One of our coauthors, Shane Jimerson, who received the Lightner Witmer award in 2003, has provided leadership and collaborated with leading scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to feature science that contributes to promoting the development and education of children. For example, in the area of promoting school safety and addressing school violence such handbooks include; *School Safety and Violence Prevention: Science, Practice, and Policy* (Mayer & Jimerson, 2019), the *Handbook of School Violence and School Safety: International Research and Practice* (Jimerson, Nickerson, Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, 2012), and *Best Practices in School Crisis Prevention and Intervention* (Brock & Jimerson, 2012). Other examples include the area of understanding and addressing bullying at school (*The Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective*, Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage, 2010); empirical foundations and implementation of response-to-intervention and multitiered systems of support (*The Handbook of Response to Intervention: Science and Practice of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*, Jimerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden, 2016); supports for bereaved children (*Supporting Bereaved Students at School*, Brown & Jimerson, 2017), and insights regarding the science and practice of school psychology around the world (*The Handbook of International School Psychology*, Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007). This scholarship has moved the field forward by identifying empirical foundations to inform and improve school context, climate, and safety, which is consistent with Conoley and colleagues (1995, 2020) perspectives on the practice of school psychology.

One additional way to move the field of school psychology forward and address the challenge proposed by Conoley and colleagues (2020) is to push the boundaries of school psychology research into new areas of investigation that are important to children's success. One of our coauthors, Jessica Hoffman (2007

Lightner Witmer award recipient), has engaged in research on the topic of school-based health promotion. There is ample evidence that children's academic and social-emotional success is grounded in their physical wellbeing, including healthy eating, sleep, and physical activity (Schmidt, Hamilton, & Hoffman, in press). Despite this fact, school psychology research on these topics is just emerging. By combining knowledge of schools as systems, theories of behavior change, and program planning and evaluation, school psychology researchers are well positioned to develop, test, and disseminate evidence-based practices that promote children's well-being in schools. Working in collaboration with colleagues from related disciplines, as described earlier, we can identify important insights that lead to school-based innovations, which is consistent with Conoley and colleagues' recommendation to use public health models as examples of systems changes that promote students' well-being.

An example of this type of research is the Wellness Enhancing Physical Activity for Young Children (WE PLAY; e.g., Hoffman, Schmidt, Castaneda-Sceppa, & Hillman, 2019; Hoffman et al., 2020) and WE PLAY-Autism (Schmidt, Hoffman, Mule, & Briesch, 2020) professional development programs for preschool teachers. Both WE PLAY and WE PLAY-Autism are online professional development programs for teachers that are grounded in theories of health behavior change and are guided by implementation science. Two preliminary studies using rigorous group and single case designs demonstrated that WE PLAY and WE PLAY-Autism could be implemented as intended, are well received by school staff, and are associated with changes in children's physical activity levels, which were objectively measured. This program of study demonstrates how school psychologists can apply their knowledge and skills to push the field into new territories that are important to children and schools.

Extramural Funding

As we look forward, one element that cannot be overstated in terms of its significance in opening research doors is the attainment of extramural funding. Conoley and colleagues (2020), do not discuss this topic, which has been identified as critical in other fields associated with systems change, such as public health (Plough, 2015). In our opinion, the most effective approach to securing extramural funding is to establish a compelling program of research with high relevance to addressing critical problems, an interdisciplinary team of collaborators, and excellent writing habits. The foundation for future funding success is built upon research and project management skills that can be secured during graduate training, research assistant experiences, and postdoctoral fellowships. A record of publication and expertise in an area is an important prerequisite from which to begin a productive grant-active career. It can be enticing to allocate precious time to attaining large-scale federal grant funding, but it is important that such activities (especially when they occur pretenure) be pursued in conjunction with building a successful publication record. Outlining a series of projects that could be accomplished in a particular time frame (e.g., 5–6 years) that are related and serve to establish a research agenda is a useful exercise. When outlining these projects, it is helpful to consider the members of the team as well as the resources required in terms of time, personnel, knowl-

edge/skills, and materials. From there, an analysis can be made regarding the costs of the project and the best way to carry it out.

Grant writing requires a set of skills that can be acquired and crafted through workshops, webinars, and other forms of training. It is important to take advantage of those offered by one's university or the agencies themselves. There are many possible sources of funding that can support research, and it is important to become familiar with these various sources and the fit with one's own research agenda.

Potential funding sources can be found locally (e.g., university research offices, local foundations) and, although smaller in scale, are useful to establish a history of successful funding. Pilot projects as well as small scale research studies often can be accomplished by securing internal funding through departmental, college or university-based sources. Notably, many research studies can be accomplished through collaborations with school and community organizations during which resources can be shared and the benefits of which are mutual. Professional organizations and state agencies also offer funding opportunities for researchers. For example, SSSP offers both early career (<https://www.sssp-research.org/early-career-research/>) and midcareer grant (<https://www.sssp-research.org/shapiro-mcsri/>) opportunities. The NASP website (<https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/nasp-research-center/grant-funding-opportunities>) also offers links to federal and foundation agencies and search engines. The APA website (<https://www.apa.org/about/awards/index>) offers a grant search engine that includes APA sponsored funding opportunities and assists with searches for federal funding that are specific to the psychology. Private foundations offer a variety of opportunities for researchers, and those that are more educationally oriented (e.g., The Spencer Foundation) are good alternatives to federal agencies. Finally, the lowest yield but highest reward in terms of monetary support are federal agencies such as National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and the Institute for Education Sciences. For federal agencies and foundations, it is important to examine the established priorities or missions linked to funding opportunities. In some cases, rejected grant applications may be due to discordancy, which can be rectified by identifying federal agencies or foundations aligned with the goals of the proposal.

It is useful to incorporate the following four endeavors into annual research activities (Sullivan, 2017). First, explore potential opportunities. Connect with available university resources and local grant officers or other personnel that can help you navigate various listservs or search engines, such as PIVOT (<https://pivot.proquest.com>), to locate funding sources. PIVOT, formerly known as Community of Science, is a comprehensive source designed to assist researchers with the location of funding opportunities. Individual accounts can be established; however, many university libraries offer subscriptions to faculty. Second, familiarize yourself with funding agencies. Most competitions will provide contact information for a program officer or other personnel member who can describe the requirements for the grant competition and offer assistance, read proposal drafts, or offer insider information. Third, familiarize yourself with funded work. Most external and internal funding competitions will make available samples of previously funded or exemplar proposals. It is important to access and read these proposals, review successful proposal abstracts, and talk to grantees. Fourth, participate in

trainings offered by the funding agency such as tutorials, workshops, webinars, and conferences.

Dissemination Efforts

As described previously, throughout his career, Lightner Witmer actively engaged in presenting and publishing his scholarship to advance science and inform practice. Dissemination of scholarship, although always a part of one's research responsibility, has received renewed attention in the era of digital scholarship and social media outlets. With the advent of novel and broadly accessible communication options, we believe it is the professional and ethical responsibility of researchers who uncover efficacious practices to disseminate their findings to stakeholders (practitioners, administrators, decision-makers) seeking evidence-based strategies to improve practice. For example, federal funding agencies, such as the Institute for Education Sciences, now require that multifaceted dissemination plans be incorporated into grant proposals. Scholarship dissemination requires strategic consideration of different audiences who may benefit from research and the products the research produces. Typically, this includes a variety of stakeholders such as participants who are immediately impacted by the research as well as other researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. As a result, it is important to purposefully select publication outlets that will address the primary goals of the project (e.g., efficacy vs. replication study), the nature of the contributors (e.g., field-specific vs. interdisciplinary researchers), and the audience (e.g., design methodologists vs. school-based practitioners).

Publishing findings in scientific, peer-review journals remains the gold standard for disseminating to other researchers. Academic social networks, such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu, provide another outlet for sharing research findings in a platform designed as a repository for research articles (Manca, 2018). When utilizing academic social networks, it is necessary for authors to follow the guidelines that are offered by publishers. For example, publishers may restrict the format in which the article can be shared or may provide a sharable link to the published article.

Publishing articles in practitioner- and policy-oriented journals is important to expand the reach and utility of research findings. Often practical or policy-related outlets require specific formats, including length, organization, focus and implications. Similarly, social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter may provide a forum for sharing links to published works, when appropriate. Creating a web page that is connected to or separate from one's university site is also effective for disseminating current and previous research projects and outputs.

Conference proceedings offer opportunities to address researchers and practitioners. The number and type of conferences in which one participates might be determined by the audiences that would benefit most from the research findings. Whereas it is common to submit proposals to school psychology, psychology, and education conferences, it is also useful to present at professional associations that target teachers, principals and other school leaders, and leaders in public health (Conoley et al., 2020). Furthermore, research findings should be reported to the education and community agencies or schools who participated in the project or offered data collection opportunities.

An important caveat when presenting to different audiences is considering how one's research findings are conveyed. When presenting to researchers, emphasis is on the methodological rigor; however, the dissemination goal for policy and practitioner audiences is how the findings impact changes in everyday experiences. An important consideration regardless of audience is to effectively and clearly express research findings in a usable way. Conveying one to two key main points ("need to know" information) in plain language, using infographics and other visuals to display findings, and connecting with the everyday experience of the audience are all important aspects of effective communication whether constructing a poster or delivering a presentation (Friman, 2014).

Finally, a recent and popular recommendation that may serve as a starting point for effective dissemination is to establish a unique author identifier using author registration systems rather than simply rely on one's author name to track scholarly contributions. One of the most commonly used systems is the Open Researcher & Contributor ID (ORCID).

Looking Backward and Moving Forward

As described herein, Lightner Witmer was a pioneering scientist, scholar, and practitioner during the late 1800's and early 1900s. Witmer emphasized (a) the direct application of psychological principles to help people through therapy and education, (b) that scientific study of mental health and developmental processes may inform the practice of medicine and teaching to address human problems, and (c) that providing instruction on psychological principles to education and medical students may benefit their professional performance. Witmer emphasized the importance of experimental science involving psychological principles to help support and educate children.

Whereas much of Witmer's foundational research was based in laboratories, significant shifts toward school-based research was evidenced over the 75-year history of the Division of School Psychology. This emphasis of science within the school context is consistent with the important influence of ecological systems articulated by Conoley et al. (2020) and reflects the hallmark of school psychology scholarship as an applied science. Contemporary scholarship within school psychology highlights the use of empirical evidence to inform strategies that support the social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development of children. Indeed, the use of research to inform practice undergirds notions of school psychologists as "scientist-practitioners." As an example of research-informed practice, evidence-based consultation processes that build the skills of adults (e.g., teachers, parents) who will then use effective strategies to support children in their natural settings (classrooms, homes) continue to represent a primary role for school psychologists. The convincing evidence base for consultation, along with a philosophical argument regarding means to expand the breadth of school psychology's impact, led Conoley et al. (2020) to articulate a "vision for an adult-focused practice of school psychology" (p. 3).

This article highlights the importance of mentoring and collaboration as two important elements for supporting and bolstering research trajectories. Notably, Witmer's scholarly development as a graduate student working in the labs of Cattell and Wundt highlights the importance of mentorship. Additionally, Witmer recognized the importance of collaboration among scholars within

the field of psychology, as well as interprofessional collaborations, as important to address scientific questions related to the well-being of children. Advancing the identity of school psychologists as applied scientists (scientist-practitioners) whose roles and functions are shaped by research ("what works") requires change in systems that define practice, and this cannot occur in a vacuum. Conoley et al. (2020) note that "Systems-change requires knowledge and skill about implementation science" (p. 17), which is informed by numerous disciplines and reflects the importance of researchers collaborating with and learning from others to advance school psychology.

Fortunately, advances in research methods and analytic approaches augment researchers' capacities to address new and complex problems, making it important to stay abreast of available methodological tools. New statistical analyses and procedures extend far beyond what was envisioned during Witmer's era and enhance the rigor of our research programs. Relatedly, replication is the cornerstone for collecting evidence and verifying with confidence programs that should be disseminated and adopted for widespread practice. However, although replication was important for experimental science during Witmer's tenure, less than 1% of published research in education and psychology represents replication research today. Advances in the science and practice of school psychology will rely on the continued proliferation and adoption of advanced experimental methods, replication of scientific findings, and broad dissemination to researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers. Although many collaborative school-based action research projects inform implementation science endeavors, large scale research programs with broad generalizable implications at scale often require extramural funding.

Throughout this article we have included some information about the career and contributions of Lightner Witmer to illustrate several of our observations. We have also articulated some "key considerations" for establishing and sustaining successful research trajectories and scholarship within the field of school psychology. With adequate mentorship of young scholars, collaboration within and outside of the field, methodological advances matching the complexity of field research, funding opportunities for novel and replication studies, and broad dissemination options, we are confident that the future of school psychology research, and research-informed practice, can flourish.

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