



Rodrigo Enciso, MA, LEP

San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA

January 2017

Describe the site where you work.

I primarily work at Encanto Elementary School, within San Diego Unified School District, in southern California. As a bilingual and bicultural school psychologist, I have had the privilege to primarily work with linguistically and culturally diverse populations such as Spanish speaking immigrants and low SES communities.

What are your areas of expertise at this point in your career?

Assessment has come naturally to me and I have enjoyed it quite a bit, particularly as assessment relates to learning disabilities. Assessing for learning disabilities in culturally and linguistically diverse students is no easy task; however, I have learned a lot in this regard from Dr. Samuel Ortiz and my own experience. One tip I would offer is to avoid making generalizations about students who are English language learners with suspected learning problems. Instead, it is important to withhold judgement until the student's unique characteristics have been understood, sufficient data have been appropriately collected and thoroughly analyzed, and perhaps interventions have been attempted.

Describe something that has surprised you about your career thus far.

I have been surprised by how many leadership opportunities have been presented to me so early in my career. Some of these have been within the California Association of School Psychologists (i.e., Region Representative, Assessment Specialist, Membership Chair), the San Diego County Association of School Psychologists (i.e., Board Member, President), and within my school (e.g., PBIS and other committees). I was also surprised and honored to have received an Outstanding School Psychologist Award from the California Association of School Psychologists for 2016. An important

lesson I have learned through all this has been to not be afraid to step up, experience growth, and to also help those around me to grow in the process.

What challenges have you faced in your early career, and how have you handled them?

I think the biggest challenge I have faced is being naive about the fact that there always are politics in school systems. To be an effective change agent in a complex system, I have learned the value of moving forward with care and to always be on the lookout for opportunities to work with others on shared goals. This was hard to learn prior to being in the field and I have seen other early career school psychologists also struggle with accomplishing their goals while navigating school politics.

What advice do you have for other early career school psychologists?

Someone I consider as one of my early career mentors gave me important advice that goes something like this: Don't feel like you have to respond to every problem right away. Instead, take a step back, go home, and sleep on it, and you'll be able to come back prepared to address the issue at hand or come up with a better way to respond to it. I have utilized this advice by not rushing into situations that require finesse as well as to avoid roadblocks and charging forward in a way that could be unproductive and have a negative impact on relationships.

How has your NASP membership benefited you?

I greatly enjoy learning from the communities, webinars, and other NASP materials. Informational NASP resources that I can pass along to parents and educators have also been valuable. I have been a NASP member since I became a graduate student and my membership has been useful throughout the different transitions in my young career.