

Dr. Hill M. Walker by Jessica Humphrey



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Professor of Special Education
Department of Education, Eugene, Oregon

Education

1962- [Eastern Oregon College](#), B.A., Secondary Education

1964- [University of Oregon](#), Eugene, OR, M.A., Counseling Psychology

1967- University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, Ph.D., Special Education, Counseling Psychology

Awards

1993- [Council for Exceptional Children](#) Research Award

2000- University of Oregon Presidential Medal

Introduction

Dr. Hill M. Walker is a widely respected professional in the field of education. His vast contributions to the field have greatly contributed to its success. Dr. Walker's work has created the foundation for professionals today. His research interests include social skills assessments

and intervention, violence prevention, early intervention, school safety, and longitudinal research (University of Oregon, 2010).

Early Life

Dr. H. M. Walker was born and raised in Washington, Virginia. Throughout his childhood, Walker participated in sports including basketball. He also enjoyed table tennis and marbles. He credits his family for showing him the importance of obtaining an education and a career. Numerous family members were power models for Walker to attend college as they valued the importance of receiving an education. His mother was his greatest influence, as well as his seventh grade teacher, who would often make examples out of his behaviors in the classroom. He also credits his uncle, a family physician, as having a significant influence on his choice to receive a higher education. Walker had two brothers located in Oregon attending college, which ultimately attracted Walker to attend Eastern Oregon College.

The hardest thing Dr. Walker has had to overcome throughout his career was a speech impediment. As a child, he had a severe stuttering problem. This sparked his interest in bullying and harassment due to his experience of social cruelty. Walker remembers the “good ol’ boys” hanging around and publically teasing and harassing other children. At the time there was no such profession as speech therapy to help his impediment. Walker recalls receiving his best therapy during his freshman year in college where he was the ideal subject for another student studying speech and language. Walker was put in situations to test the psychological aspect of treatment where he was to stutter on purpose. These situations showed him how to take control of his stuttering.

In 1962, Walker graduated from [Eastern Oregon College](#) with a bachelor’s degree in secondary education with plans to pursue his graduate degree. Thereafter, he taught grades seven

and eight in the [Eugene School District](#) in Oregon. The children fueled Walker's passion. At this time, Walker experienced the "wow" moment signifying to him that he needed more training in order to work effectively with children. He continued his education at the University of Oregon where he was head counselor in the freshman dormitory and participated in intramural sports. Walker shares that he was able to practice his counseling skills when undergraduate students came to him with their problems and concerns. In 1964, he received his master's in counseling psychology. He remained at the [University of Oregon](#), working as a graduate teaching fellow, to obtain his Ph.D. in special education and counseling psychology. He graduated in 1967. Walker credits psychologist, Jerry Patterson, and the past Director of Human Development, Robert Schwarz for their guidance and support throughout his education.

Early in his career, Dr. Walker began researching issues addressing deviant behavior in children. Since then, his lifelong efforts have transformed into a vast knowledge of contributions to his field (Walker & University of Oregon, 1967). He noticed a large population of children having school related behavior disorders. Walker reports that these children take on a world in themselves that is not necessarily normative. He finds this area very interesting as children work very hard not to absorb the consequences of their behaviors (H. M. Walker, personal communication, November 3, 2010).

Dr. Walker has been ahead of the times throughout most of his career. In the 1970's, he and his colleagues were producing bound manuals featuring collections of behavioral interventions, and 25-30 years later they became all the rage. He focused a great deal on assessment and tools to use multi-gating approaches for early detection of external/internal behavioral problems, which created the foundation for today.

Research

Walker has contributed numerous influential works into the educational field. Throughout the decades, Walker has been the director of copious research initiatives in the field including, the Center at Oregon for Research in the Behavioral Education of the Handicapped, the Social Behavior Survival Project, the First Steps Program, [University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities](#), and Oregon First Step to Success Replication Initiative (Oregon Research Institute, 2010). He has remained close to the educational atmosphere throughout his work, as a professor and Associate Dean for the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation from 1982-1995 and Associate Dean for Research and Outreach from 1995-1997 at the University of Oregon (Oregon Research Institute, 2010).

Dr. Walker has continued to research factors that contribute to educational learning for at-risk youth and children with behavioral disorders. He has also focused on approaches to make the school climate safer. Walker realizes children are capable of great change and feels children need to be shown behaviorally efficient ways to deal with their environment. Walker states, “The trick is to teach children without loss of behavioral efficiency” (H. M. Walker, personal communication, November 3, 2010).

Current Efforts

Walker has continued to collect data for Head Start Mental Research and work with the [Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior](#) (IVBD) of which he founded and became Co-Director in 1994. The mission of IVBD is “to empower schools and social service agencies to address violence and destructive behavior, at the point of school entry and beyond, in order to ensure safety and to facilitate the academic achievement and healthy social development of

children and youth” (IVBD, 2009). When founding IVBD, there were no programs in school safety at the time. Currently, Walker is involved in writing four different grants for IVBD.

For years, Walker has lobbied for general education on behalf of the field. Walker feels there has been some success; however, the legal field is now influencing special education to limit the program’s achievement. Walker has always been committed to the best evidence-based practices. Advocacy and persuasion are needed to support the children. Walker is an advocate for [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#) (PBIS), which has given the field a surge of energy, advocacy and acceptance in over 1,300 schools. PBIS is a guiding force for teachers who work to serve children with emotional and behavioral disorders. PBIS is a “decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students” (PBIS, 2010).

Walker is personally satisfied with the progress that has been made in the field thus far, especially in light of PBIS. Dr. Walker voices many concerns for the field today, though. In addition to labeling issues, Walker feels schools should take better advantage of new programs rather than struggling to accept them. According to Walker, sustainability and maintenance of behavioral gains require increased concentrated efforts in research and practice. They have been produced but have washed out over time. Walker thinks the greatest challenge in the next two to three years is effectively addressing bullying, peer harassment, and relational aggression, as well as guiding the role and responsibility of media and technology (H. M. Walker, personal communication, November 3, 2010).

Walker considers his greatest accomplishment sustaining a program on research grants for forty plus years. While he feels very fortunate, he also laments not learning enough from

failures in his personal and professional life. Walker's advice for current students is to become an expert with the system and focus on getting all the information they can. Professionals should continue to work with practices, which are evidence based and effective (H. M. Walker, personal communication, November 3, 2010).

Selected Publications

Walker, H. M. (2004). Commentary: Evidence-based intervention in schools: Where we've been, where we are, and where we need to go. *School Psychology Review*, 33(3), 398-407.

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