Hudat

University of Nottingham School of Psychology

Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology (Professional Training)

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History and philosophy of developments in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services for Children: 1913 - 2000

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Summary: While there are many accessible articles in the professional journals detailing recent debates about the role and structure of EPSs, few make explicit links with origins of the profession. This account attempts to fill some of those gaps, providing greater opportunity alongside the accompanying taught session, to discuss recent dilemmas and challenges to the professional application of psychology within children's, educational and community services. This account is intended as a historical background against which subsequent changes and future directions can be more fully understood.

When does a 'history' begin? And end? Decisions about dates are often arbitrary. This overview begins with the development of psychometric tests by Binet, and finishes at the end of the 1990s, when current Ep practice and professional issues are covered within the core curriculum of the doctorate training programme.

Origins of UK psychological services for children and young people

(i) School psychologists and the psychometric movement.

In 1908 the Paris educational authority invited Alfred Binet and Theophile Simon to devise an instrument for identifying 'slow learning' children for 'remedial education' in special classes. Binet and Simon proposed that any such psychological model of assessment should have a 'before and after', evaluative function. Thus one of its purposes should be to determine whether or not the young person actually benefited from any special provision, other than "that which might be credited simply to the consideration of growth" (Binet and Simon, 1905) – an outcome seriously neglected by subsequent generations of educational psychologists (Eps).

Binet and Simon's psychometric test, or mental measurement scale, was subsequently developed and published in the USA by Stanford University as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. Examples were still to be found in test cupboards in the UK as late as the 1970s and 80s, by which time, apart from a few doughty die-hards, the 'Binet' was largely superseded by the even more American Wechsler Scale for Children (WISC), a British version of which (WISC-R) revised and published in 1974.

The psychometric movement gained further impetus within the UK by the appointment of Cyril Burt by London CC as the first school psychologist in 1913 "temporarily, part time, as an experiment."

Burt's appointment ushered in an era of impressive psychometric and social surveys into the individual, family and social factors influencing children's progress at school. His pinpointing of the importance of the mother in the child's educational attainments anticipated the findings of the Plowden Committee by some 40 years.

Among Burt's voluminous publications were two major studies of particular interest to Eps: 'The Backward Child' and 'The Young Delinquent'. (Burt's notoriety for misrepresenting research findings from his post WW2 studies earned him the nickname of 'the *old* delinquent.')

However, his earlier research, surveys and case studies provided a model for early services, influencing the developments in the provinces, reaching Leicester in 1931 and Nottingham in 1939.

The links between psychometry and the identification of children for remedial or special education were firmly entrenched from the beginning, setting out a framework for staffing, role and practice in School Psychology Services (SPS).

The psychometric weaponry became increasingly sophisticated and specialised, if not necessarily useful, being further augmented by a battalion of test constructors: Vernon, Raven, Oseretsky, Pickford, Schonell, McCarthy and Kirk (ITPA), Snidjeers and Ooman among many others. It was not until 1979 after a long period of gestation, that the first major UK test of intellectual abilities, the BAS, came on the scene. The cryptic comment, attributed to Burt, that many services were no more than 'HQs for EQs and IQs' was well merited.

2. Origins of services for children and young children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: The Child Guidance Movement.

In 1909 William Healey, an English born Freudian psychiatrist, established the first Child Guidance Clinic (CGC), in Chicago. Healey's CGC was a reflection of society's concerns about challenging and delinquent behaviour among young people. It also provided an embryonic model of a 'team around the child', a concept which was to recur in many guises, most noticeably in a hundred years later.

Given Healey's psycho-analytic background, it was no surprise that the source of the child's difficulties were seen as residing within the child's early up-bringing and relationship with parents, in particular the mother. The therapeutic team comprised a child psychiatrist (medical director, team leader and therapist), psychiatric social worker (working with the parent, usually the mother) and child/educational psychologist (working with the child). This represented an unapologetic medical model, in process, structure and authority.

The educational psychologist's role was confined to that of a psychometrist, contributing a range of interpretations based on intelligence, projective and personality tests (e.g. TAT, CAT, Rorschach, Cattell, and Bene-Anthony).

There was widespread enthusiasm for these new approaches, which became known as Child Guidance Clinics and which spread to the UK with the introduction of the London Child Guidance Training Centre and the Tavistock Clinic UK in the 1920s.

Child Guidance Clinics, and School Psychological Services gradually became established across parts of the UK. While the SPS was generally funded and managed as part of the local education authority, the CGC was more often based within School Health Service, with the EP often playing a joint – but different – psychometric role within each. However, within the CGC, the Ep was often outranked and over-ruled by the psychiatrist in the area of assessment strategies or test selection.

3. Influence of World War II on the development of psychological services.
Child evacuation impacted greatly on the general public, highlighting the consequences of poverty and social disadvantage on the development of children and young people. Poor health, malnutrition and disease were linked with 'maladjustment' and low educational attainments – which were no longer hidden from view. Health and education services also commented on the long-term consequences and disrupting effects on children of being evacuated and separated from their parents during a time of such national crisis.

In Nottingham, the Medical Officer's Report to the Education Committee of 1940, echoing the voice of its CGC, warned:

> "it is a dangerous psychological experiment to remove a child from his ordinary home environment to an entirely strange place."
> (Newth and Stephenson, 1940).

This prompted the education committee to establish specialist assessment and treatment services incorporating a peripatetic social worker, a senior and junior educational psychologist (Miss Hawkeye – excellent name for an Ep) - and play therapist. The city also opened a number of Hostels "for difficult cases where treatment on Child Guidance lines under skilled workers can be carried out." (Newth and Stephenson, 1940).

Despite, or because of, the exigencies of war, School Psychological services, Child Guidance and School Health Services developed rapidly, sowing some of the seeds for post-war National Health Service.

<u>1944 Education Act</u>
The major educational legacy of the 1940s was to be the 1944 Education Act, to which Cyril Burt contributed as an adviser. A major recommendation was the introduction of a tripartite system of secondary education: Grammar, Secondary Technical and Secondary Modern schools. Allocation to the schools was based on a system of selection, by a group intelligence test, at age eleven. Enter the '11 plus exam into educational

practice. This was a highly competitive and divisive process, separating pupils from their peers and allocating them to schools on the basis of a test score. According to educational folklore, parents rewarded their successful children with a bicycle, which, if true, probably did wonders for Nottingham's Raleigh Cycle Company.

While the ablest children moved on to the grammar schools, pupils who's abilities were deemed to be more practical, or nonverbal, had the opportunity at the age of thirteen to take a further exam would enable them to transfer to a Technical school. Those who were did not take, or were not successful in either the 11 plus or technical school entrance exam remained at the newly designated Secondary Modern schools, whose leaving age had been raised to age fifteen.

One of the intentions of the 11 plus exam was to provide more opportunities for working class pupils to obtain a grammar school, or 'scholarship' education. While many were able to take advantage of this opportunity this was not universal. For some poorer families, or those in which education was not highly valued, the requirement for the pupil to stay on at school till the age of sixteen to complete the scholarship or GCE exam course, rather than leave for a paid job at fifteen and contribute to the family income was a strong disincentive.

In some psychological services the Ep was also required to adjudicate in instances where able junior school pupils 'failed' the 11+ and parents and teachers demanded a re-assessment, which generally took the form of an individual IQ test. Other anomalies included identical twins, one of whom passed and the other who failed the 11+. Again, within many authorities it was part of the Ep role to carry out an individual IQ assessment and adjudicate whether or not the 'unsuccessful' twin could progress to the grammar school.

For some reason, these 'special assessments' tended to be carried out on a Saturday morning.

The 1944 Act was generally heralded as a positive and forward looking post war piece of legislation. However, this was not entirely true. The Act's regulations removed the pre-existing option for children with significant learning disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools once they had been 'Reported' (or classified) as 'ineducable' by a medical officer. Until that time, pupils with significant learning disabilities had been accepted 'ordinary' schools so long as their behaviour did not disrupt the education of others – another concept that was re-emerge in the wording of the 1981 Education Act: Special Needs.

Increasingly the role of the educational psychologist was primarily to carry out assessments and provide IQ test scores, which, as we have seen, were used for a number of social and educational purposes.
For instance, the grounds for a child to be Reported was based an IQ score of 50 or below the criterion for a child or young person to be deemed 'ineducable', and therefore 'unsuitable for education.'

1944 Education Act

"Attention is drawn to Section 116 under which (local) Authorities have no power or duty ... in respect of any person reported under Section 57 (3). Certain Authorities have in the past allowed ineducable children to attend school so long as they behaved well. They have no power to do so under the present Act ... and they have no power to incur any expenditure in respect of that child."

John P.R. Maude (Ministry of Education).

Mental Deficiency Classification

Both America and the UK developed a rigid system of IQ bands linked to labels which were used as the basis for classifying children and adults. Examples of these are listed below.

IQ band	Classifying Label
70-80	Borderline deficiency
50-69	Moron
20-49	Imbecile
Below 20	Idiot

4. The Summerfield Report: more than professional recognition?

Professor Arthur Summerfield was invited to conduct First national survey of LEA educational psychologists. Intriguingly, the title was: 'Psychologists in Education Services' which perhaps points to an opportunity lost. The report, published in 1968, made recommendations about the EP role and training arrangements and was also intended to serve an educational purpose, informing a wider audience about the wider contribution of psychological services in the educational sector.

At the time of the Report there were 414 established Ep posts within England and Wales, of which, because of the dearth of qualified Eps, only 326 were filled. Of those Eps in post, many were unqualified, having graduated in psychology lacking any post-graduate professional training. Twelve authorities had no establishment at all for Eps, a situation that continued well into the 1970s for one large authority, Nottinghamshire, which shared that distinction with the Scilly Isles.

The Summerfield Report addressed this problem by proposing a minimum ratio of one Ep per 10,000 school age pupils. These targets were to be achieved through a growth in

training courses, resulting in the establishment of the Nottingham, Newcastle, Exeter and UEL courses, fuelled by a central 'pooling' system of funding for trainees and tutors.

The growth in School Psychological Services and changes in roles was accompanied by role tension between medical officers, psychiatrists and the influx of newly trained and enthusiastic educational psychologists, keen to take over the special education functions formerly held by school medical officers. The latter no longer found themselves as the 'gate-keeper' to special schools. (See also course notes on "Legislation").

If Summerfield signposted the way to a more creative and exciting future there was also a reluctance within parts of the profession to forsake traditional practice and to maintain a more cautious approach to development of the profession (see Chazan et al, 'The Practice of Educational Psychology').

5. The 'Reconstructing Movement'

In 1978, Bill Gillham (then EP Course Director at the University of Nottingham) edited a grass roots response to the conservatist wing of the profession: *'Reconconstructing Educational Psychology.'*

Most of the contributors were practising psychologists who described their values, aims and aspirations for the profession, which included community psychology, the application of systems work within schools. Above all, they shared a commitment for developing alternative and more effective ways of construing and delivering psychology.

'Reconstructing Educational Psychology' made 'no pretence of being 'radical' but it did succeed in capturing the spirit of reconstruction in a number of innovatory services. And it set down a marker for the future in its rejection of 'within child' models of practice in favour of a more interactionist perspective and systemic practice.

The emphasis on working with and through schools, teachers and parents to improve the development and education of children and young people became an established feature of professional philosophy. It also aroused tensions within some authorities in which school advisers did not necessarily welcome what they saw as an intrusion.

A contemporary event in the 1970s was the transfer of Junior Training Centres from Area Health Services to Local Education Authorities, where they became schools for children with severe learning difficulties, thus removing the stigma and barrier against children the children at last receiving an education. It also enable the EPS to work with the 'new' SLD schools in developing curriculum and teaching strategies, an opportunity seized by Peter Mittler and colleagues at the Hester Adrian Centre and the University of Manchester through the Education of the Developmentally Young (EDY) accredited programme and materials.

While some of this new agenda was not universally welcomed within the profession at the time ("throwing out the baby with the bathwater") and subsequent legislation and changes in LEA roles and functions stifled some developments, it is also the case that educational psychologists continued and continue to initiate, innovate and expand on the

range of psychology which informs their practice. (See Miller and Leyden, 1999, for a 'coherent' framework for coordinating areas of psychology relevant to application in schools).

6. The Warnock Report (1978), The 1981 Act (Special Needs) and Inclusive Education

Ripples of USA Public Law 194 and concept of 'least restrictive environment' crossed the Atlantic, and Mary Warnock was tasked with reporting on special education needs and arrangements within the UK. At the time, special needs or education were seen as euphemisms for 'special schools' for children described as physically disabled, educationally subnormal (moderate or severe), maladjusted, deaf or blind. The Warnock Committee rejected the use of such labels, transforming the language of special education and, controversially at the time, argued for the educational needs of children with 'learning difficulties' to be met within mainstream schools. (See module notes on legislation).

However, not all the Report's recommendations were translated into legislation, critically in respect of training arrangements and teacher salary structures.

1981 Education Act (Special Needs)

The subsequent legislation (the 1981 and 1996 Education Acts, Special Needs), although receiving cross party in the commons, failed to attract additional central funding for LEAs, in the forlorn hope that savings from falling school rolls would cover the costs of implementation.

Neither the Warnock Report, nor its subsequent legislation, succeeded in framing clear, unambiguous definitions of 'special educational needs' or 'special educational provision', uncertainties that were to continue.

The Report's major findings were variously interpreted, and levels of 'Statementing' and degrees of pupil inclusion varied across LEAs. In the early years of their introduction, requests for Statements, far from protecting the needs of children, represented a form of 'bounty hunting' on the part of some schools.

Legal recognition of educational psychologists

However the legislation required LEAs to identify and assess children's special educational needs - a duty that included a formal assessment by an educational psychologist. In practice most authorities also sought some Ep input into the drafting of the Statement. The assertion by Maurice Tyerman, HMI and ex Ep, that this aspect constituted a "psychologist's' charter" at least contained the truth that Ep posts were to be protected and staffing levels increased. For the first time the contribution of the profession was written into legislation.

Despite some caveats about the wording and philosophy of the Act, describing assessment as an 'examination' referred back to a more medical model, the educational landscape shifted, and twenty years on significant progress has been made in attitudes and practice, among LEA officers, Eps, teachers and parents. On a parochial note, Eps

continue to be central to the assessment process, where psychometry still prevails in many services, while others have developed a more strategic, moderating and consultative role within their LEA.

More importantly, many more children with significant learning disabilities were now to experience mainstream education alongside their neighbourhood peers. The picture for children with challenging behaviour, or low incidence exceptional needs is less encouraging.

During the last decade Newham, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City LEAs have been noteworthy (up to the time of writing) in seeking to include the highest proportion of pupils with significant needs in mainstream schools. In the case of the latter two this was largely because of the central, strategic role played by the EPS under the leadership of Tony Dessent and Peter Gray, Principal and Deputy Principal Educational Psychologists (see Gray and Dessent, 1993). Their 'Children First' strategy incorporated an ingenious and effective system of resource and support delegation to schools, moderated at local levels, which permitted greater flexibility and less reliance on expensive statementing procedures.

(See also the notes of my parallel sessions on 'History of Inclusion' and 'Values and Practice of Inclusive Education').

7. Conclusion

It has not been the focus of this session to describe the complete the raft of major educational legislation which took place in the 1980s, 90s and beyond.

However, The Education Reform Act, delegation of budgets to schools, school and local authority inspections, the standards agenda, SATs and exam 'league tables' have all impacted on EP services.

But we need to ask questions about what we have learned from our own professional history. Ironically it was Binet and Simon who posed the question about whether or not children benefited from 'remedial treatment.' Are we yet in a position to answer that question about placements in our special schools? Or the quality of education, for all children, within mainstream settings?

How critically do we evaluate our own professional practice? And above all, what will the cohort of trainee educational psychologists have to say about us and our practice twenty years from now?

8. Appendix: Stages in the growth of the EP profession.

1913 Cyril Burt appointed in London as the first school psychologist
1931 'Leicester Mercury' reports one of the first appointments of an Ep outside of London.

1939 Nottingham City appoints its first Ep. (Notts CC waited until 1974 before establishing its own EP service).
1955 The Underwood Report ('Report of the Committee on Maladjusted Children'; London: HMSO) *recommended* a 'modest target' of 280 Eps for England to acknowledge their role beyond Child Guidance Services (the origin of CAMHS).
At that time, nationally, there were 143 Eps nationally.
1960 143 Eps were identified as working within Child Guidance or School Psychological Services. At that point recording was sketchy, with a failure to record, systematically, Eps working in CGCs or SPSs.

1963 For the first time a central recording system identified the total number of Eps working in CGC and SPSs. The total was 299.
1965 314 Eps employed in LEAs.
1966 354 Eps employed in LEAs
1968 The Summerfield Report ('Psychologists in Education Services') *recommended* a ratio of one Ep to 10,000 school aged pupils.
1978 The Warnock Report ('Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People', chaired by Mary Warnock) *recommended* a ratio of one Ep to 5,000 children (aged 2 - 19 years) as the 'minimum' likely to be effective.
1981 The Education Act (Special Needs) placed duties on LEAs to obtain 'psychological advice' in respect of pupils with special educational needs for which a 'Statement' might be required. At the time this was seen by many as an 'Ep's Charter'.
2000 The DfEE Research Report ('Educational Psychology Services (England): Current Role, Good Practice and Future Directions', 2000) surveyed LEAs and found Ep - pupil population ratios varied from 1 – 2,628 to 7, 785. The ratio of Ep – population ratios (0 – 19 years) showed a similar pattern: from 4,041 to 11, 171.
2008 The number of qualified Eps in practice (public and private sectors) = 2, 720 (source: AEP 'full membership' category.

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