

**The role of psychological theory in the training of educational
psychologists**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Institute of Education, University of London,
June 1996**



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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of my supervisor Professor Caroline Gipps. My thanks are also due to my colleague Professor Brahm Norwich, to Professor Tony Gale and to Julian Hall, all of whom have been enormously encouraging and supportive in their very different ways. I am grateful to the tutors and the 1993 trainee educational psychologists of the eight courses who took part in the study, and to my colleague Associate Tutors and other staff at the Institute of Education and to the 1996 Institute of Education trainee cohort for supporting my study leave.

Ingrid Cecilia Lunt

The place of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists

Thesis abstract

This thesis looks at the place of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists, and at the relationship between theory and practice during the training period. Training of educational psychologists in England and Wales consists of a first degree in psychology, followed by teacher qualification and experience, which is followed by a one year Master's degree. Professional psychologists are recognised in the UK through Chartered Psychologist Status of the British Psychological Society, which generally assumes a scientist practitioner model of training and practice. The literature review explores the nature of educational psychology and the question of how far educational psychologists are applied psychologists. It also explores the nature of professional training, including reference to other professions, and some aspects of the theory-practice relationship in professional training. Empirical work consisted of focus group interviews carried out at the end of their Master's year with trainee groups from a sample of the universities, and individual semi-structured interviews of tutors from the same courses. Documentation concerning the courses and training in educational psychology was reviewed and analysed to provide additional information. The data are presented thematically and used to illuminate issues which emerge from the literature. The literature analysis and the data suggest that there are difficulties over the role of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists, and that there are aspects of their role which make it difficult for educational psychologists to function as applied psychologists. These difficulties may in part be due to the nature and length of the training, and in part due to factors within the profession itself including its position within the LEA.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Rationale

The training of educational psychologists: theory-practice relationship

Introduction

This chapter sets the context and raises the issues which will be covered in the research. Each of the issues is picked up again in the literature review where it is considered in some detail. Psychology has held a powerful position within education and the field of education is considered to provide an appropriate ground for the application of psychological theories and techniques. Yet there is a tension in the field which may be linked to a tension between 'two cultures', the 'scientific' and the 'humanistic', or that between the early American educational psychologists Thorndike and Dewey, and their different world views and epistemologies, and to an extent their very different views of science and its relation to education. One manifestation of this tension is the question whether educational psychology emerges from and has roots in education or whether it emerges from psychology. These two alternatives imply different views of psychology and its place in relation to education and contribute to a difficulty over the relationship between educational psychology and education.

In considering the field of educational psychology, it is important to be aware of the existence in the UK of two groups who call themselves educational psychologists, and who lay claim to be applying psychology to education (e.g. Francis 1995), academic and practitioner (sometimes called professional) educational psychologists. Although the thesis focuses mainly on the second group, the relationship between the two groups is of interest and relevance here.

Professional educational psychology claims to be an application of psychology to education, an applied or professional psychology, and indeed provided one of the earliest practitioner psychologists in 1913, Cyril (later Sir) Burt who was appointed the first educational psychologist. Professional psychologists claim to have a scientific

knowledge base, a foundation in theories of psychology which provide the basis for developing and applying professional knowledge and the competence to apply this knowledge to the professional context (Lunt 1994b, Lunt & Lindsay 1993). Educational psychologists claim to base their professional practice on the discipline of psychology; their professional knowledge is defined in university curricula through 'academic knowledge' such as theories of child development and social psychology, 'professional knowledge' such as understanding of confidentiality, ethics, professional responsibility, and 'practical skills' such as interpersonal and communication skills, assessment techniques, and attitudes such as equal opportunities and client issues. This professional knowledge is gained in part through university teaching, and in part through the apprenticeship or socialisation processes taking place on placement in Psychological Services during the training year, and, in particular, the year after the Master's year.

The profession has a lengthy training period, based on a psychology degree, teacher qualification and experience, and a postgraduate Master's degree. During their Master's degree, trainee educational psychologists are expected to carry out on their placements some of the tasks which constitute the work of professional educational psychologists; indeed, the placements provide a supervised apprenticeship, in which trainees learn about the role from observing and carrying out aspects of the work of experienced educational psychologists. It is thus possible to gain some knowledge of the tasks which newly qualified educational psychologists are expected to be able to carry out. A question which will be asked in this thesis is: what kinds of psychological theories are being applied on trainees' placements and how. Postgraduate training for educational psychology is intricately linked with professional practice in LEA Psychological Services: the Master's courses provide vocational training and prepare trainees on completion of the course to work in these services; local LEA services provide placements for trainees during their training, and could thus be said to exert considerable influence on the nature of the training process. University courses are dependent on local Services, and provide training in partnership with them. It is suggested that this relationship or partnership between

universities and services and the effect that it has on the nature of the work carried out by trainees on placement during the course, affects the position of theory, and in particular psychological theory, within the training year.

The Training of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales

The profession of educational psychology in the UK is a 'Chartered profession' regulated by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and defined by a long training period. In England and Wales this consists of an Honours (Bachelor's) degree in psychology (or equivalent to confer eligibility for Graduate Basis for Registration of the British Psychological Society (BPS)), a teaching qualification (PGCE), usually 2 or more years' teaching experience, and a professional Master's qualification in educational psychology, followed by one year's supervised experience in a first post as an educational psychologist (BPS 1994a, 1994b, 1995b). This supervised practice or 'internship' (analogous to the erstwhile probationary year of teachers) is required for Chartered Educational Psychologist status, which is increasingly being required of new recruits by employers. (The situation is different in Scotland, see page 7 below). Organisers of the one year Master's qualification, which aims and is required to develop both academic knowledge and practical competence, are clearly faced with the question of the relationship between theory and practice.

The thesis is based on data collected from courses in England and Wales and will restrict its scope to these. The Master's courses are based in universities (except for one which is based in a clinic but accredited by a university) and the one year training period is spent part-time (about 50%) in the university, and part (the remaining 50% of time) on practical placement in schools and Educational Psychology Services (EPS). This balance is required by the BPS, which stipulates a minimum of 75 days of the one year course to be spent on practical placements (see appendix 3, BPS criteria for evaluation of educational psychology courses). Most educational psychology courses have two placements in Educational Psychology Services (EPSs), the first one part-time, where trainees will spend about half the week on placement and the other half in the university, the second a full-time

block placement where trainees will spend the whole working week in a EPS setting. Whilst on these placements, trainee educational psychologists are supervised by an experienced educational psychologist member of the service, in addition to a tutor from the university.

The BPS requires course tutors responsible for the courses to be qualified professional educational psychologists who have had experience in Educational Psychology Services. All courses have in addition Associate Tutor staff seconded part-time to the university from a senior EP post in a local EPS; these Associate Tutors fulfil an important role in maintaining links between the university and Educational Psychology services.

The Role of the British Psychological Society (BPS) in Professional Training of Psychologists

The training of all professional psychologists in the UK (for Chartered Psychologist Status) is controlled by the professional body, the BPS, which accredits courses for this purpose. The BPS maintains a register of Chartered Psychologists-those psychologists whose qualifications meet the standards and criteria specified by the BPS, and who agree to abide by its (BPS) Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures (BPS 1994a). Most professional psychologists, especially clinical and educational psychologists, work in the public sector, in the NHS or for LEAs; these bodies increasingly require Chartered Psychologist status of their employees, with the result that the BPS effectively controls the training of professional psychologists working in the public sector. (It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the debate over the statutory registration of psychologists which, if enacted, will limit the use of the title 'psychologist' to those qualified as Chartered Psychologists and therefore under the control of the professional association, the BPS, or its Registration Body). The BPS also serves as the 'competent authority' in relation to the implementation of the EU Directive 89/48/EC which concerns the mutual recognition of psychologists with qualifications obtained in other countries. This means that it (the BPS) is recognised by Government departments as the appropriate body to determine

qualifications of psychologists in this country, and to evaluate the qualifications of those qualified in other countries who seek recognition as psychologists in this country. The education and training of psychologists, in particular educational psychologists, in other European countries differs significantly from that provided in this country (e.g. McPherson 1988, Lunt 1994a).

All training courses (in clinical, educational, forensic, occupational, and increasingly counselling psychology) are required to meet standards set out by the BPS in its documents entitled *Criteria for the Evaluation of Educational (Clinical/Occupational etc.) Psychology Courses*, and are required to follow a broadly defined core curriculum (appendix 2). The documents specify organisation and staffing, placement requirements, supervision and tutorial arrangements, assessment and evaluation, research requirements. All courses are visited every five years by a team from the BPS which receives full course documentation, carries out a site visit to the course, and produces a full report which goes to the course, to the BPS, and to the DES/DFE, now DFEE, on whose behalf the BPS carries out this accreditation. Since most educational psychologists are employed by LEAs, and LEAs require their employees to have a recognised qualification, and increasingly Chartered Educational Psychologist Status, the BPS is in a powerful position in relation to determining this qualification.

The Role of the BPS (DECP) and AEP in the Profession

The profession is served by two associations, the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) which serves a Trade Union function, and the British Psychological Society (BPS), in particular through its Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP), which serves the functions of a learned society and a professional association. The two bodies have at times held differing views, in particular over the training of educational psychologists. Specific differences of view have existed over the requirement that all trainee educational psychologists should first qualify and gain experience as teachers, a view which has been held strongly by the AEP, which is affiliated to the NUT, and which has been considered less relevant by the DECP,

which has tended to emphasise more the contribution of psychology. The existence of two professional associations, sometimes with rather different perspectives, may over time have created some problems for the profession of educational psychologists, in particular over differing views of the role and training required. Nevertheless, it could be said that the two professional organisations in England and Wales exercise considerable control over the employment and training of this small profession. (The number of educational psychologists employed by LEAs in England and Wales is about 1700, with a further 300 in Scotland, 1995 figures).

Early Training Courses in Educational Psychology and the current situation

Although the first training courses to prepare psychologists to work in Child Guidance Clinics were set up before the Second World War in the Tavistock clinic (c.1921) and the Child Guidance Training Centre (1930) (Sampson 1980), formal training for this profession could be said to have started after the Second World War. Four courses were established in universities, with a more academic orientation than the clinic based courses, with the first two courses developed in the late 1940s at University College London (1946), and the University of Birmingham (1948), followed by courses at Manchester University (1961) and University College Swansea (1963). These six courses provided training for educational psychologists until major expansion following the Summerfield Report in 1968 (DES 1968) when the remaining courses (of the present 12 in England and Wales) were set up during the 1970s.

Most of the courses at that time provided little link between university based learning (academic knowledge or 'theory') and placement based learning (practical skills or 'practice') (DES 1968). Although all courses provided placement experience in local Psychological Services, the trainees themselves were expected to make any links that were made, and to build any bridges between theoretical understanding and knowledge, and practical skills or the job in practice.

At the current time, there are 12 Master's courses in educational psychology in England and Wales, all of 12 months' length, all required by the BPS to provide at least 75 days' supervised experience on placement in EPSs, and with the course curricula guided by the BPS core curriculum in educational psychology. All courses are required to include a 'taught academic' element, a 'practical placement' element, and a research element. There is also one course in Northern Ireland, also a one year course, and accredited by the BPS. However, training for educational psychologists in Scotland, where there are two university courses, is arranged differently; there is no requirement for prior teacher qualification and experience, and the Master's degree is of two years' duration, thus implementing a policy for two year training agreed over 10 years ago (DES 1984). This point will be picked up in chapter 10.

Training in the Professions

The term 'the profession' is used regularly to refer to educational psychologists. Professional psychologists (i.e. Chartered Psychologists) claim to be one of the professions; this issue is taken up in chapter 3. In the light of this claim, it is therefore relevant to consider here educational psychology training in the context of training for the professions generally. Historically, in different professions, training and education has advanced from apprenticeship through university based Diplomas to Master's degrees, apparently reflecting increased status, professionalism and complexity of tasks in the professions. Professions acquire status through becoming 'all-graduate' professions, and through having their training based in universities. For example, within psychology, the profession of clinical psychology has advanced through Diploma to Master's status, and now requires Doctoral level training in this country.

The growing status of professions has been reflected in their growing requirement for theoretical knowledge (Eraut 1994). How far this requirement reflects the increasing requirements of the work, and how far it reflects a growing need and desire for status, claimed expertise and mystique, will be considered in chapter 3. Alongside this growth there has continued to exist a tension between theoretical knowledge

and practical skills, and a gap between theory and practice, referred to widely as the 'theory-practice issue' in much of the professional literature.

Some commentators consider that this gap may be bridged by professional knowledge (e.g. Eraut 1994), while others consider that the 'reflective practitioner' model may provide a link between theoretical and practical aspects of professional development (e.g. Schön 1983). Yet others put forward the importance of professional 'competences' as a means of formulating professional qualification, and producing a link between underpinning knowledge and skills.

The BPS, representing professional psychologists, has been among professions at the forefront of developments led by NCVQ and the Employment department, to develop occupational standards in applied psychology, including educational psychology, at the professional level, level 5 of NCVQ (Bartram 1995). The pilot project to develop occupational standards in Applied Psychology has even within BPS highlighted an aspect of the tension between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which was demonstrated by the responses of the professions to the proposals. The widespread (politically driven) moves to develop a more competence or outcome based model of evaluating professional qualifications, and proposals to extend the framework of National Vocational Qualifications to level 5 (NCVQ 1995), have had a critical reception by the professions. Responding critically to the proposals to introduce NVQs at the professional level, because of their focus on behavioural outcomes to the neglect of theoretical underpinning knowledge, the professions have contributed to a subsequent shift in the position of NCVQ to include the importance of underpinning knowledge and understanding in the development of professional competence.

The place of theory in professional training

The professions are characterised by their claim to unique expertise, and to the requirement of a distinct knowledge (theory) base. Training for many professions consists of a period of academic study or acquisition of the knowledge base, followed by a period of internship,

when the emerging professionals are expected to put the theory into practice. A theoretical component and a specialised knowledge base serves to give professions status, unique expertise, and the authority of 'science'. This is not to ignore the fact that a specialised knowledge base may in fact be necessary to give professions unique and useful specialist expertise. Indeed, it is possible to claim that a specialist and theoretical knowledge base may be one of the defining characteristics of the professions. This may be gained in various ways, according to the profession. However, increasingly, training for professions is based in universities, with a substantial academic component. As Eraut (1994) suggests:

historical, political and sociological factors have resulted in initial training for the professions being increasingly based in higher education under the leadership of academics recruited from these professions. However, these professional educators are likely to experience considerable role conflict as the norms of higher education take precedence over those in the professions. In particular, the knowledge-base is likely to be segmented and framed in technical/scientific rather than practical terms, rendering the nature of professional knowledge highly problematic for aspiring professionals. (p. 10)

Thus, for many professionals there is an issue of the relationship between theory and practice, or the links between academic knowledge and professional knowledge and practical skills. This is in part due to the higher status accorded by universities to 'academic knowledge' in contrast to the more 'practical' aspects of professional knowledge required by members of the profession.

Trainee professional attitudes to theory

Trainee professionals themselves often value more, and attribute greater relevance to, the practical/placement/apprenticeship aspects of the training, having a tendency sometimes to relegate 'theory' to the shelf, as a necessary activity to be undertaken in order to gain the professional qualification. This appears to be the case for a number of professions (e.g. teachers, social workers, nurses, doctors), all of whose educators have expressed the difficulty of making meaningful the place of theoretical knowledge in the training of professionals (see Lunt & Gray 1990). The values and the time perspective of the

university and the agency or place of work are very different, as are their functions:

The purpose of the university...is to educate for practice, and contribute to knowledge building. Valued activities are research, scholarship and teaching. The university's time perspective is primarily future-oriented...its primary focus is analysis and critique of current forms of practice, and experimentation leading to new intervention approaches. The purpose of the agency is to provide services to people in need. The valued activity is the delivery of effective and efficient service. The agency's time perspective is primarily present-oriented, concerned with maintaining and enhancing programs (Bogo and Vayda, 1987, quoted in Rumgay, 1988, p.336).

Trainee professionals themselves are usually eager to take on the service function, to carry out the 'real job', and frequently have a vocational attitude to their training which means that they see more relevance in the placement activities and less relevance in the more academic or theoretical part of the training. Trainee educational psychologists, all of whom are already qualified and experienced in another 'profession' (here teaching), frequently state a preference for working on placement (Lunt & Gray 1990), which appears to validate them as professionals and where they feel 'adult' and competent, over study at the university, where they may feel deskilled, lacking in confidence and competence, and more like 'students'. It is possible that the difference in their professional role, status and responsibility may manifest itself in their attitude and behaviour in the two different settings of university and service placement.

Debates over the Training of Educational Psychologists

Since the Summerfield Report of 1968 (DES 1968), there has been considerable debate over both the role of educational psychologists and their training. Discussions over the role and function of educational psychologists appear to have continued without much abate over the past 30 or so years. The question of role and function clearly has profound implications for professional training; one aspect of this concerns the respective roles of the university and the Service placements in contributing to the role identity of the newly qualified professional. How far is the identity of the newly qualified professional EP shaped by the university and how far by the service placement? How far are trainee EPs influenced by the values and

perspective of the university as opposed to the placement and how do they gain their professional identity? As mentioned above, as an attempt to integrate the university and service based aspects of training, courses are required (by the BPS) to be directed by a qualified educational psychologist with prior experience as a practitioner and to have on their staff Associate Tutors working part-time in the university and part-time in Educational Psychology Services.

At a time of shortage of educational psychologists, the Summerfield Report (DES 1968) was commissioned by the Government to consider the work and training of educational psychologists, who at the time constituted the largest group of psychologists in the UK. This report recommended three routes of entry to the profession, two of which are used currently: (a) qualified teachers gain a psychology qualification followed by a Master's degree, or b) psychology graduates gain a teaching qualification followed by a Master's degree. The third route would enable psychology graduates to proceed immediately to postgraduate training and to qualify as educational psychologists in two years. This route was not taken up, in England and Wales, mainly because of the position of the Trade Union (the Association of Educational Psychologists - AEP) in relation to the requirement for teaching qualification, an issue which has been hotly debated ever since this report. It should be noted that this route has been taken up in Scotland where the Master's course is two years' length.

This issue is also pertinent in other European countries. In some European countries educational psychologists have a generic training as professional psychologists; other countries train them first as teachers, sometimes with minimal training in psychology. The differences may reflect differing views of the primacy of psychology or the primacy of education for educational psychologists in the different countries, though it also reflects historical developments and the employment context. It is argued that this issue has considerable influence on the role and function of this professional group, and on the way in which they are perceived by other professionals.

The conclusion of a series of meetings between representatives of ACC, AMA, DES, UGC, NAPEP, AEP, BPS held during 1982-1984 (following the passing of the 1981 Education Act) was a recommendation to increase the length of the Master's qualification to two years (DES 1984: TEP 84(7))(acronyms at end of chapter). This recommendation was not implemented, partly because of perceived difficulties in funding and because the group of tutors in educational psychology could not reach agreement over the organisation and timing of the change. However, both the AEP (AEP 1986) and the BPS (BPS 1987) endorsed the need for two years' full time Master's level training courses in order to meet the requirements for knowledge and skill which continued to grow in the new context in which educational psychologists found themselves following the 1981 Act.

Since that time, there has been a continued acknowledgement of the need to increase the length of the training period, an awareness that courses are unable to cover the 'core curriculum' for educational psychology of the BPS and that they are continually forced to make compromises between breadth and depth, and a widespread recognition that the situation for training educational psychologists is unsatisfactory (e.g. Farrell & Lunt 1994, Lunt & Farrell 1994, Maliphant 1994). The Master's training year itself is a very intensive experience, with approximately three times the amount of taught input and assessment requirements as other Master's courses. The constraints of the one year training period and the very real practice demands faced by trainees on their EPS placements may mean that the organisers of Master's courses feel driven to devote time to the development of immediate practical skills which will enable the trainee to function on placement in the service, rather than the development of a broader applied psychology perspective, and the demands of the placements and the supervisors may serve to reinforce this choice. In this way the time pressures may lead courses to sacrifice the development of theory in order to develop trainees' confidence in meeting the practical demands of the placement. This very intensive year of the course may cause tensions and difficulties for course tutors who aspire to plan according to sound pedagogical principles or a model of adult learning such as is appropriate for training at this level.

There are currently moves within the BPS, which has responsibility for determining the entry requirements to the profession, to move to a three year period of training for educational psychologists, at doctoral level, which would parallel the training required for clinical psychologists (see Farrell and Lunt 1994). These moves come at a time when the profession is seeking statutory registration through a Psychologist Law which would protect the title 'psychologist' to those who have attained Chartered Psychologist Status (BPS 1996). For educational psychologists, this provides an almost unique opportunity to reconceptualise and extend the training route into the profession, and to define the knowledge and competencies required to carry out the job, and the education and training experience needed to develop these (see Lunt & Carroll 1996). They also coincide with a time at which the BPS is carrying out a pilot project to develop occupational standards and a qualifications framework in applied psychology in relation to NVQs at level 5 (Bartram 1995). This project may have the effect of making more transparent the knowledge and skills required by educational psychologists, and may have a considerable impact on professional training.

However, of major significance to this professional group is the question of who defines the role and function of EPs, i.e. who defines what EPs do and how they do it, and thus the knowledge and competence required, and the training necessary. How far is it the LEA that defines the work of educational psychologists, and how far is it the profession itself?

Debates over the Role of Educational Psychologists

In parallel with debates over the nature and length of training, and substantially linked with these, have been debates over the role of educational psychologists, and, in particular, over their place and contribution in the education system. The focus in this thesis is on their contribution as applied psychologists. For example, there was considerable debate over their role and contribution at a DES course held in 1988 entitled *The Distinctive Contribution of the Educational Psychologist* (DES course D206), while other commentators have

identified the challenges faced by educational psychologists in defining their psychological contribution (e.g. Norwich 1983, 1988).

Following the passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act, Educational Psychology Services were briefly threatened by the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS), which would have meant the devolution of the budget for educational psychology services to schools and led to schools (and others) having to purchase educational psychology services; this caused many services to produce, for the first time, documents (brochures and leaflets) outlining their services, and defining a range of psychological services on offer. However, the threat passed, with EPSs gaining mandatory exception to delegation (DFE 1991: Circular 7/91), and services returned to the activities determined for them by the 1981 Act, and, subsequently, by the 1993 Education Act and its Code of Practice. These activities mainly concern the statutory role of educational psychologists to provide psychological advice for statutory assessment under the 1981 (1993) Act, and to assist the LEA in carrying out its statutory duties to identify and make provision for pupils with special educational needs, i.e. to determine which children require additional resources.

How far is EPs' work psychological?

The question is: how far are these activities psychological, and how much psychology is required to carry out these statutory activities? Judging by the focus of recent annual educational psychology conferences organised by the professional associations (AEP and DECP of BPS), and the popularity of specific courses of continuing professional development, and debates within the professional journals, the profession itself has reached a stage where it is questioning the contribution of psychology, where it is seeking the psychology in educational psychology (see chapter 2), and where there is a renewed interest in psychological aspects of assessment and intervention.

The professional literature, both of the professional associations, and of the training courses, states educational psychology to be an

application of psychology. Nowhere do we find a desire to drop the 'psychological', although one might question some of the reasons for wishing to retain it. Psychology could be said to lend authority (and status) to the professional work, through its science and its specialist nature. Psychology provides a unique professional base; it may also have the potential to provide a unique contribution to schools and the education service.

Over a five year period, during a period of informal monitoring, 90% of the applicants for one training course in educational psychology replied at interview that their reasons for wishing to join the profession had to do with an interest in 'using psychology to help children'; they wished to become psychologists. Nowhere did they express a wish to become 'LEA officers', or 'resource allocators', or 'special education professionals', or 'specialist assessors', 'specialist teachers' or 'administrators', this inspite of the fact that the majority of them had had at least some contact with their local educational psychology service. In fact it has been possible to observe in this informal monitoring an interesting dissonance; the applicants are frequently very critical of the educational psychologists with whom they have come into contact, while at the same time expressing very positive views about the profession and their aspirations and reasons for entering it.

Although services have over the years changed their names from School Psychological Service to Educational Psychology Service or County Psychological Service or even Psychology in Education Service (cf. the title of the Summerfield Report DES 1968), there is only a tiny minority of services which have dropped the professional title 'psychological' from the name of the service.

On the other hand, the profession itself welcomed its statutory role in relation to the 1981 Act, confident that this would lead to expansion in the profession. The profession expanded significantly following the 1981 Education Act, and, more recently, following the 1993 Education Act and its Code of Practice; this expansion was a result of the requirements of the legislation in relation to educational psychologists' statutory role. Thus there may emerge a conflict

between the felt needs of the education service (for "psychological advice" as part of the statutory assessment procedure which has to do with the allocation of resources), and the stated goals of the profession to be applying psychology to the education service, or, put another way, the needs of the discipline of educational psychology and the needs for the service of educational psychology.

If it exists, this conflict will have implications for the nature of training for educational psychology. The question may be asked how far training prepares trainees for the role as it exists in services, and how far training prepares them for a role defined by the profession or its trainers, or the professional body. A further question may be asked how far educational psychologists are being trained as applied psychologists, and how their training addresses the 'theory-practice issue'. If they are being trained as applied psychologists, what kinds of psychology are they applying and how are they applying it?

The thesis

The thesis considers the question: if educational psychology is the application of psychology to education, how is this application achieved and what is the nature of the application? In particular, if educational psychology is an application of psychological theory, how is a link between theory and its application, practice, achieved in the training of educational psychologists? Educational psychology claims (e.g. through its Code of Conduct) to be a profession, with high educational standards and based on the science of psychology. How does this work in practice, as exemplified by its training?

The task faced by both trainers and trainees in educational psychology is to effect the transformation from a teacher to an educational psychologist in one year (the Master's year), and in particular to ensure that the newly qualified educational psychologist is able to carry out the task demands required by the Services, both while the trainee is on placement during the training year, and when subsequently employed by them. An additional task could be assumed to be to effect in one year the transformation in thinking, perspective and mode of theorising from teacher to psychologist, and to facilitate

in trainees the application of their psychology in an education context, and the development of applied psychology knowledge and skills.

The focus of the thesis is on the place and contribution of psychological theory in professional training in educational psychology, and on the relationships between theory and practice in this professional training, in this case the professional training of educational psychologists. The scope of the thesis is thus restricted mainly to practitioner educational psychology, i.e. as practised by educational psychologists (EP) usually employed as members of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) by LEAs, since this is the group which undergoes professional training of the kind under investigation. Although reference will be made to American literature, again the scope will be restricted to UK practice, and within this, the training courses of England and Wales.

The thesis begins by examining the literature on educational psychology. The field of educational psychology has a long history, as a branch or an application of psychology. The academic field of educational psychology is one of the oldest 'subfields' of psychology (education provided an early context for the application of theories of psychology), the earliest professional psychologist was an educational psychologist, and psychology arguably held power for many years amongst the foundation disciplines in initial teacher education. Yet the place of psychology within education is problematical.

The thesis examines the nature of educational psychology, and argues that psychology has a significant contribution to make to education practice, but that this contribution has been hindered by the lack of contact and exchange between educational psychologists whose main focus is a research function and those whose main focus is a service function. This has deprived practitioner educational psychologists of the research base which could enhance their psychological contribution. There are differing viewpoints on the question of the relationship between basic and applied psychology; these are explored, and it will be argued that, if practitioner educational psychologists are to justify their claim to be 'applied psychologists' their role within

the LEA becomes problematical. On the one hand, educational psychologists are 'officers of the authority' and, as such, required to carry out the tasks and functions determined by the administrative requirements of the LEA. On the other hand, they hold out to be applied psychologists, and, to an extent independent professionals, exercising independent professional judgement. This role is explored through a consideration of the literature on educational psychologists as applied psychologists and their role, and it is argued that their function in the LEA makes it difficult for this professional group to justify their claim to be applying psychology or to be 'scientist practitioners'.

The second area for the review of literature is professional training. The chapter examines briefly the nature of professionalism, raising the question whether educational psychologists can be considered to be professionals or whether they are rather 'semi-professionals'. This is related to a consideration of the question of the educational psychologists' professional knowledge and competence, and leads on to examine the nature of the relationship between theory and practice in professional training in educational psychology, and some other professions. Other professions (e.g. social work and medicine) express a difficulty over integrating theory with practice, and this discussion is particularly well-developed in the field of initial teacher education. Some differing views over the meaning of 'theory' are considered; these relate to differing epistemological considerations, and the contrast between a subjectivist and an objectivist epistemology, and their differing assumptions and methodologies. The differing epistemological and methodological aspects of psychology and education constitutes a major theme within the thesis. This leads on to a consideration of Schön's (1983, 1987) 'reflective practitioner' which is a model widely used in professional training and education, in particular in initial teacher education and in professional educational psychology.

All training for the professions occurs within a political context, currently a political context of increasing 'demystification' of professional expertise, and the pressures to demonstrate 'competence' on the job, rather than to claim expertise through academic

qualification. Psychologists also are subjected to these pressures. It is argued that the pilot project to develop occupational standards in applied psychology may help the profession of educational psychology to become more articulate and clear about the ways in which it is applying psychology, and may help to clarify the link between underpinning knowledge and professional competence. On the other hand, this project has had a very mixed reception within the community of psychologists, and there is strong opposition to these developments, which appear to some to threaten the scientific and theoretical base of the profession. This response is mirrored in the responses of other professional groups.

Although educational psychologists abide by a professional Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles (AEP 1995b, BPS 1991, BPS DECP 1985, 1993), and hence meet one of the definitions of professional, it appears difficult to justify their claim to professionalism within psychology, given the context in which they currently practise. Such a claim must carry with it a large degree of autonomy and professional independence. They are therefore caught in a dilemma, in which on the one hand their role and position is intricately bound up with the administrative task of the LEA to allocate additional resources to pupils with special educational needs, since they are employed by the LEA to contribute to this task; on the other hand, in carrying out this task, which is the main reason for their employment, they may find it difficult to function as applied psychologists, which they claim as their professional identity.

The thesis examines the implications of this situation, both for the future of training in educational psychology and for consideration when judging the equivalence of similar qualifications from other European countries. It draws some tentative conclusions about possible roles for educational psychologists as applied psychologists in education. The empirical work presented is based on focused group interviews carried out with groups of trainees at the end of their Master's training year, and individual interviews with their tutors. These interviews are used to illustrate and illuminate themes which have emerged from the literature. A number of course and other

training documents have been used to substantiate some of the information and to provide a context for some of the findings.

Acronyms used in this chapter

ACC Association of County Councils
AMA Association of Metropolitan Authorities
AEP Association of Educational Psychologists
BPS British Psychological Society
DECP Division of Educational and Child Psychology (of BPS)
DES Department of Education and Science
DFE Department for Education
DFEE Department for Education and Employment
NAPEP National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists
UGC University Grants Committee

Chapter 2 The nature of educational psychology

The chapter examines the nature of the broad field of educational psychology, then considers educational psychology as applied psychology. Implicit in this focus are questions over how and how far educational psychology is applied psychology and what is the psychology that is applied. This will lead on to a consideration of the nature of the psychology which constitutes the foundation for application in professional psychology training in the UK. The final section of this chapter considers practitioner educational psychologists, the group under study in this research. This last section will attempt to consider the position of this group as applied psychologists, while, importantly, locating them in their social and political context.

The chapter provides the context for a consideration of the role of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists. The literature review is based mainly (though not exclusively) on British literature, since traditions and contexts are different between Britain and USA. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to include literature from other European countries, though the issue of equivalence and comparability between European countries will be briefly addressed in the conclusions. Educational psychology claims to be an application of psychology. This claim will be examined. Practitioner educational psychologists claim (also) to be applying psychology. This claim will be examined through a consideration of historical aspects of their role in relation to the application of psychology.

A definition of the nature and scope of educational psychology has to take account of the fact that there are two groups which claim to apply psychology to education in this country, academic educational psychologists working mainly in universities, often with substantial involvement with initial teacher education, and practitioner educational psychologists working mainly in local authorities. It has also to take into account the relationship between psychology and education. Psychology as a discipline has held a powerful and influential position in education (e.g. Hargreaves 1986). Much of educational research and practice has developed from educational

psychology; psychology was until recently one of the 'foundation disciplines' for initial teacher training (Francis 1985) and constitutes the discipline base for much education theory. Historically, the psychology assumed to be relevant to teacher preparation and to application to education included major psychological topics, such as theories of cognitive development, theories of learning, theories of motivation, theories of intelligence, assessment and mental testing, theories of language and social psychology. The paradigm was a predominantly positivist psychology, with an emphasis on quantitative scientific theories and methodologies. The assumption was that psychology could be applied directly to education although students were left to make the links with their practice themselves and with the challenges facing them in their day to day teaching tasks. Francis (1995) has discussed the various ways in which psychology is applied to education through educational psychology, and the possible forms in which this takes. The difficulty with the relationship between them is linked to some extent with the different philosophies and epistemologies of psychology and education, and the way in which psychology has to a certain extent imposed its own positivist culture both on educational psychology and thence on educational research.

Yet 'as far as British education is concerned, psychology appears to be in a rather sorry state' (Tomlinson 1992). It is perceived as lacking in practical and theoretical relevance (e.g. Hirst 1983, Claxton et al. 1985, Desforges 1985, Entwistle 1985), as out of touch with current educational issues (e.g. Claxton 1985), as lacking usefulness (e.g. Hargreaves 1978, 1986, Hastings & Schwieso 1987), as having no impact on practical teaching (e.g. Stones 1988) and, along with the other 'foundation disciplines' it has been replaced in teacher education programmes by courses on 'educational studies' which, in turn, have more recently given way to practice in the classroom (Norwich 1985, 1995, Tomlinson 1992, Wilkinson 1992).

This situation arises both out of current political and professional directions in education (e.g. Lawlor 1990), and out of differing views concerning the status of knowledge and 'the disciplines' (philosophy, psychology, sociology), and the appropriateness of their methods. The relationship between psychology and education is paradoxical; on the

one hand, much of what is now accepted as 'educational theory' has its origins in psychology, while on the other hand psychology is dismissed as irrelevant to current educational concerns. Egan (1984) is led to suggest that

'there is a gulf between psychological theories and educational practice....(and) no psychological theory has, or can have, legitimate implications for educational practice' (p.ix).

Although the suggestion is refuted by, amongst others, Fontana (1986), the distinction drawn here between educational and psychological theories and their influence on educational practice is important. Egan is critical of what he calls the 'invasion' of education by theories of other disciplines (here psychology):

'At present, education commonly borrows a range of psychological theories, and, it seems to me, educators typically are insufficiently sensitive to the fact that in so doing they borrow also psychology's focus of interest, its semantic colorings, subject matter, methodologies, and the nature of the claims it makes.....Education..is characterised at present by its theoretical poverty - one symptom of which is the ease whereby "outside" theories invade it, and persuade educators that their interests are identical with those of the invaders' (Egan op. cit. p.181).

The point made here is that psychology has a potentially problematical relationship with education precisely because of the difficulties of defining a field separate from the disciplines, while acknowledging their different epistemologies and methodologies. Educational psychology may be said to be caught between the disciplines of education and psychology, drawn in different directions by their differences. On the other hand, this tension is viewed positively by Francis, who views educational psychology as having developed 'a productive tension between education and psychology, its strength and nature varying with the distance between them and with material changes in each over time' (Francis 1995, p. 11).

Definition of educational psychology

In seeking to define educational psychology, it is appropriate to ask whether educational psychology is a branch (or application) of general psychology or whether it is a discipline in its own right. Hargreaves suggests that educational psychology is

'tied, like some retarded and over-dependent infant, to the parent discipline of mainstream psychology - its concepts, theories, methodology and the dead weight of its gigantic literature. Educational psychology gives every appearance of being afraid to grow up' (Hargreaves 1986, p. 17).

Part of the problem of defining the nature and place of educational psychology arise out of the relationship between psychology and education already mentioned: for example, as long ago as 1898, William James expressed the view that

'psychology is a science and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediate inventive mind must make that application, by using its originality' (James W. 1899/1983 quoted in Berliner, 1993, p. 50).

Berliner (1993) thus contrasts the 'ethical and concrete' approach of the teacher with the 'abstract and analytical' approach of the psychologist; he suggests that 'our job (as educational psychologists) is to psychologise about educational problems and issues and not simply to bring psychology to education' (ibid, p. 72).

The question of the relationship between educational psychology and psychology has both historical and epistemological aspects: did (or does) educational psychology develop out of its 'parent' general psychology (Hargreaves op. cit.) as a subfield of the parent discipline, or did it emerge from the tradition of early educators in the 18th and 19th centuries and the child study movement as a discipline separate from and in parallel with general psychology (see Duric 1989)? Does educational psychology have its origins (epistemological and methodological) in "education", for example from the child study movement and early childhood educators, or in 'scientific' psychology, such as the psychology of learning and individual differences/mental measurement? So,

'is educational psychology an engineering science (concerned with) the application of relevant knowledge to the process of education...or (is) educational psychology an applied science which should develop its own basic research programs for the creation of a body of knowledge directly relevant to the process of education...?' (Mathis, Menges, & McMillan 1977, quoted in Houtz & Lewis 1994, p. 4).

According to the first view, educational psychologists would take the theories (and methods) of psychology, and apply them in the field of education: 'educational psychology is the field that applies the principles of psychology to education...educational psychology conducts psychological research relevant to education, thereby contributing original knowledge to the bases of both psychology and education' (Glover & Ronning 1987, p. 10). According to the second view, educational psychology develops apart from and in parallel with mainstream psychology, but is not an application of psychology, rather taking its identity (and methodology) from its field, education: 'the child study movement gave rise to two educational psychology disciplines: school psychology and educational psychology' (Kramer 1987).

Some of the tensions for educational psychology are illustrated by Glover & Ronning who write:

'by putting itself as the "middleperson" who applied the principles of psychology to education, educational psychology has put itself in the position of justifying its existence to the rest of psychology and justifying psychology to education. On the one hand, education has criticised educational psychology for being too theoretical and concerned with research. On the other hand, psychology has accused educational psychology of being too concerned with applications and not possessing clearly articulated programs of research.... The essence of the discipline appears to be such that it will continue to be closely scrutinised by psychologists and educators. These two groups appear to have very different world views and attempts to satisfy both will continue to create stress in the discipline' (Glover & Ronning 1987, p. 6)

This thesis is concerned with educational psychology as the application of psychology. It aims to consider the claims made by educational psychology and educational psychologists to apply psychology, and to highlight some of the underlying tensions in this activity.

Whatever its historical and epistemological origins, educational psychology has a long history; it has been widely claimed to constitute the earliest application of psychology (Spielberger 1984, Tomlinson 1992, Spurgeon, Davies & Chapman 1994). The first laboratory of applied psychology is said to be the anthropometric laboratory founded by Galton in 1884; a few years later in 1890, Cattell's 'mental

test' constituted the earliest practical application. The first educational psychology textbooks appeared at about this time, and the discipline is said to have emerged substantially around the turn of the century.

At this time, educational psychology was perceived to be the application of psychological science to practical concerns, for which at that time education provided a fertile field. There are a number of reasons for this, for example the needs of a compulsory schooling system, the administrative needs for selection and categorisation, and a growing interest in 'technical' aspects of the discipline. Those concerned with its early development claimed to take a scientific approach to human problems in the field of education, and the scientific field of differential psychology or individual differences emerging at that time both contributed to research and at the same time served a useful function within the education system. This field of individual differences seemed to make it possible to combine 'science' with 'practice' in the same discipline (and by the same people) and thus to apply principles of scientific psychology to practical problems (see Olssen 1993a, 1993b). Certainly the powerful early developments in psychology, for example at University College London, demonstrated commitment to the research endeavour coupled with a practical function, and to results of practical work contributing to research data.

These early beginnings may imply some confidence over the relationship between psychology and its application to education, and there are a number of basic textbooks which take this confident stance. For example, a standard American textbook claims that

'educational psychology serves as a foundational discipline in education just as the physical sciences serve engineering...educational psychology can provide some insight into most aspects of educational practice...educational psychology serves teachers and education in general by providing help in dealing with ... problems (Gage & Berliner 1975, p.3).

These authors take a traditional position on the nature of educational psychology as a science:

'like any science, educational psychology makes use of concepts, principles, and methods.....the purposes of educational psychology, like those of any science, are to understand, predict and control the phenomena with which it is concerned' (ibid p. 20-21).

Similar confidence is expressed on this side of the Atlantic by Fontana:

'the application of psychology to education has a long and honoured history....but it is only during the last sixty years or so that psychology has developed the precision and methodology that allow it to make accurate generalisations about child behaviour, and to provide the teacher with the kind of information necessary....(to) make objective professional decisions and judgements' (Fontana 1988).

In their different ways, these two approaches imply a direct and straightforward relationship between the discipline and its application (to teachers).

Coolican (1996) suggests that 'educational psychology seeks to establish a systematic body of knowledge concerning the factors which influence learning and behaviour within an educational context. As knowledge grows, so practice develops' (p. 79). This definition implies a complementary relationship between 'knowledge' (science or research) and 'practice' in educational psychology, a question raised in the thesis.

Francis (1995) suggests that 'an educationally grounded psychological field, developed by psychologists researching educational concerns in education contexts and communicating effectively with teachers, truly deserves the name educational psychology' (p. 16). Francis assumes that these 'psychologists' are applying psychology and using psychological methods and theories to research educational concerns.

However, Child (1985) acknowledges some difficulties in application:

'Educational psychology.....has always had three main functions. Two we are very familiar with, that is the creation and transmission of knowledge. But the third tends to be undervalued, that is the application of knowledge.....Educational psychology needs to recognise the importance of this third function - applying psychology in the service of education'. (Child 1985, p. 22)

Child highlights the need for educational psychologists to 'apply psychology in the service of education', a phrase which has been widely used by professional educational psychologists to describe their own work. The claim forms the basis for the (also confident) definition of (practitioner) educational psychology in the careers leaflet published by the British Psychological Society:

'Educational psychology is the application of psychological science and theory to the learning and behaviour, social and emotional problems of children and young people in the educational context.' (BPS 1994b).

Academic and Practitioner Educational Psychologists

As noted, two groups exist which claim to apply psychology to education: academic and practitioner educational psychologists (for example Francis 1995). Both in the UK and in the US, these two groups appear to lead fairly separate professional lives, with predominantly separate concerns, methods, values, employment contexts and literature. Indeed, an overview of the journals in which members of the two groups tend to publish reveals remarkably little overlap.

Professional organisations differentiate the two groups: within the BPS the 'scientific' or 'academic' Education Section is separate from the 'professional' Division of Educational and Child Psychology; the APA differentiates Division 15, Educational Psychology, from Division 16, School Psychology, and internationally, the International School Psychologists Association (ISPA) has very different concerns and activities from either the Division of Educational, Instructional and School Psychology of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) or the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI).

In the UK, 'academic' educational psychology is sometimes referred to as 'psychology of education', while the nomenclature is less confusing in the USA where there is a distinction between *educational psychologists* who are mainly academics and researchers, and *school psychologists*, who are mainly practitioners (Grinder 1978, Wittrock and Farley 1989). However, with the enormous growth in service-

providers and the more professional side of psychology over the recent period, there are 'academic' educational psychologists in the USA seeking to increase the scope of the discipline and blur the boundaries between research and professional practice:

'If we define educational psychology as a discipline whose goal is to promote learning practices in specifically prescribed situations, then educational psychology clearly is able to claim its own knowledge base and methodology for the foundations of professional practice' (Houtz & Lewis 1994, p.8).

This extended definition and role for what is traditionally considered to be the research 'end' of this discipline, moving more towards a professional practice function, is interesting in that it captures the role claimed by many British practitioner educational psychologists, i.e. that of promoting successful learning through the application of psychology.

In the UK, practitioners working in the school system are always referred to as *educational psychologists* (EPs), but this term is frequently used also to refer to psychologists working in universities in the field of education as academics and researchers, a fact which can lead to confusion (Stones 1970, Schwieso 1993a). For this reason, in the UK, the 'academic' field is sometimes also referred to as the *psychology of education* (Schwieso 1993a, Francis 1995). Burden (1994) is keen to differentiate the groups, while leaving no doubt of their common roots in applied psychology:

'although the terms educational and school psychology are sometimes used interchangeably, they actually represent two different but related schools of applied psychology' (Burden 1994, p. 294).

On both sides of the Atlantic, there is an issue over the identity of educational psychology, in part related to the question over its origins and its epistemology referred to above. Wittrock & Farley (1989), though optimistic about its future, nevertheless, return repeatedly to the search for its identity; Stones (1970) expresses the difficulty:

'A great problem facing the student of educational psychology is the difficulty of deciding exactly what it is... at times the term educational psychology has embraced a strand of theory and practice which owes

little if anything to experiment or scientific investigation and yet which confidently provides 'explanations' of aspects of children's behaviour and prescriptive formulas for educational practice' (Stones 1970: p.1).

Practitioner educational psychologists are well-known for debating over their identity and role (see below).

The scope of educational psychology.

In spite of some of the more philosophical doubts about the identity of educational psychology, a large number of standard textbooks describe the application of the traditionally relevant areas in psychology (teaching and learning, motivation, cognitive development, assessment, language, personality, social psychology, intelligence) to education (see Francis 1995). In the US, degree courses in educational psychology exist at undergraduate and Master's level, while in this country it is taught as an academic or a professional field only at Master's level. Thus for example, a Master's course (academic) aims to 'develop participants' understanding of psychological perspectives on educational issues (classroom interaction, learning and development) and provides a training in appropriate research methods (qualitative and quantitative research methods together with education in statistical techniques)' (Institute of Education prospectus 1996-7). The BPS core curriculum for professional educational psychology courses defines the scope as: personal skills and communication, collecting information and assessment, intervention approaches, disabling conditions and special educational needs, professional practice, research and evaluation, issues in child development (BPS Core Curriculum for training courses in educational psychology 1990 and see Wolfendale et al 1992, p.10, Coolican 1996).

In these two Master's courses in educational psychology, the former (the 'academic' course) makes mention of 'psychological perspectives' rather than specific psychological theories per se; in the second case (the 'professional' course) there is very little direct mention of psychology as a field. These considerations are important when we consider educational psychology as applied psychology.

Educational psychology as Applied psychology

What is applied psychology?

There are three ways of defining applied psychology, either as (applied) research or as (applied) practice, or both. These are sometimes used interchangeably, and sometimes confused. The International Association of Applied Psychology, founded in 1920, originally with the name 'Psychotechnology' emphasises the 'scientific' aspect of applied psychology in stating as its aim *'to establish contact between those who..devote themselves to scientific work in the various fields of applied psychology, and to advance the study and achievement of means likely to contribute to the scientific and social development in these fields'* (IAAP Constitution Article 1). Apart from the original title which implies a more technical aspect, this statement appears to take for granted the existence of various fields of applied psychology and makes no attempt to define it.

In its pilot project to develop occupational standards in applied psychology, the key purpose statement of applied psychology is "to develop and apply psychological principles, knowledge, models and methods in an ethical and scientific way in order to promote the development, well-being and effectiveness of individuals, groups, organisations and society" (Bartram 1995).

Key roles for applied psychologists are defined through functional analysis as:

- * develop, implement and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice
- * apply psychological and related methods, concepts, models, theories and knowledge
- * research and develop new and existing methods, concepts, models, theories and instruments in psychology
- * communicate psychological knowledge, principles, methods, needs and policy requirements
- * manage the provision of psychological systems, services and resources

- * develop and train individuals to apply psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures

Middleton and Edwards (1985) emphasise that ' *a clear relationship between theory and application is fundamental to the development of a discipline that has to be capable of making informed and relevant contributions to issues and problems of the modern world*' (p. 146). They prefer to distinguish between 'theory driven' ('pure') and 'need driven' ('applied') research and to break down the barriers between academic and practical psychology by encouraging 'theory-driven research in the contexts of ordinary life', and thus entitling psychology to its claim to relevance and applicability. This point is also made by Sigston (1996) who calls for 'the improvement of dialogue between researchers and practitioners, making better matches between research questions and methodologies, and the use of action research methods by practitioners' (p.9).

Belbin (1979), in an article distinguishing between 'applied' and 'applicable' research, suggests that both C.S Myers and Sir Frederic Bartlett, early British applied psychologists,

'showed that psychology was applicable to a wide range of important but practical questions in everyday life.....(and) that the way to make psychology applicable was to concentrate first on topical problems and then to develop theories, ideas and solutions rather than the more familiar alternative of starting with theories and techniques and then seeking to employ them to the world outside' (Belbin, p. 241)

This illustrates one of the tensions within applied psychology, namely the question of how psychology is applied, and in particular the relationship and respective roles of theories and practical questions.

Gale & Chapman (1984) make the case for applied psychology as a unitary discipline that must be based on a broad foundation of psychological theory and research. Several authors maintain that the different branches of applied psychology have more commonalities than differences (Pearson & Howarth 1982, BPS 1984, Gale & Chapman 1984, Hartley & Branthwaite 1989, Gale 1994). However, the literature does not always make the distinction between 'applied research' and 'applied practice', i.e. between researchers and

practitioners, who, it is argued here, have very different functions, value systems, and relationships with the discipline of psychology. For example, a 'service' definition is found in 'applied psychologists are people who, in their jobs, try to use their skills to help other people' (Hartley & Branthwaite 1989), while others imply a differentiation between applied research and applied practice (Spielberger 1984). Thus, there appear to be two groups of applied psychologists, those with a research function (who apply psychology to a research field e.g. education, industry, organisations, cross-cultural studies, transport) , and those with a service function (who apply psychology to solve immediate human problems from a face to face client perspective e.g. clinical, educational, forensic, occupational psychologists working as practitioners). A question may be asked how far these two groups could be said to exist on a continuum of research and practice, and how far their modes of application are discrete and discontinuous.

Let us consider, for the moment, a definition of educational psychology as applied psychology. As noted above, it is possible to distinguish between applied research and applied practice (and see Spurgeon, Davies & Chapman 1994), and to distinguish further between 'applied' and 'applicable' research (Belbin 1979, Watts 1984). According to Belbin, 'a strong technique orientation favours an applied approach, while a strong problem orientation favours an applicable approach' (p. 242). Within the field of education those engaged in applied research would be mainly the 'academic' educational psychologists (or psychologists of education), engaged in research and in teacher training, while those engaged in applied practice, would be mainly the professional educational psychologists working predominantly in local authorities. This is an important distinction to make, since the notion of 'applied' is frequently not distinguished from the notion of 'practical' or 'practitioner'. Both groups lay claim to the application of psychology.

Before moving on to consider the basis for these claims, we need to consider the relationship between basic and applied psychology. On the one hand are those who claim a direct relationship between the 'science' or theory and its application (see above and e.g. Davidson 1977, Duckworth 1981, Mittler 1982, Spielberger 1984). According to this view, there is a direct relationship from the theory to its

application, whether this be in terms of research or in terms of practice. Psychological theory develops first, and application follows from theory. A well-used example is the development and application of behavioural psychology, both in research and in practice (but see Schönplflug 1993, p. 8 and below). However, Middleton and Edwards (1985) point to a strong tension between pure and applied psychology

'there is currently a sense in which 'pure' psychology is psychology, while the applied field is the point where psychology meets the real world. Such a conception is ruinous both of theory and of practice' (p. 148).

In 1967 Grace Rawlings claimed to be the first "applied psychologist" President of the BPS and identified in her Presidential address some problems in applying psychology:

'Problems in applying psychology are not different from those experienced in applying other sciences. First the body of scientific knowledge must continue to grow; secondly, so must the perception of its relevance to the study of problems external to it; thirdly, the professional education of those who apply the science has to be furthered and improved; fourthly, there should be feedback of problems for the applied fields to the "pure" scientists' (Rawlings 1967, p. 2)

An alternative view is expressed by Schönplflug, who argues that the separate origins and traditions of basic psychology with its 'ontological orientation', and applied psychology with its 'pragmatic orientation' make them incompatible (Schönplflug 1993, 1994). In contrast to the natural sciences, he is unable to find 'linear progress' from basic psychology to applied psychology, according to a 'two-stage model' 'which claims a foundation of practical work within basic research'. He suggests that applied psychology gradually evolved much earlier than the 20th century from 'the pragmatic tradition' which embraced concerns such as 'decision making, organisation, production of goods, maintenance, and consumption'. With very separate roots and traditions, *'apparently, basic and applied psychology formed a coalition'* (Schönplflug, 1983 p.21). This coalition enabled universities to recruit students, and practitioners to gain status, and is most clearly evident in psychology curricula and training programmes, which require professional (applied) psychologists to have a foundation in basic psychology and espouse the scientist-practitioner model of training. However, in his article, Schönplflug

highlights some of the continuing problems for this 'coalition' where 'doubts and complaints, conflicts and tensions indicate a continuing polarisation between basic and applied psychology' (Schönplflug op. cit., p. 23).

Hastings and Schwieso (1987) point to the need for caution over claims for the direct applicability of educational psychology:

'the generation of such high expectations for educational psychology rests on a belief which is commonly held about the relationship between scientific understanding on the one hand and practice on the other.....that action follows from theoretical understanding' (p. 2).

These authors go on to identify a problem for educational psychology; they point out that the main aim of psychology as a science is to 'describe and generate understanding' rather than to 'change or influence things'; although it may be argued that educational psychology is different, since its concerns lie within a field of practice, most of the literature in this field 'has been concerned more with the development of understanding than with informing practice in any direct way'. Thus, whether one sees psychology as engaged in the search for general laws or understanding of a more individual and interactionist position (see Francis 1995), the bridge with practice provides a considerable challenge (Mittler 1982). This has not helped the position of psychology as a discipline in initial teacher education. Educational psychology, seeking to maintain its roots and base in psychology as a 'science' finds problematical its applicability to the field of education.

This is a central issue for educational psychology as applied psychology.

'Any belief that empirical research will yield findings from which it could be deduced exactly what should be done in any particular context, is fundamentally flawed.....this does not mean that we think educational psychology has become a service industry and abandoned attempts at generating theories to account for its findings, merely that this has become a less prominent aim' (Hastings & Schwieso 1987, p.3-4).

Schwieso, Hastings and Stainthorp (1992) are critical of a model of the relationship between theory and practice which 'suggests that

psychological knowledge and understanding can be "applied" by teachers - the technologists - so as to achieve their practical purposes' (p. 112). They suggest, first, that the prime purpose of the discipline (of psychology) is to advance understanding, not practice, and second, that much relevant research in the field (of educational psychology) arises from practical and professional concerns, rather than concerns of basic psychology, and third, that psychology and education should interact mutually to 'use psychology and psychological methodologies in the service of education'.

Despite these difficulties, we find an impressive confidence in the literature over the application of psychology to education. In her valedictory lecture in 1994, Hazel Francis described different models of application of psychology to education (Francis 1995). According to the first model, 'one-way traffic', educational psychology is a specialised branch of psychology characterised by selection of content to be transmitted to teachers (education). In the second model, educational psychology is a specialised branch of psychology, 'selecting aspects of general psychology to test in educational contexts before informing psychology of the results and transmitting the content to teachers' (Francis 1995, p. 11). The third model 'shows a more balanced and autonomous relationship with psychology on the one hand and education on the other where 'the field develops its own research, drawing on training from psychology but addressing educational problems from a dual perspective. It is a research field in its own right, developing research in educational contexts and submitting it for testing within educational provision' (ibid p. 15). Francis' fourth, and preferred, model provides an educational psychology which 'truly deserves the name' and is

'an educationally grounded psychological field, developed by psychologists researching educational concerns in education contexts and communicating effectively with teachers' (ibid p. 16).

Thus she defines educational psychologists as 'psychologists at work in education'.

This is also a claim made by practitioner psychologists where the different branches of practitioner psychology, clinical, educational,

forensic and occupational all make clear claims to apply psychology and to have their roots in psychology, or even psychological science. All claim to apply psychological theory to a particular field of activity or service, and the predominant model for practitioner psychology and the basis for psychology as a professional activity is the scientist practitioner model (see chapter 3). Together with the other groups of applied psychologists, clinical, counselling, forensic, and occupational, educational psychologists are represented in the Applied Psychology Project which is developing occupational standards in applied psychology for NVQs at level 5. The 'official literature' of the BPS states that 'like all applied psychologists, an educational psychologist uses a knowledge of the principles and techniques of psychology, applying them in a particular context (BPS 1995a, p.13) and 'educational psychologists are applied psychologists working both within the school system and in the community' (BPS 1995b, p.6).

Psychology as a base for application or professional training: the nature of psychological theory underpinning professional practice.

The nature of the psychology degree (Graduate Basis for Registration of the British Psychological Society)

Schönpflug (1983, op. cit.) refers to the coalition between basic and applied psychology, and to the mutual benefits obtained in most (developed) countries through requiring a foundation in basic psychology prior to professional training or specialisation (see chapter 3). According to this view, scientific psychology benefits in terms of student numbers due to a widespread and growing interest in psychological practice, while practitioner psychology benefits through the status and respectability of a scientific base to practice. This is the basis for the scientist-practitioner model, widely supported by practitioners across the Western world (Barlow, Hayes & Nelson 1984, Pilgrim & Treacher 1992, see chapter 3). The foundation in basic (theoretical) psychology is a fact which contributes to the professional status of psychologists (see chapter 3).

The British Psychological Society is in a powerful position in the UK in setting the standards for training and accrediting postgraduate

training courses in professional psychology in this country; it requires that all entrants to postgraduate professional training in psychology are eligible for the Graduate Basis for Registration. This means that all applicants for postgraduate professional training must first have a recognised (by BPS) Honours psychology degree; this is defined as equivalent to the breadth and standard of the BPS Qualifying Examination (QE) which provides the yardstick by which first degree (BSc/BA) courses are evaluated. All degree courses in the UK are 'accredited' by the BPS through a comparison of their curricula with that of the QE, in order to establish "equivalence".

The BPS is explicit about its own definition of a basic 'core' psychology; the QE syllabus covers the following areas of psychology which could therefore be said to define the 'standard' or theoretical basis for progressing to professional training: (i) biological foundations and cognitive processes (biological foundations of behaviour, perception, learning and memory, thinking and language) (ii) individual differences, social and developmental psychology (personality and intelligence, social psychology, developmental psychology) (iii) research design and quantitative methods in psychology (conceptual research issues, practical research issues, quantitative methods) (iv) general psychology (v) advanced option in one area. This foundation is considered to be a prerequisite for professional training, and is used to evaluate the equivalence of qualifications obtained in other countries.

On the other hand, Coolican (1996) suggests that 'the areas of study most relevant to educational psychology are studies of child development, the development of learning and understanding in young children, the study of behavioural and emotional difficulties in children and adolescents, testing and assessment of children and adolescents...recently influenced by studies of how organisations operate and what makes them effective and ecological approaches to understanding learning and behaviour' (p. 79). However, it is not clear from the literature that there is a mechanism for the requirements of postgraduate courses to influence the content of the undergraduate degree, or for a discussion of the relationship between the 'theoretical foundation' i.e. the Graduate Basis for Registration of the BPS and the postgraduate professional courses.

A Core curriculum of psychology?

Matarazzo (1987) argues persuasively for a core knowledge of psychology in the USA, based on the four major content areas of: biological bases, cognitive-affective bases, social bases, individual differences, suggesting that 'core knowledge in the science and profession of psychology' is applied in the different arenas of application. However, despite what appears to be a clear definition of the scope and breadth of the psychology degree by the BPS in the UK, it is clear that 'there is no formal consensus as to what intending professional trainees in psychology require' (Radford 1992, and see Radford & Rose 1989).

The undergraduate psychology degree has been subjected to critical investigation (Gale 1990), criticism that it has remained virtually unchanged over a quarter of a century (ibid. p. 488), that it prepares its graduates for what has been deemed a narrow career in research for which there are few opportunities, and that it may not include the areas and approaches considered most relevant, useful or interesting to its students, the majority of whom go into psychology with an interest in psychological practice and work in the human welfare field. Burden goes further in writing about the undergraduate degree as the foundation for postgraduate training in educational psychology and criticises it as the positivist 'baggage' that we carry with us from our initial psychology degrees (Burden 1992). Writing about counselling psychology, Williams and Irving (1996) highlight a conflict of paradigms within psychology, suggesting a 'conceptual impasse'. They go on to point out that 'the theoretical and conceptual foundations of counselling psychology are based upon knowledge formulated from within a logical empiricist framework..., yet the actual practice and development of counselling psychology is universally claimed to be phenomenological'. This illustrates a potential tension between the paradigms taught and valued by many universities (and the BPS) at the undergraduate level, with those increasingly used and valued by practitioner psychologists working in a human service function.

The requirement that all trainees who wish to continue to a recognised professional training in 'applied psychology' have a

foundation in psychology equivalent to the Graduate Basis for Registration must, at least if taken at its face value, be based on the assumption either that professional psychologists will apply a certain body of knowledge or theory or that they will make use of psychological methods in their subsequent work as applied psychologists. This will be considered in chapter 3, which concerns professional training, and the nature of the professions.

We turn now to consider the profession of educational psychology, the practitioner branch of educational psychology.

Practitioner Educational psychology

The profession of educational psychology (hereafter referred to as EP), or the practitioner or service side of the discipline is referred to in the USA and several other countries as 'school psychology' and in the UK as 'educational psychology'. It has always had a service function, usually in relation to the operation and administration of the school system. As such, conflicts over the application of psychology may be inherent in its practice.

A number of volumes have been devoted to this profession in the UK (Chazan et al 1974, Gillham 1978, Lindsay and Miller 1991, Wolfendale et al 1992, and see Sigston et al 1996), though a glance at the professional journals suggests that the profession has to a greater or lesser extent continuously been seeking an identity and grappling with the tensions which may be inherent in the task of applying psychology within the framework of an education service, tensions which have been exacerbated since the profession achieved a statutory role following the 1981 Education Act (DES 1981). This appears to mirror the situation in the USA where there is also a considerable number of volumes devoted to educational psychology practice (e.g. Gutkin and Reynolds 1990, Reynolds, Elliott, Gutkin & Witt 1984) and where 'school psychologists have deliberated about origin, identity, and appropriate roles throughout their brief history' (Cobb 1990).

The nature of practitioner educational psychology (EP).

As mentioned in chapter 1, educational psychologists are entitled to be Chartered Psychologists: the notion of Chartered Psychologist implies both an equivalence of status and training amongst the different branches of professional psychology, and a scientific base in the discipline of psychology (the Graduate Basis for Registration of the BPS), suggesting that the recognised fields are clearly applications of psychology. The question arises here how far the specialism of educational psychology is, like other specialisms such as clinical psychology, counselling psychology, occupational psychology, an application of psychology, or an applied psychology. The assumption made by the professional organisation (which serves several purposes including that of defining standards of entry to the profession), is that the profession of psychologist bases its application on psychology, and that a standard or equivalent foundation of psychology of a breadth and standard defined by the BPS is necessary prior to further postgraduate qualification. However, this may not be such a straightforward assumption as it initially might seem.

A sample of statements of Educational Psychology Services suggest that the profession views itself as applying psychology. For example the Cumbria County Psychological Service mission statement states that

'We apply psychology to help people solve problems in an educational context and also in personal and organisational relationships....One task for service management is to balance the expectations and aspirations for psychology of a wide range of stakeholders' (Watmough & Thomson 1995),

Another County Service claims that

'the overall purpose of the County Psychological Service is to bring a specialised knowledge of psychology and its applications to promote the psychological and educational development of individuals and institutions', (Cheshire County Psychological Service).

The Surrey EPS states its common purpose as

To create the conditions by which Surrey EPs can apply psychology within a consultation framework. This allows educational psychologists to bring a variety of fresh perspectives to problematic situations, so that

those who are directly involved with children and young people can take action to promote positive change (Cameron 1995),

while another service lists amongst its aims 'to make a psychological contribution to the well-being of children from 0 to 19 years of age'. On the other hand, it is equally possible to find job descriptions which contain no mention of the word 'psychology'. It would appear that the profession itself is divided when it comes to expressing its aims and job descriptions.

There are two main aspects to the question whether educational psychology is applying psychology, the first concerning what it is that EPs might be applying, and the second concerning their place and role in the Education Service. We will return to these questions. The literature now restricts itself to the UK, since specific comparisons are beyond the scope of the thesis.

Early educational psychology (EP) (1913-1949)

Cyril Burt was appointed to the London County Council in 1913 as the first educational psychologist in the UK and certainly saw himself as a psychologist and as applying psychology. Indeed, as the first educational psychologist, he was also the first professional psychologist in the UK, and, arguably, the world (Sutherland & Sharp 1980). He was

'the first person who was primarily a psychologist, the first to function as a psychologist outside the walls of a university...the first Britisher to devote his life simply and solely to psychology' (Hearnshaw 1979: p.1).

Sutherland & Sharp (1980 op.cit.) point out that three themes are entangled in this appointment: 'the complex and ambivalent relationship of psychology with medicine; the importance of educational work and policy in bringing about an initial separation between the two, while yet proving unable to sustain the discipline in its subsequent development; and the continuing authority of traditional academic models and hierarchies' (p.181). The considerable advances which had been made in the fields of individual differences and psychological testing in the early years of this century coincided with developments and requirements in the school system, to create

the climate for this appointment (Dessent 1978, Quicke 1982b, Rose 1985, Pilgrim and Treacher 1992). The context for the appointment of a psychologist to the education service was even at the time political and bureaucratic, though Burt appeared genuinely convinced that his task was applying psychology. Medicine provided the role model, and in particular the notion of the doctor as 'the man of science', while Burt appeared to believe that the 'the discipline of education could only be developed by linking experimental psychological work to practical school problems at every stage' (Sutherland & Sharp 1980, p. 192).

Traditionally medical doctors had carried out the task of identifying 'backward children' within the recently introduced compulsory schooling system; Burt was employed in preference to another medical officer and the purpose of his appointment is explained as in part due to the inadequacies of the medical profession in coping with special school placement decisions, with the result that

'after some debate the council finally agreed to appoint a psychologist rather than an additional medical officer...The post was a half-time post...and the appointee was expected to fill in his remaining time with other assignments in teaching and research.' (Hearnshaw 1979, p.33).

It should be noted that Burt was appointed half time to practical tasks, and half time to research. However, he 'soon realised that if he was to achieve anything at all he had to subordinate purely academic to practical concerns' (quoted in Hearnshaw 1979, p.35). Revealingly, already in 1914, Burt wrote, (ibid p.35)

'I have come to realise in a very concrete way that a psychologist who is doing educational work is really starting a new and independent science. Educational psychology is not merely a branch of applied psychology. Medicine is not merely applied physiology. The medical investigator has been found, by practical exigencies, to build up an independent science of his own, of work not in the physiological laboratories, but in the hospital and by the bedside. Similarly the educational investigator cannot merely carry over the conclusions of academic psychology into the classroom. He has to work out almost every problem afresh, profiting by, but not simply relying on, his previous psychological training. He has to make short cuts to practical conclusions, which, for the time being, leave theory or pure science far behind. Education is thus not a simple field for the illustration of what is already known; it is, as you say, a great field for fresh research' (Burt 1914, quoted in Hearnshaw 1979, my emphasis).

Hearnshaw emphasises the practical in stating that *'Burt was first and foremost a practical applied psychologist, and it was because his feet were firmly planted on the ground that his advice was so often highly regarded by those in positions of authority'* (ibid p.35).

During his time as an educational psychologist Burt illustrated some of the tensions between the scientist and the practitioner or between objectivity and intuition in the profession of educational psychology, when he wrote:

'Tests were regarded as 'but the beginning, never the end, of the examination of the child....The scientist may standardise the method; to apply that method and to appraise the results, demands the tact, the experience and the imaginative insight of the teacher born and trained' (from *Mental and Scholastic Tests* 1921).

Burt worked as the Psychologist for London County Council (LCC) between 1913 and 1932, when he moved to University College, London (UCL); he was clearly identified as one who applied and carried out research in psychology. He saw his work for the London County Council as one aspect of his research work, and he moved easily from the LCC to UCL engaging in similar kind of work.

Although one of the main reasons for his appointment was to assist in making more accurate decisions (based on psychological assessment) over children's placement in special education, Burt clearly envisaged a broad role for psychologists within the education service, and one which applied psychology both to mainstream and marginal areas of the system, one which involved research and clinical work, and one which involved the clear application of psychological knowledge and techniques. As a 'practitioner' he was engaged in survey research, the adaptation and construction of tests and other research activities in addition to his clinical work, and himself maintained that the work of an educational psychologist was essentially that of a scientific investigator and researcher (Burt 1964, quoted in Dessent 1978, and Burt 1969).

The 'scientific' basis for Burt's work in relation to special education decision-making was given by the use of the 'IQ cut-off point'. Sutton

suggests that 'the origin of the cut-off point of 'IQ 70' in this country appears to have lain in the work of that most inventive and influential educational psychologist, Cyril Burt' (Sutton 1981, p.112). He quotes Burt (1921) 'mental deficiency must be regarded as an administrative rather than as a psychological concept....for immediate practical purposes the only satisfactory definition of mental deficiency is a percentage definition based on the amount of existing accommodation' (Sutton 1981, p.113). So 'the children for whom day special school is most appropriate are found among those whose limited ability corresponds with an intelligence quotient of about 55 to 70 or 75' (Ministry of Education 1946, quoted in Sutton 1981). The technology of IQ tests was given scientific credibility and authority, EPs had a monopoly over their administration, and it was thought that decisions could be made with objectivity and authority. Psychology, and psychology as a science, gave this activity its authority within the education system. The next educational psychologist appointed to a local authority was appointed to Leicester C.C. in 1931, though it was not until after the Second World War that LEA services began their real expansion (DES 1968).

However, between the two world wars, a more clinical branch of educational psychology emerged when the first interdisciplinary child guidance clinics were set up (Sampson 1980), with teams which included educational psychologists who thus took on a more clinical role, and, indeed, shared some common training with clinical psychologists (BPS 1955a and 1955b). This led to a narrowing of the role for educational psychologists, at least as envisaged on the basis of Burt's experience. Educational psychologists in Child Guidance Clinics tended to administer psychometric (and other) tests at the request of psychiatrists;

'many decisions of vital importance to the welfare of thousands of children are nowadays being based upon the findings of psychologists attached to Child Guidance Clinics. And these findings rest very largely on the presumed accuracy of certain indispensable psychometric tools...' (Vernon 1937).

In 1951 Wiseman was moved to complain that 'the term educational psychologist has come to be restricted to child psychologists working in child guidance clinics', urging a wider application and reminding

readers that in 1945 the Council of the BPS had issued a statement on the Usage of Certain Terms in Applied Psychology and recommending the following definitions:

Educational Psychologist: a psychologist who uses the science and methods of psychology in the field of education

Child Psychologist: a psychologist who specialises in the problems of childhood.... (Wiseman 1951)

The BPS statement here makes a clear commitment to the science of psychology as the base for the profession of educational psychology. It should be noted here in passing that the term 'child psychologist' has not had frequent usage in the UK. In the late 1970s the British Psychological Society conducted a survey of the work of clinical and educational psychologists with children (Wedell & Lambourne 1980, BPS 1981) though its report 'Psychological Services for Children' concluded that these services would probably continue to be offered by the two separate groups.

Developments in the profession of EP (1945-1968)

The profession of educational psychology emerged substantially after the Second World War and has to be seen in the context of the 1944 Education Act, compulsory schooling and the welfare system of the post-war reconstruction period (Ingleby 1974, Quicke 1982b, Rose 1985, Pilgrim & Treacher 1992). EPs were one of the 'new' professions whose

'knowledge and skills were exactly what was required by the architects of social policy who had the problem of devising a system of distributing welfare resources on a socially just basis' (Quicke 1982b).

Educational psychologists found themselves working either in Child Guidance Clinics (CGC) or in School Psychological Services. The Symposium on psychologists and psychiatrists in the Child Guidance Service (BJEP 1951-1953, vols. 21-23) illustrates the commitment of EPs, at least in CGCs, to the discipline of psychology. A much broader role for educational psychology services in applying psychology to schools was suggested in 1956 as part of a UNESCO report (Wall 1956) though it is not clear whether this matched any reality in a Psychological Service.

In September 1962, the BPS published a statement on The School Psychological Service, which defined the aim of the service as '*contributing to the healthy development of children through the application of psychological knowledge to education*' (BPS 1962). This again provides a broad role for the SPS, implying involvement with children in mainstream and special schools, and in the promotion of their well-being.

The Summerfield Report 1968

In 1965, the shortage of educational psychologists led the Government to set up a Working Party to 'consider the field of work of educational psychologists employed by local education authorities and the qualifications and training necessary...' This led to the publication of the Summerfield Report in 1968 (DES 1968) entitled Psychologists in Education Services. The authors of the Report had no doubt about the nature of educational psychology in its conclusions and recommendations that

'the particular contribution of psychologists in education services derives from their specialised study of psychological science and its application to education and other aspects of human development. It should be the main criterion in determining their work.' (Summerfield Report 6.3 and 6.R1).

Although the Summerfield Report recognised the pre-eminence of 'psychological science' for educational psychologists, a number of authors commenting on the Report found this conclusion less obvious (e.g. Moore 1969, Phillips 1971). Herein lies a tension between the psychological and the educational base of educational psychology which remains to the current time. Currie (1969), for example, emphasised the 'special close relationship between educational psychologists and the education service' and suggested that 'the educational aspect of the designation (educational psychologist) is as essential as the psychological aspect'. Roe (1975) positions the profession clearly within the local authority: 'the main base is in the schools and the local authority; from there he (sic) makes raids into psychology and brings back what booty he can'. Phillips (1971) agrees that 'the school psychologist should ideally work within a state of

tension engendered by two frames of reference: his (sic) 'clinical' commitment and his service to education' though admitting that educational psychologists are 'caught in a sharp polarity of concerns, their psychological clinical skills being employed on behalf of individual children, and their appointments being to an education setting'. Burt himself, however, commented 'an educational psychologist is primarily a psychologist not an educationist, and the chief emphasis therefore should rest on the practice of psychology rather than on the practice of teaching' (Burt 1969).

This point was endorsed by the Portsmouth evaluation of a psychological service in 1979:

'head teachers and teachers valued many aspects of the work of the educational psychologists, but particularly those which stemmed from their knowledge of psychological science and their scientific attitudes in tackling the problems referred' (Wright and Payne 1979).

The Summerfield Report recommended and led to considerable expansion in Psychological Services and in Training Courses and the profession was deemed, by many commentators, to have come of age.

"The Reconstructing Movement" 1975-1981

The late 1970s and the early 1980s witnessed strong opposition to the use of intelligence tests both from outside and within the profession. This coincided with developments within psychology, critical of its naive positivism, and espousing new paradigms, new methodologies, and ultimately new epistemologies (for example Smith et al. 1995a and 1995b). Developments within psychology of concepts such as subjectivity and social constructionism began to cause doubt to be cast on the objectivity and authority of psychologists (and psychology) (Shotter 1975, Henriques et al. 1984, Rose 1985, Harré 1993, Smith et al. 1995).

1975 brought in a new and more substantial role for educational psychologists, through the introduction of Circular 2/75 which transferred responsibility for making recommendations for special schooling from medical officers to educational psychologists. Although educational psychology was now said to have 'come of age' (Wright

1975), the emergence of the 'reconstructing movement' (Gillham 1978, McPherson & Sutton 1981) reflected a growing dissatisfaction with what came to be referred to as the 'traditional model', and increasing debate over the EP role. Whereas up to now, educational psychologists had been substantially concerned, either in Child Guidance Clinics with clinical aspects of children's welfare, and in School Psychological Services with individual remediation, and special education provision, Gillham (1978) asserted that 'the heart of educational psychology must be the theory and technology of change' (p.20), a very different model from either the clinical model or the identification model of traditional EP practice.

The profession became increasingly concerned over its identity and its role and ways of work as shown by numerous articles in the journals of the profession at the time (e.g. Topping 1977, 1978, Hedderley 1979). These concerns focused on the limitations of psychometric assessment (e.g. Burden 1973), outside expectations and perceptions of EPs' work (e.g. Freeman & Topping 1976, Acklaw 1979), the problems of individual casework (e.g. Hart 1979, Gregory 1980), the constraints of working with a 'within-child' paradigm faced with the clear contributions of school or social systems to children's difficulties (e.g. Burden 1978, Thomas 1985), the growing numbers of children being labelled as 'maladjusted' or as 'moderately educationally subnormal'. Quicke (1984) has summarised some of these concerns as the 'reconstructionist critique' and the 'practitioner critique': 'the first is a fundamentalist critique of the dominant paradigm of practice, i.e. a critique of the very nature of the psychology which the EP is trying to deliver to schools, whilst the second is more to do with practical concerns, i.e. how to deliver this psychology in new circumstances rather than the question of whether it's worth delivering at all' (p.127).

Much of this debate reflected both a tension between the backgrounds of education and psychology, and a tension between an 'individual' and a 'systems' approach. Pond (1982) illustrates the tension for EPs resulting from their background as teachers:

'as would be expected from their pedagogical background, their main interest was in cognitive testing and remedial teaching.....when faced



with disruptive children in schools, their instinct, perhaps left over from their teaching experience, is to save the institution at the expense of the individual; that is, sacrifice the child for the sake of peace in the classroom'. (p.50).

Pond suggests that EPs find themselves in a difficult position in the education service where 'the spectacle of a thousand educational psychologists disguised as Trojan horses might be somewhat intimidating to the teaching establishment' (Pond 1982, p.50). While this is a somewhat bizarre image, it does illustrate the position in which educational psychologists may find themselves, going into schools, and finding the schools less than satisfactory to meet the needs of children who have been identified by schools as 'problems', yet having their position defined in relation to the school and the local authority which may make it difficult to be critical of the education system. Pond suggests that there are strong arguments for a greater independence from education, and although he acknowledges that 'in this harsh practical world education authorities are going to be reluctant to pay educational psychologists to bring down the system', nevertheless suggests that 'it might be healthy for educational psychologists to think carefully about their criteria of competence independent of their employability by LEAs' (p.51).

The Warnock report, followed by the 1981 Education Act, radically altered the nature and role of educational psychology services. Educational psychologists gained a statutory role in the assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and, as such, their employment was guaranteed. Thus, the profession was given, and received willingly, considerable responsibility in the administrative decision-making over the allocation of additional resources, with the result that, according to many commentators, their role became increasingly bureaucratic, and decreasingly psychological (Norwich 1983, Dessent 1987). The role of defining resource-worthiness or acting as a gatekeeper to resources may be seen merely as a development of the role for which Burt was appointed in 1913, a role of categorising and sorting, advising the authorities which children would benefit from which schooling; the psychological technology of testing was thought to be the appropriate tool for this. Dessent has suggested that 'the resource issue both underpins and undermines the

role of educational psychologists as a support service to mainstream schools' (Dessent 1988, p. 75, and see Dessent 1987), and that 'the basis for the employment of educational psychologists within LEAs is centrally linked to resourcing issues' (ibid p. 84).

Indeed, the HMI report already in 1989 (DES 1989) was raising questions over the extent to which EPs were actually using their specialist skills and knowledge (in psychology) suggesting that

'through their knowledge of child development and of learning processes, and from the breadth of their experience, psychologists should be well placed to provide that range of initiatives and support needed to enhance the educational opportunities of children and young people throughout the decade' (DES 1989:84).

The current position for the profession of EP: the psychology in educational psychology 1981-1996

The period 1981-1996 has seen unprecedented legislative and policy changes within the education service, in particular in the way that provision for pupils with SEN is organised. Educational psychologists have been considerably affected by this and have continued to debate their role (e.g. Jones & Frederickson 1990, Wolfendale et al. 1992, Stobie 1996). They find themselves in a situation where their position in the LEA is guaranteed provided that they serve the functions which are required by the LEA i.e. defining 'resourceworthiness' (Dessent 1994) of pupils with SEN.

Many EPs are unsure about the nature and contribution of the psychological advice required by the legislation, and call for psychologists' assessment to be more meaningful (e.g. Boxer et al. 1991, Frederickson et al. 1991). Threats of litigation and the tribunals are in some cases leading EPs to return to more traditional forms of assessment, and current methods for allocating additional resources create a tendency to use explanations 'within child' rather than broader explanations for children's difficulties. The changing employment and legislative context continues to cause the profession to reappraise its role (e.g. Farrell 1989, Burden 1992, Lindsay & Lunt 1993), though not without some optimism (e.g. Farrell 1989).

The 1981 Act may have provided educational psychologists with a 'meal ticket' and guaranteed their position within the local authority bureaucracy, but it is difficult to see how it enhanced their role as psychologists. Sutton, for example, considered that the legislation set psychologists back 20 years (Sutton 1985, quoted in Gregory 1993, p. 68), while Gregory (ibid) suggested that 'statementing' had virtually excluded all other types of psychologists' work. Indeed the influence of the local government bureaucracy surrounding the 1981 Act was felt to be so negative that Gregory was led to suggest that 'maybe a widespread move to the private sector by educational psychologists will promote the discipline of psychology more so than remaining in the public sector' (ibid p. 70). As mentioned in chapter 1, the brief opportunity provided by the threat of delegation of funding to schools led to Educational Psychology Services producing brochures outlining 'psychological services', but their being granted guaranteed exemption from delegation because of the status of their role and work returned them 'to the lower echelons of public services, to fulfil the pre-ordained functions like servicing the 1981 Education Act instead of going out to husband valuable resources and create new knowledge' (Sutton, quoted in Gregory p. 70).

Many educational psychologists are critical of the current situation (e.g. Faupel and Norgate 1993) in which they perceive educational psychologists to be placed in the role of 'gatekeepers'.

'Perhaps the single greatest disaster for educational psychologist services, as a result of the procedures of the 1981 Act, was to be seen as 'providers' of additional resources to schools via Formal Assessments.... Short term status enhancement and perceived power has led to educational psychologists becoming street level bureaucrats' (p.132).

The 1988 Education Reform Act (and the threat of delegation of their funding) caused Educational Psychology Services yet again to examine their role, and, in many cases, to justify their continued role within the LEA (e.g. Lucas 1989, Pearson 1989)

On the other hand, Gale (1991, 1996) is confident that 'psychology has a great deal to offer within education' although 'psychologists themselves may lack sufficient confidence in psychology and its power to change the world we live in' (Gale 1991, p. 67). He suggests that

psychologists should be aiming to 'create the conditions under which teaching and learning are pleasurable, positive, and free of negative emotion and disappointment. They will be concerned with organisational and personal affect. They will tackle structures, processes and personal experiences' (ibid. p. 72). Gale puts forward a vision of psychologists working in schools using psychological skills, introducing a psychological dimension, contributing to making these more 'healthy' learning environments, a vision which is very different from either the 'fire-brigade' or 'undertaker' model or the model of 'gatekeeper' to increasingly scarce resources for pupils with SEN. Gale poses starkly the dilemma for EPs, in relation to their employment base, and the key role in which they find themselves as part of a bureaucratic system

'Will teachers and students see educational psychology not as a friend and facilitator but as a pawn or agent of aversive regimentation and exploitation? In seeking to determine which side our own bread is buttered, are we more concerned with our own fortune than those of our clients?' (Gale 1991, p. 67).

This dilemma is echoed by Burden (1994) who suggests that EPs should be using an interactionist theory of human behaviour to help teachers, students and their families, rather than acting as gatekeepers to scarce resources. Perhaps as a result of the changes affecting Educational Psychology Services, there appears to be a call for a return to psychological theory, or a call for the injection of psychology into educational psychology (e.g. Gray 1992, Lunt & Farrell 1994, Maliphant 1994).

The current situation in the profession has been summarised by Leyden and Miller (1996) as

'educational psychologists have no difficulty in acknowledging that their professional identity is or should be rooted in the academic discipline of psychology. Greater scope for debate and disagreement, however, may arise from attempts to make these links more explicit. How much of a typical undergraduate psychology degree does in fact find itself into the professional practice of the average educational psychologist, or vice versa? Major perspectives within psychology-the cognitive, developmental, social, organisational-clearly have the potential to inform and extend the practice of professionals. But educational psychologists are also charged to function within a wider social and political context dominated by such themes as equal opportunities, human rights, ethical and financial

accountability, and the legislation surrounding pupils with special educational needs' (p.3).

The developments and changes over the past 15 years leave the profession of the 1990s asking: where is the psychology in educational psychology (e.g. Dessent 1992). In contrast to its 'sister' specialisms in clinical, counselling and occupational psychology, educational psychology has found itself in a situation where historical, social, political factors have combined to create a psychological role for itself. It continues to face the challenge posed by Dessent in 1988

"The largely unmet challenge for educational psychology and educational psychologists lies in the development of a psychology of schooling. This has the potential to provide a link between two types of educational psychology: the educational psychology which forms part of most teacher education and the educational psychology of practising LEA-based EPs (Dessent 1988, p.87)

This chapter has attempted to look at the field of educational psychology, some of the difficulties in applying psychology, and the way in which professional educational psychology is applying psychology. The literature reflects some of the dilemmas for both the discipline and the profession in relation to the application of psychology in education; for the profession, these are in considerable part due to the position of this professional group within the LEA and to a lack of clarity over the role and contribution of psychology within the school system.

Chapter 3

Professional education and training of educational psychologists

Introduction

Training for professional psychologists (as Chartered Psychologists) in the United Kingdom consists of a foundation of theory or knowledge (the undergraduate psychology degree) followed by a period of three years' further study and/or practice in psychology (see chapter 1, page 2). In the UK, as in the USA, professional applied psychologists claim to adhere to the scientist practitioner model. This is most easily exemplified in the UK through the training in clinical psychology, which consists now of three years' undergraduate psychology degree (knowledge or theory) followed by a three year doctorate involving the integration of theory and practice, and modelled on the scientist practitioner model formulated in 1949 at a major conference on training for clinical psychology held in Boulder, Colorado (Raimy 1950).

Some of the problems inherent in this model were clearly anticipated at this conference:

'Too often, however, clinical psychologists have been trained in rigorous thinking about nonclinical subject matter, and clinical problems have been dismissed as lacking in "scientific" respectability. As a result, many clinicians have been unable to bridge the gap between their formal training and scientific thinking on the one hand, and the demands of practice on the other. As time passes and their skills become more satisfying to themselves and to others, the task of thinking systematically and impartially becomes more difficult' (Raimy 1950, quoted in Barlow, Hayes & Nelson 1984, p. 9)

These are echoed by Pilgrim and Treacher (1992) 'British training programmes have consistently espoused the scientist-professional model and in doing so have glossed over the difficulties that are intrinsic to the model' (p. 80). Nevertheless this model dominates professional training of psychologists both in the USA and in the UK (Pryzwansky & Wendt 1987, cited in Dobson & Dobson 1993, Kendall & Norton-Ford 1982, Marzillier & Hall 1992). In its strictest form, one would expect that the scientist aspect of the role requires the

discovery of new knowledge through basic and applied research, while the practitioner aspect requires the application of the principles developed by the scientist (see also Cronshaw 1993), and the exercise of some interpersonal skills (e.g. Spielberger 1984).

Describing historical developments in professional training for psychologists in the USA, Peterson (1991) has described three phases: the pre-professional, the scientist-professional, and the professional phase, each implying a different relationship between research and practice. Fundamental to professional training in the US is the premise that 'education and training for practice is grounded in the evolving knowledge base derived from the scientific discipline of psychology' (JCPEP 1990, quoted in Peterson p. 425). According to Peterson, the pre-professional phase (pre-Boulder conference) implied a fairly direct though one-way linkage of science and practice: 'once the laws of psychological nature were known, applied research could produce the technology required for effective professional service' (p.425). Thus, basic science led to applied research which in turn led to technology leading to professional application in relation to the client. The second phase, the 'scientist practitioner' phase was said by Peterson to assume a more reciprocal relationship between research and practice, though since the 'science-profession was still dedicated fundamentally to advancing knowledge and improving technology.....students were trained to do theory-driven, verificational research within a positivist philosophy of science carried over from the preprofessional phase' (p.425). Peterson claims that clinical psychology has now moved into the third phase, the professional phase, which implies a prioritising of professional activity as disciplined inquiry, with the needs of the client rather than the needs of science driving research. This implies a different approach to research and inquiry, with implications for professional training.

This (professional) model emphasises the fundamental differences between science and practice: 'science begins and ends in a body of systematic knowledge....professional activity begins and ends in the condition of the client' (p.425-6). According to this way of looking at developments in professional training in psychology in the USA, the priority of science in the first phase gave way to what turned out to be

an uneasy mutual relationship between science and practice in the second model, which now gives way to the priority of professional practice in the third model. Peterson concludes by referring to the relationship between science and practice in this profession:

'a science-based profession can be formed in either of two ways. Practice can be restricted to fit the science, or the science can be developed to fit the practice...the best thing scientists in psychology can do to improve practice is not to deride their professional colleagues for going beyond tested knowledge but to extend the base of disciplined knowledge and improve the procedures that professionals need to meet the demands of public service' (ibid, p.429).

This relates to the discussion on the relationship between basic and applied psychology in the chapter 2.

The literature from clinical psychology has been used here freely, since educational psychologists in the UK claim equivalent status and training with other Chartered Psychologists within the BPS. Chartered Psychologist status requires a period of qualification of at least six years (BPS 1994a). Educational psychologists in England and Wales spend their three postgraduate years leading to Chartered Psychologist Status rather differently from clinical psychologists, with one year 'granted' for the teaching qualification and experience required in England and Wales, one year studying on a full-time Master's degree which aims to integrate theory and practice (such as the one under study in this research), followed by one year 'granted' for (supervised) practice (equivalent to 'internship') (see chapter 1, page 1). This has been pointed out to be a matter of concern to the profession (Lunt & Carroll 1996), particularly in the context of the profession seeking statutory registration through a Psychologists' Law protecting the title to those qualified as Chartered Psychologists.

Psychologists in the UK regard themselves as members of a "profession". They have a professional body (BPS), which determines the qualifications for entry and accredits training programmes and implements standards of ethical conduct and professional practice, they have a Royal Charter, and membership of professional organisations such as the United Kingdom Inter-Professional Group (UKIPG). While suggesting that 'psychology has had more trouble than most disciplines in defining itself as a profession', Peterson suggests

that the most important characteristic of a profession is 'a demonstrably useful, educationally communicable technology based in a complex, reasonably well-established intellectual discipline' (Peterson, 1976, p. 573), going on in his article to demonstrate the case for professional psychology as 'applied general psychology'.

Chapter 2 highlighted some of the problems in the relationship between pure and applied psychology. In relation to professional psychology, this point is made by Schönplflug, who suggests further that 'practical psychology has formed a coalition with basic psychology in order to obtain and defend privileges as a profession.....psychological practitioners need advanced theories of behaviour not so much for treating their clients and advising organisations. They rather need basic psychology to legitimate their profession as equivalent to medicine, economics and other professions' (Schönplflug 1994).

As outlined in chapter 1, professional training for many professions is faced by a problematical relationship between theory and practice and the difficulties of integrating them during the training period. This relationship concerns in part the link between university based theory and 'real world' practice, and their perceived relevance, and in part the question how far professional training should prepare trainees for the job as it is carried out in practice, and how far it should 'lead' and influence the field, in order to progress the profession.

This chapter will examine how far educational psychologists can be considered to be members of a profession. Implicit within this notion is the idea of professional knowledge and competence, which is examined in relation to psychology. I move on to consider professional training, and the relationship between theory and practice in professional training. Here I also draw on literature from other professions, in particular teaching and social work, with brief reference to medicine. Many professional training programmes have been and are currently influenced by Schön's (1983, 1987) concept of the 'reflective practitioner' which is examined as a possible means to link theory with practice. The chapter concludes with a description of

some of the current issues for professional training in educational psychology in the UK.

The professions: are educational psychologists members of a profession?

Cronshaw (1993) defines a profession as ' a service-related work role requiring a specialised knowledge base and a lengthy, intensive academic preparation'. In general, the professions are usually distinguished from others by having a unique body of knowledge and set of skills, a code of ethics and conduct, self-regulation and disciplinary procedures for their members (Peterson 1976, Dobson & Dobson 1993, Allaker & Shapland 1994, Eraut 1994). Peterson quotes an early authority on medical education in the USA, Flexner who defines the characteristics of the professions as 'qualities professions ought to have if they are to serve the needs of society as well as the occupational group itself':

'a) the objectives of professional work are definite and immediately practical, b) educationally communicable techniques for the attainment of those objectives are available, c) applications of techniques involve essentially intellectual operations, and practitioners exercise responsible discretion in matching techniques to individual problems, d) the techniques are related to a systematic discipline...whose substance is large and complex, and hence ordinarily inaccessible to the layman, e) members of the profession are organised in some kind of society, with rules for membership and exclusion based in part on professional competence, f) the aims of the professional organisation are at least in part altruistic rather than merely self-serving, and entail a code of ethics....' (Flexner 1915, quoted in Peterson 1976, p. 573)

The United Kingdom Inter-Professional Group, representing 18 so-called professions (in that they meet the criteria for entry to UKIPG) includes psychologists among its members. The UKIPG membership criteria state that the profession should 'be self-regulating with a Code of Ethics under an established disciplinary procedure, have defined educational standards for admittance, and have common interests and concerns which are compatible with those of existing members' (UKIPG 1995). Professions are also characterised by having professional bodies, and, in this country, often a Charter. Their professional bodies/associations will have systems for regulating entry into the profession through minimum standards of education

and training, standards of practice and conduct expected of every member of the profession and mechanisms to respond to cases of abuse of those standards. Haug (1973) states that basic to all definitions of professions are knowledge monopoly based on an esoteric body of knowledge, service-orientation rather than profit-making outlook, and work autonomy, 'the knowledge, service, autonomy model' (p. 196), while Downie (1990) has put forward five criteria which may be said to define the professions: (i) a broad knowledge base, (ii) service through a beneficent relationship with clients, (iii) a social function or duty, (iv) independence, (v) education rather than training. The profession is legally and morally legitimate, it is suggested, if it meets the five criteria.

There are two forces which come together to require advanced professional training for the professions (Dobson & Dobson 1993). There is, first, the need of the public for competent service providers, and, second, the need of the profession itself to protect its 'guild interests' and also to ensure that standards are set and maintained in order to gain public respect, professional autonomy and market protection. Here, at least, is an acknowledgement of the mutuality of need: the need of the public for expertise, and the need of the profession for status.

'Individually and, in association, collectively, the professions 'strike a bargain with society' in which they exchange competence and integrity against the trust of client and community, relative freedom from lay supervision and interference, protection against unqualified competition as well as substantial remuneration and higher social status' (Rueschemeyer 1983, quoted in Eraut 1994, p. 2).

Therefore the need of the public for 'qualified practitioners' and the need of the profession for standards, status and autonomy apparently justify the requirement for advanced and specialised knowledge and training. However, there are differing perspectives on the basis for this requirement; is it the public who needs the expertise based on the lengthy preparation or is it the profession itself which requires this in order to maintain its status, monopoly and mystique? A benign view supports the mutuality of need, while a more sceptical view is more critical of professions as being 'self-seeking'.

Scott and Wilding (1990), for example, describe the struggle or aspiration for professional status as involving 'elements of an implicitly agreed strategy'; these elements include (i) establishing that the work is 'firmly based on a corpus of established knowledge' (ii) establishing the need for a long training (iii) establishing the training in high status institutions, i.e. universities (iv) proving usefulness to governments and elites. They suggest, writing mainly about social work, but also referring to the 'human service professions' that 'the search for professional status distorts training' and that 'the struggle for professional status has been a strong influence on the development of education and training in the people work world' (p. 12). Thus it is the needs of the profession rather than the need for expertise that determines at least in part the nature of the professional training.

This perspective emerged strongly during the 1970s when professionalism came in for strong criticism from various perspectives. For example, sociologists (e.g. Freidson 1970) criticised the 'professional dominance', economists (e.g. Friedman & Friedman 1979) criticised the 'closed shop monopolies', and educationists (e.g. Illich et al. 1977) criticised the 'disabling professions' for their 'professional imperialism' (these cited in Scott & Wilding 1990). Much of the literature from the study of the sociology of the professions (e.g. Freidson 1973, Dingwall & Lewis 1983, Pavalko 1988, Freidson 1994) questions the very rationale for the existence of the professions, and suggests that the professions have a negative impact on society, basing their claims more on self-interest than on a desire to protect the public, and engaging in ' "window dressing" to dupe members of the public into continuing to allow a societally destructive level of power and status to a small number of persons' (Sinclair 1993, p. 172, and see Eraut 1994, chapter 1). According to this argument, the professions are self-seeking and self-protective, interested in their own status rather than the protection of the public and concerned only to protect a field of activity for their own members. This is a point being made vociferously by a minority of those opposed to the proposals for statutory regulation of psychologists which are currently being put forward by the British Psychological Society (e.g. Mowbray 1995). The BPS claims to be 'protecting the public'; its opponents claim that it is

acting from self-interest and protecting itself as a profession and its monopolistic claim to all 'psychological' work.

A more benign aspect is presented by Tuohy and Wolfson (1978):

'Professionalism is best defined in terms of the relationship between the providers and consumers of a service. Professionalism does not refer, strictly speaking, to high levels of competence and altruism themselves. Rather it is a relationship established to ensure that specialised competence is brought to bear in the making of certain decisions and to ensure that the client's interests are fully protected in the making of these decisions. It is, in other words, an agency relationship' (Tuohy & Wolfson 1978, quoted in Dobson & Dobson 1993, p. 163).

Pretty and Chambers (1993) have put forward a model of 'new professionalism'. They suggest that 'to characterise an old and a new professionalism is to risk polarised caricature between the bad and the good. A distinction is needed here between the strengths of traditional science as bodies of knowledge, principles and methods, and the weaknesses of the beliefs, behaviour and attitudes that often go with it' (p. 8). They contrast the 'old' and the 'new' models of professionalism in relation to differences in their assumptions about reality, their scientific methods, the contexts of their work, the relationship between the actors in the setting priorities and in the work process, their modes of working, and the technology or services. Inherent in the 'new' professionalism is a commitment to partnership, to empowerment, dialogue, and local interests and priorities.

To an extent this fits in with the concept of 'deprofessionalisation' suggested by Haug (1973) as the trend for the future and defined as 'a loss to professional occupations of their unique qualities, particularly their monopoly over knowledge, public belief in their service ethos, and expectations of work autonomy and authority over the client'. Deprofessionalisation is said to be a likely trend because of the 'fate of knowledge monopoly', questions over whether professions are client-serving or self-serving, and the tension between autonomy and accountability (p. 197). Pavalko (1988) quotes Toren (1975) who suggests that as work becomes more standardised and more routine, 'the profession's claim to unique and mysterious competencies is threatened' (p. 38). In this way the professions risk

deprofessionalisation, and the loss of the status and power of their unique knowledge.

The older professions were traditionally doctors, lawyers, priests, joined later by engineers and architects, and in modern times by a large number of others, including psychologists (UKIPG 1995). These professions traditionally enjoyed a considerable degree of independence and autonomy, an aspect reflected in the concept of 'liberal professions' used more frequently in other European countries (SEPLIS 1994). However, even in this country traditionally 'the ideology of professionalism appears to assume that professionals are self-employed or partners in small practices' (Eraut 1994, p. 4). Thus, a consideration of how different professions are employed, and the constraints within their employment, currently leads both to a realisation of the differences in autonomy of the professions, and to an awareness that the very notion of professional autonomy is under threat. This is particularly the case under current national and international political and economic pressures and moves which increasingly emphasise market competition and consumer rights.

Etzioni (1969) coined the now much-used term 'semi-professions' (and see Toren 1972) to refer to those employed in the public sector, with significantly less power and autonomy, and, arguably, status. Semi-professionals, for example nurses, teachers, social workers, would to an extent carry out work determined by their employer, and would not necessarily be free to exercise their autonomous professional judgement in decision-making. Galloway et al (1994) quote Larson's (1977) notion of 'organisational professional' to describe the way that various groups claim professional characteristics while working within state bureaucracies; they suggest that the nature and culture of professions has had to change, since all now depend to a large extent on employment by the state. These 'semi-professionals' or 'organisational professionals' perhaps correspond to the 'quasi-professions', 'would-be professions', or 'professions in process' referred to in the sociological literature, or to Scott & Wilding's (1990) 'would-be professionals' or 'aspirant professionals'. In their critique, they suggest that

'At the end of the day it seems that professional status is achieved by struggle and carefully constructed alliances. Professional status is the product of a successful campaign to achieve a monopoly in the provision of particular goods and services and the privileges and powers which go with monopoly' (p.7) and see Wilding 1982.

Galloway et al (op.cit.) make an important point concerning the higher status and middle-class nature of the professions, and their special powers and prestige. They continue, making reference in particular to educational psychologists,

'armed with their expert knowledge, professionals ask to be trusted and do not expect their clients to question their judgements. Professionals not only claim to know better, but also are allowed to define the standards by which their superior competence is judged. Thus, educational psychologists have, during the twentieth century, claimed an expertise in IQ testing and have defined their competencies in knowing better than others, how to measure levels of 'intelligence' (ibid, p. 123).

How are (educational) psychologists members of a profession?

As stated above, in the UK psychologists have a professional body which specifies minimum standards of entry into the profession, and which maintains a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures. It is claimed that psychologists have a unique body of academic and applied knowledge and skills (e.g. Dobson & Dobson 1993). It is also suggested that professional psychologists apply the unique body of knowledge (psychology) to the unique field of need (solving human problems) within the boundaries formed by regulation, ethics and standards of practice (Webster 1967, cited in Dobson & Dobson 1993, p. 8). These authors hold, moreover, that research is a distinguishing feature of the profession of psychologist (ibid, p. 8).

The BPS, the professional body for psychologists, claims that 'like all applied psychologists, an educational psychologist uses a knowledge of the principles and techniques of psychology, applying them in a particular context' (BPS 1995a). It goes on to state that 'most LEAs and other employing bodies would recognise that there must be a degree of professional autonomy' (ibid p. 14).

Educational psychologists consider themselves to be professionals. In order to qualify, they undergo professional training, which consists of qualification and experience as a teacher prior to qualification through a one year Master's course integrating academic input with practical placement experience. They meet most of the broad defining criteria or characteristics of a profession (e.g. 'monopolisation of particular forms of expertise, the erection of social boundaries around them through entrance qualifications and extended training, and an ideology of public service and altruism' (Abbott & Wallace 1990), and self-regulation). While acknowledging that the task of defining 'professions' is generally difficult, and lacks consensus at the level of detail and specificity, and may not be a particularly helpful approach in a more detailed analysis, it is useful here to consider how far educational psychologists meet some more broad criteria such as those used by the United Kingdom Inter-Professional Group, which has a claim to represent the professions in the UK (UKIPG 1995), Abbott & Wallace (1990) point out that 'psychology has been particularly successful in establishing itself as a knowledge base because the positivistic background of the discipline lends itself to claims for scientific 'truth'. In addition the British Psychological Society-under pressure from clinical psychologists anxious to establish their professional base within the health service-has been concerned to erect professional barriers' (p. 25).

The literature consistently refers to educational psychologists as 'professionals', whether this is in contrast to 'parents', or whether this is in the context of 'multi-professional' assessment or 'inter-professional' rivalry. Yet there is a difficulty in their identity as professionals. On the one hand, educational psychologists seek to maintain professional independence, for example in submitting their advice under the formal assessment procedure, while on the other hand, as Armstrong has pointed out

'the form of control to which professionals, as members of the state bureaucracy, are subject (that is, the mediation of the state between professionals and service users to define client needs) also means that it can be unclear to professionals who their client is.....this lack of clarity is not necessarily reproduced in the subjective understanding of professionals in their day-to-day practice....this subjective understanding of who the client is can itself serve to veil the range of conflicting interests which influence their practice in ways which

operate to disempower not only the service user but the professional as well' (Armstrong 1995, p. 146-7).

These are some of the reasons that Etzioni (1969) used the term 'semi-professionals' to refer to those employed by the state and whose independence is necessarily curtailed by their employer. Educational psychologists have many of the characteristics of professionals, and yet they find themselves in a situation where their employer and the rationale for their employment may require them to carry out work for which they have some professional reservations. At an informal level, this may be expressed in the literature through expressions of dissatisfaction at the bureaucratic nature of the work (e.g. Faupel and Norgate 1993), while at a more formal level, this may be expressed through educational psychologists being formally requested to work in a certain manner or carry out certain tasks, for example because the LEA fears the possibility of litigation.

Galloway et al. (1994) point out the number of 'professionals' now involved in the special education process constituting 'what can be, for parents and children, a formidable proliferation of expertise' (p. 121). In describing Larson's 'culture of professionalism' they point out that each professional group has 'its own specialised training, its own esoteric language, and its own claims to expert practice' and a belief 'that whatever they do they will be acting 'in the best interests of the child' (p.121) Despite the differences in power, status and authority between professionals and their clients, they suggest that 'professionals working in special education share with all other professionals the characteristics of the 'service ideal' and 'claim a degree of altruism and a disinterestedness from wider social, political and economic considerations' (ibid, p.124), following what is referred to as Kirp's (1983) 'humanitarian welfare' or 'benevolent humanitarian' model of professionalism within special education.

However, it is clear that this 'disinterestedness' is difficult to maintain within the education system, which has its own need for social, political and economic control. In particular, the special education system has its own needs for procedures (and professional advice) which will enable it to meet the requirements of legislation, to allocate additional resources, and to deal with parents in a way to minimise

conflict. Galloway et al put it this way: 'professionals involved in special education have increasingly been drawn into the service of the local and central bureaucracies whose concerns are with the wider education system and wider social, political and economic considerations' (p. 125, and see Armstrong 1995, p.148, and Fulcher 1989, p. 165).

Since the implementation of the 1981 Act in 1983, there have been further legislative changes which have arguably increased the administrative and bureaucratic tasks required of educational psychologists by the LEA. LEAs too have come under increased pressure, and the 1990s have brought a climate of parental litigation and financial cutbacks within an increasingly market-oriented education culture. This highlights the ambiguous position of 'semi-professionals' or 'organisational professionals' who are in effect 'paid servants of the state', and who carry out work determined by the needs and bureaucratic structures of that state, while at the same time attempting to claim some degree of professional autonomy. Galloway et al (1994) suggest that 'psychologists are in a particularly ambiguous position' (p.127), being perceived by different parties to be an advocate for the child, or to provide advice that could be used for resource decisions, or to be a supportive colleague working in the interests of the school, or various other roles depending on the perceiver. Rarely are they in a position to define their own role and to carry this out with the degree of autonomy traditionally expected by 'independent' professionals; rather they find themselves in the situation of being employed by the 'state' which has certain needs, and employs educational psychologists to help them to meet these needs.

These issues and the debates over the educational psychologist's client (Galloway 1990, Armstrong et al, 1992a, 1992b, Dessent 1992), examples where educational psychologists have been directed over their advice (Pyke 1990), and the debates over the independence of educational psychologists in their statutory role (see chapter 2) suggest that the employment base of the majority of educational psychologists in this country leave them at best in the position of 'semi-professionals' or 'organisational professionals' as defined above.

Professional knowledge and professional competence: what is the educational psychologist's professional knowledge and competence?

Most accounts of professionalism emphasise the primacy and uniqueness of the professional knowledge base. Expertise is required, the public requires protection from incompetent professional practice, and the profession emerges to define standards of education and conduct, and undertakes self-regulation. There are different views concerning the nature of 'professional knowledge'. For example, Scott & Wilding (1990) suggest that

'many occupations have a corpus of knowledge which has to be mastered by its members. Professional knowledge, however, is given coherence by theory. Such knowledge cannot just be learned on the job' (p.8).

This statement illustrates a tension in the definition and origin of professional knowledge, a tension which underlies many aspects of professional training; on the one hand, the status accorded to 'university knowledge' is important to the professions, while on the other hand the professional credibility of 'practice knowledge' carries significance. Eraut (1994) suggests that scientific knowledge is accorded higher status than professional knowledge in institutions such as universities, with a resultant tension for professional trainers, increasingly and now almost exclusively based within universities, who are pulled by the demands of the university for 'scientific knowledge' and of the profession for 'professional knowledge'. This tension has more recently been demonstrated in recent moves to define professional knowledge through functional analysis of professional work, such as through NVQs, and the professional opposition to these moves.

Professional knowledge is difficult to define. Its widest definition would encompass all the knowledge required by the profession to carry out its work: scientific, practical, attitudinal knowledge. Thus, Schein (1973) proposes three aspects of professional knowledge:

- * an underlying discipline or basic science from which the practice is developed

- * an applied science from which many of the day-to-day diagnostic procedures and problem-solutions are derived
- * a skills and attitudinal aspect that concerns the actual performance of services to the client, using the underlying basic and applied knowledge.

Eraut (1994) reflects on the different uses of the term 'knowledge' implicit in discussions of 'professional knowledge', preferring to extend its meaning to include procedural knowledge, propositional knowledge, practical knowledge, tacit knowledge, skills and know-how (p. 16). However, he also points out the separateness of the 'public knowledge base of the profession' as represented by training courses, and the 'personal knowledge of working professionals' which informs their judgement, and the relevance of Oakeshott's (1962) development of Aristotle's distinction between 'technical knowledge' and 'practical knowledge' (p.42) (and Eraut's reference to Ryle's 1949 distinction between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' and Polanyi's 1967 'tacit knowledge'.)

Professional competence forms one of the main principles in Codes of Ethics of psychologists. For example, it is stated that psychologists are required not to practise beyond their competence, and that their competence is based in **the science of psychology** and in their codes of ethics. 'The moral justification for the professional activities of psychologists is invariably based on their competence in psychology' (Poortinga 1994), which is derived from education in psychology and professional training. Most of the Codes of Ethics of psychologists contain a statement to the effect that 'Psychologists work according to scientific principles and substantiated experience and maintain their professional competence at all times' (Ethical principles for Scandinavian psychologists, Principle IIA). The preamble to the American Psychological Association (APA) Code begins 'Psychologists work to develop a valid and reliable body of scientific knowledge based on research' (APA 1992). The Codes will be taken at face value here, though the scientific basis for psychological, especially clinical, practice has been questioned by, amongst others, Dawes (1994).

Competence is clearly related to professional knowledge though it has rarely been defined other than through professional qualifications, based on a relevant set of knowledge, skills and attitudes usually defined and maintained by the profession through its professional body. However, in common with notions such as professional integrity, professional competence is a particularly difficult idea to define, and therefore to assess. Over the past 10 years, however, there have been attempts to define this 'professional competence' in more transparent ways (than, for example, the seeming "mystique" of professional or guild knowledge) using models of competence, originally derived from behavioural psychology. These attempts, organised by NCVQ ostensibly to rationalise vocational qualifications, focus on the output rather than the input end of qualifications, and require the learner to demonstrate competence through performance at the work place rather than through examination papers. Although the professions have been resistant to these developments, partly because they appear to threaten the professions' own control of definitions of competence, the NCVQ framework has been extended to level 5, the professional level (NCVQ 1995). The BPS has been one of the professional bodies in the forefront of these developments, having developed its own occupational standards in applied psychology in a pilot project funded by the Department of Employment (Bartram 1995). In their study of 15 UK professions, Allaker and Shapland (1994) suggest that

'models of how competences should be considered and set out can themselves restructure the ways in which the profession and professionals have thought of their work practices, particularly if what is competent practice has not been made explicit.....a competence-based approach to professional education and regulation can effectively hijack the traditional ideologies which dominate a profession. Information on how investigating and disciplinary committees define incompetent professional performance might help in deciphering some of the underlying ideologies of the professional body' (Allaker and Shapland 1994).

The public expects that a qualified professional, in this case a psychologist, will be competent in the area of activity or work. This is the basis for the profession and is the justification for all attempts at professional regulation, such as currently being put forward by the BPS; the public has a right to professional competence.

It is suggested that 'all professions should have public statements about what their qualified members are competent to do and what people can reasonably expect from them. These should comprise both minimum occupational standards and codes of professional conduct. They could also include information about more specialist services provided by members with additional expertise and/or further qualifications' (Eraut 1994)

Up to now, attempts to evaluate professional competence have been controlled, usually by the professional body, from the 'input' or curriculum end. They examine and control curricula or syllabus documents which specify theoretical and professional knowledge. They have greater difficulty in specifying professional competence, leaving this to be determined by entry to membership of the professional body, rather than defining particular characteristics of specified actions, as is required by the NCVQ approach, and which threatens the mystique and hegemony of professional organisations, and institutions of higher education. Carr highlights the fallacy of the current fashion to make the link between theory and practice through the idea of professional competences (Carr 1993). 'It is argued that we need (professionals) ...whose knowledge and understanding are expressed or exhibited in their abilities....who are competent by virtue of the intelligent application of their knowledge and understanding in effective practice....A professional practice is something public and observable-rather than private and inaccessible-and therefore the standards to be expected of any competent practice ought to be discernible and specifiable in a reasonably precise and determinate way' (p. 254). However, as Carr (ibid) points out, this fallacy confuses the notion of 'competence' with 'competences'. As mentioned above, the extension of NVQs to level 5 has posed a challenge for the professions, in particular in relation to its earlier lack of inclusion of underpinning knowledge or theoretical base to professional knowledge.

Professional training and the relationship between theory and practice

As mentioned above, most professional education consists of the acquisition of a body of knowledge or theory followed by the development of practical skills and competences. Part of the basis for the claim to professionalism of professions such as medicine, professional psychology, and to a lesser extent social work and teaching lies in their foundation of theory followed by practice (see above). It is assumed that the profession is based on a 'corpus' of unique knowledge, usually specified as theoretical, which is then applied and developed to inform the often practical professional tasks, often referred to as 'problem-solving' with which the professional is faced in practice.

The tension between theory and practice, expressed particularly during the professional training period, though also in the profession itself in terms of the status accorded to different forms of knowledge, appears in the literature of many professions. The problem of the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge and their development in professional training and contribution to professional knowledge and identity is not avoided by psychologists (Gray & Lunt 1990, Lunt & Gray 1990, and see Pilgrim and Treacher 1992). Achtenhagen (1995) refers to the 'reality shock' experienced as trainees move from the theoretical to the practical part of training. He suggests that there are difficulties with the relationship between theory and practice at both the social and political level, and the epistemological level, and the relationship between modes of knowledge acquisition within the theoretical and practical phases. Bromme and Tillema (1995), pointing out that professional training in many countries is showing 'increased academisation' and 'professionalisation' summarise the phenomenon:

'All professions requiring comprehensive academic training are familiar with the phenomenon of the theory-practice dilemma. After the theoretical, academic part of training, this newly acquired knowledge has to be applied within everyday vocational practice. Quite often, novices perceive a gap between the theoretical knowledge they have acquired and their actual performance in concrete settings, where the former type of knowledge seems to become increasingly irrelevant. Novices may also be confronted with the opinions of experienced

practitioners....the result of such confrontations can be described as a 'reality shock', which in turn gives rise to conservative attitudes and which causes ambivalent reactions towards the value and usefulness of theoretical knowledge' (p. 261).

They propose that there are different approaches to the tension between theory and practice, the academic approach, which stresses the utilisation of knowledge, the skills approach, which emphasises the application of instrumental knowledge, and the problem-solving tradition, which highlights deliberate action and reflection. They suggest that the 'professional seems to be caught in the middle: it is expected that he/she should draw upon an established body of knowledge (which is constantly being renewed); at the same time, however, performance in practice generates knowledge in action (Schön 1983) and puts constraints on the application of abstract and codified knowledge' (p. 262).

Hastings and Schwieso (1981) criticise the assumption that 'with science in the role of theory, and technology as practice, theory would appear to precede and be necessary for effective practice' (p. 223). They suggest the use of the term 'Social Technik' to describe the 'problem solving approach' of the 'social professions'. They argue that 'social technik' entails an alternative to the 'applied science' conception of the relationship between practice and the discipline, starting from a functional and empirical analysis of the job and aiming to produce people who can draw upon specific skills, knowledge and principles of application, rather than on specific theories which are required to be translated into practice. It should be noted that many Master's courses of educational psychology claim to be based on the 'problem-solving model' (Cameron & Stratford 1987, Hogg et al. 1989, Miller et al. 1992)

On the other hand, Volpe (1981) is critical of

'many professional programmes (that) have attempted to minimise the inclusion of formal theory because of an inability to demonstrate its direct utility. Student demands for 'survival tactics' have often been given priority and the rationalisation has been offered that the existing programmes are too short and cannot do everything. Such a perspective continues the false separation of theory and practice and overlooks the necessary role of representation and reflective abstraction in the development of knowledge. Overlooking this dimension will make professional programmes technical training courses. The practitioners

they produce will not be equipped to participate in the growth of professional knowledge' (p. 50).

Emphasising the importance of an integration of theory with practice, and using an approach derived from Piaget's genetic epistemology, he suggests that 'theories are systematic abstractions of various points of view on practice. When acted upon and transformed by the problem-solving aspects of practice these theories can foster a breadth of perspective unobtainable in a lifetime of experience' (p. 41).

Brief reference will be made here to literature from social work (one of the 'caring' professions), medicine (one of the traditional professions), and teaching (an 'education' profession).

Social Work

The 'problem' of the theory-practice split has been extensively discussed in the social work literature (e.g. Sheldon 1978, Carew 1979, Hearn 1982, Barbour 1984, Rumgay 1988, Payne 1991, Secker 1993, to quote a few of the many references in this area). 'Social work has a scientific ideology, and has constantly sought status and respectability through having a scientific approach to understanding human problems' (Payne 1991, p. 46). For example, there is the concern that social work should be empirical or scientific, and yet an awareness that 'the sorts of knowledge available to social workers are not concrete enough ever to be useful' (Payne op.cit., p. 53). Payne identifies different types of relationship between theory and practice: these range from a relationship in which general theories of behaviour or social life are used to originate practice theories, through theory as a process of enquiry, or theory as a series of generalisations, to theory developing from practice experience.(see also Carr 1986).

Rumgay (1988) believes that 'the teaching of social work practice is not only about the transmission of technical skills, nor is it content with the theoretical understanding of counselling and models of practice. Good practice is informed by a grasp of broader theoretical principles and knowledge' (p. 335). Several authors emphasise the importance of the placement in influencing the nature of the relationship between theory and practice in social work. CCETSW

requires students to include 'written work demonstrating (their) understanding of relevant theory and practice' while Thompson, Osada, and Anderson (1994) suggest that 'the ability to relate theory to practice is a central part of developing professional competence by being able to draw on relevant theoretical frameworks and research, and developing critical thinking skills' (p. 64).

In general, the literature concerning social work training points to similar difficulties in linking theory and practice as that frequently experienced on educational psychology courses, and referred to in evaluation reports of BPS visiting teams. Theory is often perceived as being taught in the university, and as having a different status and value from practice, which is developed in the field, on placement, and is perceived as having greater relevance and immediacy (Lunt & Gray 1990).

Medicine

The problem of the relationship between the 'sciences basic to medicine' (termed in this country 'pre-clinical; or 'academic') and clinical practice continues to be extensively debated in the literature on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g. Coles & Asbjørn Holm 1993, Lowry 1993). Medicine may be said to embody the 'two cultures' of arts and science): 'clinical education is a composite of learning facts, acquiring practical skills, taking responsibility, and developing the ability to make decisions. Medicine is a curious mixture of art and science, its clinical bedside method a sharp contrast to the exactness of science' (BMA 1996). This BMA publication continues:

'courses are currently in a ferment of reform. In a few years all will be focused on the ability to relate, think, question, and solve problems rather than to absorb facts like a sponge. the biological and behavioural sciences basic to medicine will be taught in relation to the need to know and understand about health care in general and clinical needs in particular. Consequently the traditional divide between "preclinical" and "clinical" will increasingly become blurred until it disappears altogether' (p. 55).

Originating in America, though now used in the UK, is the 'problem-based curriculum' or 'problem-based learning (PBL as it is called) which has been extensively evaluated (e.g. Norman & Schmidt 1992,

Berkson 1993, Vernon & Blake 1993). According to this model, theory and practice develop concurrently, and are taught/learned through the use of clinical problems, often using a form of Bruner's 'spiral curriculum'. The model calls into question the appropriateness of the traditional presentation of theory prior to its application, and acknowledges the need to integrate the acquisition of theoretical and factual knowledge with real professional situations and clinical challenge.

Initial teacher education

One of the problems in using initial teacher education as an example to illustrate some of the problems in the relationship between theory and practice in professional training is the question over whether teaching is a profession (e.g. Hoyle 1974, Carr 1989). On the other hand, this is an appropriate group to consider here, partly because the relationship and tension between theory and practice have been widely discussed in its literature, and partly because the nature of the training, at least in the PGCE, has many similarities to the training year for educational psychologists (and both are professions within education). Let us assume, therefore, for these purposes, that the task in the professional training of teachers has aspects in common with the training of educational psychologists, and is thereby of relevance here.

The difficulties in integrating theory and practice in initial teacher education have been well documented (e.g. Pearson 1989, Booth, Furlong & Wilkin 1990, Graves 1990). Alexander (1990) summarises the problem neatly:

'the so-called theory-practice problem then centres on the mismatch between the two worlds, the claimed irrelevance of much 'theory' to 'practice' and the need to devise ways of integrating them more meaningfully' (p.70).

Describing the demise of the position of the foundation disciplines in initial teacher education, Graves (1990) states that 'the kind of propositional knowledge offered in the foundation disciplines was not immediately usable in the process of learning to manage a class or teach how to solve a problem in mathematics or physics' (p. 60) which

created 'the dilemma of universities asking for rigour while the students and practitioners ask for relevance' (Graves 1990, p. 63). However, according to Carr (1980) this distinction misses the point that

'it is only by ..challenging the adequacy of conventional theories of educational practice that the observations, interpretations and judgements of practitioners will become more rational and coherent and their practices will be conducted in more disciplined, intelligent and effective ways' (and that educational theory should) 'seek to emancipate practitioners from their dependence on practices that are the product of precedent, habit and tradition by developing modes of analysis and enquiry that are aimed at exposing and examining the beliefs, values and assumptions implicit in the theoretical framework through which practitioners organise their experiences' (p. 66).

In a similar vein, Carr (1995) suggests that 'the problem of professional knowledge for teaching is not that of resolving a dualism of theory and practice-of understanding how a kind of scientific knowledge can be given technological application; it is more of appreciating the role in human affairs of an inherently principled form of practical reflection concerned, on the one hand, with the rational articulation of educational values in the light of all we know of ourselves and the world, and, on the other, with the proper expression of such values in civilised conduct' (p. 324).

Alexander (op. cit.) suggests that the 'theory-practice 'problem'...is not only procedural, organisational, and curricular, but also conceptual' and relates to a misconception of the nature of theory (and practice). His solution appears to be to replace the notion of 'theory' with that of 'theorising' which he defines as 'reflecting on, generating, using, testing and reformulating ideas about teaching and learning', and to acknowledge that in the same way that university educators do not have the monopoly of theory, neither do teachers have the monopoly of practice. This begs the question of the definition of theory, a point made by Young (1990) who suggests that 'theory is more and more equated with methods for reflecting on practice' (p.16).

A problem in this debate is both the definition of theory, and the question over: whose theory. Theory has various definitions and connotations (e.g. Carr 1980), ranging from strict scientific interpretations, e.g. Skinner's theory, through a definition of theory as

a broad explanatory framework, to a more individual process of theorising through reflection; the question of the relative validity of different theories and the debate over the relative status of objective versus subjective knowledge, (see below) contributes to the difficulty in linking theory with practice. Winter (1989), for example, is critical of the conventional and hierarchical 'prescriptive sequence' by which 'theory is derived from the 'correct' observation of one situation, and this theory is then taken to be a prescription for action in another situation.....research firstly produces 'findings' which subsequently are to be 'implemented' (p. 33). This leads, he suggests, to a rejection of theory by practitioners, who might feel that research and researchers are out of touch with the day-to-day demands and pressures of (in his case) the classroom. He equates this stance with a positivist approach to theory:

'Positivism thus creates the theory-practice relationship in the form of an impasse, in which the prescriptive claims of researchers are frequently greeted by practitioners with incredulity, boredom, or mockery, as in the following quip.....in relation to a survey commissioned by the NFER: Research either tells you something you knew already, or tells you nothing, or tells you something which is obvious nonsense' (ibid p. 65-66)

Hirst (1990) contrasts the 'traditionalist' with the 'rationalist' approach to the issue; according to the former, 'the 'theory' that informs any professionally competent teaching is necessarily the product of the world of teaching itself' (p. 75), while the latter suggests that 'the 'theory' that informs the practice of an individual teacher is a set of concepts, beliefs and principles that have been developed independently of practice itself. It has been generated by a multidisciplinary understanding of human nature and society including a justifiable set of values' (p.77). He suggests that 'what is needed is a more careful approach that does justice to both the traditionalist emphasis on practical experience in the generation and justification of practices and to the rationalist demand for their more fundamental examination in the light of the disciplines' (ibid p. 79).

In a study evaluating school-based PGCE courses, Furlong et al (1988) found that although 20% of the students mentioned the ability to 'relate theory to practice' as one of the advantages of school-based

training, especially as they had had the opportunity through concurrent teaching practice and university attendance to 'relate their experiences in school to the theory at the university' and 'bring areas of personal experience into the seminars and the discussions', they nevertheless felt that they had missed out on educational theory, and that this had been squeezed out to make space for more time in school. Furlong (1990) concludes that 'the majority of students did want some formal training in educational theory but they wanted it in a way that related to their own professional concerns and interests' (p.95).

Gilroy (1989) describes the two traditional positions in epistemology of 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism'; according to the former which implies an 'autocratic view of knowledge' the difficulty is due in part to the difficulties in making a bridge between two kinds of knowledge, 'objective' and 'not objective' (p. 105); according to the latter,

'autocracy is replaced by the absolute autonomy of the individual. In addition the theory-practice gap has been neatly removed as a problem, for there now exists only the individual's knowledge of his or her own practice, with external theory being seen as irrelevant at worst, and at best as a mere formalising of that particular practice' (p. 106). '

Thus 'the subjectivist effectively denies the existence (or at least the usefulness) of knowledge which is not personal' (ibid p. 106). He calls for an alternative account of knowledge, which avoids the

'major problems that the objectivist and the subjectivist face (an unbridgeable dualism and a too extreme monism respectively) without rejecting the positive aspects of their theses.....and which describe(s) our perception of knowledge as having both objective and subjective aspects without making one of these aspects dominate the other' (p. 107).

Gilroy calls for an account which lays stress on the social, contextual and provisional dimension of knowledge and on the context-specific nature of professional knowledge. This enables 'so-called 'theoretical' and 'practical' knowledges (to) interact in various contexts, and it is the appropriate context, rather than knowledge itself...that defines which is to be termed 'theory' and 'practice' (p. 111)

One of the starkest polarisations in the debate is over the primacy and ownership of theory. This has already been alluded to. On the one hand is the conventional view referred to above of the primacy, both in time and significance, of 'official' 'text book' theory, which then informs practice; on the other hand are those who give primacy to teachers' own 'theories' (i.e. reflections or theorising) which are then used in conjunction with 'external' theories. For example, Stones (1978) appears to put forward an approach which aims to make the students autonomous through personal enquiry and learning, with the help of theoretical principles, and Wragg also (1984) favours an inductive approach in which experience precedes any theorising about practice, and experience provides a basis for making sense of and being critical of theory.

This has some similarity to the contrast between 'technical rationality' and 'artistry' proposed by Schön, and the development of the idea of the 'reflective practitioner' (Schön 1983, 1987).

The reflective practitioner

Schön (1983) has suggested that the gap between the scientific basis of professional knowledge and the demands of real world practice have led to a crisis of confidence in professional knowledge. This, he says is due to an inappropriate and dominant epistemology of practice and a particular kind of theoretical thinking which he refers to as 'technical rationality'. According to Schön, Technical Rationality is the heritage of Positivism, and with its hierarchical model of professional knowledge which gives primacy of place to the theories and techniques of basic and applied science, leads to a separation of research and practice. According to the model of Technical Rationality, 'professional activity consists in instrumental problem-solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique' (p. 21), resulting in a 'dominant view of professional knowledge as the application of scientific theory and technique to the instrumental problems of practice' (ibid p. 30). Schön suggests further that this 'positivist epistemology of practice', determines the 'positivist curriculum' dominating professional training in universities, and leads to the rigour/relevance dilemma which he claims characterises

professional training, universities demanding 'rigour' and students asking for 'relevance'.

In its place, Schön would have Reflection-in-Action or knowing-in-action (1983, 1987) and uses examples from several professions (architecture, engineering, music-making, psychiatry, teaching) to develop his ideas of the 'reflective practitioner' to develop a new relation between theory and practice, which involves 'a shift from an objectivist to a constructivist view of practice' (Graves 1990, p. 63). It involves giving up 'the rewards of unquestioned authority, the freedom to practice without challenge to his competence, the comfort of relative invulnerability, the gratification of deference', replacing these with 'new satisfactions ...of discovery about the meanings of his advice to clients, about his knowledge and practice, and about himself' (Schön 1983, p. 299). This model would seem to place 'practice' (e.g. placement or internship) at the centre of professional training, with students developing their understanding (their 'theory') through reflection both while they are 'acting' (on placement or practice) and after their 'action' (e.g. in supervision or in a notebook). However, Shulman (1988) argues against such a dichotomy between the technical and the reflective, proposing the need for a 'continuing dialectic between the learning of principles and the experience of cases' (p.36) while Fenstermacher (1988) argues for a continued distinction between research and practice. Both of these authors, while acknowledging the value of 'reflective practice' nevertheless see the need also for systematic enquiry derived from **outside** the practitioner. Graves (1990) suggests that 'for teacher education this means that teaching practice should be the central aspect of the course from which students learn by reflection-in-action, aided by competent practitioners' (p. 63), though this 'reflective practicum' as he calls it will need to be informed by the world of schools and the world of science and scholarship.

Educational psychology training

Educational psychology training claims to be training for a profession. The postgraduate Master's year which is the focus of this thesis builds, as do other professions, on a foundation of academic

knowledge; it also, in this country, happens to require prior qualification for another profession, teaching. The one year Master's course resembles the PGCE course for teacher training, and certain elements of social work training, in that there is an aspiration and attempt to integrate theory with practice, often through the use of part-time placements taking place concurrently with teaching at the university. However, the question arises of the respective roles and power of university and field. Over 10 years ago, an OECD report (1982) highlighted this question and suggested that 'the field is a place for really learning, for diagnosing real problems and exchanging experience, not simply trying out what has been learnt', nevertheless emphasising that 'training practices are legitimate only to the extent that they require and facilitate a return to theory'.

The majority of educational psychology courses claim in their documents and literature to integrate theory with practice, frequently also making mention of a 'scientist-practitioner' or 'reflective practitioner' approach to the professional training. In this they resemble professional training courses for clinical psychologists which, though longer, also claim to integrate theory with practice through the use of placements interspersed with academic teaching; this is in contrast to other forms of professional training which may have a longer period of academic study followed by a period of internship.

Professional training in educational psychology, therefore, requires a lengthy preparation, consisting of an academic or theoretical foundation followed by at least three years spent developing the knowledge, skills and competencies which are judged necessary and sufficient to meet the requirements of the job in LEAs. The training has many aspects in common both with other practitioner psychologists, and with other professions such as teaching and social work, and to some extent medicine. These professions are all faced with the question of how to relate theory to practice and how to make meaningful links between the two during the training period. Training for educational psychologists is influenced both by university based staff, and by field based psychologists who work with the trainees during their placements in EPSs. There may be a tension between the

demands and expectations of the university in contrast with those of the field.

Chapter 4

Summary of key issues and formulation of research questions

The chapter aims to consider key issues which emerge from the literature.

The relationship between theory and practice during the training year

The literature reveals a tension between theory and practice in training for different professional groups. Professional groups have in the main increased the place of theory and academic knowledge in their professional training, particularly as professional training is increasingly based in universities. Such developments may lead to tensions within the profession such as that expressed by Abbot and Wallace (1990) in relation to nursing as it struggles over its place among the 'professions':

'the main struggle in the twentieth century has been between those who want nursing to become an autonomous profession and those who see nursing as more of a vocation and are more concerned with practice than with developing theories to underpin practice.....Those who emphasise a professional model for nursing have tended to be concentrated in the schools of nursing and advocate a more theoretical training for nursing and the development of nursing theory' (p. 22).

The issue relates in part to the nature of the 'professional knowledge' of the profession, and how this is gained, and the use which professions make of academic knowledge.

Eraut (1994) has suggested that 'attempts to map out the knowledge requirements of a profession are associated with the design of training courses or the compilation of regulations concerning entry to the profession.....knowledge is likely to be labelled and packaged according to traditional assumptions about where and how it will be acquired' (p.41). He contrasts this with an alternative approach using 'practice-derived maps'; these bear some resemblance to the 'functional mapping' procedure used by the BPS in its project to develop occupational standards in applied psychology (Bartram 1995), and lead to a very different kind of knowledge from that traditionally taught on university courses. In this approach, knowledge would be derived from a consideration of the tasks which a professional is

expected to carry out in practice, moving from these to consider the knowledge and skill requirement to carry these out.

A practice-derived map, for example, of head teacher knowledge uses three dimensions: (i) areas of responsibility, (ii) skills and processes, (iii) knowledge about people, practice, regulations, while the map about social workers' knowledge includes: (i) knowledge about resources and how to get them, (ii) knowledge about organisations and their subcultures, (iii) knowledge about how to get knowledge, (iv) knowledge about self and how one learns, (v) formal knowledge and (vi) coping knowledge.

It may be argued that a similar 'taxonomy' of professional knowledge may be applied to educational psychologists, and that trainee educational psychologists need to gain this knowledge in order to function on the job. This means that they will accord greater priority and significance to this type of knowledge than to theoretical knowledge, particularly since theories can rarely be applied directly, and require time to process and work through into application. The immediacy of the professional situation, together with the pressures on the trainee to 'perform' and a focus on immediate 'problem-solving' may lead to a tension between theory and practice and the knowledge derived from and relevant to both, in which 'practice knowledge' or 'professional knowledge' assumes higher importance. This situation is found in the literature of many professional educators.

Another way of looking at the knowledge required by trainee educational psychologists is to look at their requirements for propositional knowledge, practical knowledge and experiential knowledge; propositional knowledge would be knowledge of theories and facts (cf. Ryle 1949 'knowing that'), practical knowledge would be knowledge of skills (cf. Ryle 1949 'knowing how'), while experiential knowledge would be personal knowledge (cf. Polanyi 1958 'personal' or 'tacit' knowledge), or knowledge of self. These different forms of knowledge and the implications for curricula in educational psychology are not discussed in the literature, and different university courses approach the task of developing and integrating them very differently. However, the demands for 'competence' or 'performance' whilst on placement may lead to trainees valuing certain kinds of

knowledge (those contributing directly to their ability to perform on the job) more highly than other kinds of knowledge, which may be given equal or even higher priority or status by the university.

The thesis concerns the profession of educational psychology. In their professional literature, educational psychologists claim to be applied psychologists, yet the literature also reveals some problems with this claim in practice, in part because of the role which they carry out and the position that they occupy within the education service. The problems may also arise from broader and more fundamental problems over the application of psychology to education. Resultant from their claim to be applied psychologists, and to be professional and Chartered Psychologists, educational psychologists have a lengthy training based on the requirement for a foundation in academic psychology specified by their professional organisation, the BPS. This results in theory at least, in an expectation that they will be applying psychological theories in their educational psychology practice. In common with many other professions, there is an issue for educational psychologists over how to relate theory to practice both in professional training and in their subsequent professional work (the latter is beyond the scope of this thesis). The one year Master's courses (and the BPS document outlining its requirements) attempt this integration of theory and practice through academic input linked to practical placements throughout the training year, and through using models such as that of 'reflective practitioner' and 'scientist practitioner'.

Thesis questions

The thesis focuses on the training of educational psychologists through their one year Master's degree and on the contribution made by psychological theory to the training of educational psychologists, and will address the following questions:

1. Is educational psychology an applied psychology and are educational psychologists applied psychologists? If so, what is the nature of the psychology which is being applied?

This question will also address the relationship between academic educational psychology and professional or practitioner educational psychology.

2. What is the nature of psychological theory underpinning EP training and used during the training year, and used on placement during the training year?

Here the question concerns both the underpinning theory expected of professional EPs (and the nature of the GBR or psychology degree) and what kind of theories are brought to the Masters training, and the kinds of theories that are used in the professional training year.

3. What does the professional training process involve?

How are professionals trained and what is the relationship between theory and practice during the training year for educational psychologists?

4. What is the model of trainee/emerging professional used in educational psychology?

Questions 1 and 2 are of a more conceptual order, while questions 3 and 4 are more descriptive, although all questions bridge the conceptual/descriptive divide.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Introduction

The introduction to the chapter addresses the nature of psychology as a discipline, and its methodologies. This is both because of the potentially problematic nature of traditional psychology for professional educational psychology (and see chapter 2), and of the need to describe and explain the methodology used in this study. It may be said that psychology as a discipline spans the reach of natural science, social science and the humanities, and that some of the tensions inherent in this breadth are reflected in the range of its methodologies. The subject matter of the thesis involves consideration of the nature of psychology as a discipline, in particular in relation to its practice, and of some of the conflicts or discontinuities between the 'academic' core (specifically as defined by the subject content of the BPS Qualifying Examination which confers eligibility for Graduate Basis for Registration of the British Psychological Society), and the 'applied' practice exemplified in professional educational psychology.

The history of many of the social sciences, including psychology, as a discipline reveals what many have considered to be an over-emphasis on a 'natural science' paradigm, in particular the nineteenth century positivist paradigm (Joynson 1970, Smail 1970, Harré 1971, 1983, 1993, Harré & Secord 1972, Pilgrim & Treacher 1992, Ingleby 1974, Richards and Light 1986, Shotter 1975, 1984, 1993, Lincoln & Guba 1985, Reason & Rowan 1981, Smith et al 1995a and 1995b). For example, 'amongst those identifying with psychology in the 19th century, nearly all proclaimed the view that psychology was a science in the same manner as the physical sciences' (Olssen 1993a, p. 158). Critics such as Smail and Joynson make reference to 'psychology's long-standing inferiority complex in relation to the natural sciences' Smail (1970) and the history of modern psychology as 'a record, not of scientific advance, but of intellectual retreat' (Joynson 1970).

It is claimed that, in its efforts to establish itself and be taken seriously as a 'science', psychology restricted itself to a limited range

of methodologies, thereby restricting its subject-matter, and, according to the critics, its relevance. In positioning itself as 'behavioural science' or 'cognitive science', psychology became criticised for ignoring the human and the subjective. This led to the pretence that psychological experiments are in principle no different from experiments in the natural sciences, and to ignoring essential differences between human 'subjects' and physical entities (Schultz 1969, Silverman 1970, Danziger 1990, Smith et al 1995).

This has led to difficulties in the relationship between pure (or basic) and applied psychology (e.g. Schönpflug 1993), and may have exacerbated the tension between 'scientists' and 'practitioners' which is central to the thesis, and the 'relevance' of the psychology degree to later postgraduate professional training. Some of these tensions have been highlighted in the difficulties expressed in relation to the 'scientist-practitioner' model of training, and to the nature and place of research in professional activity (see chapter 3).

Thus, over the past 20 years or so, there have been criticisms of traditional psychology for its over-commitment to a positivist epistemology and methodology (see above, and e.g. Smith, Harré & Van Langenhove 1995a and 1995b). Within the discipline, a strong tension has emerged between a positivist and an anti-positivist epistemology which becomes reflected in a frequent polarisation between quantitative (e.g. experimental) and qualitative (e.g. participant observation) methodologies. The positivist tradition is based on taking natural science, and its methods, as the paradigm of human knowledge. By contrast, the anti-positivist movement, critical of what is seen as a mechanistic and reductionist view, has led to an awareness of the importance of the subjective. Critiques of positivism suggest that it leads to an inadequate conceptualisation of science, that it is overly dependent on operationalism, that it leads to determinism and reductionism, that it produces research with human respondents ('subjects') that ignores their humanness, and that it relies on assumptions which are increasingly difficult to maintain (such as assumptions of linear causality and of value freedom) (Lincoln & Guba 1985). To these criticisms must be added the critique of psychology and its conceptualisation and methods from a feminist perspective (e.g. Nicolson 1995, Riger 1992), in particular its claims to

be 'objective', to take a 'value-free stance' and its use of a 'gender-biased' scientific method.

Within psychology there is a contrast in methodologies between nomothetic and idiographic approaches, and between normative and interpretive paradigms (and see Burrell and Morgan 1979 for a useful taxonomy of ontological, epistemological and methodological differences in approaches in the social sciences). Much of traditional 'mainstream' psychology has adopted a nomothetic approach, attempting to establish general laws about human behaviour. Smith et al (1995c) have criticised mainstream psychology for neglecting the idiographic domain, thereby ignoring the importance of meaning, which, it is argued, constitutes a major difference between humans and physical entities. 'One of the big differences between physical entities and human beings is that the behaviour of people has a meaning for the people themselves and is mainly intentional' (Van Langenhove 1995). The emergence of a 'new paradigm' within psychology, and in particular the acknowledgement of the appropriateness of qualitative methods to psychological research has led to a greater awareness of the limitations of an exclusive focus on quantitative and experimental approaches (Banister et al. 1995, Smith et al. 1995b, Richardson 1996).

More recently, psychology and psychologists have carried out research on a wider range of issues previously not considered appropriate for psychological enquiry, and have become receptive to a greater range of methodologies. This has involved a recognition of the role of human 'subjects' in research, the difficulties in assuming their passivity and neutrality, and an increased use of human subjects for example as participant groups in research (e.g. Smith, Harré & Van Langenhove 1995b). Indeed, Van Langenhove takes an extreme position, but one with which there is a lot of sympathy, when he writes:

'It is my conviction that if psychology should picture and treat people as persons rather than as natural objects, then speech acts should be taken as the substance of the social and psychological world. This would make the hermeneutical approach a far better model for psychology than the misplaced scientism of the natural sciences model' (Van Langenhove 1995:23).

A striking feature of developments within psychology over the recent past is the emergence of qualitative methods as 'respectable' within psychology (e.g. Henwood & Pidgeon 1992, Banister et al. 1994, Henwood & Nicolson 1995, Richardson 1996). In fact, as pointed out by Richardson (1996) the paper by Henwood & Pidgeon (1992) 'was one of the first papers on qualitative research methods to be accepted for publication in a mainstream psychology journal in the UK' (p. 5).

However, the tensions, both epistemological and methodological, continue, and lead to discussions concerning the unity or diversity of psychology (Lévy-Leboyer 1992, Rozenzweig 1992, Matarazzo 1987, Watts 1992). Lincoln and Guba (op.cit.) draw a distinction between positivist and post-positivist (which they call naturalistic) inquiry. Naturalistic inquiry includes 'ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, qualitative, hermeneutic, humanistic' methodologies (ibid). A distinction sometimes drawn between 'hard' psychology and 'soft' psychology, usually leaves professional or practitioner psychology located at the 'soft' end of the polarisation. This may have the effect of creating a discontinuity between 'scientific' psychology and applied or practitioner' psychology, which may contribute to some of the discontinuities emerging in the present study.

The perspective of the present study

The study uses 'naturalistic' inquiry and qualitative methodology. This is partly because of the nature of the research focus and questions, and partly because of the assumptions made in this study about the nature and methods of psychology. The study involves a degree of 'reflexivity' since it explores an area in which the researcher is herself intimately involved such that she herself is involved in and part of the subject matter being explored, as are the respondents whose attitudes and views are being gathered. In this sense social science, unlike natural science 'stands in a subject-subject relation to its field of study, not a subject-object relation; it deals with a pre-interpreted world in which the meanings developed by active subjects enter the actual constitution or production of the world' (Giddens 1976, quoted in Cohen and Manion p. 25). The researcher's own involvement in the subject matter forms a background and a

framework within which an exploration is made of the views of others, acknowledging and deriving insight from the highly personal, subjective and interpretive nature of the inquiry. In addition, the researcher had a particular relationship with her own group of trainees who formed part of the focus group study, and she used the study as an opportunity to reflect both on the focus group discussion itself, but also to inform her part in the discussion, and subsequent developments in training.

The fact that the researcher is a colleague of the tutors who were interviewed, and engaged in the same enterprise made the data-gathering a highly personal, privileged and unique experience, and one for which a qualitative approach using open-ended interview questions of a semi-structured interview or 'planned discussion' (see Nicolson 1995) in an atmosphere of mutual enquiry was felt to be the appropriate method. Special trust was needed between the interviewer and those who were interviewed, since the focus group interviews with their trainees could potentially raise sensitive issues relating to the courses. A further and related reason was the need to have face to face access to both groups of respondents in order to be able to follow up and probe on questions, and to generate in-depth views on the area. It was expected that the enquiry would generate interest in the participants, and it was embarked on in a spirit of mutual enquiry, rather than a more hierarchical or investigative approach which may characterise more positivist forms of psychological enquiry. Thus the method reflects the subjectivity of the subject matter and the interpretive and illuminative nature of the study.

The present study

The intention of the study reported here was to collect data to describe a situation, to highlight issues within the area, and to illustrate or 'illuminate' themes. The researcher was interested in the trainees' experiences of and feelings about their professional training year, and in the tutors' views and feelings on the topic under investigation. The sources of data would by definition be the course tutors and the trainees of a sample of Master's courses in educational psychology, of which there are 12 in England and Wales. The data to

be sought would, by definition, be highly subjective and personal, and concern the views, attitudes, and perceptions of the respondents.

The use of the kind of individual interview or 'planned discussion' of the present study provides an immediacy of access to perceptions and enables the researcher both to explore in depth and directly the area of interest, and to follow the interviewee's way of seeing the area and of making sense of the topic. This is important since there are many different perspectives which the researcher was interested to explore as part of the data. Similarly, the focus group discussion also provided an immediacy of access in which trainees themselves were able to express and explore a range of different perspectives. The trainees participating in the focus groups had shared a social world for the year, and had worked closely together over their intensive training year; the focus group enabled them to express individual views, to capture group interaction, and to see common and differing views both within and between courses.

Semi-structured interviews were used for the tutors of the university courses, and focus group interviews for the trainee groups. In addition various course documents were available which could give additional factual information, and the researcher had access to other documentary evidence on professional training, in particular that available through the British Psychological Society, such as Training Committee Evaluation Reports, and formal policy documents on training.

The researcher has herself been closely involved in the area for over ten years, being a course tutor for one of the professional training courses in educational psychology; her involvement includes long membership of several of the British Psychological Society's committees (e.g. Membership and Qualifications Board, Professional Affairs Board, DECP Training Committee, Council), serving as a member of seven visiting teams carrying out accreditation visits to a number of courses on behalf of the BPS, and as External Examiner to two courses of professional training in educational psychology.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have their origins in sociological research and have been extensively used in market research (Merton & Kendall 1946, Merton, Fiske & Kendall 1956). However, it was not until relatively recently that focus groups became part of the accepted and respected methodology of social science (Morgan 1993, Millward 1995, Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, Vaughn et al. 1996). For example, in 1988 it was suggested that 'social scientists will have to work hard to adapt the focus group technique to their purposes' (Morgan 1988, p. 77), and in 1993 the same author wrote 'just 5 years ago, few social scientists had heard of focus groups, yet now they are the subject of widespread interest' (Morgan 1993, p.ix). There has recently been an exponential rise in the number of studies employing focus group methodology (Millward 1995), and the method has achieved some acceptance and recognition, at least within the less traditional group of methodologies referred to above.

Definition of focus group

Krueger defines a focus group as 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted with approximately 7 to 10 people by a skilled interviewer. The goal of focus group interviews is to create a candid, normal conversation that addresses, in depth, the selected topic' (Vaughn et al. 1996). The discussion is comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion' (Krueger 1994, p. 6 and see Greenbaum 1988, Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, Vaughn et al. 1996).

Distinctive features

There are several features which distinguish the focus group from other forms of interviewing or data collection, such as individual interview, participant observation or other forms of group interviews. The focus group 'involves the simultaneous use of multiple respondents to generate data and it is the 'focused' (that is, on an 'external stimulus') and relatively staged (that is, by a 'moderator') nature of the focus group method that separates it from other types of

group interviewing strategy' (Millward 1995, p. 275). Of significance is the explicit use of the interaction between members of the group, and the intention to build up the group discussion and interaction as a source of data. 'The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group' (Morgan 1988, p. 12). The intention of focus groups is that the group discussion will of itself and by its nature generate unique data (insights) which would otherwise not be available. 'The aim of focus groups is to get closer to participants' understandings of and perspectives on certain issues. It is not geared to the formal testing of hypotheses in the traditional hypothetico-deductive sense' (Millward 1995, p. 276). Focus group interviews are compatible with key assumptions of the qualitative paradigm (Brotherson 1994, cited in Vaughn et al. 1996, p. 15): thus the nature of reality is viewed as phenomenological, the inquirer and respondent relationship is significant, and the nature of truth statements is such that truth is influenced by perspective. 'The goals are to conduct an interactive discussion that can elicit a greater, more in-depth understanding of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences from multiple points of view and to document the context from which those understandings were derived' (Vaughn et al. 1996, p. 16). Some of the advantages and limitations of focus groups are mentioned later in the chapter.

Nature and Size of group

The nature and size of the group is fairly crucial, and the role of the interviewer or 'moderator' is key. The group needs to be of a size which facilitates discussion and interaction, and contain members who both have an interest in the focus of the discussion, and who are able to speak their point of view within the group. Millward (1995) has suggested that the average size of group (derived from looking at recent focus group research in psychology) is nine participants, with a range of 6-12. The nature and size of a cohort of educational psychology trainees matches a typical focus group as described in the literature (Krueger 1994, Millward 1995).

Typically in focus group discussions, 'participants are invited to "discuss" or "share ideas with others", thereby conveying the informal

nature of the discussion' (Krueger 1994) and the use of open-ended questions encourages discussion and provides insight into the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants who have been selected through having had a common experience or having a common interest in the topic of concern. A permissive environment which may lead to far ranging discussion and tolerance of different views, is achieved through the establishment of the focus group rules, the nature of the questioning, and the selection of the participants (Krueger p.13). The educational psychology trainee groups formed an ideal focus group, having as they did a common interest in the topic, a common experience of the area, and a trust of each other and the group. It is, however, unusual, in the focus group literature, to find groups who are well-established in their relationships and who have a history of group discussion as part of their immediate experience.

The interviewer or 'moderator'

The interviewer (frequently referred to as the 'moderator' in the literature on this type of research) has many tasks in the focus group, and is a central figure to its successful progress. A first task is to create a permissive and non-critical environment which nurtures different views and responses; the intention is to provide a setting which stimulates interest, discussion and exchange of ideas and points of view. This is done through the introduction of questions as stimuli to discussion. The moderator then facilitates participation, through guiding rather than directing the discussion. Finally there needs to be a means of recording the discussion, either through a scribe, or, more commonly, audio or video taping. 'The skills of the moderator are fundamental to the effectiveness of the focus group' (Millward 1995 p. 281). Krueger states that 'the focus group is not a collection of simultaneous individual interviews but rather a group discussion where the conversation flows because of the nurturing of the moderator' (p.100). He enumerates characteristics of a successful moderator as: exercising a mild, unobtrusive control over the group, maintaining enthusiasm and interest for the topic, possessing curiosity about the topic and participants, having respect for participants, having adequate background knowledge, able to communicate clearly, having self-discipline, able to make participants feel comfortable, and 'a friendly manner and a sense of humour'.

Focus groups for this study

The idea of using focus groups arose out of the researcher's experiences using focus groups on another research project (Norwich et al. 1994), and an awareness of their potential as a means of analysing perceptions and attitudes and experiences.

A focus group was then used on the penultimate session of the training year prior to the year in which the research was carried out. This session (in 1992) served as a pilot for the subsequent and present study (whose data were collected in 1993). The intention of the pilot study which was carried out in 1992 was to investigate the perceptions and understandings of the trainee group at the end of their training year in relation to the place of psychological theory in their educational psychology training and how they felt about this; a further intention was for the tutor to evaluate the success of some of the aims of the course at the end of the training year. The framework for the pilot study forms appendix 6. The trainee group of 1992 which constituted the pilot study found the experience of the focus group discussion very positive and useful, and considered that it served a useful purpose in drawing together some aspects of the training year in preparation for starting employment as educational psychologists. The researcher (their tutor) found the results to be highly illuminating and informative, and considered the exercise to be useful as an evaluation, and to inform future planning in an area considered by her to be of prime importance. Slight modifications were made to the framework and questions of the pilot group discussion of 1992, and this revised framework was used in order to study the area more widely in the present study.

The present researcher was the interviewer or 'moderator' for all the focus group interviews. Krueger suggests that focus groups work better with a neutral, unknown interviewer. In seven of the eight groups, the researcher was unknown and therefore able to take a neutral position. The eighth group was the group for whom the researcher was the tutor, and the data are presented separately in chapter 8, since they are by definition and status different from the data from other groups.

The groups ranged in size from 4 to 11, reflecting the size of the educational psychology cohorts that year, and the attendance on the particular day. A number of trainees were absent from their course because of job interviews at the time.

Of note was the universal expression of enjoyment, interest and value made by the trainees who were visited and interviewed for this study. All 7 (8) groups considered that the topic was very important, that it had not been addressed during the course (and should have been) and they would have liked more such discussions. The trainees entered into the discussion very readily and enthusiastically.

The eight courses were visited in the summer of 1993. These visits were arranged with the course tutor as part of their end of year sessions. It was agreed that the researcher visit the course, carry out the focus group interview, and give a presentation to the course on a topic that they had chosen from a precirculated list. The focus group discussion took place in the trainees' teaching room. The group discussion focused on the questions (themes) introduced by the researcher (see page 100). They were formulated as open ended stimulus questions in order to elicit a wide range of views, and to facilitate open discussion. In addition, each trainee was given a sheet with the stimulus questions on it for use during the group session. Further questions were introduced as probes where they were judged to be appropriate, either as clarification or to amplify a point. Following initial reaction, where necessary, the researcher clarified the stimulus questions in order that the trainee groups had, so far as was possible, similar understandings of what was being asked. For example, for the first question it was important that trainees understood that what was of immediate interest to the researcher were the psychological theories and knowledge which they had brought with them to the course, both from their psychology degrees and from other sources. The researcher was satisfied from the responses that this was the case, and that trainees had a similar understanding of what was being asked.

The discussion session lasted between one hour and an hour and a half. The discussion was tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim

and subsequently subjected to thematic analysis using methods of grounded theory and progressive data reduction. Anonymity was guaranteed, with an assurance that no individuals or courses would be identified. Permission was sought and granted for the researcher to use verbatim quotes in the thesis in order to illustrate particular points provided that these were unattributed. The requirement for confidentiality restricts access to the data, and means that it is not available for future consultation. The profession is small and its training institutions also form a small group of universities and staff in this country, and the potentially sensitive nature of the data meant that full confidentiality was assured. However, one sample transcript of a tutor and a group interview is presented as appendix 2.

Sample

The trainee groups of 8 Master's courses of professional training in educational psychology and the Tutors and Associate tutors of these courses were visited in summer (May/June)1993, during a period when they were approaching the end of their courses. This constitutes two-thirds of the total number of such courses in the country, and could be regarded as providing a broadly based picture.

The eight courses were chosen because of their availability and the timetabling constraints both of the course and of the researcher. The educational psychology courses are spread across the country, and at some distance from each other. The course tutors were approached by letter and invited to take part, with the offer of a session being provided for the trainee group following the focus group to be fitted into the summer term timetable. On receipt of the letter, tutors discussed this with their trainees and negotiated their willingness to take part in the research. Thus, the focus group session (and the following input session) became part of a 'visiting speaker' slot during the final term of their course. The researcher decided not to include in the study the two courses in Scotland, since they are very different in nature (being of two years' length and having no requirement for prior teaching qualification and experience); however, it is acknowledged that a comparison would be of interest in a future study. Ten courses in England and Wales were approached by letter and follow-up phone call; of these two were unable to accommodate the session within

their timetable. Two of the courses in England and Wales were not approached, one for reasons of sensitivity in relation to BPS accreditation procedures, the other because of an imminent external examining relationship with the course.

The researcher is a female tutor; of the 7 course tutors interviewed, one was female and six were male; of Associate Tutors two were female, six were male. The ratio of female to male trainee educational psychologists is currently about 85:15, and was reflected in the groups. All groups except one contained at least one male trainee; none contained more than three trainees. The study could therefore be said to reflect the imbalance in the profession, where the course tutors are predominantly male, while the trainee educational psychologists are mainly female.

Since 'the intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalise but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation' (Krueger p. 87) it was considered that the issue of sampling did not arise in the same way as for other methods.

The questions for the focus group

The questions for the focus group were developed from the pilot study (see appendix 6) and were intended to provide a framework or stimulus for the discussion. They were thus deliberately open-ended, and aimed to take both a broadly chronological sequence, and to begin with more straightforward issues before moving on to address more difficult issues.

The following sheet was read out and circulated to the trainees at the beginning of the focus group discussion. It was therefore available to them throughout the session.

Focus Groups Introduction and themes

Introduction.

First could I introduce myself and then ask you just to go round and say who you are (for my benefit). (Introductions). This is a group discussion focusing on the contribution of (psychological) theory to EP practice and the relationship between theory and practice in this training year. I will introduce a number of broad questions (issues) and I would be grateful if you could discuss these. I hope you don't mind that I am tape-recording this session. We have some ground rules. They are that only one person speaks at a time, there are no right or wrong answers, and I am very interested in your own perspectives, views and experiences of these issues. Could I emphasise again that there are no right or wrong answers? I am interested in your experiences and the sense that you have made of them; we are not looking for a group consensus. I will not lead or guide the discussion, though I may try to steer it back if I feel it has gone too much off course. I will be introducing these questions or themes, and some possible follow-up questions. The discussion is confidential in the sense that I will not attribute any remarks to identifiable individuals or courses. If I do use any verbatim quotes in my write-ups, they will be attributed to 'a trainee'.

Here is a sheet with the broad themes. What I would like to do is first of all to go round asking you individually, then to open out the discussion more widely and generally.

- * what kind of theories did you bring with you on entry to this year and the course? how do you gain your theoretical knowledge?
- * is educational psychology an applied psychology?
- * what kind of theories do you think educational psychologists are applying and for what tasks?
- * what kind of theories have you been introduced to on the course? which theories this year have you found particularly useful to you in your professional development and practice as an EP?
- * how has theory linked with practice in the training year? has it? have you experienced them as integrated? or split? could anything more or different be done in order to make the links more meaningful?
- * are there other issues in this broad area which you would like to bring up?

The use of focus groups

Focus groups may be used either as a self-contained means of collecting data or as a supplement to other methods (qualitative or quantitative). In the present study the focus group was used as a self-contained means of collecting the data. This was because the aim was to hear and sample the attitudes, views, feelings, perceptions, experiences of trainees. The focus group provided the opportunity for the trainee group to interact and to stimulate each other's responses and reactions, to explore a very important area, and to express views in a non-judgmental situation. Subjectivity was an essential element of the data, and the ability of the trainees to present a personal perspective and to interact with each other was crucial to the study. Further, the atmosphere of the discussion group permitted trainees to say more 'risky' things than they might have done on a written questionnaire, and to develop their thoughts in response to colleagues and in response to their earlier thoughts. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the very aspect of the group situation which provided social facilitation might also have induced elements of 'risky shift' and group 'conformity' or 'groupthink' through individuals who held strong or extreme views having undue influence on the direction of the discussion. This issue is discussed in a later chapter.

It was considered that a written questionnaire asking the same questions might have been more likely to elicit responses of a socially or professionally desirable nature, and would have been less confidential and anonymous. Although the trainees knew that the group interview was being tape recorded and transcribed, it was felt that the transient nature of utterances in the group enabled them to speak openly and freely about what they had experienced and about some of their hopes and disappointments. Furthermore, a written questionnaire would have restricted the nature of the questions, removed the possibility of more in depth responses and prevented the group interaction. Individual interviews with trainees could have been threatening and almost inquisitorial, and might have more resembled an external examination or viva, particularly as carried out by a course tutor, where the status differences would have been hard to ignore. As it was, the group discussion took on a democratic nature,

where the status difference between trainees and tutor could be virtually ignored, and where the group 'moderator' could take on the role of 'interested researcher' or 'informed outsider'. This minimised the influence of interviewer over interviewee which may be an issue in individual interviews. The trainees in the group became immersed in the discussion, which became a discussion amongst themselves rather than the question and answer of more traditional interviews. The focus group enabled assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, the atmosphere created enabled trainees to respond to each other as well as to the stimulus questions, and the group interaction produced a level of discussion and conversation which would have been impossible in a sequence of individual interviews. 'This technique is not meant to replace the individual interview, but rather group interviewing will provide data on group interaction, on realities as defined in a group context, and on interpretations of events that reflect group input' (Frey and Fontana 1993).

Validity

The validity of the data produced in focus groups depends on the suitability of this method for the area of the inquiry. 'Focus groups are very much like other social science measurement procedures in which validity depends not only on the procedures used but also on the context' (Krueger 1994, p. 31). The topic was of considerable intrinsic interest to the groups, and they readily and enthusiastically immersed themselves in the discussion, with few inhibitions, so that we can conclude that trainees were describing their own experiences and perceptions, and not expressing views which they felt they ought to be expressing. Furthermore, the data were intended to describe the situation and to illuminate and illustrate themes rather than to present definitive answers, though the subjective reality which was presented in the groups emerged with consistent themes across the groups.

Focus group identity influencing views

However, an issue which should be mentioned is the degree to which a focus group takes on its own identity and its very permissiveness may encourage more radical or extreme views to be expressed, which in

turn become taken up and developed thus giving a potential bias to the nature of the discussion. For example, one member may introduce an extreme element of their experience which touches on something also experienced by another member, and this theme then develops into a major issue of discussion without necessarily representing the totality of the experience. Awareness of this issue is important though it should also be emphasised that the research was seeking views and perceptions, and was not based on a search for 'objective reality' or a definitive description of the totality of their training experience.

Morgan and Spanish suggest that 'in essence, the strengths of focus groups come from a compromise between the strengths found in other qualitative methods. Like participant observation, they allow access to a process that qualitative researchers are often centrally interested in: interaction. Like in-depth interviewing, they allow access to content that we are often interested in: the attitudes and experiences of our informants. As a compromise, focus groups are neither as strong as participant observation on the naturalistic observation of interaction, nor as strong as interviewing on the direct probing of informant knowledge, but they do a better job of combining these two goals than either of the other two techniques. We believe this is a useful combination, and one which, for some types of research questions, may represent the best of both worlds' (Morgan and Spanish 1984).

Some advantages of focus groups

Vaughn et al. (1996) suggest that focus groups offer several advantages over other research methods in the collection of 'rich in-depth data'. Focus groups encourage interaction both between group members and the interviewer, they offer support for individual members and encourage greater openness in their responses, and they encourage participants to form views through interaction with others. The "loosening effect" (Vaughn et al. op. cit.) facilitates more candid and reflective responses, and it is said that the group environment allows greater anonymity and therefore helps individuals to disclose more freely (ibid).

Some limitations of focus groups

Krueger has listed some of the limitations of focus groups as a method of data collection: the researcher has less control in the group interview, data are more difficult to analyse, the technique requires carefully trained interviewers, groups may be difficult to assemble, the discussion must be conducted in an environment conducive to conversation (p.36). These limitations were taken into account, and attempt was made to minimise their impact. In this study there was only one interviewer who has considerable experience in interviewing and in work with groups, thus creating consistency of group interview across the groups; unlike many other focus groups which use members who do not know each other or the researcher, there was no difficulty in assembling the groups, since the group discussions were part of the course, thus permitting unique access to this kind of data, and the trainees found the subject matter of great interest and importance; the group discussion took place in the trainees' seminar room with which they felt very familiar, and which had certainly been the base for trainee discussion and debate throughout their training year; it would be reasonable to assume that the environment would be conducive to discussion. The issue of control over the interview did not emerge as a difficulty, partly because of the subject matter, and partly because of the fact that the trainee groups were used to discussing together and were used to listening to each other, and appeared to be sensitive to gentle direction and prompting. The trainees had nothing to hide, this would be a one-off meeting with the interviewer, and anonymity had been guaranteed, so it is therefore likely that the data have high face validity, that is, the trainees both understood and answered to the best of their ability the questions raised.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the Course Tutors and Associate tutors of the courses. Interviews are widely used in qualitative research (Burgess 1984, Powney & Watts 1987, Taylor & Bogdan 1984). They are favoured over the use of questionnaires because of the richness and immediacy of the data, and the possibility of in depth exploration and probing. It has been suggested that semi-structured interviewing 'gives the researcher and respondent much

more flexibility than the conventional structured interview, questionnaire or survey. The researcher is able to follow up particularly interesting avenues that emerge in the interview and the respondent is able to give a fuller picture. Then by employing qualitative analysis an attempt is made to capture the richness of the themes emerging from the respondent's talk rather than to reduce the responses to quantitative categories' (Smith 1995, p. 9).

This study used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Kerlinger defines open-ended questions as 'those that supply a frame of reference for respondents' answers, but put a minimum of restraint on the answers and their expression. While their content is dictated by the research problem, they impose no other restrictions on the content and manner of respondent answers' (Kerlinger 1964, p. 471). Open-ended interview questions were chosen as an appropriate method for data collection, since they 'provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms ' (Patton 1980), while at the same time enabling the researcher to focus on the subject of interest. The use of a common set of interview themes or questions allowed for the data to be collected in a sufficiently systematic way for subsequent coding and synthesis.

In this study, the intention was to explore with the respondents (course tutors) their attitudes, views and feelings in an area which was felt to be one of fundamental concern to them. Thus, the semi-structured interview served as a 'planned discussion' or 'planned conversation' (Nicolson 1995). The respondents (tutors) were shown the interview framework (appendix 1), and were invited to contribute their thoughts and views on each of the areas; considerable flexibility was allowed, enabling the respondent to emphasise those aspects of the topic which had greatest significance at the time. The respondents were positive about this opportunity, not least because it caused them to reflect on an area which all believed to be important. The interviews were carried out by the researcher, a colleague and peer of all the respondents; thus, the interview became a lengthy conversation structured by the researcher, and aiming to explore with the respondents their views and experiences in this area.

The interviews were semi-structured (see appendix 1) and covered predetermined areas. The schedule was constructed using the researcher's experience in training educational psychologists, reading of the literature, and the researcher's contact with other professional psychologists. A pilot interview was carried out with a colleague tutor (not subsequently involved) in the summer of 1992, and the schedule was modified following this and other discussion. The aim was that the questions should not of themselves impose a conceptual framework on the responses, but should provide the opportunity for interviewees to bring their own conceptualisations and frameworks to bear on the interview. Thus, interviews were structured by the schedule but very much influenced by the respondents (see Smith 1995b). Each interview lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, and gave good opportunity to explore, to follow up and to probe responses which seemed appropriate. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Anonymity was guaranteed, and an undertaking was made only to include verbatim quotes unattributed (and see page 99).

A semi-structured interview was used in this study, because of the nature of the subject matter and the respondents. The subject matter is one of great importance and interest to the respondents, it is complex and responses may require several attempts to capture exactly what the respondent means. There were a number of broad areas which the researcher wished to cover, but responses to one question frequently influenced the way or the order in which a subsequent question was framed, and the respondent shared in the direction that the interview took. 'In this relationship, the respondent can be perceived as the expert on the subject and should therefore be allowed the maximum opportunity to tell his or her own story' (Smith 1995b). The method recognised the mutuality of interest and the collegiality of the researcher and the respondents.

The use of semi-structured interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews may raise questions of validity. Smith has provided a helpful analysis of the continuum of theoretical positions possible in relation to the validity of semi-structured interviews (Smith 1995 op.cit.) He suggests that '(a)t one extreme,

(one may) believe that one is uncovering a factual record.....(a)t the other extreme one may assume that a person's responses form part of a locally organised structure.....(b)etween these positions one may consider that what respondents say does have some significance and 'reality' for them...that it...represents a manifestation of their psychological world, and it is this psychological reality that one is interested in' (ibid). The position of this research is very much at this intermediate position which Smith describes as adopting a phenomenological perspective drawing on a symbolic interactionist position. The nature and formulation of the questions was a product of the researcher's psychological 'reality' and perspective; similarly the responses reflected respondents' psychological 'reality' which in turn was derived from and reflected in the model of psychology which informed their thinking (and the training process of the course of which they were tutor).

Analysis of data.

The data were analysed using methods developed from the 'data reduction' techniques of Miles and Huberman (1984) and the 'constant comparative method' originating from grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which focuses on theory generation rather than theory verification and which explicitly links the research process with theory development. 'A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents' (Strauss and Corbin 1990), in contrast to one used in the hypothetico-deductive framework traditionally used in psychology (see above). Miller (1995) quotes Turner (1991) who suggests that the term 'grounded theory' may be misleading, preferring the term 'developing local theory'. This fits with Glaser and Strauss' belief that local theory should be grounded in the complexity of the data and that from local theories will emerge more all-embracing systems of understanding.

In grounded theory, analysis consists of coding which 'represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data' (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 57). Different forms and levels of coding and categorisation are used, and it is suggested that the coding depends on the researcher's own conceptual framework, the technical literature and the words and phrases of the respondents themselves (ibid). The first stage of coding is 'open coding' which is defined as 'the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising the data' (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p.61). This is time-consuming, but proved to be a helpful approach to the task of making sense of the large amount of transcripts generated by the interviews and focus groups.

Turner (1991, quoted in Miller 1995) characterises the grounded theory approach as moving through three stages:

Order 1 (information in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, documents)

"Chaos" (field notes and transcripts are chopped up and rearranged)

Order 2 (data recombined and relabelled)

However, in another way of looking at the stages, there are three levels of coding, as the first stage (open coding) then moves on to stage 2 through condensation of the codes and stage 3 through further condensation and synthesis with the researcher's conceptual framework.

Miles and Huberman progressive data reduction

Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994) use the term 'data reduction' to refer to 'the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the "raw" data(it) occurs continuously throughout the life of any qualitatively oriented project....even before the data are actually collected, anticipatory data reduction is occurring as the researcher decides (often without full awareness) which conceptual framework, which sites, which research questions, which data collection approaches to choose' (p. 21). They continue: 'data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses,

discards, and organises data in such a way that "final" conclusions can be drawn and verified' (ibid, p. 21).

In the present study a combination of techniques derived from these theoretical approaches led to a system of identifying themes, coding, combining categories and linking these with the original themes identified in the interview frameworks.

Method of analysis of the data

The semi-structured interviews and the focus groups yielded substantial transcripts which were used as the basis for analysis, with the researcher 'engaging in an interpretive relationship with the transcript' (Smith 1995). Each course had between 2 and 6 hours of tape which were initially transcribed verbatim immediately following the interview sessions. The course transcripts were of between 10 and 30 pages length, with a mean of 24. The transcripts were kept confidential and anonymous, and the requirement for confidentiality within the context of a small profession and its training restricts access to this data and means that the transcripts are not available for consultation.

The seven sites are presented with context and summary in chapter 6, with the researcher's own course presented as chapter 8; themes emerging from the data are presented in chapter 7. The themes are then related to the researcher's conceptual framework and to the literature in the discussion in chapter 9.

Following completion of all the interview sessions, the eight sets of transcripts were studied carefully as a group, the researcher immersing herself in the data over a three day period, in order to identify major themes in the data (see appendix 3). Although the researcher started out with her own conceptual framework which informed the nature and order of the questions asked in the interview sessions, the codes and categories of themes emerged as the transcripts were read and re-read.

Thus '*unlike quantitative coding that means applying preconceived codes.....to the data, qualitative grounded theory coding means creating*

codes as you study your data. The codes emerge as you study your data. By studying your data, you again interact with them and ask questions of them' (Charmaz 1995, p.37).

This is referred to as 'the constant comparative method of analysis' derived from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 101, and see Glaser 1978, Strauss 1987, Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1993, Smith 1995, Charmaz 1995).

Thus, the researcher first read through all the transcripts, carrying out a process of identifying themes and coding and chunking relevant sections of text in the individual transcripts. These themes were then used as a framework to 'comb through' the transcripts again, seeking further themes and then looking for patterns within and between these categories in order to build up higher order themes and a theoretical representation of the area being explored. The themes were identified within each site and compared across sites.

In this way, the data processing involved an iterative process with regular returns to the original data transcripts, alternating with the development of theoretical positions, and using the literature to inform the interpretation, which is continually informed by the researcher's own personal experience of and deep interest in the area in question. The data thus interact with the literature and with the personal and professional positioning and perspective of the researcher.

Chapter 6

The Courses

The context of seven courses

This chapter presents seven courses as 'case studies' and aims to provide information on the source of the interview data, both from the focus groups and from the tutor interviews. Thus there is a brief summary write-up of each 'case' (university course), providing a brief background context and a very shortened summary of some of the issues which emerged from the data from the trainee focus group discussion and the individual tutor interviews from the particular university. The courses have been given fictitious names to protect their identity. The introductory paragraphs on context are drawn from course documentation, and quotes come from course documents.

Then follows a brief summary of the focus group discussions and the individual tutor interview sessions in order to provide a base for the more detailed thematic discussion. These summaries were sent to course tutors for validation and correction of factual information and may therefore be seen to have been negotiated with the people involved and represent a fair account to the best of their knowledge. However, the tutors were unable to comment on the validity of the group discussion reports since they had not been present, and it was not possible to send the reports back to the trainee groups for verification since they had long dispersed to their posts as educational psychologists. Even if the groups had been intact, it would have been difficult to ask them to verify the transcripts which were drawn from individual views and group interaction.

Course Andertown

Context

The course at Andertown is based in the education department. It was started in 1946 and is thus one of the oldest courses of its kind in the country. It has long been associated with some of the leading British educational psychologists. The course works closely with local LEA

psychological services and educational psychologists of whom the majority have been trained at this course and provide practice placements and supervision for the trainee EPs. There has therefore been considerable congruence between the model of training on the course and local services, and there are close links between the course and the surrounding Educational Psychology Services. These links include two Associate Tutors who work part-time in the university, and part-time in local services where much of the trainees' placement work in their first term is carried out. Until recently the model of the course was strongly based on behavioural principles and methods. The model has been expanded by the advent of new staff to embrace other models, in particular personal construct psychology and self-organised learning.

The course handbook states that 'The course seeks to equip trainees to become reflective scientist-practitioners'.

Andertown Trainee Group

The course had 11 trainees that year. The course takes trainees with a wide range of experience, several of them with a long teaching career. About half of the trainee group had spent more than 10 years in teaching and felt themselves to have been socialised into education and away from psychology. Of the 11 trainees of this group, 9 were psychology graduates, and 2 had acquired GBR via an MEd route; this was an atypical year, since the course normally has about 50% of its students gaining their psychology through OU/MEd type routes.

The majority of the trainees mentioned theories of behavioural psychology as the dominant model they had brought with them to the course and used in their teaching. Several of them had only vague recollections of psychological theory, and most felt that they had not really used their psychology during teaching and that teaching had created a break in the development of their psychology thinking.

On this course, the trainees felt that educational psychology used to be applied psychology and potentially could be, but their experiences on placement had been mainly of statutory assessment, where they felt that there was little time or place for psychology. They felt that

educational psychology, in contrast to clinical psychology, had become completely bureaucratic, with no time for psychology. For this reason, they had not really seen any application of psychology in the field and perceived all EPs to be overwhelmed with requests for statutory work, where there was not much need for psychology.

The group felt a lack of psychological theories in the profession. The reasons given for this were that:

- a) there was little time for psychological theories, since assessment and decision making in the LEA were very superficial, with no time or need to test things out or to ask questions why.
- b) time constraints and workload made it impossible, and no one was particularly interested in psychology in the LEA, where they just wanted their job done.
- c) the profession was also to blame, since EPSs had embraced statutory work to ensure their survival. The profession was felt to be concerned more with its own survival, than with developing a decent profession.
- d) individual EPs had got out of the habit of thinking psychologically and had become frightened of it, and had got into comfortable routines where they had no need to think.

All members of the group welcomed what they perceived to be a lot of theory on the course, gained mainly through lectures and reading and consisting, as they saw it, mainly of tutors' favourite theories, such as Personal Construct Psychology, Applied Behavioural Analysis, theories of communication, systems and family theory, self organised learning. They had enjoyed the theoretical input, though regretted that there was no opportunity to put this into practice in the field because of the pressures of the job and the fact that they perceived an "anti-theoretical culture" amongst EPs. They felt that the link between theory and practice in training was problematical for them because they had been stimulated by a lot of theories and ideas on the course, but had no opportunity to put these into practice on placements, which had been very practical and mundane and lacking in psychology.

The group had experienced theory as separate from practice because there was such a gap between the university and the placement. At

the university, they had been expected to develop theories, whereas on placement they were expected to work in the same way as supervising EPs i.e. to be atheoretical and to get on with the statements and to develop very practical skills.

In order to make these links more meaningful, they felt that practice would have to change in the field and that there was a conflict between the practitioner psychologist in a professional sense and the LEA employee/bureaucrat. All the trainees wished for a more psychological and less bureaucratic approach to practice, but felt that this was prevented by too little time, an anti-psychological and anti-thinking culture, fixed ideas within a service, and misguided priorities of a service. However, they felt that the LEA would not want a more psychological approach, and that psychology would interfere with the LEA systems and bureaucracy. They felt that psychology is about asking questions whereas the LEA wants quick solutions and answers.

Andertown Course tutors

Two Tutors were interviewed. Both said that they would like educational psychology to be applied psychology, but suspect that it is not, both because of the practice in the field which is largely atheoretical and bureaucratic, and because trainees do not arrive as psychologists to the course. They felt that they are unable to assume any theoretical knowledge from the undergraduate degree, except perhaps a residual and vague memory of psychology, and that there is no common core, since, despite the BPS accreditation, different universities have different views of what constitutes a psychology degree. Many applicants to the course appear to have been distanced from their studies of psychology by their (sometimes extensive) experience of teaching.

On the course selection procedures aim to ensure that only those applicants who can demonstrate an active continuing interest in psychology, and who can offer a cogent account of the content of their undergraduate studies, and the ways in which they have been able to apply their psychological knowledge and understandings in their teaching, are offered a place on the course. Nonetheless, it remains

the case that many successful applicants do later demonstrate very poor recall of much of the psychology with which they had once been conversant.

They felt that academic educational psychologists and professional educational psychologists do not really communicate with each other and have very little in common and very little contact. They have different preoccupations and time frame, different origins and value positions, a different language and methodology (e.g. positivist vs. reflexive), a different scale of operation which makes contact very difficult, and different values e.g. client issues, service vs. research.

On the course the tutors encourage trainees to use a range of theories and theoretical models within an action research paradigm. The tutors now make considerable use of a Personal Construct Psychology model, and Self Organised Learning, and a lot of emphasis is placed on the idea of applying these models reflexively and flexibly so that trainees become aware of the values and hypotheses which are driving their own thinking and behaviour. There is still a heavy emphasis in local services on Applied Behavioural Analysis about which the tutors have some concerns. Tutors hope that inputs on cognitive behavioural models will ensure that, where trainees **do** utilise behavioural paradigms in their practice, they will do so in ways that ensure that key tenets derived from Personal Construct Psychology (e.g. the personal construction of meaning), are considered in parallel. By combining behavioural and cognitive/social constructivist models, tutors aim to safeguard against the potential weaknesses of either model. The tutors hope to reactivate trainees' theoretical knowledge through tutorials and guided reading and seminars. They feel that trainees appreciate a theoretical approach.

On this course their stated aim is to train both 'scientist-practitioner' and 'reflective practitioners'. They feel that it is very important to have a theoretical approach and stance rather than detailed knowledge of any particular theories. However, they feel that EPs in the field are much more driven by techniques and craft skills than principles and theoretical considerations.

A problem for the tutors is the gap between training and the modus operandi of most of the services that the trainees will be working in. Having a theoretical approach is not strongly valued in the services; rather EPs are required to be a kind of pragmatic problem-solver who fixes the things that schools and local authorities want psychologists to fix without making waves; creativity is not valued in most fieldwork settings, and in fact appears to be punished in some settings. They feel that the LEA culture and the service culture inhibits the place of theory, and that there is an implicit criticism of any interest in theory.

However, while tutors considered that psychological theory should form the backbone of the training, there is a problem in that local authority service delivery may often be construed by trainees as wholly pragmatic and atheoretical: in many cases therefore, there is a risk that trainees will not see the relevance of theory to EP practice. They aspire to integrate theory and practice on the course, by getting trainees to give an account of the psychology informing their casework, and encouraging them to use psychology in their statutory work; they hope to inoculate trainees against the socialising pressures to forget their psychology once they are working in the field. They try to influence services by only choosing supervisors whose practice is congruent with the models used on the course. They feel that one year for training is not long enough to develop a secure grounding in a range of theoretical models. However, they try to ensure that application of the SOL (self-organised learning) planning and review framework provides a structure through which trainees will derive continuing personal learning and professional growth through increasing practice.

They believe that it is not enough for EPs to have discipline knowledge only, which would mean they could just be carrying out experiments. EPs need to have the professional context and knowledge, and the responsibility to themselves and others that makes them a professional psychologist.

B. Eastshire

Context

The course at Eastshire University is based in the education department and was established in 1972. The two tutors have been involved in the course from its beginning, though recently they have been joined by part-time Associate Tutors from local Educational Psychology Services. The course is based in Eastshire and provides educational psychologists for and draws supervisors from its local authorities; it has been quite isolated, being located at a distance away from other services and courses. The EP practice in the region is fairly stable, partly because there is very little turn-over of educational psychologists. This has had advantages and disadvantages. The course has a reputation for having developed an innovative model of training, based on 'systems' and project work in schools, with a high degree of experiential work on the course.

According to the course handbook, the tutors feel strongly that the training should provide trainees with an alternative model ('our own unique approach to training'). The course takes a 'constructionist' perspective and uses a model of 'consultation' in which trainees draw on a 'range of psychological skills and knowledge'. The handbook states that a 'guiding principle throughout the course is the integration of theory and practice', and that 'the purpose of the fieldwork placements is to provide an opportunity to integrate theory and practice in the professional setting'.

Eastshire Trainee group

The trainee group that year consisted of 6 fairly mature trainees, all of whom had received their psychology qualifications between seven and twenty years previously. The tutors on this course have a slight preference for mature students with at least five years' teaching experience. A common route is via teaching first followed by an MEd in psychology recognised by the BPS as affording eligibility for GBR. The tutors have found such students to be more mature and are more likely to have developed the ability to apply psychology, to think psychologically and to have begun to integrate psychology into their thinking.

The trainees felt that the training year had been a uniquely formative experience which would help them to cope with the pressures of the job, but that this had not had much to do with their previous psychology degree. In general they felt that traditional psychology degrees were not that useful and did not feel that they had been using psychology in their teaching. All felt more confident as psychologists at the end of the year although they felt that that had not been to do with specific knowledge, but rather a psychological approach.

They felt that although they had been introduced to a range of useful theories in the year, many of which they would follow up later, the course was more about a psychological approach involving reflection and problem-solving and their own experiential learning and reflection. The course had involved an approach or a process, a way of thinking and working psychologically, rather than the introduction or use of specific theories. However, the course had made extensive use of systems theory in the training year.

The trainees were critical of the profession on the question whether educational psychology is an applied psychology. They felt that there is a lot of defensiveness in the profession, which made out that the psychologist is very different from others, but that this was about protecting jobs, rather than offering anything distinctive. They felt that EPs should be demonstrating the benefits of psychology rather than protecting their jobs by just fitting in with the LEA system. EPs do not apply psychology, and the 1981 Act had forced EPs to be administrators rather than clinicians.

Most of the trainees had had placements with ex-trainees from the same course, and therefore found the links between theory and practice were easier to make. The fact that the course had concentrated on perspectives and process meant that it was effective in influencing not what they were going to do, but the way they did it. They realised they could go and find out the knowledge, while the course had provided a way to look at the situation. The course had also involved participation in action research projects where the trainees had experienced the link between theory and practice.

The trainees felt that there were many pressures against psychological theory in the field. They mentioned specifically:

- a) EPs' isolation,
- b) time pressures,
- c) the profession's anti-theoretical culture,
- d) LEA pressures.

Eastshire Course tutors

Two tutors were interviewed. Both considered that educational psychology should be and could be applied psychology, despite the pressures of the LEAs and the profession against this. They felt that EPs should use a different kind of psychology from the traditional positivist model, a more interpersonal, constructivist and tentative psychology. They believed that the different applied psychologists had much common knowledge and skills, but that the context makes the crucial difference. The AEP break-away from the BPS was seen as in part responsible for educational psychologists losing their psychology (in contrast to clinical psychologists).

The tutors perceived that EPs tried to apply a range of traditional theories not very effectively or appropriately, and that a different approach would be more appropriate, i.e. an approach which is constructivist, illuminative, respecting of clients, and emphasises values. They considered that EPs have tended to choose theories which give quick answers (e.g. psychometrics, differential psychology, behavioural psychology, because of political issues of grading and sorting), and have used them fairly atheoretically. Both tutors considered that theory was very important to EP practice.

They regretted the lack of two-way traffic between academic and professional educational psychologists, feeling that academic EPs are probably too academic and traditional, and professional EPs are not interested in psychology and theory. So the two groups have very different perspectives, language and values.

They have learned not to take for granted any psychological knowledge in their students, which confirms the huge variation of psychology degrees in this country, which is contrary to the notion of GBR. Since

they have a preference for mature trainees who have often come through an MEd route, they admit that they are not expecting any common foundation in theoretical psychology. They are looking for trainees who have already begun to integrate psychology into their thinking. They do not agree with the way some people 'do psychology' as a detached, irrelevant, positivist enterprise and in this way they perceive much academic psychology as having little relevance and use for professional practice.

The tutors consider that training involves modelling an approach of the whole person, which enables them to cope with feelings of insecurity, to appreciate the socially constructed nature of knowledge, a collaborative, consultative human problem-solving model which draws on a range of theories but which becomes an integral part of the person. They believe strongly that trainees need to appreciate the socio-political aspects of their role. Thus trainees need a psychological framework or perspective, an understanding of the socio-political aspects of the role, and some professional know-how to do the job, but always retaining the psychological perspective.

The course has a strong commitment to integrating theory with practice, but the tutors perceived that job pressures push trainees in an atheoretical manner and that trainees are in danger of being pulled in two directions; here the task of the tutor is to help them to integrate the two and to cope with the tensions.

They stated that EPs in the field do not want to get involved in theory and just want to get on with the job and draw their salary in the end. Much of this is the fault of the profession, which has not fought to defend its interests, and has given in to or even welcomed the LEA bureaucracy. They feel that a problem for the profession is that many EPs view the end of the training year as their training completed, without seeing the need to go on and to develop and maintain a reflective and theoretical position in their practice.

C. Meretown

Context

The course is based in the Education department and was established in 1961. The course tutor has been involved with the course since 1977, first as Associate Tutor and subsequently as Tutor. The Associate Tutor has been there since 1985 and was herself trained at this course. An earlier course tutor, who was there until 1991 although not actually running the course at that time, was heavily involved in the development of the British Ability Scales and has now in fact moved to USA to work as Technical Director of a test agency. This course has therefore historically had a strong emphasis on BAS and related procedures. The course is 'regional' in that most trainees have placements in LEAs in the region, where a majority go on to work in local services.

According to the handbook, the course 'draws on a range of theoretical perspectives which inform psychological practice' and aims to help trainees to integrate theory with practice through 'units of work which are designed primarily to enable trainees to demonstrate their capacity to link theory with practice'.

Meretown Trainee group

Of the 8 trainees on the course that year, 3 had Honours psychology degrees, one had taken the BPS QE, 2 had gone through the MEd route, and 2 had OU degrees. There was considerable variation in their backgrounds and length of teaching, the majority having had long teaching careers.

The trainees found it difficult to say which theories they had brought with them to the course and mentioned a range of different theories at a superficial level. Most felt that they had not used any psychology in their teaching, partly because their undergraduate degree was too long ago, and partly because their undergraduate psychology had been too academic and not useful.

The group considered as a whole that it was difficult to find any psychology in educational psychology. The profession was felt to be one which had lost any psychology it might have had, allowed itself to be totally involved with administration and bureaucracy, and therefore trainees on placement had to fit in with this apychological,

almost anti-psychological stance. However, they felt strongly that educational psychology **ought** to be psychological and based in psychology.

The group agreed that they had not really seen any evidence on their placements of psychology being applied and suggested that “the profession is not interested in applying psychology”. In general the group considered that the main task for EPs, as seen on their placements, had been writing statements, and there was little or no psychology involved in this; they felt that EPs had somehow forfeited their psychology and replaced it with bureaucratic concerns.

There was a general view that there was very little psychological theory on the course, which had been mostly practical. A theme which came up several times was that there had not been enough time for theory which had been sacrificed for teaching of practical skills. Most trainees would have liked more (explicit) psychology on the course. A common feeling was that there had been very little time for thinking or for asking questions, but that this was probably a good preparation for the job, since EPs have no time to weigh up the issues or to think or reflect or to do psychology.

The group felt that there was no link between theory and practice either in training or in the field: they felt that it is a practical job, where people are not interested in theory. A common feeling was that there was no real commitment to being a psychologist, either in the job (as seen on placement) or on the training course. They would have liked tutors to make more of an effort to make the links, to have a commitment to psychology, and to structure the placements so that they permitted some psychology. There was a widely felt complaint that the placements pressurise trainees to be the same as working EPs: since working EPs do not think (or have no time to think), this spreads to the trainees, and becomes frustrating. The trainees considered that there were considerable vested interests and pressures to adopt a particular stance in this profession. EPs themselves were not very interested in psychological theory.

Meretown Course tutors

The two course tutors considered that the reality and the ideal of educational psychology as applied psychology were very different. On the one hand, (ideal) they felt that EP should be applied psychology and that there is a great need for applied psychology in the education system. On the other hand (reality), EPs do not function as applied psychologists because the majority become socialised into the ways of local education authorities and become LEA personnel, often thinking of themselves primarily as educationalists, possibly even special educationalists. EPs have become more involved in education and bureaucracy; as local government officers, they have been forced (and may have welcomed this) into a position in the LEA where they find they are not being asked to apply their psychology and therefore do not use psychology.

They felt that there are not many specific psychological theories which inform EP practice, but that EPs rely more on belief systems which may be vaguely rooted in some sort of psychological theories. Many are still informed by broad behavioural theories. EPs do not have the time to reflect on their practice and the theoretical aspects of it; if they did, practice would almost certainly improve. They felt that EPs would probably say that they are not using psychological theories. However, if they do use any theories, they tend to stick with those presented in their training, or they become eclectic to the point of superficiality. They felt that the LEA culture mitigates against theory.

They felt that there is not much contact between academic educational psychologists and professional EPs, and that they do not appear to have much to offer to each other. One possibility might be for the two groups to merge together in the BPS, the Education Section and the DECP and get more interchange between the two groups.

The tutors do not assume any particular knowledge of psychology of trainees on entry to the course, although they still hope for some general superficial knowledge of some of the key theories in psychology, grounding in child development, some grounding in statistics and research methodology, but they admit that it is very patchy and often forgotten. They find that there is more of a difference than a similarity between trainees in their knowledge and

understanding of psychology, since they vary enormously in their degrees, their length of teaching, and their background. They do not assume any carry-through during teaching, and most psychology is usually forgotten in this period.

They aim to teach a little theory on the course, and to assume trainees gain some input through their reading. However, since the course is too short in length, they prioritise practical aspects to enable trainees to do the job; they regard as a priority to prepare trainees to do the job as it is found in the field. One tutor aims explicitly to use the idea of the reflective practitioner.

The relationship between theory and practice in the professional training year is seen to be a difficult issue. This is partly because the trainees themselves are keen to get on with the job, and are not seen to be interested in theory, which they see as irrelevant to the immediate task, and partly because the job in the field is a very practical one, with little use for psychological theory. Thus there are massive tensions between theory and practice in educational psychology.

The pressures of a one year course mean that they aim to prepare trainees for EP practice as it is defined by services, and this is lacking in psychological theory. It is therefore difficult to integrate theory with practice in the job because of the LEA culture, and the pressures.

The tutors felt that several factors inhibit the place of theory. These include:

- a) the trainees' inclination and interest,
- b) the LEA pressures and expectations,
- c) the profession and its development.

Although the tutors felt a strong commitment to psychological theory in EP practice, they felt unable to deliver this in a one year course where the expectations are that trainees will be able to perform on placement. They feel that their prime role is to prepare trainees to be able to do the job as it is found in the field.

D. Northtown

Context

The Northtown course has been in existence since 1967, based in the Child Development Research Unit of the Psychology department, and had been dominated up to this year by a somewhat clinical model of training Child Psychologists (6-8 EPs and 6 Child Psychologists each year train together). From 1994, it has been based in a Postgraduate School of Applied Psychology within the Psychology department, which is very strong in terms of 'traditional' research oriented psychology, and where this course sometimes feels itself to be 'second class' in terms of its contribution, for example to the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise).

This is a course where there had previously been a historical emphasis on clinical developmental psychology, and on medical syndromes, in particular autism; more recently there has been the introduction of the applied psychology problem-solving model. Both of the tutors have part-time appointments in LEA services. According to the course handbook, the course 'draws heavily on psychological theory, research and practice. It is not a 'top-up' course for those wishing to teach children with special educational needs but it is a significant career shift into the role of an applied educational psychologist'.

Northtown Trainee group

Of the trainee group of 7, five had had a long teaching career and had only much later decided to go into educational psychology. Five trainees had entered with a psychology degree, one with an OU degree, and one with a MEd giving eligibility for GBR of the BPS.

The majority of trainees felt rather vague about any psychological theory that they had brought with them, although they thought they might have brought some behavioural psychology to the course. They did not feel that they had taken much psychology through their teaching, partly because they felt that there is not much psychology in teaching, and partly because with many years in teaching one becomes socialised into another culture.

They were unclear whether educational psychology is an applied psychology, though they felt that there were similarities with clinical and occupational psychology. They felt that educational psychology was more a systematic way of working, looking at a situation and analysing it, using the problem solving model, in a process of description and prediction, and looking for evidence. However, they had not seen much evidence of EPs applying psychology in the field, but rather saw EPs as teachers with a bit of extra knowledge about SEN.

They had been introduced to a range of theories on the course, mainly through lectures. These included: behavioural, systems theory including family therapy, medical models, syndromes e.g. autism. However, they felt that everything had been rushed and skimmed and there had not been enough time to go into anything in depth. They had found the behavioural theories useful in practice, and also the training in developing their own theories through their problem-solving model. However, they also felt that the course was more a practical training in a problem-solving model which they had found useful.

They felt that they are caused to integrate theory with practice through being asked to design their own problem-solving model and then use it in practice and demonstrate how to use it and reflect on it. Most of the group felt that 'the model' was the best part of the course and they felt that they had the opportunity to encounter theory in action, side by side during the course.

However, many felt they had learned more from placement than from university, since the placement was the real job, and they could learn from seeing other people working and they could ask questions at the time the problem cropped up. On the other hand, several thought that there were benefits to having experiences both in the university and the field and that having time to discuss and reflect in the university gave them confidence: "theory gives you confidence".

They saw tensions between theory and practice in the field. These were perceived to be due to:

a) time pressures,

- b) socialisation into a bureaucratic way of working,
- c) pressures to stick to the familiar,
- d) pressures to write statements,
- e) pressures to do what the LEA wanted which did not involve thinking.

The trainees were aware of their very different backgrounds, and thought it was difficult to establish a baseline of psychology. They were not sure whether the course had any base in psychology (or whether it would be possible to do the course and the job without psychology), but found this a very interesting question

Northtown Course tutors

The two tutors considered that a professional EP needs to be able to apply psychological theories and ideas in a social and political context. A more useful theory of educational psychology practice than that traditionally used would have to be much more sociological and social psychological and deal with the context and the political purposes. They considered that educational psychology **should** be informed by psychological theories, but that EPs have become bureaucratised.

The tutors consider that there are two kinds of EP activities: intervention, where the EP may be applying psychology, often behavioural psychology, and developmental psychology, and resource allocation where they will not.

They consider that academic EPs have a more legitimate claim to say they are trying to apply psychology in education; professional EPs will always look like the poor relations if the scientific application of psychology is taken as the measure. But professional EPs are not poor relations at all; they have to deal with the real life complexities, rather than managing to sanitise issues in a sort of scientific way in order to deal with them. They would welcome more contact between the two groups. Most professional EPs are not in touch with recent developments in psychology because of the pressures of the job.

They are very concerned that they do not include enough theory on the course and think that they should have significantly more. However, the pressures of the field, and the inclinations of the trainees who are very practical people and who they perceive are not interested in theory make this very difficult; this makes them more vulnerable without a theoretical framework.

Tutors are not able to assume any knowledge despite the requirement that all trainees have GBR, and are disappointed at the lack of understanding of scientific method and of psychology when trainees come on the course. However, trainees who have done less teaching seem to retain more intellectual alertness, and are less likely to be 'contaminated'; teaching is felt to 'wash out' the psychology. The tutors feel that many trainees would be able to get jobs as practising EPs without much theory, since the primary tasks of EP tend to be fairly practical and routine.

The tutors consider theory to be very important, but feel that there are too many practical skills to learn, and that the trainees do not want theory, and so do not listen to theoretical input. Pressures drive EPs to operate on the practice knowledge base a lot of the time with no time for theory. In contrast to clinical psychologists and occupational psychologists, they feel it is difficult for EPs to be applied psychologists, partly because of their institutional and professional culture, where there is not a high value placed on a scientific approach, partly because of the politics, and an emotional conviction approach. However, they also feel that the scientist practitioner view cannot help with the particular contexts, and that EPs need much more a phenomenological view and perspective, which is more relevant and takes into account people's perspectives and context.

Although the tutors believe strongly in the important links between theory and practice, they feel that this is almost impossible to achieve in the training year. The pressures of the LEA job make the profession very atheoretical and uninterested in research; this is damaging to the profession.

They feel that in a one year course training should reflect practice, rather than lead practice, in order to produce trainees who will

actually get jobs and be able to do them, so they settle for building theory about practice as it exists now. They admit that training ought to be able to lead practice, but find that this is difficult, since the trainees have to be able to get jobs at the end of the year.

E. Sandtown

Context

The course was started in 1974 by the present tutor. It is based in the Education Department, and has some links with the Psychology department. It has substantial support from the local Psychological Service, which provides one of the Associate Tutors. There has been a mainly stable staff of tutors over many years.

The course handbook states that: 'It is intended that, by careful analysis in the light of current psychological knowledge, the course will help towards the solution of those highly complex problems faced by educational psychologists today.....The course aims to integrate.... theory with practice'.

The course tends to accept a substantial number of trainees who have been experienced teachers, often with other life experiences, and who subsequently complete a psychology equivalent qualification such as the OU, MEd or the BPS QE.

Sandtown Trainee group

There were 8 trainees in the group, several of them with long teaching careers before they subsequently did a GBR qualification. Most of them felt they had brought very little psychology with them to the course, and that they had taken little psychology through their teaching. Several commented that a long teaching career, or teaching itself causes them to forget their psychology.

They feel that any theoretical knowledge that they gain on the course is gained through their follow-up reading which they are very much encouraged to do. The group felt that educational psychology is more applied education than psychology, though they wished there could be

more psychology in it. Although they had seen some EPs using psychology, they felt that these were the exception, and that most did not. The psychology that they had seen being applied was mainly rather simplistic behavioural psychology, also systems theories. However, they felt that statutory work dominates EPs' lives to the extent that EPs can find themselves becoming gatekeepers and administrators, filling in forms to justify additional resources.

On the course they felt they had been introduced to a range of theories, though they had found particularly useful an introduction to a theoretical perspective. However, they had found the link between theory and practice to be difficult, because of the pressure to carry out work on placement (which was on the whole untheoretical and unpsychological) which left them very little time for reading and thinking. Although they had seen an attempt at the university to integrate theory with practice, they felt that the placements militated against this and created a split between theory and practice. They considered that a longer training period could help with this.

They felt that the job and the profession were not really interested in theory and that the LEA just wanted the job done with a minimum of fuss, and question. However, as trainees, they had very much enjoyed their training year, particularly the theoretical aspects and the introduction to psychological theories, and wished that there could be a second year of training.

Sandtown Course tutors

Four tutors were interviewed at Sandtown. They felt that educational psychology should be applying both psychology, and other disciplines. However, the kind of psychology of the traditional undergraduate degree was perceived to have some problems in its application. The tutors were all committed to the importance of theory and to an integration of theory with practice, and mentioned a wide range of theories which they felt were relevant, though they also mentioned that the dominant paradigm would probably be the social interactionist.

The tutors try to encourage trainees to read, and to make links between theory and practice through tutorials, but find that there is little time. They do not feel that they can assume a basis of psychological knowledge or understanding as a result of GBR, and there is a wide range of psychology degrees. However, they hope to take trainees who have a concept of psychology as a discipline, and a critical awareness.

The tutors mentioned that the training is too short, and that CPD is not taken seriously by the profession which could require much more through the practising certificate for Chartered Psychologists. In the job, the amount of psychology and theory developed by individual EPs depends very much on the culture of the service. The culture of the LEA which does not value training (in contrast to the NHS) tends to leave EPs doing a very practical job.

They feel that there are tensions between theory and practice, mainly because the pressures in the LEA are to get a rather practical job done. However, they make explicit attempts on the course to get trainees to integrate theory and practice, in particular in the placements and the work files, for example by requiring trainees to demonstrate in their practical work evidence of the use of at least two different theoretical paradigms. However, they acknowledge that there are pressures against theory in the field where the task is to 'get the job done'.

The tutors see themselves as trying to relate theory to the field and both to lead and follow the field. They realise that they have to train trainees to work in the local services, but they also see themselves as encouraging CPD, and keeping in contact with past course members in order to maintain and develop their theoretical and reflective approach.

F. Hamden

Context

The course is based in the psychology department and is now the only 'integrated' course in the country, offering a 4 year 'package' of PGCE,

two years' local primary teaching experience, followed by the Master's course. It has the strong support of a large psychology department. It was started in 1973, with the support of the large LEA in which it is located and which provided resources and support. Most of the trainees come through the integrated route, i.e. Psychology degree, PGCE + two years local teaching during which they attend seminars at the university, then the MSc. They tend therefore to be significantly younger than any other trainees. There is very great competition for places on the course. The present course tutor has been there since the start of the course in 1973, initially as Associate Tutor from 1973-75.

The course handbook states that 'Given the position of the course within the Department of Psychology, emphasis is given to the research basis of practice, and a blend of academic and practical relevance is aimed at'. 'Successful pursuit of studies in psychology is seen as a critical entry requirement'. The course is based on a clearly articulated problem-solving model and has traditionally had a behavioural orientation.

Hamden Trainee group

The trainee group of eight mentioned a range of theories and appeared to be in touch with the psychological theories that they had brought to the course. They felt that they carried psychology through teaching by being aware that they were going to be EPs, and that they would be using their psychology, and by having meetings at the university through the two years.

They felt that they were psychologists, and that psychology had something useful to offer to education, and that they might be able to offer it. However, they were aware that there was little time for theories on the course as there was too much practical work to be done, and so much practical skill to learn. Most felt they had to fall back on some of their undergraduate theory, and any reading they could fit in during the year.

The group felt strongly that EP is or should be applied psychology, but were all aware of the limitations of one year training, and aware of the

pressures on EPs, both from the LEA and the profession to carry out procedures which had very little psychology. They felt that many EPs are ambivalent about psychology, and so do not apply it or acknowledge it. They felt that the profession was more interested in its own survival (and statutory work) and so had itself to blame for the lack of psychology. They had not seen much psychology in most of EPs work on placement. They felt there was a problem about being applied psychologists which was that they do not see much psychology in reality in EPSs.

They felt that the psychological approach of the course was useful, as a way of systematic thinking and hypothesis formulation and problem-solving. However, they felt the pressures of statutory work were overwhelming.

The group felt strongly that they would have liked the issue of the relationship between theory and practice to have been addressed at the beginning of the year. They felt that a session such as this one would have been a useful one to set the scene and to orient them to some of the issues, and to raise these issues at a time when they could have done something about them. However, they had experienced theory and practice as split (theory at the university and in books, practice on placement).

Hamden Course tutors

The two tutors both believed strongly that EP is applied psychology. They considered that it was an approach rather than specific theories which were being applied, (though there are some major theories which are applied) but both emphasised the scientist practitioner approach. However, they also felt that the pressures from the field were towards 'street level bureaucrats'.

They felt that the difference between applied psychologists is mainly in the work setting or context, health, business or organisation, education, but these contexts are very different. There was a feeling that the education context seems to be very anti-psychological and anti-theoretical, rather bureaucratic, and that EPs have a lot to learn from their applied psychologist colleagues. They expressed regret at

the lack of contact between academic EPs and practitioner EPs and considered that they have a lot to offer each other. The one group has desperately hung on to psychology, whereas the other group has lost touch with it.

They feel that they get the best graduates at the Hamden course, because of the integrated course, and the career package, but even so, there is great variation in the psychology degree. They take only those with good Honours degrees, and carry out the selection with a member of academic staff from the psychology department. Despite the variation, they feel they can rely on a psychological approach, and on the fact that trainees have not forgotten their psychology by the time they come on the course. They also believe that anyone teaching for longer than two years seems to lose their psychology. They try to integrate theory and practice on the course, but the pressures of time mean this is difficult and the pressures of the LEA are very much against theory, since the LEA just wants a job to be done, and the particular job does not require much psychological theory. Theory is important for EP training, in order to try to produce EPs who are more creative and able to resist the pressures of the LEA and do something creative in the education field.

They expressed regret that the course is rather practical because of the one year period and the demands of the job in practice. However, since the trainees had only been in teaching for two years, and had not been socialised into teaching they brought more psychology with them through teaching and onto the course. This provided a hope that they could become applied psychologists on the job. However, they also felt that the pressures to become a competent practitioner inhibit the place of theory, EPs are very practical people faced with very practical issues, and the work required of them is usually not of a very theoretical nature. Both tutors would like to see more of a requirement for practitioner EPS both to have CPD and to do research.

G. Seashore

Context

The course was started in 1963 and the course tutor has been there since 1970. It is based in the Education department. As it is the only course in this region, it can seem somewhat isolated, since it mainly feeds and draws on local services, and can become rather distanced from other services. However, by enabling at least one trainee to have her/his Autumn/Spring term fieldwork placement in a nearby town, and by requiring all ten trainees to have their summer term block placement in other more distant LEAs, preferably in multi-cultural cities, the course does attempt to deal with the isolation problem. The Associate Tutors seconded part-time to the course all work in this region, and have mainly been trained on the course.

Of the group of 10, 1 had an OU degree and 4 had MEd qualifications with long teaching careers. Thus, half the group (5) had been teachers first and had just done their psychology qualification, through OU or MEd. The majority of the group felt they had brought with them mainly theories of Piaget and behaviourism. However, although most of the trainees felt that their knowledge of psychological theory was rather superficial, they were able to mention several theories which they felt were useful. (This was particularly the case for those ex teachers who had only recently been studying psychology and felt themselves to be in a good position to relate their psychology to this course). Most of the group agreed that psychology had had little relevance to teaching and that the two were quite separate activities or phases.

Seashore Trainee group

The group felt that the course lacked psychological theory and that what they learn is practice and practical skills; for example, they had spent a lot of time on training of interpersonal /interviewing skills, but with no balance on more theoretical and analytical aspects of the job. They felt that they would very much like to have had some more input on psychological theory, e.g. this is based on this theory and is an application of X's theory etc.

They felt that educational psychology should be applied psychology but that in reality a lot of what EPs do is common-sense. They had not seen much psychology at all on placement, where they felt the

work was rather routine, and 'just like form-filling'. They felt that EPs are not allowed to be psychologists, because they work for the LEA and schools and LEAs don't want psychology or psychologists.

They contrasted their experience with that of clinical psychologists who are encouraged to read and write, to think about psychological theories and models and even do research and write for publication, whereas no EPs do this. They felt that clinical psychologists (and trainees) have a confidence in their psychology, which was not the case for educational psychologists. Some felt that this was to do with the nature and length of EPs' training, others felt it had more to do with the LEA culture.

They did not feel that EPs are applying psychology, since there does not seem to be any time in the job for applying theories. However, they felt that there should be psychological theory in assessment, for example, where EPs should have a distinctive contribution, but in reality they do not and just fill in forms and carry out routine tasks.

They felt that there had been little time for theory on the course and it was assumed that they would follow up for themselves on theory. The course seems to be all about practice, since there appeared to be a lot of practical and administrative skills to learn for the job. However, they had found useful from the course assertive discipline, psychometrics, and behavioural theories and applications

They felt that the link between theory and practice in the training year had been difficult though some attempts had been made in seminars to link theory with practice. This they had appreciated. However, there was a problem, since the majority of the placements were not psychological, and had little use for psychological theories. By the end of the year, they had felt frustrated since they had come on the course to train to be psychologists, and this had proved wrong.

They felt that more could be done to link theory with practice by the university, and that the university should lead and influence the field and EP practice. Since EPs did not have the time or the inclination to read or develop theories, their practice reflected this lack, and the

trainees felt that universities could change practice in the field and could help trainees to change practice, even on their placements.

They felt strong pressures against maintaining a psychological theory when they are out in the field, for several reasons, about which they were very articulate:

- a) the EPS ethos,
- b) LEA pressures and demands,
- c) time pressures,
- d) conservatism of the profession,
- e) professional need to communicate without jargon, and to work in partnership.

They felt that this course used to be very theoretical, and not practical, but that it had now gone to the opposite extreme. They felt strongly that EPs should commit themselves to a psychological theory and use their psychology to challenge schools.

Seashore Course tutor

The tutor (one interviewed) was very definite in his convictions that educational psychologists are applied psychologists and stated that the course begins with a definition of the role of the EP, as one applying psychological knowledge and theory in an educational context.

He stated that they apply the undergraduate psychology he hopes they had brought with them, developmental, social, cognitive psychology, especially in the way children use language, experimental psychology and the hypothetico-deductive framework, and statistics as a tool. He also felt that there is a psychological way of thinking gained from the psychology degree.

The course requires trainees to do a pre-course essay in developmental psychology whose purpose is to remind them of the theory; after this the theory becomes implicit and there is no more theoretical input. He feels strongly that theory should inform the way they think about things.

The tutor stated that the majority of the local EPSs are very traditional, using normatively oriented psychology and concerned with administrative decisions about placement. Traditionally most EPs were not involved in intervention, though if they did get involved in direct intervention, there was more opportunity to apply psychology, e.g. behavioural techniques. More recently, some EPs had begun to use alternative paradigms, e.g. working with systems.

In this region, in recent years, the tutor stated that the opportunity for EPs to develop specialisms had meant that they were more interested in developing theoretical frameworks.

He hoped that trainees gained their theoretical knowledge (of psychology) mainly from their first degree and that what they gained from the training was professional knowledge, which he defined as the core curriculum for professional training; he considered that if we accept what the profession is saying about what people ought to learn in their training, then it ought to define what the profession should be able to deliver. So they develop modules which reflect what is happening in the field and aim to develop knowledge and skills which will make trainees feel more confident in their practical work.

However he stated that he cannot assume any common knowledge gained as a result of a first degree in psychology, partly because of the enormous variety of their backgrounds, but wished that he could. He would like to see trainees arriving with: the ability to use statistics and experimental methodology, and to have a good theoretical grounding in developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, including language, thinking, memory, perception, possibly cybernetics.

This tutor clearly values the role of theory and feels strongly that psychologists are scientists; when asked about the theories that are introduced on the course, he provided a full response focusing on coverage of the scientific approach, positivism, and inductive and deductive reasoning as providing a framework for trainees' thinking, "in order that they see themselves as scientists". He feels that the course should not be introducing new theories, but rather reminding them of theories from their undergraduate degrees. He hoped to build

on the undergraduate degree and to get trainees to be receptive to ideas, to think more, to be more scientific and open to question and develop their own theories.

He finds it difficult to establish the ideal relationship between theory and practice in the one year training and has clearly thought a lot about it. For the group of trainees coming after the group interviewed, he has now introduced a modular approach, in order explicitly to link practice chronologically with theory. They have specific tasks to achieve the links, and the intention is to help trainees to take on new ideas and theories and put them into practice. They also use case study role play sessions for this, individual tutorials, and the dissertation to make links between theory and practice.

He feels there are tensions between theory and practice because the demand for practical solutions to problems which trainees are having in the field tends to take over. He also feels that the profession is largely practical, solving largely practical problems, which means that integration of theory and practice on the job is very difficult. In the services surrounding the course he felt that practice is rather traditional and that the majority of EPs use traditional ways to solve practical problems.

The tutor regretted the problem of the variation in content of the undergraduate degree and believed that this undermined the profession, and that a much stricter definition should be made of the GBR. He considered that it is very unsatisfactory that courses are unable to know what psychology the trainees bring, and that they ought to be testing each individual on their knowledge of psychology.

Chapter 7

Major themes emerging from the individual interviews and the focus group discussions.

This chapter presents some of the themes emerging from the focus groups and the tutor interviews of the seven courses presented in chapter 6. The themes were identified from the coded transcripts, and clustered together round headings derived from the research questions and from the data. Relevant sections of the transcripts were coded and subjected to thorough reading and processing in order to derive an understanding of the perspective and views being expressed. The aim of the research was to use these interviews (focus group trainees and individual tutor) to describe and illustrate the situation pertaining at the time, to illuminate themes identified from the literature and to point to other issues, and to contribute to further develop theory.

Comparisons between courses have therefore been minimal, and, as was intended, links were not made between the context of the courses and the nature of the themes. The intention was not to evaluate courses in any way or to draw conclusions about different forms of organisation or orientation, but to discover the views of trainees and tutors on the areas of enquiry. Although many of the themes occur across sites, there were some clear differences between the courses, both in terms of what emerged in the trainees' discussion, and the orientations and beliefs of the tutors.

The trainee cohort as a whole was clearly influenced substantially by what they had encountered of educational psychology practice from their placements in local services during the course. This in turn may vary somewhat across the country, but is considerably influenced both by the culture of the profession and by the culture of local government at that time, and also by the legislative and political aspects of the professional role.

Most of the themes are common across the 7 'cases' (courses). These could be said to reflect the situation in professional educational psychology and its training at the time (1993). Most courses

demonstrated remarkably strong agreement within a trainee group. It should also be remembered that cohorts of trainee educational psychologists vary across the years, and that the interaction amongst members of a trainee group leads to particular course cultures. With such great differences in prior experiences of trainees, both within and between groups, the nature and responses of a particular trainee group reflects a number of different influences: their prior experiences, the interaction in the group and with the tutors, their fieldwork experiences and the local EPSs, the input and organisation of the course, and the culture of the profession as it is absorbed through trainees' encounters with professional journals and other literature, and through attendance at professional courses and conferences.

Verbatim quotes are drawn from the interviews by way of illustration and presented in italics here. They were selected to illustrate a general theme rather than a theme specific to a particular course, and quotes were chosen which best encapsulated the theme. As mentioned above, confidentiality guarantees meant that quotes are totally anonymous, and could not be attributed.

The main themes will be presented and discussed as follows:

1. educational psychology as an applied psychology
2. the nature of a base in psychology from the undergraduate degree (or equivalent)
3. the lack of psychology in the field
4. the nature of educational psychologists work in LEAs
5. the role of the profession in relation to the nature of the work
6. the kinds of theories introduced and used during their training year
7. the links between theory and practice in the training year
8. the question whether courses should lead or follow the field
9. the length of the Master's year of professional training
10. the gap in culture and contact between academic and practitioner educational psychologists
11. the difference in educational culture between the education and the health service
12. the positive reaction to this focus group discussion

1. Educational psychology as an applied psychology.

The overwhelming majority of tutors and trainees considered that educational psychology should be applied psychology, but that in practice and reality it was not. Most trainees had come into the profession in order to apply psychology, but were disappointed: *"we would like to apply psychology but EPs are tied down to statutory work because of the pressures in the job, and the ethos of the service prevents any psychology being applied"*. Several of the trainees felt that the strength of the profession lay in its psychology, and that EPs should be applying psychology and demonstrating its usefulness. However, they did not see this in the field.

Many of the trainees felt that the profession was itself in part responsible for not applying psychology: *"the profession is not interested in applying psychology"*. Another group considered that EPs were *"not really applying psychology, but were more like teachers with a bit of specialist knowledge that enables them to work with pupils with SEN"*, while others expressed the view that *"it's really education more than psychology, although I suppose you could say it is a mixture"*, and *"I think it's more applied education rather than applied psychology, although I wish it could be more applied psychology"*. From their experiences on placement, most trainees felt that they had seen little evidence of EPs applying psychology, though one trainee mentioned an exception to this: *"I've seen some EPs applying psychology, but they seem to be the exception, and they are regarded as somehow a bit way-out"*.

Trainees also considered that LEAs did not want applied psychology: *"the LEA and schools don't want applied psychology, they want statements so they can get resources, they want a quick fix"*. One group summarised the situation with: *"EPs are not allowed to be psychologists, because they work for the LEA and for schools, and the LEA doesn't want psychology or psychologists"*. On one course, all the trainees wished to be applied psychologists, but when they had gone round services for job interviews, and asked about this aspect, they had been discouraged by the answers of PEPs and services.

Several trainee groups contrasted educational psychologists with clinical psychologists: *"clinical psychologists think they're psychologists and they are proud of it, they are confident in their psychology"*, and *"clinical psychology is applied psychology, but educational psychology is just bureaucracy with no time for psychology"*, and with occupational psychologists. They felt that in contrast to these two groups, educational psychologists were not able to be applied psychologists: *"clinical and occupational psychologists are much more confident about their psychology than educational psychologists"*. Another view expressed was that clinical psychologists are encouraged on their course to think of themselves as psychologists, to read psychology journals and even to publish in these journals, thus giving them more of an identity as psychologists. However, another group expressed the view, albeit hesitantly, that *"there are similarities with clinical and occupational psychology, so in that sense it could be considered to be applied psychology, they're all supposed to be applying psychology"*.

Many tutors, too, considered that clinical and occupational psychologists were more able to apply psychology, and contrasted them with educational psychologists: *"I get the impression that clinical psychologists seem to be much more concerned about putting theory into practice, and I know that occupational psychologists are much more concerned about drawing practice from the literature. I think that set against those two, we are definitely different, and we don't do that and (psychology) is not so highly valued"*.

Most tutors also considered that educational psychology should be applied psychology, but that this was difficult in practice: *"EPs are probably not functioning as applied psychologists, but that is because a lot of them become socialised into the ways of LEAs and become LEA personnel, often thinking of themselves primarily as educationalists, possibly even special educationalists"*. Several tutors contrasted what they saw as the ideal with the reality, for example: *"are we talking about what we would like to do or should be doing, or what we actually do? I think there is a lot of psychology we would like to apply, but do we actually get the opportunity?"* Another tutor would like educational psychology to be applied psychology, *"but suspects that in practice it becomes a craft skill rather than an active transmission of theoretical principles driving courses of action"*. However, one tutor considered that

"perhaps the behavioural approach is a good example of application, which gives a scientific problem-solving framework, and an empirical approach".

Several tutors considered that what was required for application was a different kind of psychology than that of the traditional psychology degree, and that one of the reasons for educational psychologists finding it difficult to be applied psychologists was the perceived irrelevance of 'academic psychology' to problems in the field. An alternative was felt to be a more 'personal' psychology, or a more 'tentative' psychology, a more 'phenomenological' or 'interactionist' psychology which takes into account the social and political context of educational psychology (or other professional psychology) work. A number of tutors mentioned the problems in applying psychology, and in particular *"the problem for practitioners in making that (psychology) knowledge personal and using it in a way that is useful for themselves and for their clients in the field"*. The "academic nature" of the psychology degree was also experienced by some of the trainees as a problem for its use and application in educational psychology. Several tutors confessed to developing an 'alternative model' even though they were aware that this could not be put into practice on placement; these tutors appeared to feel that they had a duty to the 'discipline'.

2. The nature of the base in psychology from the undergraduate degree

Most of the trainees were only able to mention a few 'big names' or 'major theories or schools' when it came to identifying the psychological theories which they had brought with them to the course. Behavioural psychology was the paradigm which was named most frequently, and which some felt that they had taken through and used during their teaching. Other trainees had vague memories of developmental psychologists (Piaget, Bruner, Kohlberg were mentioned), though they could do little more than mention the names. Most of the trainees felt that they had brought very little psychology with them when they began the postgraduate course, what they had brought was not very relevant or useful, and that their often lengthy teaching career had caused them to forget their psychology. A significant number of the trainees had taken some psychology courses

as teachers, and had thereby gained some familiarity with theories such as 'humanistic' and 'counselling'.

In all the courses there was a feeling that teaching had little to do with psychology, and that a long teaching period caused them to forget anything they had learned: *"psychology was too long ago, so I lost it all, not that there was that much to lose"* and *"that's a very difficult question, partly because the psychology was a long time ago, partly because teaching has very little to do with psychology, and you just get on with it. If you're not thinking about doing psychology, you just get on with your teaching"*. There was the additional point that the kind of psychology that had been taught at undergraduate level had not seemed to be relevant to professional psychology *"I didn't feel my first degree contributed very much, it was traditional, logical-positivist, experimentally based"* and *"the psychology I had as an undergraduate was very academic and not relevant or useful, so I left it behind and forgot about it"*. Thus there was a perceived lack of contact and relevance between the undergraduate and the post-graduate psychology degrees.

Several of the courses had taken trainees with teaching careers followed by a Psychology equivalent (usually MEd or OU degree). The trainees on the integrated course of Hamden (4 year model) were the only ones who felt that they carried through their psychology, knowing that they were going to be EPs and kept in contact with the university psychology department during their two year teaching period. The majority of these trainees had chosen to become educational psychologists at the end of their psychology degree, and had carried the psychology through with them over the subsequent three years.

All the tutors felt unable to assume any particular knowledge gained as a result of the first degree in psychology and expressed considerable disappointment at this state of affairs. The lack of any common knowledge and understanding of psychology as a result of the undergraduate degree or GBR equivalent was felt to be partly because of the enormous variation in psychology degrees across the country, even though all have to confer eligibility for Graduate Basis for Registration of the BPS: *"There's a problem of what is a core curriculum*

for psychology. The BPS QE implies that there is a core...There is no common knowledge or base. We can't assume anything" and "I've learned not to take for granted any psychological knowledge, this confirms the huge variation of psychology degrees in this country, so I don't know what GBR is".

Most of the tutors explicitly wished they were able to assume some basic knowledge and understanding of psychology on which they could build in the postgraduate training, and were dissatisfied with the wide variation, and lack of a common core in the psychology degree.

However, when asked what kind of psychology they would like to be able to assume as a foundation, there were considerable differences between tutors. On the one hand were those tutors who would like trainees to have a grounding in 'traditional' areas such as basic developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, basic statistics and data analysis, and a sound grasp of psychology as a discipline and method. On the other hand, there were some tutors who considered that there were problems with attempts to apply these more 'traditional' areas, and that what was needed was a foundation which took on more 'new paradigm' conceptualisations and methods, and the ability to integrate psychological perspectives with a personal philosophy of practice. Some of this last group of tutors attempted to develop this on the one year course.

Another reason for not being able to assume a basic grounding in psychology was that many entrants to training had a long career in teaching behind them during which they had ample time and opportunity to forget any psychology that they did take with them from the undergraduate degree: *"many have spent so long teaching that they have forgotten anything they ever knew, and only have a very vague recollection of what psychology is or might be"*. Indeed, by contrast, several of the tutors preferred more mature entrants to their courses, pointing out that since the psychology degree was so inappropriate as a preparation for postgraduate training, they preferred to take people with other qualities. Several tutors pointed out both the great variety in prior background and experiences of entrants to the course. As one tutor said: *"we would like to (assume some common psychology knowledge) but this is difficult as they have such varied experiences and*

such very different time lengths between their different stages. Then the conversion course (MEd) (has) a very different kind of psychology from those who have a BSc, and then there is the age factor...". Most tutors considered that trainees would not necessarily carry any psychology through in their teaching experience.

Finally several tutors mentioned that the perceived inappropriateness of the undergraduate psychology degree, its highly academic nature, and its perceived lack of relevance for professional practice meant that trainees left behind that phase of their learning, considering it lacked relevance to the next phase of professional training.

Consequent upon this most of the courses make little use of any theory that trainees might have brought with them, and are not able to use this as a foundation to build on or to develop. In a one year course, it would seem that even if they wanted to, tutors would have no time to develop, update, reactivate or resurrect any psychological knowledge that trainees might bring. One course tutor, however, attempts this: *"the reactivation of undergraduate psychology and the development of theoretical principles is worked through mainly in tutorials in the first term....it is very hard work, and does not just happen for the majority"*.

3. The lack of psychology in the field

This theme was one of the strongest themes both in the groups and from the tutors. Neither trainees nor tutors saw much evidence of psychology being applied in the field, nor of EPs making use of psychological knowledge or theory in their work.

According to the trainees, several reasons combined to create the lack of psychology in the field. These included:

(i) time pressures: *"Given the time constraints, you just have to get on with the job, and in the job there is no time for psychology"*, and *"EPs are overwhelmed with requests for statutory work, and there is not much psychology in that"*, and *"time constraints and workload make it impossible to do psychology"*

(ii) the nature of the work: *"there is no psychology in writing statements"* and *"psychological interventions are not popular, as the schools just want*

as many statements as possible, and want resources not psychological input which makes them do some work and think". Another group considered that "the 1981 Act has forced EPs to be administrators rather than clinicians. They carry out routines in order to meet statutory requirements, which doesn't permit creativity or reflection". One trainee group had identified two types of EP work, which they referred to as the "statutory work and the 'other' work" and considered that "we should not be forced to put the 'other' work on the back burner until we have time to do it. We have to be in there letting them know we can do it, and they don't need to buy it in from elsewhere". This 'other' work referred to was 'psychological' work, which this trainee group considered had been forfeited for the statutory work which dominated the profession.

(iii) the LEA and school culture: "The LEA and the schools don't want applied psychology, they want statements so they can get resources, they want a quick fix', or 'psychology is about asking questions and the LEA just wants quick solutions and answers",

(iv) the lack of a commitment to psychological theory in the profession: "EPs are frightened of psychology, it means they have to think. In the present situation the job is not challenging, they don't have to think and it pays quite well".

Two groups mentioned the ambivalence felt by EPs about being psychologists: *"the trouble is that many EPs are not happy with being psychologists, and would rather have some other identity. They would rather not explain that they are psychologists to parents, teachers, children, since there is so much misunderstanding of psychology, and so EPs are rather ambivalent about it. This leads to some identity confusion".* This highlighted a frequently mentioned tension over EPs' identity as educationists rather than psychologists.

The profession was felt by trainees to be one which had lost any psychology that it might have had, allowed itself to become totally involved with administration and bureaucracy and routine tasks, and the trainees on placement were forced to fit in with what they perceived to be an almost anti-psychological stance. The profession was perceived by trainees to have welcomed the statutory role, and to have sacrificed psychology for this in order to have a guaranteed job: *"the profession chose to do statutory work rather than psychology, so it*

only has itself to blame". This theme of the survival of the profession occurred in over half of the trainee groups, with the implication that the profession of educational psychology had taken the easy way out, had adopted a role which gave it a statutory duty and ensured its survival, yet which did not really demand much thought and certainly very little knowledge of psychology.

Tutors, too, considered that there was often very little evidence of psychology in the field. Several tutors felt that EPs were overwhelmed with the demands of statutory work, and with the pressures of time which did not permit EPs to reflect on their practice. One tutor suggested: *"I actually think that psychological theories do probably inform practice, but EPs do not reflect enough on those theories, and if they did give themselves time to reflect on their practice and the more theoretical aspects, they would almost certainly improve their practice"*. The issue of time and time pressures on EPs came up in many of the tutor interviews. Several tutors mentioned the constraints of the LEA; for example: *"frankly much of what they do or are required to do has very little to do with psychology. It's become increasingly the case that they are moving further and further away from applied psychology and more into a position of being administrators and gatekeepers and handmaidens of the LEA"*.

Some tutors considered that EPs' work in the field of severe learning difficulties did draw on psychology, while others considered that some EPs carried out interventions which were psychologically based. However, there was also a view frequently expressed that there were two kinds of work, statutory work and psychological work, and that most EPs had very little time for the second, and that all the pressures on EPs were for more statutory work.

4. The nature of educational psychologists' work in LEAs

Both tutors and trainees commented on the largely atheoretical and practical nature of the work of EPs. For the trainees: *"practical placements had been very practical and mundane"* and *"theories are rubbished by practising EPs"*, and *"the profession tends not to value theory"*. They considered that EPs were mainly engaged with statutory work, and this was largely atheoretical and very practical, and did not

require any theoretical base. Most of the trainees were critical of the profession for allowing this to be the case, and felt that it was in part to blame for this state of affairs.

The pressures against maintaining a theoretical perspective in the field were thought by trainees to be due to several factors. Among those mentioned were:

(i) the EPS ethos: *"no psychological ambience in the EPS or the profession"*. In most services that they had encountered on placement, they were expected to carry out fairly routine and practical tasks, which seemed to be the way that the EPs were working. So, on placement they were expected to adopt the way of working of the service *"i.e. to be atheoretical and just get on with the statements"*.

(ii) the EP role as they had seen it: *"we have had to develop very practical skills such as time management, report writing, section 5 writing, administration skills, patience and tact, self-preservation, and survival skills."* All trainees mentioned the role of the EP, as they had seen it, to be almost entirely to do with writing statements, for example: *"the statutory work can dominate, and EPs find themselves just being gatekeepers and administrators, just filling in forms and justifying extra resources"*.

(iii) LEA pressures: *"The LEA culture and the pressures inhibit the place of theory"*. *"The LEA just wants the job done as quickly as possible, and they don't want EPs to think about it"*.

(iv) time pressures to process statutory assessments and statements. Most of the trainees had found that their supervising EPs felt under considerable time pressures, particularly in relation to statutory assessment

(v) the conservatism of the profession *"if you want a quiet life, just accept the referrals from the schools, process the work, and write the statutory assessments"*. This view related to a frequently expressed view of the profession's own responsibility for this state of affairs, through its willing embrace of a role which gave it a 'meal ticket'.

Tutors, too, considered that there was often an anti-theoretical culture in EPSs: *"there's a resistance against theory, and an implicit criticism (of trainees who wish to use theory), so they have to get on with the job. The LEA culture and the service inhibits the place of theory"*. Another tutor expressed this: *"the pressures of the LEA are very much*

against theory. The LEA just wants a job to be done, and the particular job does not require much psychological theory. EPs are caught in this, and even if they did want to be more psychological, the culture militates against it".

Several of the tutors expressed a disappointment at the perceived inevitability of the situation in which the job required very little theoretical perspective; however, some tutors expressed the view that *"EPs are very practical people"*, and trainees come on the course wanting to carry out "practical work", and the practical nature of the LEA work simply confirms and exaggerates tendencies already apparent in the people who choose to enter this profession. Thus *"I think the kind of person who comes on the course may already be a very practical kind of person, and they've been in teaching some for a very long time, and this is a very practical activity, so they find it (theory) hard"*.

However, although several tutors expressed a view that trainee EPs tended to be more interested in practical issues, the majority of the trainees themselves expressed a wish for more theoretical input. Tutor: *"the trainees are so eager to get on with the job, which is practical, they are not keen on theory, which they see as irrelevant to the immediate task"*; trainee from the same course: *"this course is too practical, it lacks theory"*.

One tutor expressed strong criticism of the profession: *"EPs don't want to get involved with theory, they are not interested. It is all about pragmatics..They just want to get on with the job, and draw their salary. It's the fault of the profession, it hasn't fought to defend its interests, it's given in to or even welcomed the LEA bureaucracy"* . Most of the tutors considered that the EP job was now a somewhat practical job: *"I think the profession is a rather practical one, solving largely practical problems"* and *"EPs are very practical people faced with very practical issues. The work required of EPs is usually not of a very theoretical nature...the pressures to become a competent practitioner inhibit the place of theory"* .

5. The role of the profession in relation to the nature of their work

Over half of the trainee groups expressed disappointment at the way they perceived the profession itself to be partly to blame for the nature of the work and the lack of psychology (and see above 1 and 3). The profession was felt to be responsible: *"the EP has power and status, but they have allowed themselves to be sucked into bureaucracy. They've deprived themselves of their psychological skills and allowed themselves to become pen-pushers"*. The profession was felt to be not interested in applying psychology, and to have taken the easy way out by embracing a statutory role which gave them a job, but which compromised their psychological role.

Some tutors, too, considered that the profession was in part to blame, for not resisting the pressures, and not presenting a strong psychological 'alternative'. For example *"the profession has not resisted the pressures strongly enough"* and *"the profession has not got its psychological act together, and defined its role strongly"*, *"the profession has accepted unthinkingly a role which minimises psychology and minimises the need to think"*. However, another tutor was also aware of the political and economic pressures which were affecting all professions: *"the ideal does not fit with the reality; we have to pay our mortgages and this is the way society is moving, we're lucky to have a job and so EPs do what they are asked to do"*.

Also mentioned was the vary varied and isolated nature of different LEA practices, and the fact that the profession does not have a united view of its role; this was in part felt, by tutors, to be linked to parochialism of LEAs (each LEA developing its own local practices), and in part to differences between the (two professional associations) AEP and the BPS, and to strong differences within the profession itself.

6. The kinds of theories introduced and used during the training year

About half the trainees considered that they had been helped to develop some useful theoretical perspectives and knowledge during the

training year. For some trainees, this was more to do with an ability to think critically and analytically and to reflect, whereas other trainees mentioned specific theories. Among these Personal Construct Theory was felt to be very useful; also mentioned were Systems theories, Applied Behaviourist theories, Theories of Consultation and Change. Several courses had developed their own way of developing a theoretical perspective, either through using their own 'problem-solving' model *"the model is the best part of the course...it forces us to think things through"*, or through developing an approach *"this year has been more about an approach or a process, how to think psychologically rather than about specific theories...the year has been uniquely formative, it's taught us how to think"*. Several trainee groups echoed the feeling that *"they had very much enjoyed the theoretical input, and a good range of theories, but regretted that there might be no opportunity to put these into practice in the field"*. About half the trainee groups had found the course to be predominantly focused on practical issues and skills, a fact which they regretted.

Tutors, also, differed in their views on this question. Some tutors considered that the aim of the year was to develop the skills, mainly practical, to enable trainees to carry out the job, both on placement and subsequently. Others felt that they had a duty to introduce trainees to psychological theories and perspectives and to a psychological way of working. One tutor was very aware of the tension: *"I'm very concerned that we don't do anywhere enough theory on this course, and think we should spend much more time ...but the actual primary tasks of EP work, the things you'd get sacked for if you didn't know how to do, are very practical"*. All tutors expressed the difficulties of the one year period (see 9 below) and the conflicts between preparing trainees for the job as they saw it and preparing trainees for a different role (see 8 below).

7. The links and potential tension between theory and practice in the training year

All trainee groups and tutors considered that there was a tension between theory and practice during the training year. At its simplest level, this was described as the tension between theory learned in the university and practice developed in the field. All tutors aspired to link

theory with practice on the courses, but there was an awareness that *"there is a huge tension for trainees, it is sometimes a great shock for them when they can't see any applications of psychology on placement, partly because of the sheer volume of work"*. This link was attempted in various ways, for example through modules which included theoretical input and practical tasks, through specified casework requirements, through tutorial work. One tutor felt that, although they attempted to *"get (trainees) to think of their work as theoretically driven.....the chasm between training and the modus operandi of most of the services means that a theoretical approach is not valued and one is required to be a kind of pragmatic problem-solver who fixes the thing that schools and LEA want fixed without making waves"*. All tutors found the links to be difficult and found that this was exacerbated because of the atheoretical nature of much of the practice found in the field, and the pressures of the work of EPs.

Most of the trainee groups had experienced a split between theory and practice, having been stimulated by, or at least presented with, ideas and theories on the course at the university, and finding that there was little opportunity to put these into practice on placement. However, the trainees from one course where they had had placements with past graduates from the course found the links easier to make, particularly as they had focused on project work which explicitly drew on theoretical principles from psychology.

Most of the trainee groups would have liked to spend more time on this topic (how to link theory with practice), and more time in discussing ways in which this could work out in EP practice. They felt that the tutors could have done more to help this; most of them considered that the tutors had an important role to play in making these links explicit and in ensuring the strong position of (psychological, and other) theory in their developing EP practice.

8. A question over whether courses should lead or follow the field.

A theme where there are some, albeit slight, differences between courses was the question whether training should influence the field and practice or whether it should reflect and prepare for practice as it

is. Some tutors felt that their role was to prepare trainees for the job as it is found in local services, while others felt that their role was to influence practice, and to help to 'inoculate' trainees to resist pressures.

On the one hand were those tutors who said that *"training should reflect practice, rather than lead practice, for the sake of the trainees, to turn out people who can actually get jobs"*, and: *"the pressures of the one year course mean that we prepare them for EP practice as it is defined by services, and this is rather lacking in psychological theory, I'm afraid"*. These tutors considered that, even though they did not necessarily agree with the nature of much of the practice, they had an obligation to prepare trainees for the reality as it existed in local services.

On the other hand were tutors who considered that they had a responsibility to try to influence the profession and to develop a strong psychological base for the trainees which could help them to resist the pressures to be atheoretical in their practice. This could be done either by presenting a strong model of practice, for example a strong problem-solving model or a strong consultative model, or by attempting to develop in trainees strong habits of thinking and working which were of a theoretical and reflective nature. Some tutors considered that this could be done in other ways, for example through the liaison with supervisors: *"liaison with supervisors is tight, and they don't get to be fieldwork supervisors unless they buy our models, so it's furtive infiltration of the profession"*, or through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and maintaining contact with past trainees in the field. Although most of the tutors themselves expressed reservations about the anti-psychological nature of practice in Educational Psychology Services, this brought up a tension in them over whether they should lead or follow the practice exemplified by the field, mainly through the fieldwork placements.

Trainees, on the other hand, tended to think that universities should be able to influence practice in the field and that courses should 'lead' the field. For example *"the tutors could make more of an effort to make the links (between theory and practice) and to structure the placements so that they permitted some psychology.....tutors could have more commitment to psychology...this might raise the standard of the*

psychology and permit us to become applied psychologists". Another course felt that "more could be done by the university, and that the university should lead and influence the field and EP practice...Universities could help trainees to change the practice, even on placements". A view frequently expressed by trainees was a feeling of helplessness in the face of the very practical demands of placement, and a feeling that their university tutors should have been able to do more to help them to resist these. However, both tutors and trainees referred to the length of the Master's course as being a factor which made it difficult to do this.

9. The length of the Master's training course

Several of the trainees felt that a longer training period would enable them to have a more robust model of EP practice which could better withstand the pressures of practice. Tutors too, felt the benefits that a longer period of training might bring in terms of the possibility of developing stronger models of EP practice, which might be able to influence the field. All were aware of the pressures imposed by having only a one year training course, and the difficulties of finding time to develop the knowledge, skills and perspectives that were desirable to carry out the job. Tutors were particularly aware of the amount of time required to develop the practical skills and knowledge required to enable trainees to function on placement, and for some tutors these demands took priority over more theoretical issues and required all the time available (see above 8).

Some tutors felt also that many of the trainees were of a practical bent and already felt that practical skills were more relevant and useful, so that tutors found themselves in a vicious circle in which trainees, already interested in the practical aspects of the job, went into placements which were very practical in nature, which increased the trainees' need to focus on practical skills. This, together with the pressures of the one year course made it difficult to find the time to develop anything beyond 'practical survival skills'. Since trainees felt under pressure both to carry out the work and to demonstrate their competence on placement, and experienced anxieties about this, some tutors felt under pressure to help trainees with this. On the other hand, there were tutors who considered that the one year training

period was an important period to develop broader perspectives, and that trainees could pick up practical knowledge very quickly both from placement and the job, and that it was important to use the one year period to develop a strong identity as a psychologist.

10. The gap in culture and contact between academic and practitioner educational psychologists

Trainee groups were not aware of another group of psychologists calling themselves educational psychologists, and it must therefore be assumed that they had not come across this group.

Most of the tutors had little or no contact with this group, though many of them expressed regret at this state of affairs. Tutors tended, if anything, to perceive a polarisation between academic educational psychologists who, they perceived to be over-scientific, positivist, and using quantitative methodologies, while they perceived practitioner educational psychologists to be over-practical and uninterested in research. *"The trouble is they do not really communicate with each other.....They have different time frames, different scale of operation, different preoccupations"*. Some tutors considered that the two groups had not really worked out their relationship *"the lack of two-way traffic is sad. This is part of the problematic nature of 'applied psychology' and 'pure psychology' and the relationship between them"*. One tutor felt that *"the other (academic) group have a more legitimate claim to say they are trying to apply psychology in education...we (practitioner) always look like the poor relations if we take the scientific application of psychology as the measure...it will be a long time before we get a real theory of practical EP"*.

The tutors felt universally that contacts between the two groups would be beneficial *"we have a lot to offer each other...it would be good for us to have more dialogue"*, though they appreciated the very different cultures, contexts and value positions between the two groups. Some tutors wondered whether the very different contexts and demands of LEAs and universities could, in reality, permit much interchange and contact, however much the two groups might wish it, and that the research and practice ends of the field had gone so far apart as to make their coming closer virtually impossible. One tutor

suggested a structural solution through the BPS, and a merger between DECP and Education Section, while another suggested that the two groups might make more effort to publish in each other's journals and attend each other's conferences.

11. The culture of the education service contrasted with the health service

Several tutors mentioned the difference in culture between a medical and education service, and would have wished for a more 'medical' orientation to learning and research (i.e. what they perceived to be a valuing of research and theory, as opposed to the practical and atheoretical culture of LEAs and the education service). Along with this was an interest expressed by one tutor in a training modelled more on the lines of a medical training, both in length of training and integration and mode of training. According to some tutors, and trainees, this in part explained the difference between clinical and educational psychologists, and the status accorded to theory by the two groups; whereas clinical psychologists working in the NHS experienced a culture which valued theory and publication and research, educational psychologists worked in an LEA where the culture was quite the opposite. Several of the trainees had picked up from clinical psychology trainee colleagues, both differences within the training period in relation to attitudes to theory, research and publication, and differences in contracts of employment, since clinical psychologists were actively encouraged and had time allocated to do research and to publish. Thus, as already mentioned, the anti-theoretical culture of the LEA was felt to be in part responsible for the fact that EPs found it difficult to apply psychology in their work.

12. The trainee groups' enjoyment of this activity and the focus which they considered that it gave to their training year

A universal finding/experience during this study was how much the trainees groups positively enjoyed and valued the experience. All groups expressed a wish that they could have more of this kind of discussion and that this could have been organised at a number of earlier points of the course. It was as though they were hungry for this type of discussion. They were keen to express their views on this area,

and their confusion both over the role of theory, specifically psychological theory and the kind of work they had seen in the field during their placements. Several of the groups mentioned that a session similar to this one could have helped them to articulate and to strengthen the links between theory and practice during their training year.

Some of the differences between the courses

A. Anderton

Here the trainees felt there was a lot of theory on the course, which was useful and enjoyable, but were disappointed at the lack of psychology in the field, the 'anti-theoretical' culture of EPSs and the profession, for which they blamed both LEAs and the profession. This had inevitably led to a split between university and field and between theory and practice

The tutors aimed to teach theories and models, to develop a robust approach, action research and evaluation, reflexive psychology, and aim explicitly to develop scientist practitioner and reflective practitioner. They too expressed regret at a chasm between training and the services, with a resistance to theory in the field, and felt that they had a responsibility to influence the field

B. Eastshire

This course introduces trainees to a strong personal theory, with an emphasis on the political and social context, and with more process than content. Tutors use and develop a less traditional model of educational psychology, experiential and personal, believing that their task is to help to develop psychologists who have internalised their psychological knowledge and skills and who are able to work as psychologists. Trainees felt that they were more able to link theory with practice through the use of ex-trainees as field supervisors, who could endorse the same model; university based action research projects also helped them to link theory and practice. Trainees reflected the view of their tutors and felt strongly that psychology had

much to offer and that they would like to attempt to bring something different to the practice of EP

C. Meretown

The trainees experienced this as a very practical course, with little theoretical input, which they would have liked. They had seen little psychology in EP, and felt that the profession had lost any psychology it had ever had. Although they themselves saw the considerable importance of theory, the tutors did not feel able to teach very much theory, since they saw the job in the field as largely practical and their task within the time constraints of the one year course was to prepare trainees for the job; this course appeared to be responding to the field rather than seeking to influence the field.

D. Northtown

This course requires trainees to build their own problem-solving model, through which trainees perceive that they are caused to integrate theory with practice. They found the model useful, while hoping that they would find the time, and effort, to continue to use it when they had qualified as EPs. The tutors stated their aim as preparing trainees for a job which is practical, while they themselves acknowledged the central importance of theory.

E. Sandtown

Here the trainees felt that they had been introduced to a wide range of theories on the course, and enjoyed what they called a "theoretical approach, a way of looking at things". However, they felt that it was difficult to put this into practice, because of the very practical nature of the job in the field. The tutors are very committed to the place of psychology and of psychological theory and make explicit attempts to get trainees to use and develop theories; these were felt to be very useful by the trainees, even though they had not had an immediate use on the placements.

F. Hamden

90% of the trainees here had gone through the 'integrated route', i.e. links with the course since undergraduate time through the PGCE and 2 year teaching period. This seemed to result in trainees recalling psychological theories and appearing to be in touch with these. However, the trainees felt that the postgraduate course was very practical, with little time for theory as there was so many practical skills to learn; on the other hand they did feel that they had some psychological knowledge and understanding from their first degree to fall back on. The tutors feel strongly the importance of theory but the pressures of the LEA against it; they admit that the course is practical because of the LEA pressures, the short time, and the trainees' interests and inclinations. The tutors are committed to the integrated course, believing that they are able to select promising psychology graduates, and that the short teaching period enables them to keep in touch with their psychology.

G. Seashore

The trainees felt that the course lacked psychological theory, and that there was a lot of training in practical skills. On the other hand, the tutor was convinced of the importance of theory, although he acknowledged that there was little if any time for teaching theory on the course. The course finds itself in an area of the country where LEA services are very traditional in their practice, and it is much influenced by the practice in the area. Having previously been a course which had a considerable amount of theoretical input, the course had responded to a recent course evaluation by increasing the amount of practical relevance.

Chapter 8

The researcher's course: summary of and reflections on the focus group interview.

The focus group from the Institute of Education, the course of which the researcher is tutor, is presented separately, since the researcher is the course tutor and is intimately involved with the course, the subject matter and the trainees. It was therefore likely that, although the same questions were used to structure the focus group discussion, and an identical procedure was used, the nature of the discussion was likely to be very different. In addition it was not possible to interview other (Associate) tutors as there was a change-over of Associate tutor staff at the time. Although the researcher did not feel that it was appropriate to 'interview' herself, it is appropriate to present here some personal reflection on the issues.

The term 'reflexivity' has been used to refer to the view that researcher and researched are interdependent in the social process of research, and that reflections on the process of research by the researcher herself, and personal involvement in the process of the research enhance the quality and significance of the research (Smith 1996). Mead (1934) describes reflexivity as 'the turning back of the experience of the individual on herself', while Delamont (1991) defines it as a 'social scientific variety of self-consciousness'. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a 'reflexive journal' in which the researcher makes notes not only about the logistics of the research, but also about reflections and the role of the researcher's own values and interests. The difference between this form of research and the more traditional research carried out in psychology may be illustrated by the use of the impersonal passive or third person to describe the research versus the use of the first person and an acknowledgement of personal involvement in and influence on the research. In the research reported here, it was difficult to decide to use the third person, a convention which continues to be widely recommended. The distinction is particularly pertinent to this study, because of the difficulties in applying the more traditional psychology and its methodologies used within educational psychology, and the call by some tutors (and also trainees) for a 'different and more personal psychology' for application.

Further, it is specifically relevant to the present study because the researcher is intimately involved in the field of study and has strong views as to the importance of the area to the profession and its training. Instead of carrying out an interview of herself, the researcher decided to reflect on the trainee group discussion, and to use these reflections in the discussion and conclusions of the research. Reflections on the responses of this trainee group are in italics, apart from the last section.

Although the focus group was conducted in exactly the same way as the other groups, the discussion was different in at least two ways: first, the researcher, as course tutor, and having worked closely with the group for the whole year, knew the group well, and the group was used to discussing these kinds of issues together; second, the group was aware through having worked with the researcher for a year of her great interest in this subject and her convictions and beliefs as to its importance; this discussion was therefore by no means the first time that they had addressed similar issues, and in fact they had been asked to think about these issues from the beginning of the course, starting with one of their early sessions, which asked them to consider the theories and paradigms which they were bringing with them, and to resuscitate some psychology, and to think about the implications of training as psychologists in education. The focus group session is presented here somewhat differently from the other group sessions; since no verbatim quotes from this session have been used to illustrate themes in chapter 7, a few quotes will be included in this section in order to illustrate points from this discussion; they have been selected to illustrate particular points which were expressed in a manner which was felt to encapsulate the point.

Context

The course at the Institute of Education was established in 1973 as an extension of existing academic Master's courses at the Institute of Education. It was completely restructured in 1986 by the present tutor. The course draws on trainees from a wide geographical area, and uses a large number of services for placements. There has by chance been a constant turnover of Associate Tutor staff to this course, with the result that the present researcher has possibly

become particularly strongly identified with the course, and has sometimes been the sole tutor of the course.

The course usually takes trainees from a wide range of backgrounds. There were 11 trainees that year, of whom 8 had first degrees in psychology and 3 had gained their psychology through the OU or MEd type routes, of which there is one based in the same department. The course usually takes between 2 and 5 trainees who come with 2 or 3 years teaching experience following their psychology degree and PGCE. It has also developed links with the primary PGCE course based at the same institution, and usually takes graduates from this course who have had the required two years' teaching experience. The course, therefore, usually has a significant minority of trainees who have followed a 'direct' route into educational psychology, through a psychology BSc, PGCE plus 2 or 3 years' teaching then the Master's course.

In the following presentation of the data from the focus group discussion, the italicised text presents the tutor's reflections on the issues.

Trainee Group (11 trainees)

All the members of the group were able to name some kind of theories that they had brought to the course, about half of them emphasising in particular theories of developmental psychology, including Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, the other half mentioning behaviourist theories, especially Bandura. However there were other theoretical perspectives such as humanistic, Social interactionist, Psychodynamic, counselling theories, Personal Construct Theory. Several also mentioned that they were aware of a psychological approach, by which they meant evaluation of evidence and a kind of 'scientific method'.

The trainees on this course have addressed this question a number of times throughout the course, since this is used as a major theme from the start of the course around which they are encouraged to develop their model of professional educational psychology conceptualisation and practice.

These theories had been mainly gained from first degree, also from their reading, and especially the pre-course reading, for this course, some from attending courses and keeping up their reading of psychology while teaching.

The trainees on this course are given a substantial reading list 4 months' prior to the start of the course, and are also asked to indicate on a questionnaire what they perceive to be their strengths and weaknesses in psychology as a result of their first degree and subsequent experiences, and how they perceive their previous studies in psychology to be relevant to this course.

The majority felt that they had taken some psychology through teaching, partly because several had wanted to be EPs right from the start of their psychology degrees and had deliberately geared their reading in this direction, and carried this interest through into their teaching. There was a view that "as a teacher you don't notice you're using psychology, it's become part of your make-up, you've got it but you're not aware of it". Some trainees felt that it was "difficult to say that is psychology or that is a certain theory, because it's all integrated into the teaching and therefore into your identity both as people and as professionals".

It is noticeable that many of those from this group who decide at the end of their psychology undergraduate degrees that they wish to become educational psychologists and undertake teaching qualification and experience to this end seek out and develop contacts with psychology and psychologists. They frequently state that they kept this interest in the forefront, and geared their work and experience as teachers in this direction, thus influencing their reading and the courses which they chose to attend.

Several trainees said that they used the pre-course reading lists extensively to resuscitate psychology and to develop theoretical knowledge, and felt this was time well spent particularly since time for reading had been short whilst on the course. Several felt that the sessions in the first term had stimulated them and provided a foundation: "Some of the early sessions like the ones on psychological paradigms which stimulated us to go away and read and think". They

considered that there had been quite a lot of theoretical input, though what was more important to them had been a "theoretical approach".

At the pre-course briefing meeting in June prior to the course starting, new trainees are given the reading lists which they are asked to go through and discuss with their colleagues. They are asked to write a book review on a book of their choice from the list, and are recommended to be aware of their strengths, weaknesses and interests in psychology, and to seek to 'tune into' the task of becoming applied psychologists. They are also warned that the course is very busy, and that this is a useful period for reading since there is less time for this on the course.

Several considered that they benefited from the "process accounts" which they are required to write of their practical work. "If they don't contain theory then you (tutor) will ask where's the theory or what theory was informing this piece of work?" They considered that these process accounts had helped them to develop a theoretical approach to their work, and to relate their work in the field to psychological theories and their reading.

The trainees are required to write process accounts for each piece of work carried out on placement, and to reflect on their learning and how university learning links with learning in the field. The process accounts are intended to help trainees to think through and analyse the whole process of a piece of work, to relate it to their reading and to other pieces of work, and to give a rationale for what they did and why they did it, and how they evaluated it. They are also asked to relate this to the psychological (and other) literature. It is hoped that this routine will help to emphasise the importance of a systematic and analytical approach to their work, and will help them link psychological theories with their practice, to base their interventions on psychological theories and to develop conceptual frameworks and habits of reflection and thinking, which will remain with them when they go on to their professional work as EPs.

They felt that sessions like this (focus group) gave them a chance to pull things together and to reflect.

This was a view expressed by all the trainee groups who were interviewed. This group had already had a number of teaching sessions which pursued similar kinds of issues, and focused on the questions of psychological paradigms and the application of psychology in EP practice.

Most of the group considered that educational psychology is applied psychology and this was the reason that they had come into it. Although some felt that they had seen little psychology on some of the placements, they felt they could see a way to applying psychology and felt optimistic about this. Several considered that it was very important to keep the psychologist in the title, and avoid becoming "submerged into education" as they put it. Several agreed with the view that "Yes we are applied psychologists, but we have to hang onto the psychology, especially the theory, so that we have a base to our work". "We should be psychologists and leave teachers to get on with teaching, and advisers to advise on teaching". There was a strong agreement that educational psychologists are applied psychologists, and should hold firmly to their psychology.

The group had been aware of the issue of applying psychology, and some of the factors for EPs through sessions throughout the year, and through the regular questioning in relation to their process accounts: what psychology are you drawing on here? or where is the psychology in this piece of work? Although there were many differences in the nature of the psychology that they might find useful, they emerged as a group feeling a strong identity as psychologists, and that this was important to their professional role.

Although some of them felt that there had been little psychology evident on their placements, they felt that psychology could and should be applied in: models of assessment, psychological interventions, theories of consultation and theories of how people change. They also felt that it was important to be able to have a psychological base to the work, to be able to evaluate work and point to a theoretical base for their interventions. They felt that it was important to have a systematic approach to the work, and to be able to draw on a sound psychological theory foundation both to aid problem-solving and reflection and evaluation. Several trainees considered that they **had** seen a range of psychological theories being

applied: developmental psychology; interactionist psychology; ways of reframing problems and situations; behavioural psychology, organisational psychology leading to organisational change, also process consultation and systems work; theories of teams and team building; some psychodynamic theories; cognitive theories in assessment.

The course draws on wide range of services for placement, and does not have strong links with particular services. Nevertheless, there are a few services which regularly provide placements, and with which the course has built up a mutual understanding of the course approach and the service approach. The course devotes a number of teaching sessions to help the trainees to make sense of what they see and experience on placement, and to try to link this work with their other learning; these sessions enable trainees to learn from each other and to hear of other service practices, and to try to integrate some of the impressions and reactions that they have formed of their placements.

However, a number did admit that "although I think we've been prepared to apply theories and find them useful, lots of EPs don't do this". One trainee said that "on my placement, the EPs were very scornful of theory, they said that's a luxury for the university and not for the real world; you're here to do 'real work' not to have unreal theories and read books. If you want to read books stay in the university".

This reaction from supervisors had been discussed at length during the session dedicated to 'making sense of the placement' at the end of the first term. It is the view of the course that it is very important to address these views and their implications and to help the trainees to be 'inoculated' against them, and to build up a strong framework to resist this kind of approach.

They felt that they had been introduced to a range of useful theories on the course; however, most importantly was a theoretical approach and a realisation of the importance and usefulness of theory, and the flexibility to use psychological paradigms and theories, and not be frightened to be flexible and to be theoretical. They felt they had developed the ability to theorise their own work and to develop their

own theories; they had appreciated the importance of making time to reflect and to integrate their case work with their reading. "Sometimes I've just read books which were recommended and come across theories which are not immediately relevant but which make sense at the time; this shows how important it is to read and to follow things up even when there are work pressures".

What they had found useful was no one theory or few theories, but more the ability to use psychological theories and to have the confidence to try things out, to see if an idea fits the evidence and helps the situation; they had found theories particularly useful here. They were aware that the challenge was to continue the process, and they wondered how this would work in the field, and whether they should develop a support group in order to maintain this stance. "how can we maintain this when we're all working in different places, and we've got 43 statutory assessments to do, and the LEA is pressurising?"

The trainees were very aware of the pressures against this approach because of the demands in the LEA for them to carry out statutory work. Already they were thinking about ways to resist these pressures and ways of continuing to use the collaborative group support which they had developed during the year of the course. The course has an explicit aim which is developed during the first few weeks of the course to build a team approach to learning and to the training year, and to encourage trainees to collaborate and to support each other, to share ideas and perspectives and to use each other to help in reflecting on their work. This is attempted through team building exercises, group tutorials and other collaborative work. This cohort had become a very cohesive team who gave each other considerable support, and who developed and tried out ideas together.

They felt that they had been helped (caused) to link theory and practice in the year, through process accounts, and having to explain their work in tutorials. " It's really difficult, but really worth it". However, they also felt that clinical psychology trainees and practitioners had much more opportunity to apply theories, with a longer training and much more opportunity to explore theories.

At the beginning of the course the trainees find writing process accounts to be difficult and very time-consuming, and several have therefore to be persuaded of their benefit and purpose. It is a requirement that they write these accounts, and it is clearly explained and justified as a means to cause them to think through and reflect and to get into this habit. Writing process accounts and 'processing' the work is also presented as a means of protecting against the effects of work pressures and burnout, by developing a framework for making sense of the work and for maintaining a perspective. The course uses one placement where the trainee usually overlaps with a clinical psychology trainee and is thus able to compare training experiences, and bring back these comparisons to group discussion.

Although they had experienced theory and practice as mainly integrated at the Institute, this had been more difficult on placement where demands made it difficult to integrate some of the university work with placement; "the placement work was overwhelming and there was very little time for reading or for reflection; there was a risk that the placement work took precedence".

The course takes as a priority the integration of theory and practice. Since this takes a substantial amount of time in order to help the trainees to make sense of the placements, to process their experiences and to work through some of the issues, there is less time available for teaching practical skills. This means that some trainees find the placement even more demanding, and may feel less confident in a situation where they are being asked early on to take considerable responsibility for case work. The course endeavours to select trainees for whom this will be an appropriate approach, and applicants' approach to learning and their views on applying psychology are thoroughly explored at interview. Nevertheless, selection procedures may not be reliable, and there are a small number of trainees for whom the decision to allocate time to the development of a theoretical approach grounded in psychological theory rather than the development of practical skills and 'solutions' may prove to be difficult. The course takes a strong and explicit line on this issue in its publicity literature and on the selection days.

They felt that the links had been on the whole meaningful during the year, but the course might help by structuring the placement

experiences more, so that all trainees **had** to use theory and all placement supervisors understood the expectations and were able to enforce them. They felt they would have liked two or even three year training, and following these sessions they now felt ready to proceed to the next stage (year) in their training.

The partnership between university and Psychological Services necessary to provide placements means that there is a continual tension over how much the university may require of placements. The university is dependent on local Services to provide the placements, which they do on top of their workload; consequently, it is difficult for the university to make too many demands of the placements, since these depend on the generosity and goodwill of the services and supervisors. In placements where there is a marked discrepancy between the approach of the service, and the approach of the course, time is allocated to help the trainee to make sense of this, and to use the placement as a positive learning experience and as a way of clarifying her own model and approach. Most of the trainee groups at the end of their year considered that one year was not long enough; this cohort expressed the view commonly expressed in the final sessions that they now felt ready to move onto the next stage in their learning and professional development in applied psychology.

However, in spite of their optimism about the usefulness and strength of psychological theory, they felt the pressures of the field were considerable; "most EPs have no time to keep up with psychology, and no incentives, it's OK when you are on the course because you are encouraged and even required, and you have all the other course members to share with, but outside you'll be alone, no-one to say have you read this article, or to ask for a book or whatever".

This reflects their perception of the profession. It suggests that there may be a strong need for a more systematic way of supporting newly qualified trainees particularly in their first jobs, for example through CPD or through establishing networks. However, it also reflects a need in the profession, at least as perceived by its new entrants.

Several trainees asked: "do EPs want to be psychologists or educationists? Are they really just teachers? What do they want to do or be?"

The view of this course is that EPs are psychologists, and the course aims to help its trainees to understand and to appreciate this, and to work in a way which reflects this orientation. This orientation has to be re-emphasised throughout the course, and trainees are constantly reminded of this. It is the view of the course tutor that courses have a responsibility to take a lead and to develop a strong psychological perspective, and to help trainees to have a robust model which will enable them to develop their own psychological perspective, and to influence the field when they work as EPs.

They felt that this session was a very good way to round off the year. "We've been introduced into a way of working, and a way of creating our own theories and of using other theories. The reflective practice is a good model. It's been a stressful year, but worth it, and I've learned a lot and grown a lot".

One summed up the group feeling with: "I still think that it's going to be difficult to keep our psychological theories going, but we'll try, it's the most important aspect of our work and our training.

Reflections of tutor (present researcher)

In the same way as other trainee groups, this group valued the group discussion enormously, since they considered that it focused them on an area of great importance and relevance and caused them to bring together aspects of the training year in a way that enabled them to give it a framework linking the end of the year with the beginning of the year when they had had a similar session. These sessions constitute some of the most important elements of the course for the course tutor, and are used both to inform her own thinking and to inform her as to the level of success of the strategies used to develop the particular approach.

This chapter consists in part of data, in part of reflection and in part of discussion. It places the researcher in a position of privilege, in

being able to present her own reflections on the data from the focus group, of which she was herself a part. This trainee group had had similar discussions earlier during the course of the year and were used to focusing on the issue of psychological underpinnings of their practice. They had been caused to think about theory, both in taught sessions at the university and through the supervision of their professional work portfolios and the requirement to link their practical work with psychological theories. Many of the trainees had come to enjoy the challenge, even though they had found it difficult to begin with, and had become committed to the development of a theoretical approach. This suggests that, given a particular approach, and the prioritising of taught sessions with a focus on the application of psychological theories, trainee educational psychologists can and do think about theory and wish to use this as the base for their educational psychology work.

Chapter 9

Discussion of findings and critical reflections on the study

The key issues will be discussed using the data from the focus groups and from the individual tutor interviews, and, where relevant, referring to documentary evidence, and linking findings with issues from the literature. Although there were some differences between the courses, which reflect different orientations, perspectives, and practices, major themes occurred across courses and could therefore be said to reflect professional issues across the country at the time.

The discussion will be organised in relation to the title of the thesis: the place of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists, in four sections. First, educational psychology as applied psychology, second the psychological base of educational psychology, third the relationship between theory and practice in the training year, and fourth the nature of educational psychology as a profession.

The overall picture in terms of the place of psychological theory in the training of educational psychologists is somewhat depressing, a comment made by several tutors when they returned summary accounts sent to them for validation. The data were collected in the summer of 1993 at a time when there had been considerable changes affecting the profession. Both the 1988 and the 1993 Education Acts had considerable implications for the profession of educational psychology, and LEA restructuring and plans for local government reorganisation had also affected some services (AEP 1995).

The data were collected at the end of the training year. Trainees had experienced two placements in Psychological Services, and the vast majority of them were due to take up their first posts as educational psychologists a couple of months later. For all trainee educational psychologists the year is an intensive and busy year, with considerable pressures, as they sometimes struggle in meeting the demands of the placement (e.g. for casework reports and other paperwork) and the demands of the university (e.g. for coursework essays and research dissertations). The intensive nature of the year means that trainee

groups frequently develop a strong identity as a group, and they get to know each other and their tutors well through frequent contact and working together.

Educational psychology as applied psychology

There was universal agreement and strongly expressed views both amongst tutors and trainees that professional educational psychology should be applied psychology. The strength of this conviction both for trainees and for tutors was of note.

Most of the tutors considered that educational psychology should be similar to clinical and occupational psychology, in applying psychology, in the education field. Several tutors suggested that the different branches of applied (or professional) psychology had a considerable amount in common with each other, and that it was the work or employment context that differentiated them. This view of educational psychology as applied psychology matches all the documentation published by the professional associations (BPS and AEP), and follows a thread which it is possible to trace in the literature since the appointment of Burt as the first educational psychologist. There is a widely held view of practitioner educational psychology as applied psychology.

Gap between the ideal and reality

However, the majority, both of tutors and trainees, also considered that there was a gap between the ideal and the reality and that it was difficult for educational psychologists to be applied psychologists in reality because of the pressures of the job and of the LEA. The majority of tutors considered strongly that educational psychology should be applied psychology, but that there was a gap between 'what educational psychologists should be doing' and 'what they are doing' in practice. Trainees, too, expressed the strong view that educational psychologists should be applied psychologists and that they had come into training aspiring to become psychologists.

However, they considered that the pressures of the job, as they had seen it on placement, were against psychology and against theory, and

more towards administrative and bureaucratic tasks, and particularly those associated with the statutory assessment procedures. This reflects the AEP (1995) finding that 'statutory work has become the main driving force of much Educational Psychologist work'. For some, this gap between ideal and reality, or between rhetoric and reality, was expressed as 'educational psychology should be applied psychology', implying that it is not, or is unable to be; for others, it was expressed as 'it used to be', implying that it no longer is, or 'it could potentially be' applied psychology, implying that it is not possible to be in current circumstances but could be in changed circumstances. Thus, there is an implied reference either to a time in the past, or to a time in the future, or to a different context which would permit educational psychology to be applied psychology. This comes across sometimes almost as: "if only..." However, in all cases, the reality is different and leads to practitioner educational psychologists, at least as perceived by trainees and their tutors, being engaged in work which for the most part is perceived to involve limited psychology.

Two types of EP work

Several respondents, both tutors and trainees, made mention of two types of work, sometimes referred to as the 'statutory' and the 'psychological', as though they are somehow in contrast, or as though the statutory work is non-psychological. For many, these two types of work were of a very different nature, the one being tied to what used to be 'defining specialness' and had now become defining 'resource-worthiness' (Dessent 1992) and the other concerned with psychological intervention. According to this widely expressed view, the problem was that EPs had been increasingly forced to carry out statutory work to the exclusion of any other work (and see AEP 1995 op. cit.). These two types of work are contrasted in the responses: statutory work was referred to as bureaucratic, administrative, routine, non-psychological, atheoretical, while 'other work' was referred to as psychological, theoretical, creative, and even by some as more useful than the other work.

This way of considering the work of EPs is evident in the literature (Dessent 1992, Norwich 1995). For example, there is the view that the 1981 Act had a negative effect on the work of educational

psychologists, since it created bureaucratic procedures and increased paperwork, and involved them inextricably in the task of defining resourceworthiness (Dessent 1992). This view perhaps implied that there was a period pre-1981 Act when EPs were carrying out more useful or creative or psychological types of work. Yet the period pre-1981 Act was a period when the profession was engaged in the 'reconstructing' movement, and attempting to redefine its role away from a role which it did not want and which it felt had been inflicted on it by the expectations of others (Gillham 1978, Quicke, 1982b, Wolfendale et al. 1992).

'Ever since the first school psychologists functioned in the United Kingdom, the expectation was that they would be concerned with "damage limitation, remedial and curative approaches to identified deviant and pathological conditions". That legacy, while diffused into a positive, benevolent conception of "special educational needs", has never been shaken off successfully by educational psychologists themselves' (Wolfendale et al.1992, p.12).

Since the 1981 Act, changes in the education system mainly linked to changes in legislation have, if anything, given educational psychologists an even stronger role in the statutory assessment procedures, and within the LEA, and imposed more pressures on them to be engaged in this role (AEP 1995). This has meant that their function has once again been centrally defined in relation to special educational needs assessment and identification, and defining resourceworthiness in order to 'assist the LEA to carry out its statutory responsibilities'. In a sense, then, the resource issue both underpins and undermines the role of the educational psychologist; it is the rationale for their employment and existence in the education service, yet it appears to prevent them from carrying out the 'psychological' work which many of them claim would be more appropriate. This was evident to all trainees on their placements.

Responsibility for this role?

Although some respondents considered that the profession had been forced down the route of statutory work, and was a helpless victim of political changes and circumstances, there were others, particularly but not only trainees, who expressed views strongly critical of the profession, which, according to them, had embraced the statutory role

as providing it with a guaranteed role, status and salary, and therefore had only itself to blame for the present situation. According to this view, the profession itself was in part to blame for the situation where educational psychologists were unable to apply psychology, since it had welcomed its 'meal ticket' through a statutory role in the formal assessment process, and through its pressures for mandatory exception to delegation under local management of schools.

This reflects a real difficulty for the profession which to a large extent has its role defined by the LEA which employs educational psychologists to carry out particular tasks which concern the identification of special needs rather than psychological interventions. Half of the trainee groups expressed this critical view, reflecting a significant feeling of resentment and disillusionment against a profession which had not only allowed this to happen, but had welcomed the statutory role. This critical view appears in the literature, for example 'short term status enhancement and perceived power has led to educational psychologists becoming *street level bureaucrats* at the expense of being applied psychologists and advocates for children, parents and even teachers' (Faupel & Norgate 1993, p. 132, my italics).

Difficulties for EPs in applying psychology

However, a further theme within this area was the difficulty of educational psychologists applying psychology, partly because of the nature of what was being applied and partly because of the problems of application.

(i) The nature of the psychology to be applied

Here, some respondents referred to some of the conflicting conceptual frameworks of the knowledge base of psychology and that of educational psychology practice. Thus, for example, there was mention by different tutors of a 'different kind of psychology' or a 'more interpersonal, constructivist and tentative psychology' or a 'more contextual and sociological psychology' or the 'fairly big gap between the psychology which is relevant and useful in schools and

with families, and a lot of the psychology which happens on undergraduate courses at the moment'.

Most trainees, too, considered that the kind of psychology which they had studied in their undergraduate degrees had little relevance and usefulness for subsequent application. This relates to distinctions made earlier in the thesis between the logical empiricist and positivist perspective of 'psychological science' (of the undergraduate courses) with the more phenomenological and interpretive perspective taken by some postgraduate courses in professional psychology. However, it should be noted that the majority of trainees had taken their psychology degrees many years previously (e.g. in the early 1980s), and their views may not reflect the undergraduate degree as it is found at the present time.

(ii) The difficulties of application

It relates also to the difficulties of application described by Schönplflug (1993). Recognising these difficulties, Shapiro (1985) was led to suggest that the notion of (clinical) psychology as an applied science should be dropped and replaced by the notion of (clinical) psychologists as engaged in producing science in their work, through their use of scientific method in everyday practice. This approach matches the aspirations of a few tutors who aspire to develop in trainees the ability to develop their own theories and to develop a scientific approach to their professional work. However, as was evident from the responses, both of tutors and trainees, it appears that clinical psychologists find it easier to see psychology in their applied practice than educational psychologists, thus rendering Shapiro's model more possible in the NHS context than the LEA. Indeed several respondents contrasted the 'cultures' of the NHS and the LEA or the 'medical' with the 'education' culture in terms of their attitudes to and support for research (and by implication, a more theoretical approach to the work). Although this (the scientific and systematic approach of psychology) is one of the features distinguishing psychologists from other professionals and one of the features defining the profession of psychologist, it remains elusive in most Educational Psychology Services, at least according to the perceptions of those in training.

Relationship between academic and practitioner educational psychologists

It was considered to be of relevance and interest to a consideration of the nature of educational psychology to explore the relationship between 'academic' educational psychologists based mainly in universities particularly in departments of education, and 'practitioner' educational psychologists based predominantly in LEAs. Both these groups are applied psychologists applying psychology to the field of education. In fact, in this country, both groups frequently use the same name to describe themselves. The literature suggests that the groups have a somewhat separate existence. This question was raised only in the tutor interviews, since the pilot, and subsequent discussions suggested that it was not an issue within trainee educational psychologists' experience. Early experience showed that trainee educational psychologists were unaware of another group of 'educational psychologists' or another manifestation of educational psychology, this in spite of the fact that the majority of them had obtained PGCE qualifications, presumably often contributed to by 'academic' educational psychologists, though decreasingly (Tomlinson 1992, Wilkinson 1992). This in itself is of interest, if only to illustrate the lack of contact between the two groups, even within those departments which contain staff from both backgrounds, such as the education departments in which more than one half of the professional courses for educational psychologists are based.

The tutors in general considered that there was very little contact between the two groups who had very little in common with each other. Several tutors considered that the two groups had different value systems, different functions and time frames which made contact difficult. Also mentioned were the different methodologies; a small number of tutors considered that academic educational psychologists used a different language and methodology, with much more of a positivistic approach to psychology, and the use of more quantitative approaches to the discipline. Again, this reflected a perception, if not a reality, of different paradigms and conceptual frameworks between the two groups. Several tutors regretted the lack of contact between the two groups, suggesting that this was a disadvantage to both groups, making 'academic' educational

psychologists more academic, and practitioner educational psychologists not sufficiently in touch with psychology research, and a small number of tutors stated that they would welcome (more) contact between the two groups. Some tutors found the question difficult to answer, almost suggesting that it had no meaning for them, or that they had never considered it (two tutors actually said that they had never considered the issue). This also reflects the lack of contact, which, as one tutor pointed out, and was shown in the literature, manifests itself in the organisation of the different subsystems within the BPS.

In general the responses to this issue seemed to point to a difference in value systems, and time perspectives, which may characterise a more general difference between a 'science' perspective and a 'service' perspective, which is also mentioned in the literature on professional training and the tensions between the 'university' and the 'field'. However, of relevance is a consideration of the kind of psychology which is being applied. One tutor suggested that the 'academic' educational psychologists had more of a claim to call themselves applied psychologists since it was clearer for them that psychology could be applied, and that there were problems in applying psychology to a practitioner and service education context. A relevant question has to be the kind of psychology which is being applied by educational psychologists (practitioners).

The psychological theories which inform EP practice during the training year

If we assume that educational psychology is applied psychology, what is the source of psychology that is being applied? By definition there are three sources of psychological knowledge, skill and understanding available to trainee educational psychologists, (i) that gained as a result of their first degree in psychology, (ii) that which may be gained during their teaching qualification and experience, and (iii) that gained during the Master's year. These source 'units' are equivalent to (i) first degree = years 1 to 3 (ii) teaching period = years 4 to 6, counts as one year (iii) Master's year = year 7, counts as year 5, of the route to Chartered Educational Psychologist status of the BPS (see chapter 3). Although Chartered Psychologist status of the BPS is achieved and

defined as six years, educational psychologists even following the fastest 'track' would require 8 years to attain Chartered Status, although only four of these necessarily includes study in psychology (and see Lunt & Carroll 1996, who highlight the seriousness of a situation in which a group of applied psychologists may receive an even more minimal grounding in psychology).

The undergraduate degree in psychology

The requirement for entry to all postgraduate professional training courses in psychology, of which educational psychology is one, is eligibility for Graduate Basis for Registration of the British Psychological Society. This is clearly defined as a psychology Honours degree or equivalent, with the breadth and standard of the BPS Qualifying Examination (QE) which specifies certain basic knowledge areas.

From all the tutor interviews, it was clear that tutors were unable to assume any particular knowledge gained as a result of the psychology brought by trainees on entry to the course. This was considered to be due to four main causes.

First the great variety of psychology degrees in the UK, both among the Bachelors degrees and the other routes which confer eligibility for GBR (e.g. OU degree, MEd, BPS QE), meant that there is no agreed 'core' either of a conceptual or methodological nature which postgraduate tutors are able to take for granted as a foundation. Tutors expressed a concern that the concept of GBR meant very little in practice.

Second, the requirement for teaching qualifications and the fact that psychology graduates may proceed only to primary PGCE, and that with increasing difficulty (Wilkinson 1992), means that the profession attracts many entrants who have come with a background in secondary teaching followed by a MEd or OU qualification often gained following considerable teaching experience. In fact it is very difficult for secondary teachers to become educational psychologists any other way, since psychology graduates are not usually able to teach in secondary schools.

A third issue was the wide variety of backgrounds of the trainees including the fact that very many had had many years of teaching experience during which they had not used or thought about psychology. Indeed some tutors, while regretting the impossibility of being able to assume any basic psychology knowledge of trainees on entry to the course, also stated that they had a preference for more mature trainees on the course since these people had other characteristics and experiences which were likely to make them successful as trainee educational psychologists; many of these trainees, almost by definition, had gained their psychology qualification through a MEd degree, several of which are based in the universities which also offer the Master's qualifications in professional educational psychology. It appears that at a time when there is strong competition for places on these courses, as there is at the present time, some courses favour applicants with at least more than the minimum teaching experience, and, under previous funding arrangements, through which trainees were seconded from their teaching posts, some LEAs were more willing to offer secondments to long-serving teachers. This results in at least a significant proportion of the trainees in any year having substantial teaching experience, during which, according to both tutors and trainees, they have not used their psychology.

A fourth and final reason appears to be the nature of the undergraduate psychology degree, which both tutors and trainees commented was not necessarily relevant to application, and which continues to be perceived as too academic and traditional (Gale 1990) with a result that trainees leave it behind as something not relevant to their future professional career.

The trainees, too, expressed a notable lack of psychology brought with them from their previous psychology qualification. Many of the trainees in the groups providing data for the thesis had had lengthy teaching careers, and felt that they had forgotten any psychology that they might have learned, and that they did not use psychology in their teaching. A majority also expressed the view that they had not found their undergraduate psychology useful or relevant to being an applied psychologist.

Tutors to the one remaining so-called 'integrated' course, which takes its recruits for a 4 year 'package' to include PGCE, two years' teaching experience during which contact is maintained with the university, followed by the one year Master's degree, considered that the two year period was the maximum period for the majority of trainees to be able to 'hold on to' or 'keep in touch with' their psychology, and that the professional and socialising pressures of teaching, and the very different nature of the two professional activities meant that those who subsequently went on to train as educational psychologists following more than two years as teachers had become socialised into that profession, leaving their psychology degrees behind as part of purely academic studies.

This does raise the question of the nature of the psychology degree which is assumed to form the basis for the 'application' in professional psychology. It may be seen either as something to 'hang on to' and build on in the postgraduate phase, in which case it appears that there may be a maximum length of time before it is 'forgotten', or it may be seen as something which is irrelevant to future applied practice, in which case it does not matter how many years elapse before postgraduate training, since no use could be made of this kind of knowledge.

Another point to arise from the so-called 'integrated' course was the fact that its trainees chose at the end of their undergraduate psychology course to go into educational psychology, thus already seeing themselves as psychologists and having this goal ahead, with the possibility both that they already had some identity in terms of the application of psychology in their future life and career, and that they could see through this identity towards their goal of becoming educational psychologists. This process was probably enhanced by their continued involvement with and attendance at the university through their two year teaching period, which they tended to see more as a phase to go through rather than as a career move. The trainees from this course concurred with this view. This fact may, however, not be the most satisfactory to the teaching profession and the schools which receive newly qualified teachers with little interest in becoming teachers and with the intention of leaving after two years if possible.

One of the tutors from another course also expressed the view that trainees who come from a psychology degree background with a minimum teaching experience, often saying that they 'wanted to be an educational psychologist since they were doing their first degree (or earlier)', frequently find it easier to develop their identity as psychologists, and experience less doubt about their identity during the training year. Yet this fact does raise another issue, frequently mentioned by a number of tutors, of the benefits of 'maturity'. This was seen by tutors both in terms of the benefits of other 'life experiences', including responsibilities in their jobs, other courses taken, and general 'maturity', and in terms of the very real aspects of the job which require EPs to work with head-teachers, advisers, officers of LEAs where some years' experience in the education service might be thought to be an advantage to increase credibility and general know-how.

This could be seen to cause a dilemma over the most suitable prior entry characteristics for this profession; this is most dramatically demonstrated by the disagreement within the profession and between tutors of courses over the necessity and role of the requirement of teaching qualification and experience, highlighted in the Summerfield Report (DES 1968), and which continues to the present, and, by extension, the relative importance of the psychology contribution and the teaching contribution to trainees' entry characteristics.

The trainee focus groups produced a general lack of consensus over the nature of psychology brought to the course. Most of the members of the groups were able to mention some broad psychological theory, behavioural psychology being the most frequently mentioned, but the majority of the trainees considered that they had not really brought much psychology with them to the course, and that they had not been caused to use the psychology from their undergraduate or equivalent psychology qualifications. Several of the trainees expressed concern that the kind of psychology that had been taught on their undergraduate degrees was not relevant or suitable for application, and that it was not perceived as useful to their work as practitioner educational psychologists.

Psychology gained in the teaching period

Among both tutors and trainees there was a general consensus that the teaching period did not require or develop psychological knowledge or skill, and that it was a period during which psychology was 'forgotten', particularly if, as was frequently the case, the trainee had been pursuing an (often lengthy) career as a teacher, and only later decided to train as a psychologist.

Psychology gained on the Master's course

The courses varied considerably in their orientation to theoretical input or focus. Some courses aim and attempt to use a range of theoretical models, sometimes making explicit mention of specific models. For example, explicit mention was made of Personal Construct Psychology and Self Organised Learning as useful paradigms to inform the training year, while social interactionist theories or a problem-solving model were felt by others to provide a particularly useful paradigm.

However, several of the course tutors stated explicitly that they did not aim to teach or develop any particular theories on the course, assuming that trainees would gain theoretical knowledge through their reading. This stance was either in response to a realisation that the demands of the job were predominantly practical, and the task of the courses was to prepare trainees for the job as it is found in the field, or a consideration that the one year period of training was too short and the pressures of time meant that choices and priorities had to be made, and that practical skills were more immediately necessary for trainees than theoretical knowledge. For many of the tutors this led to a conflict in their own positions, since the majority of them expressed a strong belief in the importance both of theory in general and of psychological theory in particular. Thus, they were put in a position of having to make a compromise, in part because of the time pressures of a one year course, in part because of the pressures on the trainees to be able to carry out the job in the field which was perceived to be a rather practical job. There was also a perception among some tutors that trainees did not value theory, and were 'practical' people wanting to get on with 'practical' work. This view,

however, was at odds with the majority of the trainees who expressed a great interest in and desire for theoretical input. However, many of the tutors expressed the view that the main pressures inhibiting the place of theory were pressures exerted from outside the university, and in particular from the field or the profession in relation to the work which was expected of trainees on placement and newly qualified educational psychologists.

This does call into question the role and contribution of psychological theories to the practice of educational psychology in the field.

It also raises the question whether the role of the tutors and the training courses is to lead or to follow the field, whether they should influence or reflect practice, and how university courses should relate to field agencies (i.e. Psychological Services). Tutors were divided in their views, with about half expressing the view that training courses should aim to prepare trainees for the job as it is found in the field, and about half believing that tutors should lead and influence the field and provide trainees with a robust model and with a sound psychological framework which might help them to influence services and develop practice as newly employed educational psychologists. Although trainees were aware of the need to be able to function both on placement and in their first job, the majority felt strongly that it was the responsibility of tutors and 'the university' to lead.

The relationship between theory and practice in the one year Masters degree of professional training as an EP

All the courses experienced a tension between theory and practice during the training year. In a general sense this mirrors that described in the literature for many professional groups. However, there are specific aspects of this tension which will be mentioned here.

The place of theory in EPs' work

There is, first, the question of the place of theory or a theoretical perspective in educational psychologists' work. Trainees perceived the work in the field to be largely atheoretical. This meant that theoretical work on the course would need to be presented and developed with

careful thought in order to minimise the split. About half of the trainee groups had seen the two as 'split', and the university input to be difficult to integrate with the 'field' learning. Logically there are three main alternatives for tutors organising training courses: first, they may respond to what they perceive to be the needs of the field and the trainees, and develop a largely atheoretical course; second they may believe that trainees should develop a theoretical perspective from their university learning and therefore construct a theoretically based course; the third alternative, and one most frequently aspired to by tutors was to integrate theory and practice, either through topic modules, or through particular assignments which required trainees to integrate the two. From the trainees' perspective, some of these attempts were not entirely successful, leaving trainees confused and 'split'. Most of the trainees who had received theoretical input on the course had valued the theoretical sessions that had been available, and had appreciated the value of a theoretical perspective even though they had seen little evidence of its use or usefulness in the field.

Training to lead or follow the field?

Related to this and importantly, is the question whether training should lead or follow the field, and the role of the university vis-a-vis the field in the training of educational psychologists. This has already been addressed above. Tutors were divided on this question, whereas the vast majority of trainee groups considered that tutors (universities) should influence the field and educational psychology practice. This would seem to imply that trainees considered that the nature of the training and the stand taken by tutors in relation to the role and place of (psychological) theory could have some influence on the field.

The kind of psychological theory to apply?

Third is the question of the kind of psychological theory which can be applied. This relates to the issue of the nature of professional knowledge, and the respective aspects of propositional knowledge and personal knowledge, and the values given to these. Some course tutors appeared satisfied to use traditional paradigms of behaviourist psychology, or what was described as a 'problem-solving model' which

frequently turned out to be based on behavioural principles. Other tutors aspired explicitly to present 'an alternative psychology' and to develop in trainees a very different psychological identity from the one gained as a result of previous experiences of psychology. For some tutors, this would have more in common with an approach articulated by some counselling psychologists describing the tension between contrasting paradigms within psychology: 'This presents a conceptual impasse. The theoretical and conceptual foundations of counselling psychology are based upon knowledge formulated from within a logical empiricist framework...., yet the actual practice and development of counselling psychology is universally claimed to be phenomenological' (Williams and Irving 1996, 9.4). For other tutors, the view of Shapiro (1985) already referred to above would be more appropriate to the training of educational psychologists. Yet, overarching these considerations, for many tutors, was a perception (almost resigned) that not much psychology was required for the work of educational psychologists as currently seen in a large number of services.

The length of the training year

Fourth there is an issue of the length of the training year, and decisions to be taken by course organisers over how this should be organised. All the tutors, and a majority of trainees commented on the inadequacy of the one year period for the Master's training course. For tutors, this means that they feel forced to make a choice between teaching the practical skills which they feel are necessary to carry out the job and developing psychological perspectives. For trainees, the pressures of the one year lead to their feeling rushed and overburdened in their training period, with little time for reading and reflection, and little time to develop the psychological perspectives and skills which they claim that they would like to develop.

Educational psychology as a profession

If one considers the length of its training, and the documents provided by the professional associations, educational psychology is clearly considered to be a profession. Yet a consideration of the work that educational psychologists are required to carry out, and their position within the LEA suggests that they may more appropriately be termed

'semi-professionals' (Etzioni 1969). For example, the AEP document (AEP 1995) states that 'many EPs feel their professional judgement and discretion are now unreasonably limited, and undervalued by the restrictive nature of many current arrangements' and 'the required quality of work cannot be completed within the size, and hence contracted hours, of the majority of Educational Psychology Services. Those less favourably staffed services are under immense and unsustainable pressures'. Even though this document is produced by the Union, it derives from responses to a survey carried out of members of the AEP, and corresponds with the perceptions of the trainees from their placements.

However, trainees were also very critical of the profession both for allowing itself to be overwhelmed by the demands imposed by the LEA, and/or for welcoming these demands which led to educational psychologists being administrators or bureaucrats rather than psychologists. If this is the case, and educational psychologists are increasingly fulfilling a bureaucratic role, their professional independence and autonomy must be called into question.

Returning to the question of the two types of EP work referred to above, it would appear that the first type of work (the 'statutory' work) has increasingly come to dominate service activities, and that this work gives EPs relatively little freedom to exercise their professional psychological judgement and creativity, since its functions are mainly administrative, and it may be arguable whether psychological expertise is required to make decisions of the nature required by the formal assessment procedure. On the other hand, the second type of work mentioned above, (the 'psychological' work) would demand professional judgement and autonomy (see also Farrell, 1989 and Gale 1991). So Gale (1991) asks

'will educational psychology fail because it is accused of sustaining a pernicious status quo?....In seeking to determine which side our bread is buttered, are we more concerned with our own fortune than those of our clients?' (p. 67)

These are strong words, but the answers from the trainee groups interviewed here would appear to be affirmative. As stated above, the

overall picture in terms of the place of psychological theory is somewhat depressing.

Critical reflections on the study

Before moving on to conclusions and implications, it is appropriate to make mention of some methodological issues. The methods used were deliberately chosen in order to obtain rich qualitative data. The intention was to be able to explore in depth the views and feelings of the tutors, and to engage with them in exploratory conversation; it was also hoped to be able to explore the experiences and perceptions of the trainee groups in a relatively open-ended manner.

Individual Interviews of Tutors

The group of tutors in educational psychology is a small and supportive group, the majority of whom have been in post for a considerable time and who therefore know each other well. The tutors who formed part of this study were positive about the opportunity to discuss these issues, and were supportive of the research. The interviews were more similar to 'guided conversations' between equals, though the interviewer minimised her contribution to the discussion. Although each interview covered the same topic areas in the same order (appendix 1), each interview was very different and was considerably influenced by the orientation and views of the individual tutor. Some tutors considered that they would have liked to be more prepared, and maybe even to have written down some of their thoughts in the area since it was judged to be so important; however, the length of the interview (between one and one and a half hours) allowed them to express their views and to develop their thoughts. Several of them felt able to add to the transcript summaries if they wished.

The tutor interviews were relatively straightforward in terms of checking their validity; tutors were immediately able to confirm the summaries sent to them for validation. The researcher has confidence that they would have confirmed the full interview transcripts. All the tutors interviewed found the interviews to be thought-provoking and stimulating, and felt that they caused them to articulate their

thoughts in an area held by them to be important; they welcomed the opportunity to have such a conversation. The semi-structured interview enabled them to express at some length their own philosophies and views in this area. It would not have been appropriate to explore this topic through structured interview or written questionnaire, since each interview was highly individual, and was intended to explore with the tutor personal views on the topic. This fits with aspects of qualitative research methodology (Banister et al. 1994, Smith et al. 1995b, Richardson 1996).

Focus Group Interviews

The focus groups provided an opportunity for trainees to express a range of views in relation to the broad area of questioning. They responded freely to this opportunity, and used it to express a range of views, many of them somewhat critical of their experiences. Although there was a range of views expressed among individuals in each group, there was also a tendency for an idea to 'take root' and to be taken up and developed within the group. This was particularly the case with ideas which could have seemed slightly 'risky'. Indeed, these could have been influenced by the 'risky shift' phenomenon of social psychology, where a group 'view' shifts as a result of individuals with strong or 'risky' views. Even if this were not so, individuals in the group were involved in a group situation where there could have been pressures for 'group think' or at least 'group talk'. For example, if one individual made a bold and critical statement about the profession, this tended to be taken up and agreed and developed. Furthermore, the stage of the year, at which they had almost completed their training course and were understandably nervous about their forthcoming first jobs as EPs, may have caused an element of 'delinquency' in the way in which they expressed strongly held views. On the other hand, it is also likely that, through the social facilitation of the group interview situation, responses held beneath the surface were brought above the threshold. The veridicality of their responses is made more likely by the fact that there was opportunity for disagreement within the groups and indeed there was some disagreement, though most themes were notable in their almost universal occurrence both within and between groups.

It was striking how much the trainees valued the opportunity to discuss the area, and how quickly they got into the discussion, and how desperate they were to share their views and experiences, and for the majority how almost 'hungry' they were for 'psychology' and 'theory'. This was clearly in part a reaction to placements which many had found disappointing, and in part an expression of their frustration at the profession, and possibly their own questioning of whether they had been right to train for this profession. These feelings and the timing of the group interviews, in addition to the inherent potential of group interviews to affect individual views should be taken into consideration when reflecting on the findings. Nevertheless, the nature of the findings was common across the trainee groups and could therefore be said to reflect the situation of the time, while the commonality of themes and reactions across sites provided evidence of the reliability and validity of the approach.

Hedges (1985) points out some of the disadvantages of group interviewing, though he considers that most of them can be minimised by a skilled interviewer. The experience of these group interviews with the trainees suggested that it was not so much a group pressure but rather some strongly felt individual views which resonated across the group and which it appeared that the group had not had the opportunity to express before. Indeed there was a sense of urgency to the discussion, and a passion in some of the views which suggested their importance to the trainees. A large majority of the trainees valued the discussion and would have wished for this kind of session in their own course. Within each group there were some differences of view, and the fact that all trainee groups are used to holding group discussions where different views are expressed probably meant that the risk of 'group think' was minimised. However, it is possible that the 'risky shift' phenomenon may have led to trainees expressing more outrageous views than were actually held, or than they would express in individual interview. On the other hand, individual interviews would have been considerably more threatening, and would probably not have elicited the same frank views and exchanges. Any form of written questionnaire (completed either before or after the group interview) would have contaminated or been contaminated by the interview session. The intention of the group interview was to use the interaction between the trainees, and to

capture their immediate reflections on their experiences at the end of their training year.

Seven of the group interviews were carried out with unknown groups, while the eighth was well-known to the researcher who is the course tutor. For the seven groups, the position of being an outsider led to being able quickly to build up a situation where the trainees appeared to feel at ease and free to discuss a wide range of issues including critical views. The session was a one-off, where there was no possibility of their being judged or evaluated, and anonymity was guaranteed. The interview appeared to provide an opportunity to try to make sense of what the trainees had experienced, and to take a perspective on it. The eighth group session was very different, since the interviewer knew the group well, and they had taken part in similar discussions earlier on in the course. This might have led to fewer critical or 'risky' views being expressed. Nevertheless, for this group there was a clear role for theory and an appreciation of its importance.

The position and role of the researcher

In this study, the researcher held an almost uniquely privileged position in relation to the respondents. She was an outsider for 7 out of the 8 groups. Although the trainee groups knew that she was a tutor of another course, the once-off nature of the encounter, and the fact that she was an outsider (any external examiner role or involvement in BPS evaluation activity was avoided) led to the group being able to build up quickly a situation where the trainees felt able and free to discuss a range of issues and views, including both positive and disappointing experiences, and to express some critical views, in a way that they might not have felt able to do with someone who they knew, and almost certainly not with their own course tutors.

The eighth course was the course for which the researcher is course tutor, and yielded a very different discussion. Although it would have been possible to ask a colleague to carry out the focus group interview with the researcher's own course, and indeed to interview the researcher herself, this was a very personal study, and involved

elements of 'reflexivity', such that it was felt to be an advantage to have the opportunity to carry out these interviews. The central importance of the interviewer in focus groups and the fact that the role becomes more that of a facilitator led to the decision that all group interviews should be carried out by the same interviewer, the researcher. However, this fact has led to some difficulty over the presentation and discussion of the eighth group discussion, in particular because its nature was different from the other seven groups.

The fact that a course where such sessions form part of the training year produced a very different discussion suggests that it is possible to support trainees in developing a more theoretical approach, building on and developing psychological (and other) theories, and that they welcome this. Nevertheless, the pressures on educational psychologists to carry out the tasks required by the LEA and the socialising effects of the profession may make it difficult for trainees to maintain this stance and orientation.

Having had the opportunity to carry out the research has made the present researcher even more aware of the importance of making time and sessions available during the training period (of whatever length) to develop this approach, and to consider strategies of supporting the newly qualified educational psychologists as they enter the profession.

Chapter 10 Conclusions

The predominant rhetoric is of educational psychology as applied psychology, yet the reality appears to be different. There would seem to be several aspects to this: the nature and content of the undergraduate degree which appears largely irrelevant to application by practitioners in education settings; the length of teaching career of the majority of trainee educational psychologists; the length and nature of the postgraduate training course; the nature of educational psychologist roles, status and job requirements within LEAs. There is also a more fundamental question of the nature of psychology itself and its application.

The discontinuity of training

The UK has what has been termed a 'discontinuous' mode of education in psychology (McPherson 1988, Lunt 1994b). The discontinuity refers to the complete separation between undergraduate and postgraduate education in psychology. This means that would-be professional psychologists (especially practitioners) first take a Bachelors degree, which is followed (probably several years later) by a postgraduate degree, in this case a Master's in Educational Psychology. The situation is different for those aspiring to be researchers or academic psychologists; they are more likely to continue immediately to the PhD, and the undergraduate degree may have more immediate relevance thus permitting some continuity.

For educational psychologists, the split and discontinuity is exacerbated by the requirement to be qualified and experienced teachers prior to the Master's course. The teaching experience requires at least a three year break between Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and usually considerably longer, since many trainees have lengthy teaching careers because of the strong competition for entry to professional training, and the fact that some course tutors explicitly prefer to take mature trainees. In addition, the requirement for teaching experience means that a significant number of applicants

have a primary background and career in teaching, only later taking a 'psychology equivalent' degree.

The background in education

Their background in education significantly influences the nature of the work carried out by educational psychologists, and their position within the LEA to a large extent prescribes their role. The trade union (AEP) has consistently emphasised the need for links with teachers and teaching; such a stance has until recently served the profession well at least financially, since salaries have been linked to those of senior professionals within education, and conditions of service have been favourable. This has led to a situation where education provides the dominant discipline background, and teaching the primary professional focus, while psychology takes a less influential and secondary position.

Yet, in terms of their work and professional identity, they might do well to heed Pond's words *'it might be healthy for educational psychologists to think carefully about their criteria of competence independent of their employability by local education authorities'* (Pond 1982). An opportunity (or threat) for such independence appeared briefly when there was an indication that the budgets for EP services would be delegated to schools; the threat caused some EP services to think carefully about what they had to offer, both to schools and to others, to define their 'product portfolios' and to produce clear statements outlining their psychological services. Their status as exempt from budgetary devolution to schools merely permitted and indeed required them to return to the previous status quo, i.e. their role in statutory assessment, which has become even more bureaucratised with the Code of Practice of the 1993 Education Act.

The requirements of the job significantly influence the trainees' placement experiences, which in turn influence the content and orientation of the courses. Even though based in academic institutions, these have become increasingly 'practicentric' (Petersen 1985), as trainees struggle to meet the very practical demands of the placements and course tutors endeavour to facilitate the development

in trainees of necessary skills to permit confident and competent performance on the job. There becomes a question over the respective roles of university and placement. (This question increasingly arises for other professions- or semi-professions-such as teaching and social work, and may in future arise for the more traditional professions such as law and medicine, according to a recent report of the AUT).

The nature of psychology

Educational psychologists have a service function, working in a political and social context where they find it difficult to apply psychology. It is suggested that this is partly because of the nature of psychology and partly because of the nature of the context in education, and in particular the LEA. The undergraduate psychology degree, at least up to the time at which this cohort of trainees was studying, has been heavily influenced by the 'traditional' (Richardson 1996) paradigm. Trainees and tutors identified difficulties over its application. There is also the further difficulty caused in attempts to apply psychology in a highly political service setting, where agendas and therefore professional functions may be determined by factors outside the control of the profession.

These factors act in combination, in a mutually reinforcing circle, to sustain the present state of affairs: the profession draws on people whose primary background is from education; these people then undergo a short training which is strongly influenced by the immediate task demands which depend on the political context; they enter a profession which is overwhelmed by the demands of the education system, in a culture which does not value psychology or theory. Wider pressures for accountability and increased bureaucratisation resulting from legislation changes have significantly affected the work of educational psychologists and the profession has been unable to resist these. The lack of psychology in their background, in their postgraduate training and in the work which they see on placement, means that trainee educational psychologists become more easily socialised into a profession which has responded to pressures which run counter to applied psychology practice.

There are two immediate conclusions to be drawn from this situation, one concerning the professional training of educational psychologists, the other concerning their role.

Implications for training of EPs

The training of educational psychologists in this country has reached a point of crisis where urgent change is needed. If educational psychologists are to claim to be applied psychologists, to claim parity of status as Chartered Psychologists with other professional psychologists, and to maintain their claim to have a training in research and to be 'scientist-practitioners', there is an urgent need to develop their training route.

The small number of educational psychologists trained in the United Kingdom who have sought to work in other countries have frequently experienced difficulty in gaining recognition as 'psychologists'. (The present researcher is assisting one such case of a British trained educational psychologist who is seeking to work in Scandinavia, and she has experience of a small number of other cases). It is possible to qualify as an educational psychologist in this country with minimal education in psychology (Lunt & Carroll 1996), a fact not unnoticed by many other European countries. The requirement for (often lengthy) prior teaching experience is an additional factor which potentially distances trainee educational psychologists from their psychology background and by definition from contemporary developments in psychology. The situation in Scotland already provides a considerable improvement, with a two year Master's degree (thereby implementing the recommendations of 1984 (TEP 84(7)) and no requirement for prior teaching experience.

It is suggested here that educational psychology training would benefit from having a more substantial focus on psychology and psychological theories, in order that trainees are better equipped to offer 'a unique contribution' of psychology. The data suggest that changes to the undergraduate degree (or its equivalent) might make it easier for trainees to build on the foundation of psychology provided by their first degree. They also provide grounds for raising again the

question over the necessity for the long period of teaching experience which serves to distance trainees from their psychology. All respondents considered that a longer training period than one year was needed. Consideration of the equivalence of different Chartered Psychologists leads to a realisation that radical change to professional training in educational psychology is needed, if there is not to emerge a two-tier model of professional psychologists. The three year doctorate in educational psychology which is proposed by the BPS and which is being developed by a small number of universities would meet these proposals. However, if this is offered alongside existing Master's courses in educational psychology, there is a risk of a two-tier educational psychology profession. These are conclusions at the national or 'macro' level.

However, at the more local or 'micro' level, it seems that trainees are able to make use of sessions which focus on the place of psychological theory, and furthermore that they welcome these. This suggests that use could be made of such sessions even during a one year Master's course, and that trainees would benefit from and appreciate these opportunities, and that this might provide an important means for them to resurrect their psychology and to develop their identity as applied psychologists.

Implications for services of their claim to be applied psychologists.

If the profession is to justify the claims made by its professional associations in their literature, and by many services in their mission statements and service descriptions, there may be a need for them to distance themselves from the dominance of their present statutory role. At the present time, this provides a dilemma. Educational psychologists are employed by LEAs in order to assist the LEAs in carrying out their statutory duties in relation to the allocation of additional resources for pupils with SEN. It is questionable whether a psychologist is required for this task, or whether the work involved is truly psychological in nature. As Norwich has suggested this 'calls into question the value of what psychologists do, where they work in the education system, their career security and whether they even call themselves psychologists' (Norwich 1995, p. 34)

Several interviews made mention of 'two types of EP work', meaning the statutory work and 'other' work, the latter often referred to as 'psychological' work. Indeed one trainee reported her placement experience where the LEA educational psychologists were used by schools to carry out the statutory work, while they employed independent educational (and other) psychologists to carry out the tasks suggested by, among others, Gale (1991, 1996). These tasks would require psychologists to use their expertise in 'training, instruction, counselling, non-directive therapy and social skills' with a 'key aim to create the conditions under which teaching and learning are pleasurable, positive, and free of negative emotion and disappointment' (Gale 1991, p.72), and 'the amelioration of the educational system as a whole rather than to intervene on a fire-fighting basis when an individual child appears to be in difficulty' (Gale 1994, p.370). There is no lack of work for psychologists within the education system.

Educational psychologists have been disparagingly referred to as 'super-teachers' or 'bureaucrats'. Neither role is desired by the cohort of trainees. It is possible that the demands of the LEA (the 'system') for personnel to implement procedures for determining 'resourceworthiness' may not most appropriately be met by people trained as educational psychologists, and that this task might be more comfortably carried out by 'super-teachers' or 'bureaucrats', i.e. people trained in curriculum and resource planning. This would leave educational psychologists free to develop and carry out roles which required the discipline, knowledge and skills of psychology, and 'to move beyond the role of resource definers and begin to become a resource themselves' (Dessent 1992). It could also enhance the professional independence and autonomy of educational psychologists who at present effectively function as 'semi-professionals', required to carry out tasks determined by their employers.

However, this would mean giving up the statutory role which guarantees their employment, and protects their unquestioned professional status, and casting themselves out to a wider and more uncertain market, where the profession would be required to define its

unique psychological contribution and to find institutions and agencies willing to pay for these services. There is good reason to be optimistic that these would be found and several commentators have expressed such optimism (e.g. Farrell 1989, Gale 1991). Nevertheless the profession is caught in the dilemma caused by its own (to many, questionable) 'success' in claiming and embracing a statutory role in the LEA by which it is increasingly deprived of a psychological function.

Relationship with other psychologists

The thesis also reflects the wider issue of the nature of psychology and its application. As a discipline, psychology has been criticised for its traditionally positivist nature and its desperate need to emulate the natural sciences. The literature review shows that this is changing. Others have identified problems in its application. The majority of training and practice in educational psychology has not been concerned with considerations of the nature of psychology and its application, and has existed to a considerable extent alongside yet outside mainstream psychology, and its epistemological and methodological debates. This has left it impoverished and vulnerable.

Most training courses take as their primary task the preparation of trainees to work in Psychological Services. Yet some of the interviews carried out for this study indicate both an awareness of the need for a 'different' psychology, and a keen desire to develop educational psychology as an applied psychology, alongside clinical, occupational and counselling psychology.

It would appear that there is a need for educational psychology to reconnect with its conceptual and theoretical base in psychology, and to develop its application from this base. The study reveals a lack of contact between academic and practitioner educational psychologists, and a discontinuity where there might more constructively be a continuum of activity extending from research activity to practice and service activity. Gale (1996) puts forward a proposal for centres based in universities where academic and practitioner psychologists will offer a range of psychological services, where education and training

will be linked to practice and research, and where basic and applied psychologists work alongside each other. A conclusion to be drawn from the present study is the potential benefit to be gained from academic and practitioner educational psychologists having more contact and exchange, working along a continuum of research and practice on which both groups influence and inform the other. A further conclusion which might be drawn is the potential benefit to be gained from contact with other applied psychologists such as clinical and occupational psychologists.

The challenge for educational psychology

'Will educational psychology fail because it is accused of sustaining a pernicious status quo?' (Gale 1991) A recent editorial in a widely read magazine (Special Children February 1996), asked 'what is 'psychological advice and how is it really so vital to the assessment process?....It would be very helpful to know what precisely the science of psychology has to offer the process of assessment....what does educational psychology have to sell? who will buy?'

The challenge for educational psychology is to re-establish itself as a profession within applied psychology, and to demonstrate what psychology has to offer to the service of education. In order to do this, there is a need for a longer period of training and a different approach which emphasises the conceptual, theoretical and methodological base of psychology, and which equips trainees with the ability to link theory with practice, and to carry out professional work of high quality and based on sound psychological concepts and principles capable of evaluation and research.

The study suggests that those trainee educational psychologists with psychology first degrees lose contact with their psychology through their teaching period, while those whose first qualification is in education have a strong primary professional identity as teachers. The study has implications for the undergraduate degree and for what is regarded by the British Psychological Society as the 'core' or base of psychology necessary for professional training. It suggests that trainees would benefit from an appreciate sessions early on in their

course where they are explicitly invited to reconnect with their psychology and to think about the relationship for them between theoretical and applied psychology. The study highlights a tension within the profession between the disciplines and professional bases of education and psychology, where education and teaching have clear hegemony and primacy.

The challenge for the profession is to establish a psychological role and contribution to schools, and the wider context for children and families. This may be achieved at various levels: at the level of policy by contributing to decisions concerning the resourcing of pupils with special educational needs, at the level of schools by demonstrating the effectiveness and value of psychological interventions, or at the level of individual children and families with highly complex needs by using psychological principles to inform constructive case-work. The profession would benefit from a vision and lead from the professional associations, and support in redefining a psychological role within education.

What are the alternatives?

1996 sees the combination of several factors within educational psychology which call for concerted efforts to develop the profession and its training:

- * 3 year doctoral training in educational psychology
(but threatened by the development of CPD doctorates)
- * NCVQ applied psychology project
(but threatened by territorial divisions within the BPS)
- * changes in the funding of educational psychology training
- * shortages of qualified educational psychologists
- * moves towards statutory registration within the BPS
(but threatened by existing compromise over the definition of Chartered Educational Psychologist status)

Educational psychology training

There would appear to be two alternatives, first to continue with the status quo, and second to move to three doctoral training for

educational psychologists. Assuming that training for this profession is to remain in universities, it would seem that there is little alternative to the move to three year doctoral training. This would enable equivalence with other Chartered Psychologists and psychologists qualified in other European countries, it would allow for time to develop psychological theories and a more robust psychological base for professional practice, and it would strengthen the research aspect of the training thus developing the scientist practitioner model.

Educational psychology practice

It is possible to speculate on a number of alternatives. Again, one alternative is to maintain the status quo, which appears to offer little opportunity for trainee educational psychologists to observe or develop psychological theory in practice. This is partly because of the nature of EP practice available to them as trainees and newly qualified educational psychologists, and partly because of the nature (and length) of the postgraduate training. A change in the pattern of training is likely to have an effect on the practice in the field. All tutors and trainees considered that the length of the Master's training is too short. Extending the postgraduate training period would enable more substantial and sustained study of applied psychology and specific psychological theories and interventions, and would enable courses to require more substantial and rigorous psychological work from the trainees on their placements. Moves towards a doctoral profession, both at initial training and through "CPD doctorates" such as those being developed in a number of universities are likely to influence the nature of the work carried out by EPs and their orientation towards it.

It would be possible for educational psychologists to become more clinical in their work, or to take on a more of a role of consultant to the education service. It would also be possible for educational psychologists to develop their role within special education, and become more involved in the bureaucratic and administrative aspects of the resourcing process. There could be a danger of developing a two-tier profession (such as that mentioned by one trainee on

placement, finding that schools used the LEA educational psychologist for statutory work and for acquiring additional resources, while they paid 'consultant' i.e. independent psychologists to carry out the more 'psychological' work, described by the trainee as 'the interesting work'). This provides a dilemma for the profession in its relationship with the local authority.

The thesis

The thesis provides a synthesis of the literature concerning educational psychology and highlights some of the difficulties in the application of psychology to education, in particular in the education service. Educational psychology is widely considered to be an applied psychology (e.g. Wolfendale et al 1992, Gale 1984, BP 1994b, 1995a, 1995b, Coolican 1996) yet difficulties have been pointed out (e.g. Gillham 1978, Leyden & Miller 1996); some of these difficulties for practitioner EPs have been attributed to their role within the education system, in particular the special education system (Gale 1991, Faupel & Norgate 1993, Dessent 1994, Gale 1996). The data of this study bear out issues from the literature. The majority of tutors and trainees considered that educational psychology is or should be an applied psychology, while many of the respondents considered that it is not in practice because of the role played by educational psychologists in the special education system, in particular in statutory assessment.

This fact bears out some of the issues raised in the literature on professionalism. In the literature of practitioner or 'professional' educational psychology, educational psychology is universally referred to as 'the profession' and educational psychologists as 'professionals'; nevertheless, some of the features which led to the term 'semi-professionals' (Etzioni 1979) also pertain to educational psychologists, as well as other public sector personnel particularly though not only among the so-called 'caring professionals'. It is clear that there is some mismatch in many Educational Psychology services between the perceived needs of the 'Education Service' and the espoused values and preferred way of working of the Educational Psychology Service, which leads, in some cases, to trainee educational psychologists

describing 'two types of work', and to distinctions being drawn in the literature between statutory work and 'other' EP work (e.g. Norwich 1983, 1995, Farrell 1989, Gale 1991).

The literature raises some of the problems in the relationship between psychology and education, in particular in the application of 'scientific' psychology to the complex field of education. This is in part attributed to psychology's continued preoccupation with a positivist paradigm, and in part considered to be due to the difficulties of applying 'theory' to 'practical problems' (e.g. Hastings and Schwieso 1981, Schönplflug 1993). Many of the respondents in this study considered that there is a discontinuity between 'academic' (e.g. first degree) psychology and 'professional' psychology, with the former making little contribution and seeming in the main irrelevant to the latter. It is clear that the idea of Graduate Basis for Registration, or the BPS Qualifying Examination as a national 'yardstick' for the psychology first degree, clearly documented and universally applied within this country to accredit university degree courses has limited significance in practice. Even trainee respondents who were able to recall aspects of their first degree were unable to articulate core elements; tutor respondents felt universally unable to assume any core foundation in psychology on which they might build in the postgraduate professional training.

The field of educational psychology has two discrete branches, the 'academic' and the 'practitioner', the latter having a service function. The literature demonstrates their separate existence (for example the two sets of publications and journals are almost mutually exclusive, with rare excursions into each other's publications). Data from the study bear out this separateness, although the majority of tutor respondents regret this and consider that the field would benefit from closer co-operation and contact between the two groups. If one sees a continuum of research and practice/service, it would appear to be more appropriate and constructive both for the continuum to be more explicit and for educational psychologists to perceive more flexibility of movement between different points of the continuum. In this way, research could enhance practice, and the values and context of practice could inform research.

Data from the study illuminate some of the 'theory practice' issues presented in the literature, both in education and in other professional groups (e.g. Volpe 1981, Rumgay 1988, Alexander 1990, Payne 1991). The relationship between theory and practice in professional training has been described as difficult by several different professions; this is borne out by the present study which also raises the question how far professional training institutions should be leading the field and developments in practice, and how far they should prepare trainees for practice as it is found in the field. Although some of the literature, and some of the tutors responding in this study portray trainees as mainly interested in practice issues, the trainee educational psychologists in this study were universally interested in more theoretical issues, and concerned that 'the field' might not permit their development.

The data from the study illuminate many of the issues and tensions which emerge from the literature, and provide pointers for further study in this very important area.

The contribution of the thesis

The thesis topic arose out of the researcher's own involvement and interest in this area over the past decade. The question of the relation between theory and practice in professional training, and in particular the nature and role of psychology in educational psychology training and, by implication, practice is an issue which has exercised this researcher considerably, particularly in relation to her own course of professional training at the Institute of Education, and also in relation to a number of other such courses visited as part of BPS accreditation visits over the past ten years. This has also related to work carried out by the researcher both within the BPS at a national level on aspects of professional psychology and its training, and within EFPPA at a European level on aspects of professional psychology and the relationship between science and practice. A list of the researcher's own publications within the broad area of professional training and practice forms appendix 7.

The thesis contributes both by its synthesis of literature and the conclusions drawn from this, and by the empirical study which both presents a picture of the situation for trainee educational psychologists at the time, and which illuminates issues which emerge from the literature. This is a new and original contribution. It attempts a preliminary exploration of the relationship between academic and practitioner educational psychologists, both in the literature and through the views of tutors to professional educational psychology courses, and suggests that this is an important relationship which should be strengthened to develop more of a continuum of educational psychology research and practice. It provides a further example of the use of focus groups within psychology and raises some issues resulting from the use of this methodology. Further work emerging from the study is planned. This includes a follow-up of some of the trainee educational psychologists interviewed in 1993, in particular those graduating from the Institute of Education, and some more systematic work with trainee educational psychologists both at the beginning and end of their course, and using individual as well as group interviews. The study has renewed an interest in the use of focus groups, and further work using this methodology is planned, relating this to issues from social psychology, and possibly having the benefit of one way mirror and video recording equipment.

Although the study presents a somewhat depressing picture of the place of psychological theory in educational psychologist training, it also shows that trainee educational psychologists are keen to develop a more theoretical and psychological approach to their practice, and that more formalised group sessions which focus on these issues might help trainees to reconnect with concepts and theories from psychology. Furthermore the study has demonstrated a strong commitment on the part of trainees and tutors to educational psychology as applied psychology, and therefore to the place of psychology within this profession. The present researcher moves forward from this study with a strong conviction both of the importance and the possibility of developing this stance.

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Appendices

- * Appendix 1 Tutor interview schedule
- * Appendix 2 Transcript of tutor interview and focus group session
- * Appendix 3 Analytic themes from interview data
- * Appendix 4 Core curriculum for educational psychology courses
- * Appendix 5 Criteria for evaluation of educational psychology courses
- * Appendix 6 Framework for pilot study focus group
- * Appendix 7 List of author's publications within the area

Appendix 1

Semi-structured Interview Schedule for Tutors

1. Do you consider professional educational psychology to be an applied psychology?
 - * if so, in what ways is psychology being applied?
 - * what does applying involve? (give e.g.s)
 - * what kind of psychology is being applied?
 - * if not applied psychology, what is it?
2. What do you consider to be the psychological theories which inform EP practice?
 - * for what tasks in practice are these theories used?
 - * how do EPs come to choose the theories which they use? how far are they eclectic?
3. How do trainees gain their theoretical knowledge?
 - * do you assume any particular knowledge gained as a result of a first degree in psychology?
 - * how do you view typical/modal content or outcomes of psychology first degrees?
 - * any particular theories or areas of theoretical knowledge?
 - * do you assume any theoretical carry-through of psychology during the period of teaching? any specific use for or development of their psychology?
 - * what use is made on the Masters course of any theoretical knowledge which the trainees are assumed to bring with them from their previous learning and experience?
 - * what kind of theory do you aim to teach on the final year i.e. the Masters degree?
4. How do you see the relationship between theory and practice in the one year Masters degree of professional training as an EP?
 - * tensions?
 - * factors inhibiting place of theory?
 - * factors validating the place of theory?
 - * what do you see as the theory relevant to EP practice and training?
5. Some courses state as an aim 'to integrate theory with practice'.
 - * what do you understand by 'integrate'?
 - * how do you think this integration is or might be achieved?
 - * role of input?
 - * role of practical placements?
 - * role of research?

6. Do you feel that an integration of theory with practice can be sustained in the job?

- * how?
- * if not, why not?
- * pressures for and against?
- * strategies for maintenance?

7. What do you understand by the term theory?

8. In this country there are two groups of psychologists who call themselves educational psychologists, those who work mainly in LEAs and those who often work in universities or IHEs.

Both apply psychology to the field of education.

What do you see to be their main differences? And why?

Do these two groups have a constructive interchange? Could they? If not, why not?

9. How do you define 'professional knowledge'?

- * how does this definition relate to discipline knowledge in a science like psychology?
- * how do trainees gain their professional knowledge?

10. Other comments in the area.

Appendix 2

Transcript of sample tutor interview and focus group session

Tutor Interview

Q1. Do you consider professional educational psychology to be an applied psychology?

Yes, it is an applied psychology. But I find myself needing to give 2 kinds of answers. First, the formal "scientific method" which is espoused by formal academic psychology and which lots of psychologists hang on to. It is clear that most people assume that educational psychology is applied psychology, and applying 'scientific psychology'. But I hold that to be less and less true and useful the more I go on. So if you ask me to give an account of what is going on in the field of educational psychology, then that is the pervasive model, traditional psychology; educational psychologists are applying traditional psychology, if anything, or at least that is what they claim.

My own view is more personal and more tentative, and continually evolving and changing. I'm progressively detaching myself from what I see as mainstream views. The first view, the scientific account, is what is officially going on in the field, but the second view is what I'm about. Although the "scientist practitioner" view is a generally held view and is the 'official' view, I'm not sure how realistic this is in practice, because actually one finds very little psychology at all in the field. Nevertheless I think it is a problem, that the 'official' psychology (the first kind) is a scientific psychology, whereas maybe the more useful psychology is a completely different psychology, of a more subjective and personal nature.

Q? My view would be the psychology of change, and of personal functioning, how to help people understand and make sense of what is out there, what is going on with people, in our context, in the education system.

Q2. What do you consider to be the psychological theories which inform EP practice?

There's a real mixture. Some kind of amalgam of behavioural psychology, loosely interpreted, with a dose of cognitive psychology, minority use of construct psychology, and at the other end, a pole of non-directive counselling, mainly Rogerian. A lot of the behavioural stuff, especially the curriculum based assessment, this is molecular stuff. There is also some cognitive behaviourism. I know of small pockets of psychodynamic practice. Another element would be those people who are influenced by systemic theories especially those derived from family systems theory.

But the whole field of differential psychology, psychometrics and mental testing, is still quite pervasive. Psychometrics, this is still at the centre of educational psychology, and part of what makes it so problematical and lifeless. It's almost a kind of enterprise and industry, the grading and sorting tradition of psychology; this is still a pervasive model in educational psychology. But it's interesting that this was the last one I thought of in this context; I suppose it's the one I try to avoid, and find least useful.

For me, my practice would be informed by: contextualisation and systemic theories. Simultaneous causation, a way of thinking and understanding would inform the background. It is important to see persons as your clients, not as subjects, objects, or experimental objects. It involves a whole value system. Psychological theory has unfortunately been seen as value-free, which has been damaging, of course it is totally value-laden, and we kid ourselves at our peril. I agree with those people like Rom Harré, but this is a minority view. The whole of any enterprise has political, moral and social antecedents and consequences of psychology important. Where and how psychology is being done and how it is being used is a very important issue. Whether or not the statistics add up is another point. We should start from that position that persons have a right or entitlement to respect, a non-manipulative view of people.

They are not objects or things to be manipulated, but they are agents in their own right. That sets a lot of parameters.

I'm looking for psychological structures which provide that person with as much detailed understanding into their life situation as possible which is as free of my "superior" knowledge as is possible. Once they have conducted that enquiry into their own psychological situation, then I try to work with them to find a way forward with themselves and support them to a point where they feel that progress has been made. This works for individuals and for organisations. I prefer Kelly's notion of 'a range of convenience' rather than eclecticism. It is sometimes a matter of scale, sometimes the microscopic doesn't necessarily blow up into the macroscopic. It's an illusion that has been cultivated in psychology the reductionist hypothesis, that you can reduce complex events into molecular items and then translate them back again. This is also why you can't simply translate academic psychology bits into applied psychology and expect it to work, even though I think that this is the enterprise that most people engage in.

Q? Most people, if they think at all, that is EPs, just think you can import the academic psychology, and apply it in schools. Well it just doesn't work like that.

Q. How do EPs choose the theories that they use?

Through the interaction between the questions that are flung at you and the kind of givens that you have in your working environment. For example, if I were a highly trained Jungian analyst thrown into an EPS I wouldn't know where to begin or how to survive for 5 minutes. It doesn't matter what you start with, you can or can't do it, you've got to survive.

The working conditions are such and such, so you tend to select those methods and theories that seem to have quick, active solutions; this is why people are drawn to behaviourism, for example, because it offers the promise of an active, expert sort of intervention where you can go along and sort someone out fairly quickly, nip back and check up. I'm not saying it's as atheoretical as that. But I can remember reading endless

jaw-breaking books on the application of behavioural theory to....I don't think that's an accident at all. That kind of psychology fits the perceived needs of the punters, i.e. it seems commonsensical to teachers and so on, it's choppable up into chunks and working practices for EPs, it's a nice kind of fit. It also gives a kind of scientific credibility almost, it has pretensions to 'objectivism' and objective observations, and expertise. At a political level, you've got something else to offer, an objective view, getting objectives properly written and so on. But now that teachers have captured that technology, and it isn't that hard, we find ourselves with a backlash of having to devise a curriculum based on bits and pieces. That is the result of EPs desperate to 'give psychology away', now the teachers have got it, and the EPs are left with the results. It's still a majority view that you can work like that.

And differential psychology is almost completely atheoretical, EPs use it without thinking and just go in for grading and sorting through the use of tests. This is an almost atheoretical enterprise, but unfortunately very prevalent practice. Why is this? Because of political questions, EPs are asked to grade and sort people, to be gatekeepers and to allocate scarce resources. That's always been the main *raison d'être* for us, probably par excellence an example how a social and political situation meets a willing partner, such as the AEP. So, in a way, although they complain, they have themselves to blame, especially the AEP, lying down and embracing this kind of activity.

Q3. How do trainees gain their theoretical knowledge?

Do trainees bring any knowledge with them? This is fundamental. They bring all sorts of things that are potentially useful. Past knowledge can be a difficulty as well as an advantage. It's not unproblematic.

Q. Is psychology essential? I am constantly amazed how little they bring forward from their psychology. However, if you say would a geography graduate be just as good, then I say no, I would be startled by the difference.

Q. Well, it's more an approach, some knowledge but this is hard to define, it's a way of understanding and approaching the subject. Difficult to define, but I think I would find it difficult to say a geography graduate would be just as good. Maybe it's something to do with analytical skills, or a way of understanding.

Q. Can you assume any particular knowledge from the first degree?
I've learned not to take for granted any psychological knowledge, which confirms the huge variation of psychology degrees in this country, so I don't know what GBR is. However, I wouldn't really want the trainees to have identical backgrounds.

Q. What about some base of theoretical psychology on which you could build in the training year?

It would be a nice idea. I could put together an undergraduate course, but for those who are choosing to do applied psychology, so I'd drop a lot of the biological stuff and put in more social psychology and sociology and social anthropology. But this would not meet the needs of those who are biologists. So how do you create a psychology degree which could meet the needs of those who want to become applied psychologists and those who want to go on to do research? I know what I would like them to bring onto this course.

Q. Do you expect any carry through of psychology from the undergraduate degree through their period of teaching?

I feel comfortable with people who are more mature, because they need time for their psychology to have stopped being a subject which is outside of them and that they do and pass exams in and for it to become part of them. I want them to have begun to think about themselves systematically, from the point of view of psychology, they've integrated it into their thinking. The ideal state is someone who feels personally connected with the sort of things that they are doing when they come on the course. I take this very value laden position. You can't work with people in a values way unless they do this. It doesn't matter what they know in terms of theoretical constructs, if they don't see it has any relevance to themselves as people, and they don't apply it respectfully to

other people. I'm about giving people as committed an approach as possible. The people I feel I've failed with are people who feel they know the answers or the tricks, but they have no personal connection to it at the end of the course. The most value is not on the knowledge per se, but on the context. I don't agree with the way some people 'do psychology' as a detached, irrelevant, so-called objective positivist enterprise; I think a lot of academic psychology is nonsense and it dodges many of the important issues by hiding behind a front of objectivity and 'science'. It's a power game.

9. people use their time very differently. No, they don't usually use their psychology in their teaching as such, but our trainees have often done some other courses or training during this time, and these are aspects which we find we can build on. But I have to confess that this is very unsystematic, we can't guarantee that trainees bring anything specific or defined as far as psychology is concerned with them.

Q4. How do you see the relationship between theory and practice in the one year Master's degree of professional training as an EP?

In training, I try to use those aspects of psychology which stress the socially constructed nature of knowledge, which stress the personal efficacy of people, which stress change being brought about by agents in their own right and by organisations whose members seek to liberate themselves from unconscious or even conscious oppression or exploitation. Things like construct psychology, client-centred theories of change, humanist psychology, notions of self and self-construction. Then I run out of formal schools, they are not totally satisfactory. Also Freudian concepts of defence as part of understanding humans. Jungian notions of maturity. But I wouldn't buy into whole theories. I know the comfort that people seem to derive from being members of a school, but there are always examples which can't be explained by the theory. I find myself using groups of theories which are extremely useful. To explain certain phenomena and understand people. I'm an eclectic who takes different models from different places as appropriate.

Q. Relationship between theory and practice?

I'm more interested in the values which the people are applying and their openness to look at phenomena without being bullied along by a particular point of view, their ability to tolerate feelings of ignorance and incompetence in the face of complex phenomena without actually jumping to some simple solution. That's quite enough for most people to tackle in a one year course.

Q. How might this be achieved?

By denying them easy options. I'm very aware that we could adopt a thorough-going behaviourist point of view, we could so circumscribe their practice that they'd come out with the spurious notion that they could do something which these tools suited. We could offer them simple solutions, as though the problems were simple. We could offer them answers, and let them think that every problem has a simple solution. But we don't do that. We want them to realise the complexity, the different contexts, the value-laden nature of the work.

Q. What do you mean by theory?

It's not really a word I use. I talk about structures. At the beginning I set out a problem-solving, consultative model for the trainees which is derived from a theory of human problem-solving. I suppose I've tried to track this back into something which they can make sense of and use on the ground. I've embedded this into a consultative framework. So you can use this with someone who feels themselves stuck i.e. they have a problem. The trainees can then use this framework for helping people with problems. The notion of insecurity is important, the way people learn, the way people perform well or creatively, the case for trying to tolerate uncertainty or doubt, because it has been found to be the conditions under which humans can move forward. If you can produce those feelings of security, yet comfort with uneasy situations, then things will emerge and move forward. This is how I do it with trainees. I provide what may seem to be an incredibly concrete stepwise model which you can give references to whoever you are working with. You can use this routine and you can say at this point it draws on this theory or that theory. I want to provide something based on values which people can

use in the short-term and they can build on throughout their career. A collaborative, problem-solving, consultative routine to inform practice.

This makes enough sense for people to feel they've got a start, but what it doesn't do is to provide easy answers; they get increasingly bothered because it doesn't provide the answers that people feel they need to have. The trainees will find that teachers don't want consulting, they want kids removing, they want money. Then you get back into the social-political questions about why we are here, what's our role, the social-political realities of our practice. This is my model of applied education. You lay out a wide stall, something which is robust, useful, has wide application, such as the model I've just described. Why doesn't it work? Bring in the social-political history of the field. How has it come to be like this? How on earth do you persuade someone to do this rather than jumping to an easy solution.

In parallel I run a course on the human interactional side, how do you negotiate an agreement to proceed. That's another whole layer: you, in relation to the tools that you have at your disposal, in relation to another person. How do you put the three things together? I draw a lot from the counselling literature, e.g. literature on why self-disclosure is an aid to others being helped. It's more important for them to find something in themselves that enables them to do this rather than knowing about the research papers that go to support it. I'd prefer them to feel comfortable with themselves. There's the broad ranging strategy, then the layer of personal exploration and interaction, then a professional layer of how we come to do any of this anyway, then the personal dimension of practice, the real person and the sense that you make of that.

Q Factors which validate or inhibit the place of theory or however you would call the structures or frameworks?

The field is a pretty inhibiting factor. They get socialised into something which you could call untheoretical if you use that language. It's difficult to sustain any reflection or this kind of structuring with what they experience on placement. Then there are the demands and expectations of the 'system' and teachers; this means that immediate solutions are

expected, and EPs need some positives, so it is easier to go along with the expectations. EPs in the field are a pretty unthinking lot, they are not usually interested in theory or theories, they just want to get on with the job.

Q. 5. Do you feel that the trainees can integrate the different elements of theory and practice?

My observations are that some parts of the course makes more sense in different years and different trainees make different connections and links. This year it will probably be the inner city project in Bristol; this embodied a lot of the principles which we try to develop, that is where they see the integration. My model is that as long as one thing works for each trainee on the course, then I'm satisfied. I suppose we use the projects to try to help them to see the links, and to help them to integrate the different bits. But this is a pretty difficult task, when all the pressures on placement are against such integration and against a theoretical perspective.

Q. 6. Do you feel that an integration of theory with practice can be sustained in the job?

Job pressures push you in an atheoretical manner. But you can develop other theories to understand these pressures, how organisations and political systems do this to people. Theories of organisations and organisational behaviour. Some astute individuals and Principal Educational Psychologists use those insights in order to plan and understand and make sense of their arrangements. But a lot of people go on blindly all the time. I don't know if it's better to understand that one is being oppressed. I suppose in the end the easy way is just to get on with it, and not to ask questions, and not to seek to understand why, at least that is what most EPs do. They prefer to get on with the job, without asking questions of thinking about it, and that makes it very difficult for trainees and very difficult for anyone who tries to reflect on the job in a halfway theoretical manner.

Q 7. What do you understand by the term theory?

What is theory? What is theory-driven practice? Sometimes I feel I don't understand the question. It's because I can't find an all-embracing framework to understand life, let alone psychology.

I'm not sure I understand what was meant by the statement 'there's nothing so practical as a good theory'. It's all socially and politically motivated. That is a difficult question since, as I said, I prefer not to use the term, and even when I do I am not sure I know what I mean by it. Of course at one level we all know what we mean by theory in the sense of 'psychological theory', for example Piaget's theory or Rogers' theory, but in another sense it is difficult to find frameworks which help you to make sense of it. I think I try not to use the term at least with the trainees.

Q 8. In this country there are two groups of psychologists who call themselves educational psychologists, those who work mainly in LEAs and those who often work in universities or IHEs. What do you see to be their main differences and do they have a constructive interchange?

There is a bit of me which is sad at the lack of two-way traffic between them. This is part of the problematic nature of 'applied' psychology and 'pure psychology', there are faults on both sides and we've never sorted this out. We haven't sorted out how to communicate, we haven't been good at co-operating and communicating. We've not been helped by those who do educational psychology in the academic sense. I have a feeling of sadness, due to the difficulties in both camps, and feel that it is strange that they are separate camps. Probably the enterprise is flawed, this separation; in another world there wouldn't be this separation, this is the flaw. But in the present world the EPs in the field are too atheoretical, while those in universities are maybe too theoretical or maybe they inhabit a different world with different values and preoccupations. A difficult one. They have grown too far apart if they ever had any common origins, and psychology has not helped them.

How much do you consider that applied psychologists have in common?

There are more similarities than differences. Not only because of applying psychology, but because we all do recognisably similar things. However, I learn a lot because of the context that we work in. What is politically and socially acceptable. The common knowledge of psychology seems bigger than the context, but in the field of practice there are enough special features to make a specialism justifiable. So the education context justifies the specialism of educational psychology, and so on.

So we could have a generic training, all applied psychologists, which would involve common psychological skills, then later the specialisation itself. We have a compromise to adapt ourselves to fit the world the way it is. We all have our little bag of tricks to meet the specific nature of the situation we face. Contextualisation is very important. But applied psychologists have so much in common, especially the professional psychologists who have a direct relationship with clients or with caretakers.

Q? The two groups of educational psychologists? Well, they should have everything in common but for the context in which they work, yet in practice they seem to speak a different language, and have very different values.

9. How do you define 'professional knowledge'?

Professional knowledge? This seems to be the knowledge required to carry out the profession, but what is this for educational psychologists? This is where I find it difficult, since this seems all LEA driven, all about legislation and LEA practice, how to avoid litigation, rather than about professional psychology, what constitutes a professional psychologist. When they talk about 'the profession' I think they mean all this LEA stuff, the AEP business, and some rather restrictive practices. The 1981 Act stuff, and all the administration EPs need to do now seems to form a

lot of what people mean by professional knowledge. What I mean are the sort of values issues. But these are side-lined.

Q. how does this definition relate to discipline knowledge in a science like psychology?

Again, I'm a bit at a loss, since it doesn't seem to relate.

Other comments?

In the one year course you are continually forced to compromise, you have to do what you believe in and what you feel will help trainees to make sense of their situation. Not only the breadth/depth issue, but the issue of what kind of psychology, and what kind of role. I feel that the year is a very important year, and it can make a huge difference if you get it right. We want trainees to change and to be able to make a contribution, not necessarily to prepare them for the job which is out there. There is plenty of time for them to get socialised into that, but the training year is too important. For some it works and they can fly high and have the year of their life, while for others it makes less impact. We have to make sure that we select those for whom it will work, and then we can really have a good year, and do some good psychology. I think I've said about enough now, don't you.

Focus Group Session

*** what kind of theories did you bring with you on entry to this year and the course, i.e. when you started in September?**

a) I was not sure how my psychology degree would be applied. I was slightly apprehensive. I'd been on a counselling course, possibly my humanistic psychology from that would be useful. Now we've been out on placement, you find that certain things spring to mind, it's a matter of bringing together quite a few areas of psychology for that particular situation, although I haven't got enough detail, I know that I can go and find out, my memory often lets me down when I want to apply psychology.

b) I did my degree 20 years ago. When I came, I felt rusty and incompetent as far as psychology was concerned. I feel that all that I've learned this year I could have learned without my psychology degree. It's been a very catalytic year and I have turned around and changed my way of thinking. But I can't relate it back to my degree. It's been almost like a fresh start. The times it's been most difficult are when expectations of previous psychology were high. As far as I'm concerned I could have had another degree. I've done a counselling course, also a course in specific learning difficulties, so I've done some psychology since.

c) My degree was more recent, in 1986. I didn't feel my first degree contributed very much, it was a classical, logical-positivist, experimentally based, very straightforward exposition. What comes from the first degree may be learning to observe a lot, to reflect and to hypothesise. Not quite the same as action research, where you are not totally concerned with validating the hypothesis so much as producing constructive change. The degree I did had no relevance to any applied field, in fact it didn't seem very useful at all. After my degree when I did voluntary social work we had some training from a clinical psychologist which made me realise that there was a bit more to psychology than I'd previously thought. In my teacher training I found PCP, Kelly, interesting, but it didn't seem to link very well to my practice as a teacher. That lay dormant for a bit. This year has woken up that interest in PCP. Teacher training also introduced me to the psychological theories of literacy. While I was a teacher, I resurrected some Vygotskian ideas, both ZPD and the social constructionist view. At the same time as teaching I was reading psychoanalytic approaches in literature e.g. Valerie Walkerdine, Foucault and Lacan, a parallel interest of mine. Towards the end of this course the links are falling into place, e.g. Walkerdine's work and links with systems work and family therapy. Theories like Rogerian, counselling were very new to me. These are very relevant to talking to adults and children in schools, particularly good to help me to think about myself and the effect I have on others.

d) My degree was 10 years ago, social psychology and cognitive.

That was my psychology. This year I've begun to realise that my perspective is very social and cognitive. The areas I've found the hardest have been the psychodynamic psychology, because I've never thought about it. Also postgraduate research seminar on ethnography. When I arrived I wondered how much of a psychologist I was, but now I realise how much I've used it in my teaching (I did the Leicester teacher training with the educational psychology route). During my teaching, although I've barely given psychology another thought, I have used it, for example my self-esteem and SEN work has been informed by psychology. I feel more confident at the end of the year that I am a psychologist and that doesn't necessarily mean being able to quote people or to dredge up evidence, but the kind of psychology is the kind of everyday useful psychology.

*** Do you think that educational psychology is an applied psychology? Are educational psychologists applied psychologists? Psychologists?**

a) Some of them are, some aren't. Also some of teachers and social workers are also applied psychologists. I don't think EPs are necessarily psychologists any more than some others, and many of them aren't psychologists at all.

b) I was alarmed to see in the job advert 'to apply the findings of psychological science', that is exactly why I was alarmed when I came on the course. But it's not like that for me. I still have a difficulty with the title EP or psychologist. I can't put myself into that role or slot. I would prefer to be called "consultant" or something.

c) Quite a lot is defensiveness: a psychologist is very different from others. But there is overlap and degree. When financial and political pressures are intense so there is a vested interest in making oneself out as something completely different, It's quite a lot about protecting jobs.

a) It's a lot to do with confidence. The expectations of a psychologist: will I be able to fulfil those expectations?

I actively want to change people's expectations of psychologist; I feel that I have something to offer about processes of change in schools. That kind of thing is not seen as what EPs do. It's a shame that we are in the

position that we are not able to fulfil the role that people want through the constraints let alone anything else they might do.

d) Who gave EPs that role? The profession is keeping that role. It seems to be a profession without a voice. How did they allow this to happen and have not said this is what we can do? The voice that there is seems to be more about survival of posts within the LEA rather than about what psychology can offer. The AEP line (keeping centralised funding etc.) is limiting the role, it helps ensure the survival of the profession, but to do what? To do something that is maybe not helpful to children. Is it a job at any price? What is effective or relevant about what many psychologists do nowadays?

a) The group of parents did not seem to think of EPs as a group, but they thought of individual psychologists. That's part of the problem, they all operate as individuals, not together as a group. How can we change, when the profession does not work together? Each psychologist just thinks about their own patch, their own small activity, and they don't work together, they don't think altruistically.

b) I'm not sure I'm happy with psychologists being the right people to assess individual children with SEN or how far this should be a priority in education as a whole. But they should assess the whole environment. In some sense it always puts it back to what needs to be done, rather than what is the nature of the educational task in the first place. I'm interested in the political aspects of the job, i.e. as an educational politician or something. I'll see how possible it is within the framework of an LEA job to achieve what I want to achieve. EP seems a possible useful route.

c) I suppose I'm quite optimistic, it seems it may be possible to set up the kind of job that you want. It seems a bit of a shame that central funding has been retained because it takes away the need for EPs to demonstrate the usefulness of psychology. The difficulty is how to find the time to do the more useful kind of work, and to be convincing of the benefits of other work, to convince the school to buy more time for other services. Psychologists should have a lot of things to offer about processes and organisational issues in schools, how communication operates, how meetings work etc.

d) You need to make sure that your voice is heard as a constructive voice. Some psychologists are able to do this, they have the dialogue with the schools which enables them to do the kind of work they want to do. They have a relationship which makes schools trust them, and where they have demonstrated that they have a range of psychological skills which are useful to schools; but I think this is the exception rather than the rule

a) There seems to be the statutory work and the 'other' work. We are constrained by the statutory work that we have to do. But the other things we want to do should not have to be put on the back burner until we have time to do it. We have to be in there letting them know we can do it, you don't need to buy in from elsewhere. We need to change the views that schools have of you. Problem with finding the time to change people's perceptions about what we can do. Also how?

c) But this is not entirely a problem in psychology; for example there is Tizard's stuff on the failure of researchers to impart findings and make a difference. Maybe we are a bit naive to think the failure is on our part to convince people that we can do things, it's part of a wider political system. Most people think that mainstream school is a good thing, but this doesn't seem to make a difference, we are still asked to sort out children and identify them for special provision. We think that child advocacy is a worthy role and integration, but if the community does not want those kind of kids, we can't do anything.

b) the trouble is that the mainstream system marginalises EPs, and they have always worked at the margins, usually sorting out children and testing them for suitability for this and that. This does not require them to use psychological skills.

a) are EPs psychologists? yes or no, one would have to say no. Why is this? the fault of them or the fault of the system? Both.

b) they could be psychologists and can be, but most of them choose the easy life and choose not to be, because it demands effort and creativity, and most just want the easy life and to earn a good salary and pay the mortgage.

*** what kind of theories do you think educational psychologists are applying? (for what tasks?)**

b) we don't see psychologists applying much psychology. They are too bogged down with statutory work. The 1981 Act has forced EPs to be administrators rather than clinicians or psychologists. They carry out routines in order to meet the statutory requirements, this doesn't permit creativity or reflection.

a) yes, the system prevents them using psychological theories.

d) on our placements we were pretty much warned against using psychological theories and told to get on with the work. Well, what is the work? It's the statutory work of course.

c) there is really not much psychology in EPs work, not that we have seen, but you could be lucky and find an LEA where there was some more interest in creative work I suppose, otherwise it seems pretty grim, and a strange way of using, or rather not using psychology.

a) I don't really think that educational psychologists are applying psychology or psychological theories; they have got themselves into a situation, a rut, where there is no room for psychology, and all they are used for is in relation to special education and the 1981 Act.

*** what kind of theories have you been introduced to on the course? which theories this year have you found particularly useful to you in your professional development and practice as an EP?**

b) Systems work has been very important for us. It's helped us in putting things in place.

a) It points to a whole body of work to do with management. I've found I've suffered from overload at the time, but it does seem to slot into place later, both with the case work and the dissertation. Making the connections, at the time it all seemed so isolated, but now things are falling into place. I feel sad that I won't have time to carry on thinking and making the links.

c) I feel that I chose on my first degree course to look at more individual work, like developmental psychology. What I've got most this year is the idea of working with a child within a multiplicity of systems, and other bits of social psychology.

b) we've been introduced to a completely different type of psychology, a psychology which has more meaning and which involves change, both within us and in the systems that we work with.

d) yes, a lot of new ideas, but somehow they have made sense, like some systems ideas especially, also family ideas, and some ideas from interpersonal psychology. But it's been more a new way of looking or of using psychology rather than a lot of new theories.

Q. How do you gain this knowledge or new way?

a) For example, we use casework examples from our own placements. This is useful, casework going together with theory to help understand the relevance and usefulness, also personal reflection, looking at ourselves and our own experiences and how theories fit these. Especially active listening and family therapy theories. Relating the theory to our own experience.

c) For me, through my research, it's helped me to make links between different aspects of the course. I feel I've got a store of knowledge through handouts and then I can look at them later.

b) One of the things the course has helped me do is to make links. I don't think there will be much time for reading or reflection on the job so we have to make the most of it while we are here.

a) The first part of the course was about reflection and problem-solving and our own learning and experiential learning. The whole course has been about this, understanding our own learning. I find I am working like that in my own life, all aspects of my life.

d) It's a very short course, so we've probably not had some of the in-depth input. This course looks at processes and reflecting rather than content.

b) I'm more able to problem-solve and to reflect and to make links, but I've got a filing cabinet full of handouts and knowledge.

c) the course has helped us to see that it is possible to work as a psychologist and to make a difference and to help people change, including ourselves.

*** how does theory link with practice in the training year?**

b) This was highlighted on placement to have a direct link between the field supervisor and what's covered on the course, since supervisor was an ex-trainee of Exeter.

a) I've found it easy to apply what I've learned, no problem in integrating the two. d) We don't give ourselves credit for the psychology that we are using. The course has given me the confidence to look at a situation and to be able to deal with it.

c) There's some back-up in theory. The fact that the course has concentrated on perspectives and process means it's effective, not what you going to do but the way you do it, You can go and find out the knowledge, but it's the way that you look at the situation that has made a difference.

b) Although there have been some good links made between theory and the practice, a lot of theoretical things are still not linked or connected, but I'll look forward to trying to understand and integrate a lot of the theory.

a) We've been forced into brilliant organisational skills to deal with all the material that's been thrown at us.

c) We've been struck when we've worked with qualified EPs at how bad they are at interpersonal skills and processes. They have a very different way of thinking. d) Some EPs were trained 20 years ago and haven't changed at all, they do the same things using the same techniques and not thinking about them or their work.

a) Many of them are not bothered about reading at all, but also keeping up with one's own development. They just do the same kind of work as they have always done and will always do, they are stuck in a rut, and the system does nothing to help or require them to get out of it.

b) I must say it worries me that we'll be working in an isolated situation and fall into habits and there will be no-one to help us get out of them, or even to point out that they are there.

c) the trouble with trying to link theory with practice in the 'real world' of EP work is that the system does not require it or even appreciate it. The system does not want thinkers, it wants doers or fixers, and so EPs get out of the habit of thinking or reflection, even of psychology. So it's alright to try to make the links in the training year, and I think we have

tried to do this, and been helped to do it, but then this can't last because the profession is all different and does not require or encourage it.

*** Are there any other issues in this broad area which you would like to bring up?**

a) Yes. It's good to have a session like this to pull it all together in and to think about the links. Even though it's been good this year and things have begun to fall into place, we haven't exactly talked about this and focused on it, and we need to talk about these things in order to see how we can develop next year.

c) next year could be very isolated, with no-one to discuss these kinds of things with, and us all scattered in different jobs in different parts, struggling to keep up, and not really seeing the wood for the trees in a way. How do you protect yourself against the system?

d) the year has been fantastic in all sorts of ways, mainly unexpected, and I would not have missed it for anything, but sometimes it's difficult to see how to take this with us into the job as we see it.

a) you can imagine some services might support more of a psychological perspective, but they are very few and I have not heard of any, though I have been looking out for them

b) sometimes it's hard not to get depressed or cynical; the year has been great and taught us so much, yet the profession seems not to value this kind of work. Where have they, or we, gone wrong, and can anyone do anything about it?

Appendix 3

Themes from interview transcripts

The following themes were derived from analysis of the transcripts of tutor interviews and focus groups. These themes constitute thematic clusters formed by clustering coded categories in the transcripts. No attempt has been made to translate these into quantitative data since this is not appropriate or possible within this study. The themes were used as a framework for summarising the data, and considering major themes across sites.

The themes have been numbered, and the courses have been given code letters in order to protect their anonymity. The table gives a very broad overview of themes in the study, though the qualitative approach to data collection and analysis means that in the text themes have been illuminated with verbatim quotations. The table is not able to convey the richness of the data which are presented qualitatively. The table provides a summary: although focus groups contained individual views, there was rarely disagreement on the broad thematic issue. Similarly, although tutors held individual views, there was a noticeable consensus within courses on the broad thematic issue.

Tutor interviews

1. Educational psychology as applied psychology
 - ◆ is applied psychology
 - * should be applied psychology
 - could be applied psychology
 - ▼ in theory applied psychology, in practice not
2. Psychological theories which inform EP practice
 - * mainly behavioural
 - eclectic
 - ▼ none, EP work mainly practical
3. Psychology from first degree (brought to Master's year)
 - ◆ some common framework/knowledge of psychology
 - * no common outcome of first degree (GBR)
 - little/no psychology carry-through through teaching
 - ▼ no particular psychology foundation for Master's year
4. Psychology (psychological theory) taught on the Master's course
 - * specific areas
 - not much theory
5. Relationship between theory and practice in the training year
 - * integrated
 - mainly split
6. Relationship between theory and practice on the job
 - * integrated
 - not much theory in the job
7. Nature of EPs' work
 - * mainly statutory work
 - mainly practical
8. Courses should lead or follow the field
 - * lead
 - follow
9. Relationship between academic and practitioner educational psychologists
 - * positive
 - lack of relationship
 - ▼ wish for relationship
10. Length of EP Master's training
 - * too short

Focus group interviews

1. Educational psychology as applied psychology
 - ◆ is applied psychology
 - * should be applied psychology
 - could be applied psychology
 - ▼ in theory applied psychology, in practice not
2. Psychological theories which inform EP practice
 - * mainly behavioural
 - eclectic
 - ▼ none, EP work mainly practical
3. Psychology from first degree
 - * range of theories
 - not much
 - ▼ not much relevant
4. Psychology carried through or used in teaching
 - ◆ range of theories
 - * little
 - none
 - ▼ psychology irrelevant
5. Psychology (psychological theory) taught on the Master's course
 - * specific theories
 - very little psychology
 - ▼ very little theoretical input
6. Relationship between theory and practice in the training year
 - * integrated
 - not integrated
 - ▼ not much theory on the course
7. Balance in theoretical and practical input
 - * good balance
 - course focus mainly practical
 - ▼ course focus mainly theoretical
8. Theoretical stance in the EP job
 - * pressures against this from LEA
 - pressures against this from the profession
 - ▼ encouragement for this
 - ◆ may be possible (with provisos)
9. Nature of EP work
 - * mainly statutory work
 - mainly practical

- ▼ atheoretical
- ◆ two different types of EP work

10. Trainees' view of the EP profession

- * critical
- disappointment/disillusionment
- ▼ positive

Tutor Interviews

Course	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Theme 1	◆*▼	◆	◆	●▼	*▼	(◆)	*▼	
Theme 2	●	●	*●	●	*	(*)	●	
Theme 3	(◆)	*●▼	*●▼	*●▼	*●	*●	*●▼	
Theme 4	●	*	*	*	*	●	*	
Theme 5	(*)	*	*	*	●	●	*	
Theme 6	●	●	●	(*)	●	●	●	
Theme 7	●	●	*●	●	●	●	*●	
Theme 8	-	-	-	*●	●	●	*	
Theme 9	●	●	●▼	●	-	●▼	●	
Theme 10	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

Focus group discussion

Course	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Theme 1	◆*	*	▼	▼	▼	*	●▼	◆
Theme 2	▼	▼	▼	*▼	▼	*	▼	●
Theme 3	*	*	●▼	●	*	●	●	*
Theme 4	*	●	▼	▼	●▼	●	●	*
Theme 5	▼	●▼	*	*	●	*	*	*
Theme 6	▼	●▼	*	●	●	*	●	*
Theme 7	●	●	*	*	●	*	*	*
Theme 8	*●	*●	*◆	*●	*●	*	*●	*◆
Theme 9	*●	*	●◆	*●	*◆	*	*●	◆
Theme 10	*	●	●	-	*	-	*	-



















Appendix 6

Group discussion used as pilot for present study

Themes for focus group

- * what are the psychological theories which you have found useful this year?**
- * in what kinds of work have you used these psychological theories?**
- * what kind of theories did you see underpinning work on placements?**
- * what kind of work?**
- * what do you see to be the role of psychological theories in educational psychology practice?**
- * how do you feel that theory and practice linked over the course of this year?**
- * are there any ways in which this link could have been more successful?**

Appendix 7

INGRID LUNT

PUBLICATIONS WITHIN THE BROAD AREA OF THE THESIS

(with brief explanatory annotation)

Brown Z. , Cline T., Harper T. , Lunt I. (1987) Recording the work of a Schools Psychological Service *Educational Psychology in Practice* 2,4,31-39.

This article constituted the report of a working party of the ILEA which devised a system for recording the nature of the work carried out by educational psychologists with a view to its evaluation.

Lunt I.C. (1987) *Psychology services for children, young people and their families*. British Psychological Society.

This was a small publication for BPS written when the author was Secretary of the DECP and describing the work of educational psychologists in this country.

Lunt I. (1988) Educational Psychologists in multicultural communities *Educational and Child Psychology* 5,2.

The report of a Working Party of the DECP and Tutors' Group which considered this topic, this paper looking at aspects of professional training courses.

Lunt I. (1988) Educational psychologists: career and training in *Career choices in psychology* British Psychological Society

A chapter in a BPS publication.

Cline T. & Lunt I. (1990) Meeting equal opportunities criteria: a review of progress in educational psychology training *Educational & Child Psychology* 7, 3, 59-66.

A follow-up of the Working Party of DECP and Tutors' Group considering educational psychologists in multi-cultural communities, and looking at training aspects in this area.

Lunt I. & Gray P. (1990) Theory and practice in professional training: implications for educational psychology *Educational & Child psychology* 7, 3, 23-30.

Gray P. & Lunt I. (1990) Two different worlds? The U.L.I.E. approach to integrated training in professional educational psychology *Educational & Child psychology* 7, 3, 31-36.

These two papers (above), based on a presentation by the two authors, course tutor and then associate tutor at the Institute of Education, at the Association of Educational Psychologists annual course, present some of the issues within the 'theory-practice' area, with which the course has continued to grapple, and which constitute a central focus of interest for the present researcher.

Lunt I. (Ed.) (1991) Educational psychology and Europe: after 1992? *Educational and Child Psychology* 8, 4.

This special issue of the DECP journal focusing on Europe and edited by the researcher raises many of the issues which have been of central interest to the researcher both in her work in BPS and in EFPPA. The journal issue came at a time when 'European issues' were achieving more prominence within the BPS and the researcher hoped to raise awareness and promote discussion.

Lunt I. (1991) Training and qualifications in educational psychology: beyond 1992? in I. Lunt (Ed.) Educational psychology and Europe: after 1992? *Educational and Child Psychology* 8, 4

This article raises some of the problems with educational psychology training in this country, including its totally idiosyncratic nature, its requirement for prior teacher training, and some of the difficulties with evaluating its equivalence to educational psychology training in other European countries.

Lunt I. & Lindsay G. (1992) Changing Trends in Professional Psychology. *News from EFPPA* 6, 1, 3-6.

Lunt I. & Lindsay G. (1992) Changing Trends in Professional Psychology. *Newsletter of Division of Educational and Child Psychology* 47, 32-36

These two articles (above), with minor differences for the different audiences, summarised some of the findings of a Working Party of the BPS Professional Affairs Board and chaired by the present researcher which considered the implications of changing trends on professional psychology practice and training.

Sayeed Z. & Lunt I. (1992) Induction and supervision for newly qualified educational psychologists *Educational Psychology in Practice* 8, 3, 156-165.

This article arose out of dissertation work carried out by the first author whilst on the Institute of Education professional training course, and relates to the second author's commitment to enhancing the quality of professional training, in this case through using the post qualification/pre-Chartered status year.

Lunt I. (1992) Recent judgements and their implications for educational psychologists. *DECP Newsletter* 52.

Denman R. & Lunt I. (1993) Getting your Act Together: some implications for EPs of cases of judicial review *Educational Psychology in Practice* 9, 1, 9-15

These two articles (above) describe the increase in litigation, and some aspects of the statutory role of educational psychologists.

Lunt I. (1993) The Practice of assessment in H.Daniels (Ed.) *Charting the agenda: educational activity after Vygotsky*. London: Routledge

A chapter which attempts to raise some theoretical and practical issues for educational psychologists in psychological assessment

Lindsay G. & Lunt I. (1993) The Challenge of Change. *The Psychologist* 6, 5, 210-213.

A piece which raises presents some of the issues from the PAB Working Party referred to in publications above (Lunt & Lindsay).

Lunt I. & Pomerantz M. (1993) (eds.) Supervision and Psychologists' Professional Work *Educational & Child Psychology* 10, 2.

Lunt I. (1993) Fieldwork supervision for educational psychologists in training in I.Lunt & M. Pomerantz (eds.) *Educational & Child Psychology* 10, 2.

Pomerantz M. & Lunt I. (1993) Investigating supervision practice: history and methodology of the enquiry *Educational & Child Psychology* 10, 2.

This was a special issue of the DECP journal (three references above) co-edited by the present researcher and constituting a final report of a Working Party which has attempted to raise awareness of the importance of supervision to psychologists' professional work.

Lunt I. & Lindsay G. (1993) Professional Psychologists in the United Kingdom: current issues, trends and developments. *The European Review of Applied Psychology* 43, 2, 91-100

An article for a special issue which presented issues and trends within professional psychology in several European countries. This article drew both on work of the PAB Working Party and on work carried out by the first author in relation to professional training in applied psychology.

Lunt I. (ed.)(1993) *Whither educational psychology? Challenges and changes for the future of the profession*. Leicester: BPS

This occasional publication of the DECP presents the papers from a symposium at the BPS Annual Conference convened by the researcher, which aimed to raise issues within the practice and training of educational psychology in this country.

Lunt I.(1993) Training applied psychologists in education: future trends and directions in I.Lunt (ed.) *Whither educational psychology? Challenges and Changes for the future of the profession*. Leicester: BPS.

A paper which raises some of the issues for training in educational psychology, including the issues of prior teacher training, equivalence with other European countries, commonality with other applied psychologists.

Lunt I. (1993) European unification creates tensions within the federation of psychologists. *Psychology International* 4, 1, 1

An invited piece written in the role as President of European Federation of Professional Psychologists' Associations (EFPPA)

Hymans M., Lunt I., Wolfendale S. (1994) Charting the final year to Chartered Status *DECP Newsletter* 59

A report of a project which aimed to raise the status of the year for EPs post-qualification year and pre-Chartered Educational Psychologist status

Lunt I. & Farrell P. (1994) Restructuring educational psychology training in the UK. *The Psychologist* 7, 6, 268-271

Farrell P. & Lunt I.C. (1994) Training psychologists for the twenty first century. *School Psychology International* 15, 3, 195-208.

Two papers (above) in which the authors raise some of the problems with the idiosyncratic system of training educational psychologists in this country, and raising the issues of doctoral training and increasing the applied psychology focus of the training.

Lunt I. (1994) Training and registration of professional psychologists Keynote address at First Congress of Psychology, Malta. *News from EFPPA* 8, 3,

A paper which raise some of the issues involved in evaluating equivalence of qualifications in different European countries, and presents some of the initiatives of EFPPA in attempting to develop optimal standards for European psychologists.

Lunt I. & Denman R. (1995) A more or less appealing Act *Educational Psychology in Practice* 10, 4, 238-246.

A further paper presenting an analysis of cases reported by EPSs which have gone to appeal, and considering the implications of these developments for educational psychologists

Lunt I. (1995) Special Educational Needs Tribunal Spotlight *DECP Newsletter* 65, 25-29

Farrell P. T. and Lunt I. (1995) The future of professional training in educational psychology *Educational Psychology in Practice* 11, 1, 3-9

A paper putting forward the need for doctoral level training for educational psychologists, and emphasising the need for EPs to be applied psychologists and to have the requisite training for this role

Lunt I. and Sayeed Z.(1995) Support for educational psychologists in their first year of professional practice: induction and supervision arrangements for newly qualified educational psychologists. *Educational and Child Psychology* 12, 2, 25-30

Further work with this ex-trainee from the course on the post-qualification, pre-Chartered status year for educational psychologists

Lunt I. (1995) Demographic trends in professional psychology in the UK In ed. A. Schorr and S. Saari *Professional Psychology in Europe: the state of the art*. Hogrefe and Huber

A description of some of the trends and developments within professional psychology in the UK written for a book comparing these in different European countries.

Lunt I. and Poortinga Y. (1996) Internationalising psychology: the case of Europe. *American Psychologist* 51, 5, 504-508

A paper describing some of the trends within European psychology, and putting these in a broader perspective

Lunt I. and Carroll H. C. M. (1996) Professional training in educational psychology. Paper presented to the MQB and PAB of the BPS.

This paper argues that there is a virtual crisis within the training of educational psychologists, both because of its limited psychology, and because of the problems in its lack of equivalence to other professional training in psychology both in this country and in other European countries. The paper urges the BPS to take a lead in defining the requirements for Chartered Educational Psychologist status.

Lunt I. (in press) Competent to practise in psychology? A consideration of competence and qualifications in psychology and some of the issues involved in evaluating competence of psychologists in European countries. *Proceedings of the Fourth European Congress of Psychology Contemporary psychology in Europe* edited by J. Georgas, E. Besevegis, A. Kokkevi, M. Manthouli. Hogrefe & Huber

A paper which examines notions of qualifications and competence and relates these to codes of ethics, and compares some of the developments within professional training in different European countries.

Relevant papers presented at conferences (unpublished)

Lunt I. & Norwich B. (1991) Promoting psychology in initial teacher training: implications for initial teacher training in the area of special educational needs. Invited paper presented at conference on the role of psychology in initial teacher education, Blackpool, January 1991.

Lunt I & Farrell P. (1991) Educational psychologists, their organisation, work and training. Paper presented at University of Yokohama, Japan, November 1991

Lunt I. (1992) Are we ready for Europe? Is Europe ready for us? Annual conference of AEP Harrogate October 1992.

Lunt I. (1993) Trends and issues in educational psychology in the UK. Paper presented at the University of Hong Kong Psychology dept., May 1993.

Lunt I.C. (1993) Qualifications and regulations in professional psychology in the UK. Paper presented at the Biennial conference of the German Psychological Association (BDP), Bonn, September 1993

Lunt I. (1994) Educational psychology: past, present and future: a European perspective. Invited Keynote address presented at the 23rd International Congress of Applied Psychology, Madrid July 1994.

Lunt I. (1994) The profession of psychology in Europe: current and future trends. Invited Keynote Address presented at the Congress of the Portuguese Sindicato Nacional dos Psicólogos, Lisbon, October 1994

Lunt I. (1994) Training and practice of educational psychologists in Europe. Invited Paper presented at the University of Athens, November 1994.

Lunt I. European Psychology for the future: practice, training and the EU. Invited Keynote address presented to the annual conference of the Psychological Society of Ireland, November 1994.

Lunt I. Three phases in the development of psychology as a profession: what can we learn from the history of psychology?

Invited paper presented in symposium: Goals, challenges and trends of scientific and professional psychology in the 21st century Fourth European Congress of Psychology, Athens, Greece, July 1995

Lunt I. Legal registration of psychologists in the UK
Paper presented at Fourth European Congress of Psychology, Athens, Greece, July 1995

