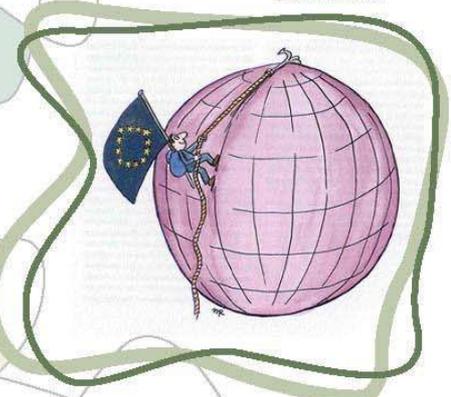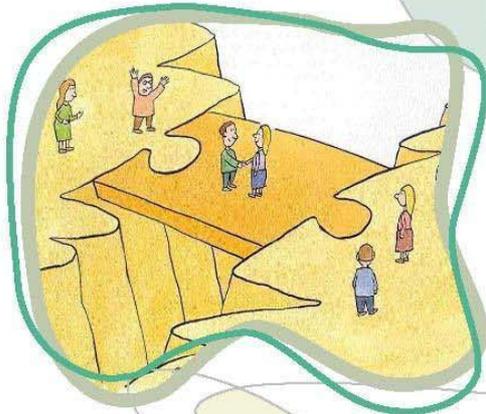Teachers...

Learners...

Educational Consultation
European Comenius Course

Exchange ... Cooperation

Cooperation between

Teachers and

Consultants

A Partnership of
Learning Support Teams from:

* Leuven, Belgium
* Kiel, Germany
* Aberdeen & Norfolk, UK
* Karmøy, Norway

Ostend - Belgium
April, 23-29, 2005

Support

The Consultation Project
Supporting teachers through cooperation, to empower their problem-solving capacity,
coping with special needs situations where they occur.

Summary

The finite aim of this project is the organisation of European training courses on 'consultation'. Consultation is defined as a collaborative approach to service delivery between support personnel and teachers. This approach is considered as an most effective for the implementation of an **equal opportunities policy** in schools, a vital contribution to **social cohesion** in an **inclusive school and society**. The theme is in line with the evolution from a traditional expert/deficit/referral model of guidance, to a model of **contructive shared cooperation** of all involved partners, within the school and the social context of the learners, and this in the general frame of policies aiming at equal opportunities, social cohesion and inclusion.

The project is also in coherence with an **innovative and challenging vision on education**, which is valuing and endorsing pupil support as an integral part of the role of every teacher, so increasing the problem solving capacity of the consultation seeking teachers, promoting partnership and networking as an approach to pupil problems. It also contributes to personnel well being and better interpersonal relationships in schools, often endangered when schools are facing problem situations.

The **strong points** of this approach are: increasing the effectiveness of support activities in schools, preventing problems and helping to solve them where they occur, improve the expectations of the education partners: pupils, teachers and their parents, ameliorate the teachers' and parents' perceptions of support personnel.

The **goal groups** are staff members of support services, and support teachers, in- or outside the school, in charge of any form of support for pupils and teachers, coping with special needs in a broad sense. The training seminars will invite a **mixed group** of teachers and support personnel, with the aim to focus on the collaboration between these actors, especially when they are confronted with special needs situations in the mainstream classroom.

The **course curriculum** contains (1) knowledge of the methodology and the effects of a consultation approach to support, (2) awareness of difficulties which arise from traditional support delivery practice, (3) discovering resistances which can develop in school systems when implementing a consultation approach, (4)learning more effective skills and methods for an effective collaboration.

Project activities will be charaterised by active learning by all partners and participants during the preparation period, during four local seminars in the partners' countries, and during the final international course. Participants will be requested to study a reader with relevant information about the theme before the start of the course. An information pack on the existing developments in the partner countries will be provided on the internet. Reflections by experts as well as a synopsis of ongoing scientific discussions will form an integrated part of this ICT-information pack. In view of the collaboration in international working groups, each participant will be asked to describe his/her professional situation, experiences and expectancies, for the information of the other participants.

During one or two intensive courses of one week, lectures and video presentations will be given by experts from the four countries of the partnership. The most important innovations will be described, analysed and evaluated. Good practice will be visited, so to give ample opportunity to discuss the issues with colleagues at the workfloor, and with concerned key persons, e.g. parents of pupils with special needs, notably learning and behaviour problems. During international working group sessions participants will be invited to compare and analyse the innovations discussed with those in their own country .

Intended outcomes are: (1) exchange of experience and resources concerning consultation methods in pupil and teacher guidance, (2) exploring and coping with hesitations and resistances among more traditionally working colleagues concerning changes in consultation practices and methodology, (3) a handbook of good practices in consultation, (4) an elaborated curriculum for a training seminar on consultation, (5) detailed modules for use in the pre service training of teachers and consultants. At the end of the project period the participants will de invited to take part in a discussion group on the INTERNET with the aim of continuing the process of ongoing professionalisation.

The project and the course will gain profit from extensive and **practice-based experiences** by the partners in the four countries, and the evaluations which they have undertaken. Also the innovative good practice reports issued by the most significant European and World organisations dealing with the theme wil form an integral part of the curriculum.

Introduction to the Reader

COMENIUS Action

Within the SOCRATES Programme the overall objective of COMENIUS is to enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of school education.

COMENIUS seeks to help those learning and teaching in schools to develop a sense of belonging to a broader and outward-looking European community - a community characterised by diverse traditions, cultures and regional identities, but rooted nevertheless in a common history of European development.

The CONSULTATION Project

This publication is one of the outcomes of the SOCRATES Comenius 2.1 project 106170-CP-1-2002-BE-COMENIUS-C21 : **Consultation: Raising teachers problem-solving capacity through support-by-cooperation. A contribution to the inclusion process in every school.**

The CONSULTATION Project is a three-year European Comenius 2.1 Project mainly developing an in-service education course open to all European teachers, head teachers, advisers, teacher trainers, and special educational needs support counsellors.

Basic aims and objectives

In each of the four collaborating member states different approaches of supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs in regular education have been developed recently, which could be of great professional interest for teachers and support staff in the field in Europe.

The CONSULTATION project started to find answers to the following questions:
- Why were innovative choices about consultation made in the four different countries?
- What works and what doesn't work properly?
- What will happen in the near future?
- What do teachers, parents and the support staff members feel about these innovations?
- Which conclusions can be drawn in terms of good practice for all actors throughout Europe?

The CONSULTATION project will offer serving teachers a programme of study through which they will acquire specific knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. The programme is aimed at serving teachers throughout the European Union, and associated countries, who are interested in current innovations in practice and theory of special educational needs support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties in regular education.

Project Development

This project is being developed over a three-year period of collaborative work conducted by a team of colleagues from Belgium, Scotland, Germany and Norway. The team has experience of different aspects of Special Educational Needs Support provision, from support services, schools, to higher education institutions, local authorities, and national advisory groups.

Three development meetings have taken place in year one of the project with a prime objective of identifying the key issues which currently need to be addressed by the project. Three development meetings in each of the succeeding two years of the project are also planned. Each of the planned meetings already has an identified objective and in the first year the project development team has researched the field and through subsequent discussion identified the key papers for publication in this reader. A greater number of papers than those found in the reader were identified and read by the project team as a whole and each paper was evaluated by the whole team together. A consensus was arrived at by the project team with regard to the content of the reader.

In the second year of the programme the project team will work with an expanded group of colleagues at the national level in the four participating countries and in addition will deliver an International Conference. This work will involve the sharing of experiences by participants in each of the national groups and will result in the setting up of international working groups with identified tasks. The purpose of these activities is to develop and refine the intended international course which is the subject of the project.

In year three of the project there will be a second international conference which will be supported by the national working groups. By this stage it is intended that participants will have developed reflective journals and identified projects on SEN innovations which will be able to be developed and shared. It is intended that small-scale action research projects will be encouraged and will be reported on at the second international conference. During this intensive course programme of one week, lectures and video presentations will be given by experts from the four countries concerned (Belgium, Scotland, Germany and Norway). Schools and Support services will be visited. During those visits there will be ample opportunity to discuss the issues mentioned with colleagues, notably in the area of learning and behavioural problems.

During a final workshop conclusions for good practice will be formulated by the lecturers together with the participants. These will be based on the presentations, lectures, visits and discussions.

At the end of the project period the course participants will be invited to take part in a discussion group on the Internet with the aim of continuing the process of ongoing professionalisation, started during the week of the course.

The Reader

This reader is part of the course development materials within the Comenius in-service education course. It is not an in-depth theoretical work but a practical small-scale, professionally focused study of current key issues in Special Educational Needs Support as identified by the project development team.

The reader is divided into the key sections of the actual debate on support delivery: Basic concepts and theories, Motivation, Methods and Implementation aspects. The papers included in this reader have been compiled from a variety of sources and the authors represent a truly International perspective.

Participating teachers will be requested to study this Reader with relevant information before the start of the course. They will also be provided with an information pack on the internet concerning support concepts and -delivery currently existing in the four countries. Reflections executed by experts as well as a synopsis of ongoing scientific discussions will form part of the ICT information pack.

Furthermore each participant will be asked to describe her/his professional situation for the information of the other participants in view of the planned collaboration in international working groups Participants will be invited to compare and analyse the educational innovations discussed with those in their own country during international working group sessions.

READER : CONTENT

- The Comenius Project on Educational Consultation: Summary

- Introduction to the Reader

BASIC ARTICLES

- Benyamini Kalman, The four clients of the school psychologist, 6 pp.

- Meijer, W., Educational Consultation. Discussing pupils in a professional way, 6pp.

- McHardy, Carmichael & Proctor, School consultation. It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing, 13 pp.

- Dens, Bogaerts & Vercammen, Educational Consultation: Effective cooperation between teachers and consultants, 6 pp.

- Wagner, P.,Consultation: developing a comprehensive approach to service delivery, 8 pp.

- Munthe & Midthassel, Peer learning groups for teachers. A Norwegian innovation, 9 pp.

OTHER SUBSTANTIAL ARTICLES (see the full version)

- Porter & Stone, The inclusive school model: a framework and key strategies for success, 5 pp.

- Van Ham, P., e.a., Implementing a working group on pupil counselling at the school level, 12 pp.

- Meijer & Smit-Wimmenhove, How do we perceive educational consultation?, 5 pp.

- Spiess & Winkler, Helping people to become better problem solvers: a constructivistic and solution focussed process model of consultation, 6 pp.

- Reiser, Willmann, Urban & Sanders, Different models of social and emotional needs consultation and support in German schools, Hannover, 12 pp.

FURTHER READING

- Meijer, Pameijer & van Beukerink, Educational Consultation and Action Oriented Diagnostics: Implementation and Guidelines for choice, 11 pp.

- Deissler, K., Dialogs in conversation. The social construction of reflexive process within therapy and consultation, 17 pp.

Reading Guide for Reader on Educational Consultation

	,	WHY ?	THEORY basics	HOW ? general	HOW ? specific *	IMPLEM. **
	Basic articles: to read before course start					
1982	BENYAMINI, The four clients of the school psychologist				PGS	
1996	MEYER, Discussing pupils in a professional way				P	
1998	McHARDY, e,a, School Consultation, it don't mean a thing, if …					
1999	DENS, e,a, Educ. Consultation, effective co-operation…					M
1999	WAGNER, Consultation: developing a comprehensive approach…					
2004	MUNTHE & MIDTHASSEL, Peer learning groups for teachers				GS	
	Other Substantial articles					
1996	PORTER, The inclusive school model				S	
1998	VAN HAM, e.a., A working group on pupil counseling				S	EO
2001	MEYER, How do we perceive educational consultation?					E
2003	SPIES-WINKLER, Helping people to become better problem solvers				P	M
2003	REISER, e.a., Different models				PGS	CO
	Further Reading					
1998	DEISSLER, Dialogs in conversation				P	
2001	MEYER, Educ. consultation and action oriented diagnostics					MC
	* Specification as to application level					
	P : individual pupil level					
	G : group level					
	S : school level					
	** Specific items					
	M : methodological					
	E : evaluation					
	C : comparative					
	O : organisation/structures					

Questions / Using the reader

WHY ?

Before
1. Why are you interested in consultation?
2. Are you looking for a way to improve your current practice?
3. What do you see to be the main purpose of school support services?

After
1. After reading these articles, does this inspire you to improve your current practice?
2. Have your ideas about the purpose of school support changed? If so, in what way?

THEORY

Before
1. What theoretical frameworks (psychological models) influence your current thinking on consultation?

After
1. What are the assumptions of consultation?
2. How do these models/frameworks compare to your current models/frameworks?
3. If you had to summarize consultation in 3 or 4 words, what would they be?

HOW ?

Before
1. What kinds of problems can we deal with in EC?
2. How would you describe your own way of working?

After
1. How does your way of working compare with other approaches (similarities and differences

IMPLEMENTATION

Before
1. Sofar, how did you go about developing your way of providing support?

After
1. Which ideas do you now have to improve your work?
2. How can you share and implement these ideas within your environment?

The four Clients of the School Psychologist

Kalman Benyamini

Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

This is a retrospective sketch of the first years of the Jerusalem Municipal School Psychological Service, built around a series of chances that occurred in the definition of the psychologist's role in the schools. A developmental scheme is presented under the theme of 'Who is the School Psychologist's Client?', and four definitions which consecutively determined service policies are outlined. First the child was defined as the client, then the teacher, next the school as a whole with an accent on problems, and finally with the emphasis upon the resources of the school. This brief description comes to elucidate some of the realities of the school as they present themselves to the psychologist, the opportunities, challenges and constraints posed by this reality to the mental health professional, and the evolving insights concerning the role of psychological services in the educational system.

The developments were occasioned and made possible against the background of special circumstances under which the Jerusalem School Psychological Service (established in 1965) operated and grew. Initially, the psychologists' main duties were to screen and evaluate problem children, and to deal with them either by transfer to special education or through direct treatment. This assignment left the Service considerable leeway with regard to work models and priority setting. Second, most services were provided from the start in the schools themselves rather than in a clinic; that arrangement facilitated extensive acquaintance with the educational institution, its workings and problems. The administrative affiliation of the Service to the municipal Department of Education helped to acclimatize psychologists to the system while still allowing considerable autonomy. Third, the psychological personnel who joined the Service in the course of the years (mostly with clinical training) were socialized into a regime of continuous learning, and thinking, with incessant criticism and sober evaluation of professional action and organizational patterns. Finally, the professionals operated in a liberal atmosphere with regard to psychological doctrine and were free to choose their own theoretical orientations. The involvement of some staff members in academic teaching and research enriched the Service's department with new ideas and findings.

The child

In the beginning, the child was defined as she client of the school psychologist. The aim was to foster children's mental health both to improve their school functioning and adjustment and. to enhance their personality development. Consistent with psychodynamic theory, this concept assumed that a healthy personality was an essential precondition for effective coping with environmental challenges and for normal development. The psychologists' professional loyalty was therefore to children in need of psychological treatment and to their families; the problem child became the prime focus of interest.

Organizationally, the service in the school was set up as a miniature clinic with the participation of the school nurses, later joined the school social workers and, much later, by educational counsellors. In contrast to child guidance clinics in the community, most referrals to the school clinic were made by teachers and school principals rather than parents.

The school was perceived by the psychologist as a place where virtually all children can be found and thus an ideal locus for mental health work with those who need it.

In addition, the school offered an opportunity to provide educational-therapeutic settings for certain children and to enlarge mental health cadres by special education teachers. Although the psychologists had more favourable attitudes towards schools than colleagues operating outside the educational system, they did not at the time recognize the school as an educational institution and were not involved in its major pursuits.

In keeping with traditional clinical practice, psychologists' tasks in the schools included diagnosis, therapy and counselling. To be sure, the diagnostic process was enriched by observations of the referred children in their classroom and among their peers, and the counselees were mostly teachers as well as parents. The professional approach, however, was essentially of the clinical-counselling variety, applied to children's personality development. To qualify for this type of work, the clinical psychologist had to know child psychopathology, psychodiagnostics and psychotherapy, and to understand the therapeutic potential of educational settings. Save for the difficulties of being separated from the clinic, the model was comfortable for the clinically trained psychologist. It also fitted teachers' expectations of the psychologists, that is as people who helped difficult students through therapeutic and counselling interventions.

This approach. frequently used when clinical psychologists felt the need to extend their services to the community and to social institutions, did not, however, survive as the sole professional strategy. Some of its drawbacks became apparent fairly soon. It required investment of expensive professional time for intensive work with relatively few pupils along with their teachers and families. It was most effective for bright verbal children and discriminated against the less privileged. Successful outcomes were not assured because so much depended on personal qualities of the psychologists. Furthermore, psychologists became disillusioned with their ability to change pathological family patterns, even when supported by multi-disciplinary teams. Additionally, theoretical considerations cast doubts on the relevance of clinical interventions with the family to children's school adjustment. And, above all, a new epidemiology presented itself in the school that was far from the psychopathology of childhood with which the 'family psychologist' had been acquainted. The kinds of problems seen by the referring teachers were related to learning assignments and to behaviour demands that the educational setting placed on students.

Conceivably, we might have continued to view the child as the sole client of the psychologist, had more recent direct clinical methods, for example behaviour modification and family therapy, not to mention knowledge about learning disabilities and remedial teaching, been available then. Later, these techniques, as well as others were included in the armamentarium of the School Psychological Service and long-term therapeutic assignments were referred to regional mental health clinics. However, the return to the child-client was then couched in a more complex definition of the psychologist's clientele.

The teacher

Defining the teacher as the client was meant. to change and modify teachers' attitudes towards their students, so that they could serve as 'mental health agents' in their classrooms. Since children live in the school under teacher supervision and come under their influence, it is reasonable for mental. health professionals to want to shape teachers in their own image. Thus, rather than working directly with children, psychologists were to work with the teachers to help them provide a positive human environment, a significant identification figure, and a tolerant accepting approach sensitive to children's need. those conditions were to improve children's mental health and personality development. The professional loyalty of the psychologist was given to the teacher, who came to be perceived as the treatment anchor with the psychologist's support. Cases of children were discussed with the teacher not only for their own sake but as examples for coping with the problems of other pupils.

The psychological service was organized in the school as an enterprise for teacher guidance, counselling and consultation (instead of, or in addition to, the clinic for children).

Referrals to psychologists originated from the teachers themselves as well as from the administrative and supervisory levels. Within this viewpoint, the school was construed by the psychologist as a place in which educators operated in ways that could either enhance or harm the mental health of children. The psychologist's' attitude towards the school was essentially positive and their involvement varied with the number of responsive teachers.

The professional practices called for by this definition included individual or group guidance, counselling and consultation about either children's problems or teachers' own functioning. Informative. lectures and discussions on subjects relevant to child development and behaviour were introduced. Psychologists needed scientific knowledge of both psychopathology and normal child psychology, as well as mastery of counselling techniques specifically applied to teachers. This model was also congenial to the clinically trained psychologist, even though it required more experience and expertise than the child-centred one. Its professional challenge was to shift the accent from work with children (and parents) to teachers. Even though school principals and supervisors encouraged the arrangement for teachers to be the psychologists' clients, the teachers themselves were not satisfied.

This approach failed, too, and not only because teachers were reluctant to accept psychological help directed at them rather than their problem students. Essentially, the assumptions of the model disregarded basic 'facts of life' in the schools. Teachers see themselves responsible for students' learning and behaviour, not their mental health, and their actions are guided more by their roles than by their personalities. Their universe revolves around axes controlled by the educational system and the school organization. These consist of imparting skills and knowledge, following exacting curricula, to large classes of students, populated without teachers' discretion, by frontal methods of instruction that largely disregard individual differences among children and teachers. Moreover, most teachers are trained in subject matter and teaching methods rather than in the psychological understanding of children and communication with parents. Small wonder, then, that the teacher's concept of 'the student' does not resemble that of 'the child' referred to by the psychologist.. The 'image of the pupil in the teacher's eye' appears to be 'one who produces educational achievements by means of attention and concentration, classroom participation, comprehension and interest, industry and diligence'.

Despite the initial failure of the model, the definition of the teacher as client was to become an important focus of the psychologists' work, but only after they had established roots in the school system, learned to understand it on its own terms and developed teacher trust and readiness for help. This line of activity would be based upon models of mental health consultation, organizational development, and others. Later, this approach was facilitated by increased flexibility of the educational system and greater openness on the part of teachers to psychological aspects of their functioning. Under those conditions, receiving Psychological advice eventually became more meaningful to educators, much as teachers find it from the start in more 'open' educational settings that favour the expression of personal dispositions (e.g., special education or kindergartens).

The school - accent on problems

The aim of psychological work in the school then came to be redefined as follows: to promote the 'adjustment' of the school to its students and to improve its capacity to offer significant education to a maximum number of pupils.

Every school, it was assumed, was entrusted by educational authorities with a certain student body, and the school could either succeed or fail in accomplishing its tasks. The institution's 'coping ability' can be assessed by the quality of education it offers together with its capacity to accommodate its students, without manifest or latent drop-outs. Psychological services should help to develop the school's ability to cope with a given student population. The school's adjustment to its students is best conveyed by the variety of educational approaches and settings it maintains, in accordance with children's needs and potentialities.

Within that view, he psychologist's commitment was to the local education authorities (responsible, by law, for school placement of all children) and to the school management. Children referred and discussed as 'deviant' were seen by psychologists to reflect institutional weak points. Recommendations sought to provide such students with appropriate treatment in their own classrooms or, at least, with an adequate setting in their own school. Psychological services, coordinated with others, were organized to function on different levels of the school: as a consulting service for school principals, to aid in problem finding and assessment and to recommend institutional interventions and arrangements; and as a referral service for problem children, offering teachers counsel and consultation (with preference given to teachers of therapeutic and other special education units). In addition, psychologists were encouraged to undertake screening for difficulties among lower-grade pupils and to initiate projects designed to solve other school problems.

Within this model, psychologists construed the school as an organization that is guided by instructional goals and educational values, and includes multiple settings in which formal and informal interactions take place among and between students, teachers, management and parents. All those determine how well the school copes with its tasks. The psychologists involvement bordered on identification with the life of the institution and its problems. Except for the clinical-counselling practices, psychologists' activities were largely those of a change agent, such as organizational consultation at different system levels, including the educational authorities themselves.

This multifaceted approach called for greater sophistication in organizational and social psychology and educational sociology, and a thorough understanding of the educational system's major dilemmas (e.g., academic achievement and equality of opportunity, issues of special education organization, problems of the culturally disadvantaged). Clinically trained psychologists were forced out of the narrow professional confines into wider institutional and organizational spheres, and even became involved in political matters. In exchange for loss of professional convenience they could find satisfaction in those new challenges, and enjoy the power of their influence in the educational world. Teachers' reactions were equivocal: although they got some support and advice on student problems, they were accountable for dealing with them.

Like previous definitions of the psychologist's client, this new one was problematic in that the school's capacity to cope with its student population was not necessarily related to its educational success. The assumption that schools would be more successful to the extent that they could provide more opportunities to more students was disproved. It was learned that a school's success depended not as much on the quality of its pedagogic and human inputs, as on its reputation in the community and its self-image. At least in an urban context, the rate of schools was in good measure determined - for prosperity or decline - by the public reputation of student' social backgrounds. It was easier for a school with pupils from a prestigious social background to be successful than one whose pupils come from disadvantaged families, ever if the latter had greater resources. Moreover, a school that properly coped with a student body of poor background by adjusting programmes and class sizes accordingly and by increasing. medical, social and psychological services could well be undergoing a process of decline. Paradoxically, were the latter placed in a 'prestigious school', in larger classes and with fewer helping services, they might have progressed more. According to a current school of thought, the very fact of increasing educational and personal services to a weak school might damage the school by sensitizing the public to its problems and deterring the community.

This analysis served as a warning. for the School Psychological Service against an exclusive focus on the schools' problems and against identification with only distress and pathology. Shortcomings notwithstanding, this comprehensive and flexible model is still used by a number of elementary school psychologists, either because service must still be delivered in 'declining' institutions or because both the professional and the school-client could not adapt their work patterns to the definitional framework to follow.

The school - accent on resources

The alternative to the previous definition is one in which psychologists seek to foster the growth and competence of the school and its staff and students. From that standpoint, the school's reputation, liaised either. on its students' social origin or its educational excellence, is of lesser importance. The institution must sustain and emphasize, both to itself and to the public, positive elements of its activity and enhance teachers' and children's motivation to succeed in their roles. Focusing attention on success rather than failure and on incentives instead of deficits can motivate poor students and their parents to achieve greater proficiency. The psychologist's endeavours in such a system are directed to making actual the constructive resources of children, teachers and institutions.

Psychologists remain committed to the school and the system in which they function. Consultation focuses on normal and gifted children, as well as problem students. Psychological services at the various levels of the school leave room and time for primary prevention, activities designed to enhance positive development and strengthen mental health. These include enrichment programmes for the gifted ;mental health projects for entire classrooms, such as 'therapeutic teaching'; learning social problem solving skills; cross-age tutoring; projects for parents, such as 'games-exchanges'; and guidance groups; consultative aid to teacher groups, and consultation to principals on psychological problems of school management. Through such involvements psychologists and their actions come to be more closely associated with normal and constructive aspects of behaviour than with deviancy and distress.

The psychologist, within this framework, construes the school as an ever-changing educational organization with regard to its resources, experience and reputation in the community. Given social mobility patterns of the people in the community, the school is susceptible to 'depletion' of programme, personnel and prestige resources, which may result in demoralization among staff and students and a negative 'institutional self-image'. Conversely, a positive image of the school can potentially attract more advantaged students and this in turn, may enhance institutional growth. The psychologist's view of the school includes its community context which at least partially shapes the school's 'destiny' towards growth, stagnation or decline. A broad 'developmental diagnosis' of the school helps the psychologist to understand specific occurrences and problems (e.g. the school's approach to deviant children and its style of coping with the student population).

On that basis, the psychologist can recommend needed 'developmental changes of direction' to school management and education authorities. We have learned from experience that one way to bring about a constructive 'change in school destiny' is to create integrated school districts. When underprivileged children are placed in schools and classrooms with more advantaged youngsters, all children seem to have better educational experiences. In addition, then, to the clinical-counselling and the organizational-social skills needed by our psychologists, they must be versed in sociological and demographic processes. Those should help them to examine the school from a broader perspective, and to recommend ecologically valid interventions on the wider stage of the community. and the system.

The last definition moves our clinical-counselling psychologists well beyond their initial professional position and leads them in the directions of community psychology and 'applied sociology'. Since this model (as well as the previous one) demands multiple professional competencies not readily mastered by a single psychologist, role differentiation has gradually taken place in the service for the schools. Consequently, a school can obtain help on particular tasks from any of a number of psychologists (as specified in a 'contract'). Such 'division of labour' among specialized professionals helps to avoid role conflicts for individual psychologists.

This new model does not appear to be well fitted to staff expectations. However, after a psychologist team has helped teachers and management to see the 'forest' to which the annoying 'trees' belong, 'institutional insight' may grow and lead to more constructive coping and renewed positive development.

Some schools have indeed gone through these four phases of client definition. Interestingly, after some had 'internalized' the essentials of the several approaches, psychologists found themselves free to return to their clinical 'origin', and have since dealt directly with children's problems together with mental health consultation to teachers and parents. More often, however, a 'fixation' took place at one of the 'stages of school psychological development', perhaps because both the school and psychologist were too satisfied with a particular definition, or because a more complex one was irrelevant (e.g., in high schools or kindergartens).   We have also learned that a more advanced definitional model is best implemented after the school has benefited from the psychologist's direct service with children and teachers, and after the psychologist has had the chance to learn about the school's characteristics. Even so, some schools may have qualities that block the psychologist's functioning beyond the levels of individual children and teachers. That lesson, for example, was learned from protracted and not quite successful attempts to develop psychological services in Jerusalem schools for Arab children.

The types of client definitions described in this paper (together with other approaches) can be useful in specifying psychological services for schools, and in delineating more clearly the responsibilities of psychologists and the schools' expectations. The definitions are especially helpful in planning training programmes for school psychologists both in academic and in-service settings.

Educational consultation:
Discussing pupils in a professional way

Wim Meijer

Every school has its own famous ex-pupil, a writer, a poet, or a scientist. His or her name appears in jubilee-editions in which the school proudly presents her contribution to the development of this great talent. This pride betrays nothing about the way the celebrity was discussed during his schooldays. In the television series "Herinneringen" (Memories), the writer and plastic artist Armando commented on his meeting with an ex-teacher of his. She remembered him as a boy who excelled in writing wonderful essays. This, however, is a lie. Armando had often neglected his schoolwork because he thought other things more important, and he had only once turned in an essay. He only started to write at a later stage in life. It is highly probable that he was talked about in exactly the same way as the other pupils during his schooldays. And today, many teachers discuss their pupils in the same way.

This article deals not with memories, but with the discussion of pupils. Most pupils will never appear in jubilee-editions. If pupils should encounter problems, their teachers are mostly not proud, but rather desperate or even indifferent. Problems, unlike success, are often attributed to the pupils or their parents. In psychological terms, we talk about attributing: positive results are the teachers' merit, negative ones are the pupils' own doing. Some teachers really think like that, and even some pupils, too. This is bad for both parties, because in the end, such negative attributions will consolidate themselves.

To prevent this from happening, we will present you with a professional way of discussing pupils in this article. This way of working is part of a methodology called educational consultation (Elliott & Sheridan 1992). It differs from the everyday conversation in the teachers' room in that it is aiming to result in constructive attributions and in new ways of dealing with pupils' problems.

There are many secondary schools where a consultation practice starts to grow falteringly. One or two teachers fulfil the role of consultant. And consultants from outside the school make their contribution. Primary schools already have more experience in this field. When we analyse these experiences critically, we find that traditions are often a hindrance to positive results. If a pupil has problems, the causes and solutions are often looked for outside the school, or one simply assumes that teachers cannot change.

The purpose of educational consultation is to optimise the facilities of the school. The first results have been encouraging, but we have not yet reached an exhaustive practical model. We are more talking about a set of basic assumptions that deserve further thought. Therefore, this article must be seen as a contribution to the discussion amongst professionals (remedial teachers, consultants from the educational guidance centre, educationalists and psychologists) about the future of counseling and remedying pupils who need extra care.

The current consultation practice

If pupils have problems, it is useful for teachers to discuss these pupils inside the school. More and more teachers are getting used to this idea, and an increasing number of schools have developed a framework for this kind of discussions. Professionals from inside and outside the school can be involved. Typical for the fact that these frameworks are being developed inside the schools is that there is an increasing assignment of tasks to teachers and consultants.

These professionals are developing their own professional operating procedures. They lead to a clearly defined task assignment and mutual expectations. For example, it is customary for teachers to refer a conspicuous pupil to a consultant, while expressing the assumption that the pupil in question suffers from test anxiety, or dyslexia. The consultant is then expected to cast light on the backgrounds and causes of the problem. He then tries to make a diagnosis, with or without the help of clear criteria, and works out a plan of action on the basis of this diagnosis. He expects the teacher to bring this plan of action into practice.

In spite of all good intentions, the co-operation between teacher and consultant does not always go smoothly. This has to do with pragmatic and more fundamental points. To start with, it is not always clear in the discussion of a pupil which problems caused the teacher to start worrying about the pupil. The consultant probably has an idea about this, and so does the teacher. But the clear and correct description is often lacking, resulting in the danger that the teacher and the consultant are talking and working at cross purposes. Moreover, this situation complicates the creation of a plan of action that fits in with the day-to-day life in the classes.

And indeed we often find that both parties argue for a form of support outside of the school sector, for example, a stress management training to get rid of test anxiety, or a training of the eye muscles. This kind of support is not necessarily bad, but it often remains unclear whether the support actually helps to solve the problems of the pupil in the teaching/learning situation. The reason for this is that the regular teaching schedule will mostly not be put on hold until the problems of the pupil have been solved. In short, we can say that the counseling often starts out from vague and not clearly delineated problems, which may lead to recommendations that are unrelated to the teaching/learning situation, or that are hard to put into practice in the school.

So the question is this: why do the pupil conferences so often shed insufficient light on the actual problems which the pupil experiences in the classroom? Actually, terms like "dyslexia" and "test anxiety" are in themselves already a kind of explanation for the fact that the problems are insufficiently delineated, i.e. something must be wrong with this pupil. Most probably, the teachers adopted the term from the consultants, and most often, the consultants confirm the teachers in this terminology. But this practice does not take into account the criticism on the traditional explanation of learning and attitude problems. This criticism has evolved over several years and can be summarised as follows (Meijer 1995):

During the more than 100 years of theorising and diagnostic work, several explanatory models have been developed. In explaining reading problems, the attention has shifted from innate and acquired physical defects (such as congenital word-blindness) via functional problems (such as incomplete hemisphere dominance and faulty lateralisation) to arrears in intelligence and function-development. With the development of intelligence and function tests, these ideas have been gaining ever more weight in the reading-problem approach. Psychological explanations replace physical explanations, but the diagnosticians still use the terminology and the characteristics of the medical approach, in which learning problems are seen as symptoms of a defect with a cause that should in principle be demonstrable (see for example Bateman 1981).
With the aid of certain tests, a profile with strong and weak points is developed, as a starting point for the treatment. The treatment itself consists of fighting the "cause" by strengthening the weak points of the profile. The tendency to point out only one factor as the cause of the problem remains present, even when, as is the case in the more recent explanatory models, more attention is paid to other factors, such as the context of the learning problems, the task itself, and the way the pupil processes information.

The idea that you can solve a problem simply by taking away the cause of it, or by training the weak function, doesn't apply to social problems in general, and to learning and attitude problems

in particular. The reason is that there is seldom a univocal relationship between cause and effect. Mostly, the situation consists of several factors influencing each other. Moreover, when a pupil and teacher are dealing with a reading problem, the roles they play are different from those of a doctor and patient whose leg needs mending. Their own perception of the problem and their dedication in looking for a solution are of overriding importance. The consultants will have to make a choice, because there is no all-encompassing theory about learning difficulties, and because practice will face problems for which there is no theory, or for which there are several theories to choose from. Every child, every problem will need examining to determine which factors actually play a role in the genesis and persistence of the problem.

In practice, there are many different factors playing various roles. Many consultants and teachers, going by tradition, attach more value to the earlier models. They consider physical factors as the real causes, and they regard support directed at other factors as a purely symptomatic treatment. But that preference cannot be substantiated theoretically starting from causal relationships between symptoms and causes. The result of all this is that the given advice is often quite unrelated to the teaching/learning situation, or simply not practicable in class.

Consultative pupil guidance

Educational consultation is a method trying to circumvent the difficulties in traditional pupil guidance. Unlike what the term would suggest, the consultation is entirely focused on the teacher. The teacher draws attention to a pupil's learning or attitude problems, and the consultation tries to help this teacher to find solutions for these learning and attitude problems. The method is founded on two notions.

In the first place, the consultant and teacher together go through the different phases of the problem solving process, along established lines. Together, they will then describe the problems as accurately as possible, together they will analyse which factors play a role in this particular case, and together they will look for solutions. Then, they will try to work out how these solutions can be brought into practice, and together they will afterwards evaluate whether the solutions have really worked. The traditional assignment of tasks will be replaced by a plan of action in different steps, in which teacher and consultant will decide for each step who will do what next. In practice, this leads to a very flexible approach of the process, depending on the actual situation: the nature of the problems and the possibilities of the teacher and the consultant. During one pupil discussion, more steps can be dealt with at once, but it is also possible that a pupil discussion is concluded with the agreement to first gather more information, and to move on to the next step only in the next meeting.

The second notion of educational consultation has to do with the contents. In analysing problems, a reference frame is used which distinguishes between direct and indirect factors. Elsewhere (Meijer 1993), we have shown what such a terminology framework looks like. In short, the line of thought comes down to this: learning problems are the result of an interaction process between child factors and teaching factors. In analysing problems, we have to pay attention to both sets of factors and to their mutual correlation. In other words: if the learning process is stalled, this is the result of a wrong interaction between teaching and child factors. Solving the stagnation means manipulating these factors of the teaching/learning situation in such a way that the interaction can once more lead to learning results.

A teaching/learning situation cannot be manipulated infinitely. The boundaries are set by many different factors: the capacities of the pupil, the limitations of the school organisation, the social context in which the school functions, the capacities of the teacher, etcetera. To prevent that the

attention is diverted from problem-solving capacities as held by the school itself, we will make a distinction between direct and indirect factors.

Direct factors are factors that are an inherent part of the teaching process. Indirect factors don't influence the stagnations directly, but they work indirectly, by way of the teaching process.

Every teaching/learning situation consists of a teaching component and a learning component. The teaching component consists of two mutually connected factors. First of all, there is the task presented to the child, for example answering questions to a text. The task determines which knowledge and skills the child will need. Secondly, there is the instruction; that is the way in which the teacher coaches the learning process, for example the extent to which the teacher explains the goal of the reading of the text, or gives instructions for answering the questions.
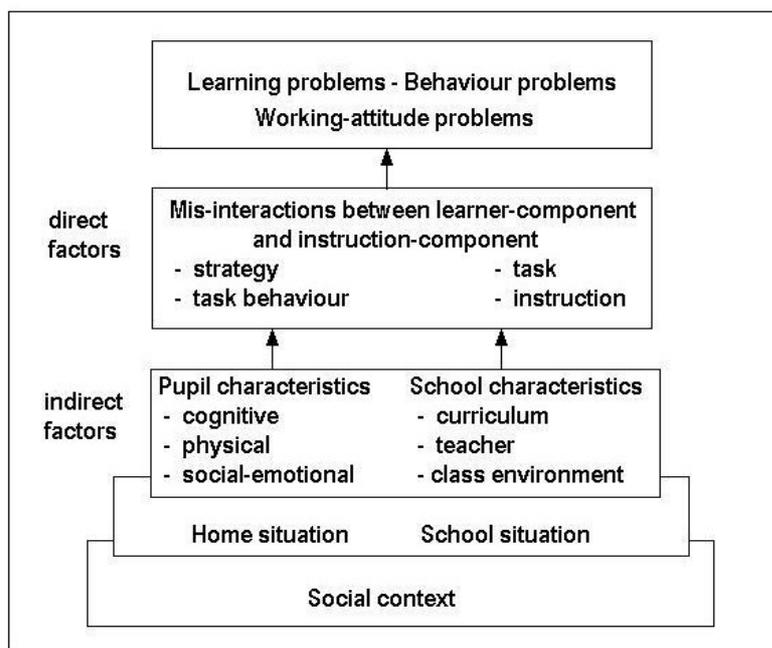
Picture 4: direct and indirect factors when analyzing learning- and behaviour problems

We can also distinguish two interrelated factors in the learning component. First of all, the strategy of the pupil; that is the way in which the pupil fulfils the task he or she was set. From the learning strategy of the pupil, it becomes clear in which way the pupil uses the knowledge and skills available to him. In the second place, we distinguish the task behaviour of the pupil; this is the way in which the pupil plans, fulfils and evaluates the task he was set. Because every teaching/learning situation is built on the basis of these same factors, the direct factors are central in the educational consultation. At the same time, these factors refer to the support: teaching help always consists of offering different tasks and/or adjusting the instructions. The reason for this is that one wants to influence the strategy of the pupil, or the way of dealing with a task (task behaviour).

In making concrete choices for help, two kinds of considerations can be made.

First of all, we ask ourselves the question to what extent the educational process was optimally conducted in the preceding period. In case we discover that there have been apparent misinteractions, this will lead to the immediate implementation of adjustments in the teaching/learning situation for the pupil. This is the case if, for example, the task is not in keeping with the foreknowledge of the pupil, or if the instruction was incomplete.

A second consideration lies in the influence of the indirect factors. Because there is no question of direct causal relationships in this case, the influence has to be proven and made plausible in each individual case. It will thus not be accepted on the basis of tradition. For example, pupils with a comparable average intelligence can still reach a different level of performance.

This way, teachers may be impressed by certain extremely tragic familial circumstances, but these circumstances only become relevant if it is made clear to what extent they have had an influence on the pupil's strategy or on his way of dealing with a task. The same goes for all the direct factors.

Indirect factors that can have an influence on the learning component are cognitive, physical and socio-emotional characteristics of the pupil and the home environment. Indirect factors that can have an influence on the learning component are characteristics of the teacher, the curriculum, characteristics of the group and of the school. These indirect factors can in turn be influenced by the social context in which the school operates.

If the consultant really wants to do justice to the basic principle that learning difficulties arise from misinteractions, and if he really wants to contribute to finding a solution for the problem, his diagnostic actions will have to meet some requirements. Firstly, the analysis must not be one-sided. Secondly, the analysis must refer to possibilities for adjustments. And thirdly, the consultant should co-operate closely with the teachers. This last aspect is necessary for two reasons: first of all, only teachers can supply them with an indispensable part of the information, namely shedding light on the tasks to be fulfilled and the instruction that goes with them. The second reason is that the teachers play a key role in implementing an advisory guideline, because it will inevitably imply a reorganisation of the teaching/learning situation. Even when the concrete support is offered outside the class environment, it will have to be optimally tuned to the class situation if a result is to be expected.

Consequences for the consultants

In educational consultation, the teachers and the consultants involved, and also the consultation framework outside the school, will have to meet stringent requirements. We will not deal with organisational aspects within the scope of this article, but we can indicate some concrete consequences of consultation, dissociated from any particular form of organisation. Consultants can increase the efficiency of the support by doing the following:

- not going into the vague complaints and descriptions about learning difficulties that some teachers provide them with. They will have to help the teacher to describe the problem accurately. This can be done by asking the teacher during a pupil discussion to indicate precisely which tasks the pupil has to fulfill at home and in the classroom, how the pupil deals with these tasks and how he tries to complete them successfully, which strategy the teacher expects the pupil to use, which instructions were given, etcetera.

- considering the support as an adjustment of the teaching/learning situation. The effect of special pupil support does not lie primarily in the use of special programmes or exotic tools, but depends rather on the accurate tuning of the tasks and instructions to the special needs of the individual pupil.

- looking for feasible solutions. Rather than coming up with the most ideal solution, the consultant should try to contribute to finding and implementing the most feasible solution in practice. There are many possibilities available to the consultant to reach this goal. Firstly, he and the teacher can try to find solutions that will require a relatively small amount of energy

from the teacher, and he can try to temper the all too ambitious plans. In the second place, he can make clear arrangements with the teacher and regularly give feedback.

This short description of educational consultation should have made clear what are the most central terms in the methodology: co-operation, making arrangements, justifying one's actions and assessing effects.

Many of the traditional tasks of a consultant, such as carrying out the diagnostic investigation, will not be completely omitted, but they are part of the arrangements between teacher and consultant. The main difference with traditional pupil guidance lies in the fact that all parties know exactly what the goal and the function is of collecting the diagnostic information for reaching solutions. By making arrangements for each individual situation, the negative side-effects that arise from a standard assignment of tasks to teacher and consultant are avoided.

In short, educational consultation is a professional way of discussing pupils and their problems. Pupil conferences are not meant to confirm the idea that teachers can hardly do anything to help the pupils solve their problems. Neither is educational consultation a deus ex machina to end all tragedies, not all pupils will turn into famous celebrities. But it provides us with a sensible method, oriented towards teachers who have realised the best feasible solutions, and who can give account for that.

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SCHOOL CONSULTATION
IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

An Evaluative Study of a Consultation Model of Service Delivery

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INTRODUCTION

Dissatisfaction with traditional models of service delivery has been expressed by Educational Psychologists (EPs) for at least 20 years. The 'reconstructing movement' (Gillham, 1978) was an attempt to promote new and creative ways of working with schools and teachers and generated an enormous amount of interest among EPs. In spite of this, it is still the case that EPs spend a considerable amount of their time in direct work with individuals using within-child explanations and psychometrics to inform their actions. What happened to the brave new world of whole-school approaches, project work and organisational analysis suggested by Gillham and others?

Jones and Frederickson (1990) suggest that one reason for the failure of these innovations to develop widely was 'the unavailability at that time of appropriately well-developed and researched alternatives' to the EP's traditional knowledge base rooted in deficit-model analysis. In their book, *Refocusing Educational Psychology* they argue that in the intervening twelve years between the publication of Gillham's book and their own this situation has changed and that there now exists a body of knowledge and research on the distinctive contributions EPs can make to collaborative work with schools and teachers. This, they argue should facilitate the development of innovative approaches in a way which was not possible in the late 1970s.

Wagner (1995) suggests two other powerful factors which may have inhibited the widespread development of such approaches. The first is the Education Act (1981) which made the assessment of individual children's special educational needs and their statementing (or recording) the first priority for EPs. In some areas this was seen by schools as a way of acquiring extra resources and resulted in pressure on Psychological Services to produce psychometric assessments of individual children.

The second factor inhibiting change, suggests Wagner, is psychologists' belief that schools and teachers want and expect a traditional approach. This may well be the case but one of the reasons for this may be that teachers are insufficiently aware of possible alternative ways of working. In fact as Wagner points out teachers' criticisms of EPs - that they hardly ever see them, that they do not spend time in the classroom where the problems occur, their reports are irrelevant and do not suggest practical strategies and that they don't work closely enough with individual teachers- are neatly mirrored in EPs' criticisms of schools- that they never give EPs time to see teachers, that they expect EPs to come up with practical classroom solutions without letting them into the classroom, that they expect useful reports based on an individual assessment and a quick chat in the staffroom and that they are not enabled to work collaboratively with teachers because of problems providing cover. Wagner suggests that in fact schools and EPs are united in wanting to work differently and that their shared priorities are for EPs to do a wider range of activities, to see teachers more frequently and informally to discuss concerns and to focus more on preventive work.

Similar criticisms of EPs were expressed by primary teachers in a previous study carried out in Aberdeen on their attitudes and beliefs about disruptive behaviour (MacHardy, McAllister and

Raitt, 1990). In the 9 schools involved in the study, 87% of teachers agreed with the statement that schools do not receive enough support from EPs in dealing with disruptive behaviour, while only 16% agreed that EPs have a major impact on the problem of disruptive behaviour in schools." At this time service delivery to these schools was in the traditional referral-driven model with which EPs were also dissatisfied.

In addition to teacher and EP dissatisfaction, there are other sources of impetus to change the model of service delivery. The body of research begun by Rutter's study *Fifteen thousand Hours* shows that schools can make a significant difference to the educational outcomes for their pupils.
Characteristics of the school as an organisation such as the ways in which information is communicated within it and problem situations are defined and managed have been shown to be factors in the school's effectiveness.

It has been suggested that EPs are ideally placed - in terms of their position within education departments, their knowledge of psychological processes and their relationships with schools - to support schools in developing a positive ethos. This involves a change in the psychologist's traditional ways of working and in the school's perception of the EP's role, in order to be successful.

In recent years the issue of teacher stress has been a particular focus of attention. The rapid pace of change in education, financial constraints and increases in the incidence of disruptive behaviour among pupils have all been suggested as reasons for increased stress among teachers (Dunham, 1984). Research evidence also suggests that organisational factors have a role in determining the levels of stress experienced by teachers (Proctor and Alexander, 1992). A school which encourages teachers to acknowledge and share problems is likely to be one where teachers feel less stressed and are able to manage problems more effectively. It has been suggested that EPs can have a useful role in helping schools to develop ways of managing teacher stress such as staff support groups (Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell and Louw, 1992; Gill and Monson 1996).

Thus many EPs have been caught in a conflict between a wish to adopt these new ways of working and the pressures, from their statutory duties and the expectations of schools and education authorities, to continue their traditional role as gate-keepers to special resources and placements, which have acted as barriers to change. Wagner (1995) suggests that the introduction of the Code of Practice in England has provided an opportunity for change in working practices. It requires schools to show evidence of consistent collaborative work with EPs in a preventive way on children's special educational needs well before the stage of statutory assessment. Although there is no equivalent legislation in Scotland many LEAs have introduced a similar process of staged assessment as part of their SEN procedures. This can be seen as a window of opportunity enabling EPs and schools to introduce more collaborative and preventive ways of working.

What form should these take? What is required is a flexible model of service delivery which allows the EP to operate at the level of the individual, the group or the organisation as required, which takes a problem-solving approach and enables teachers to be more directly involved in generating solutions. Psychological assessment of individual pupils should be an option to be considered in some cases rather than an automatic consequence of the EP's involvement. Wagner (1995) suggests that a consultation model of service delivery offers these features. She presented an INSET to the Psychological Service in Aberdeen in 1996 which generated a considerable amount of interest among EPs and a wish to try out this model. The current study arose out of this wish.

It was decided to pilot a consultation model of service delivery in a small number of Aberdeen primary and secondary schools. In order to evaluate the model teachers' perceptions of and attitudes to EPs were sought both before the model was introduced and at the end of the school

session in which it was implemented. A small number of control schools where the EPs made no deliberate changes to their working practices were also included for comparison.

The next section defines the term consultation, traces its historical development, reviews the theoretical models and considers the empirical evidence for its effectiveness. Wagner's model is described in some detail as it was used in the pilot study which is reported in the main part of this paper.

Further sections describe the methodology of the study, present the results and analysis, followed by discussion and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is consultation?

It is particularly important to define what is meant by consultation in order to explain this clearly to teachers and to education managers. There is a plethora of independent consultants now offering help to organisations in industry, health and education, which may be of variable quality. People will also have come across hospital doctors who are consultants and may wrongly assume that school-based consultation will be of a similar nature.

The dictionary definitions of the term consultation are' to consider jointly' and 'to take counsel.' These highlight the reflective and interactive nature of the process. There are a number of models of consultation which will be discussed in the next section, but some writers have tried to describe common features which are of most relevance to school-based consultation. Of these Conoley and Conoley (1990) and West and Idol ~ (1987) offer the most useful and comprehensive, while Sayer (1988) provides a useful summary of what it is not.

Conoley and Conoley describe consultation as a problem-solving relationship between two professionals in different fields, which focuses on work-related problems. The purpose of consultation is to enhance the problem-solving capacity of the consultee. A particular consultation should provide the consultee with all or some of the following-new knowledge, new skills, a greater sense of self-efficacy and a greater degree of objectivity.

There are several important points to note here. Firstly, the purpose is to enhance the problem-solving capacity of the consultee, not to provide them with a ready-made answer. Consultation is not therefore the same as the giving of advice and successful implementation of a consultation model will depend on both the EP and the school being aware that the EP will not be in the role of ' the expert' who can either solve the school's problem for them or remove it altogether by for example placing a troublesome pupil elsewhere. This view of the EP's role is commonly held by teachers and can be reinforced by a traditional model of service delivery. As Conoley and Conoley point out, in terms of a consultation model, the giving of advice can be counterproductive in that it can encourage dependence in the consultee. This is not to deny that the EP will often have specialised knowledge which it will be useful to share as part of the problem-solving process, but not as the purpose of it. Sayer (1988) also distinguishes the role of the EP as consultant from that of an LEA advisor and from that of inspector. An EP is there at the request of a teacher to help tackle a problem in a collaborative way. An inspector is not generally in school by invitation, and will be reporting on the teacher's level of expertise, not helping to extend it.

Secondly, consultation is not the same as psychotherapy, in which personal intrapsychic material is considered. Consultation has a narrower focus on an individual's work-related problems and aims to help consultees be successful in their professional responsibilities. Teachers can be reassured on this point. Consultation does, however share with psychotherapy 'the use of an accepting, non-judgmental, empathic relationship as the mode of interaction.'

(Conoley and Conoley, 1990). Sayer (1988) also points out how consultation differs from counselling, in that the latter is of a personal nature.

Thirdly, consultation is an indirect method of service delivery, in that the consultant works with another professional who has direct contact with the problem-situation. Ownership of the problem remains with the consultee who is free to use any strategies generated during the consultation or not as he chooses. This is in contrast to a traditional referral-driven model of service delivery where the teacher often feels that he is handing over the problem and the responsibility for solving it to an expert and the EP often feels pressurised to find a solution external to the school e.g. placement in a special resource.

West and Idol (1987) also define consultation as a helping, problem-solving process, which occurs between a help-giver and a help-seeker who has a professional responsibility for the welfare of others. They emphasise the voluntary nature of the relationship, with both sharing in solving the problem. While they see the goal of a consultation as the solution of a consultee's current work problem, they suggest that the consultee will also profit in respect of future work problems.

In a comprehensive review of the mainly American literature on school-based consultation Gutkin and Curtis (1982) identify nine defining characteristics of school-based consultation. It is an **indirect** form of service delivery characterised by a **trusting relationship** between the consultant and consultee. They are of **co-ordinate status**, in other words neither having power over the other. The consultee is **actively involved** in the problem-solving process, not a passive recipient of ready-made answers. Gutkin and Curtis comment that many teachers are ill-prepared for this aspect of the role of consultee, but note that several studies show that consultant behaviour has a significant effect on teacher attitudes to the process. Consultees own the problem and have the **right to accept or reject** any suggestions made by the consultant. The consultant-consultee relationship is a **voluntary** one and ideally the process should be initiated by the consultee. This ensures that the consultee recognises that a problem exists and that he or she is motivated to do something about it. These conditions will not be met if a teacher is pushed into a consultation by, say, a head teacher. The consultation will be **confidential** in order to facilitate open and honest communication. The focus of the consultation will be **work-related problems** of the consultee. If it becomes clear that the consultee has personal difficulties then the consultant has the responsibility for offering to help him or her to find an appropriate form of counselling. Finally, consultation has characteristic **dual goals**, which are to help solve the particular problem a consultee brings and to increase the consultee's problem-solving skills so that he or she is empowered to solve similar problems in the future.

Historical roots of consultation

Consultation as a method of service delivery evolved in America during the 1950s and 60s. It began in the field of mental health and spread to psychology and to the field of school psychology in particular in the 1970s. Gerald Caplan (1970) is generally credited as the person who first developed the concept of consultation.

Prior to this the predominant model of psychology for understanding individual behaviour was the medical model, which focused on intrapsychic material and processes. There was a growing dissatisfaction with this model in the 1960s, led by people like Thomas Szasz (1960) who argued that 'psychotherapists deal with problems in living, rather than mental illnesses.' Szasz argued that human behaviour and individual variations in it could best be understood in terms of the individual's relationships with society. Bateson (1973) proposed that 'a problem is not a truth possessing objective reality but is a construct made by the problem-owner which makes sense in context.' This echoes the work of Kelly on personal construct theory, which also moved the focus of psychology from within the individual to his interaction with his environment and the

meaning he gives to his experience. The approaches challenged the traditional deficit model of psychology.

Another threat to the medical model's predominance at this time came from those researchers, most notably Eysenck (1952) who tested its usefulness by studying the outcomes of traditional psychotherapy treatments. He concluded that there was no empirical evidence to support the contention that such treatments were any more effective than no treatment at all. This led some psychologists to reject the traditional medical model and to develop other models such as the behaviourist and ecological models.

A further challenge to the medical model arose from its practical constraints. Albee (1968) noted that irrespective of whether treatments based on the medical model were effective or not, they were so time-consuming to implement that there was no hope of treating all the people who might benefit. This situation meant huge waiting-lists and long delays in treatment. Albee concluded that as long as we continued to construe deviant behaviour as mental illness, we would never produce enough doctors or psychologists to 'treat' it.

These theoretical, empirical and practical challenges produced a climate for changes in how human behaviour was analysed and understood. In addition to these pressures for change within the field of psychology as a whole, there were also particular issues for school psychology to address. As Gutkin and Curtis (1982) point out, in the 1960s 'traditional school psychology was essentially an attempt to implement the medical model within a school setting.' Norm-referenced testing and psychometrics came under attack on the grounds that tests were unreliable, discriminated against minority groups, led to unhelpful labelling and yielded no strategies for attempting to remedy the deficits which they identified.

These were the prevailing conditions which facilitated the growth of the consultation model, both in psychology and psychiatry generally and in school psychology in particular .

Models of consultation

There are a number of models of consultation described in the literature, but most commentators agree that there are three clearly distinguishable from each other- mental health consultation, behavioural consultation and process consultation. While distinct from each other in a number of ways these models all share the core characteristics of consultation described in the first section of this literature review. Each has something useful to offer to those interested in developing school-based consultation skills.

Mental Health Consultation

This model was developed in the 1960s by Gerald Caplan, an American psychiatrist. He worked in Israel with immigrant children whose families had been killed or traumatised in the Holocaust. There was therefore a tremendous demand for therapeutic treatment which could not be met through direct contact between the psychiatrist and individual children because of the shortage of doctors. Caplan developed a system of consultation with paraprofessionals who worked directly with the children.

Not surprisingly, as Caplan was a psychiatrist, this model is strongly rooted in the psychoanalytical tradition. The focus of a mental health consultation is on why the consultee is having difficulties with a particular case and on helping to overcome these difficulties, enabling the consultee to then deal with the problem independently. Caplan argued that a lack of objectivity was one of the main obstacles to progress for a consultee with a case and that this could be caused by identification with the client, transference of the consultee's own psychic difficulties on to the client or by theme interference. Caplan used this term to refer to the situation where the consultee unconsciously brings into the work with the client unresolved conflicts from his own development which interfere with the task of helping the client with his or

her problem. The task of the consultant in this situation is to unlink the presenting problem from the theme thus freeing the consultee to progress the work with the client.

Critics of Caplan's approach argue that it is too psychodynamically-oriented and lacks supporting empirical evidence (Meyers,Parsons and Martin, 1979). While Caplan argued that lack of objectivity was the predominant reason for consultees' difficulties, others, including Gutkin (1981) argued that other factors such as lack of skills and knowledge are more likely explanations. Nevertheless, as Conoley and Conoley (1990) point out, aspects of this approach are useful for anyone wishing to carry out school-based consultation. This approach clearly recognises that not all behaviour is rationally motivated. Teachers may over-identify with a particular pupil or experience anger of an extent which seems out of proportion to the apparent trigger. An empathic, elicitative approach on the part of the consultant may enable the teacher to reflect on their own response to the problem and to see it in a different light, which may in turn enable them to generate a new problem-solving strategy which had not previously been apparent.

Thus although the mental health model of consultation is probably not the model of choice for most school-based consultants, or indeed most teachers, it nevertheless provides some insights which they will find it useful to consider.

Behavioural Consultation

Behavioural consultation is probably the easiest approach for most EPs to understand and to put into practice. It has been widely used in America and is the most widely researched of the models (Fuchs, Fuchs, Dulan, Roberts and Fernstrom, 1992). It consists essentially of a combination of the psychologist's traditional knowledge of and expertise in behavioural techniques with the consultant's indirect mode of service delivery. Medway (1979) showed that this model has the most empirical support for its effectiveness.

Behavioural consultation is rooted in social learning theory and therefore is concerned with the overt behaviours of the consultee rather than his or her unconscious motivation. The steps to be taken in a behavioural consultation are to define the problem, decide which variables in the situation are reinforcing the problem behaviour and devise strategies which reduce its frequency of occurrence. As might be expected this model pays far less attention to the nature of the consultant-consultee relationship than does the mental health model. As Conoley and Conoley (1990) point out this has been a criticism of this model, in which the interaction between the consultant and consultee is treated as a straight information exchange and the consultant does not attend much to the nature of the interaction. The goal of this kind of consultation is measurable change in the problem behaviour, while other models would also include changes in how the consultee construes the problem and in how confident and skilled he or she feels about managing it as additional criteria of success.

Behavioural consultation is easy to implement and to evaluate. Its emphasis on careful problem definition and goal-setting are useful ideas for any school-based consultant whether or not an overtly behaviourist model is adopted.

Process Consultation

Process consultation aims at making people more aware of the events or processes in their environments and the ways in which these affect their work. This approach is rooted in the psychology of groups and organisations and is widely used by , psychologists consulting to businesses and large organisations. It was developed and described by Edgar Schein in his book *Process Consultation* (1988, revised edition).

Schein himself states that' Process consultation is a difficult concept to describe simply and clearly. It does not lend itself to a simple definition or to the giving of a few illustrative examples,

because it is more of a philosophy or a set of underlying assumptions about the helping process that lead the consultant to take a certain kind of attitude toward his relationship with the client.' (1988).

The process consultation model assumes that the manager who seeks help from a consultant often does not know what the problem in his organisation or department is beyond a feeling that things are not going as well as they might. He or she may also not know what kind of help the consultant can offer and the consultant's first tasks are therefore to help diagnose the problem and make the consultee aware of the kinds of help which could be offered. The model also assumes that no organisation is perfect and that all organisations can therefore be helped to improve. A consultant cannot, without joining and participating in the organisation suggest workable solutions to problems. It is therefore essential for solutions to be worked out jointly with members of the organisation, who know what is likely to work in their organisation, otherwise the solution may be resisted. The goal of process consultation is 'to pass on the skills of how to diagnose and fix organisational problems so that the client is more able to continue on his own to improve the organisation' (Schein, 1988).

Process consultants are more likely to work with groups than are the other two types of consultant, as interpersonal skills such as communication and group problem- solving skills are the focus of their attention. They want to improve both the productivity of a work-group and the morale of the group (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985).

How are the concepts of process consultation useful to a school-based consultant?

Firstly, a school is a large and complex organisation where the same kinds of interactions and group processes take place as in business organisations. Secondly, education is itself a process rather than a product and an improved service can be delivered to the pupils and parents by an organisation that is functioning well on an interpersonal level. Thirdly, group process skills such as problem-solving, conflict management, giving and receiving feedback have become essential skills for teachers in their interactions with pupils, parents and colleagues. Teachers can be helped to develop these skills through feedback from a process consultant.

Aubrey (1988) points out that process consultation is rarely found in schools as teachers are not trained in this model or its techniques and procedures. It is clear however that consideration of how a school functions as an organisation will be of value to a school-based consultant whichever model of consultation is adopted, as it can help the consultant understand why certain problems are occurring.

Consultation research

Methodological Problems

Before reviewing the empirical evidence that exists regarding school-based consultation, it is worth noting that there are some methodological problems associated with outcome research in consultation. Most scientific research is carried out within a functionalist paradigm, in which 'organisational behaviour consists of objectively observable activities that can be classified, labelled, measured and related to other phenomena' (Miller, 1996). This is not a problem for research into behavioural consultation as it takes place within a functional paradigm with an emphasis on observable changes in consultee and client behaviour as criteria of success. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of research studies have focused on behavioural consultation (Fuchs, Fuchs, Dulan, Roberts and Fernstrom, 1992).

Much consultation work is carried out, however within the social constructionist paradigm, in which consultants intervene not in the actual phenomena of relationships and group processes

but in the consultees' constructions of these phenomena. Instead of advising particular strategies to a consultee the effectiveness of which can then be assessed by monitoring changes in client behaviour-a functionalist approach- in the social constructionist paradigm, 'the consultant collaborates with the client in developing a shared meaning of what kind of behaviours will help the organisation succeed in its missions and goals' (Miller, 1996). The consultant -consultee interaction is crucial to the success of this approach and is therefore a legitimate focus of investigation. As was noted in the first section of this review consultation has two goals the solution of the problem presented and the empowerment of the consultee. While the former can be demonstrated experimentally by conventional behavioural research methods, changes in how consultee construes a problem and in the extent to which the consultee feels more confident and effective are criteria for the success of the latter.

Conoley and Conoley (1990) describe the kind of evaluation strategy which they feel is most relevant to each consultation model. As already noted behavioural consultation can be evaluated using conventional measures of behaviour change and is therefore the most widely evaluated kind of consultation, with generally positive results. They indicate that mental health consultation is successful when teachers feel more confident and skilful in their work and use problem-solving approaches with new problems. Change in child behaviour may take longer, as it is a response to the teacher's gradually increasing skill level and early evaluation studies should therefore concentrate on teacher attitudes and behaviours, advise Conoley and Conoley. They suggest that process consultation interventions are most appropriately evaluated by seeking feedback from consultees 'on their increased knowledge and use of group skills, their perceptions of how well tasks are accomplished and about the quality of their work lives.' While these are subjective data, which might be rejected by a functionalist research paradigm, they are legitimate criteria for success in a constructionist paradigm.

Effectiveness Research

Gutkin and Curtis (1982) provide a comprehensive overview of consultation research in America in the 1970s. Among the findings they report are the following:

- teachers exposed .to consultation services believe their professional skills have improved as a result (Gutkin, 1980).

- teachers in schools with consultants find problems to be less serious than teachers in matched schools with no consultants (Gutkin, Singer and Brown, 1980)

- referral rates drop dramatically after four to five years of exposure to consultation services (Ritter, 1978)

- client gains following consultation services may generalise to other children as a result of increased teacher effectiveness(Jason and Ferone, 1978~ Meyers, 1975)

- teachers who work with effective consultants demonstrate significant improvements in their perceptions and understanding of children's problems(Curtis
- and Watson, 1980)

Fuchs, Fuchs, Dulan, Roberts and Fernstrom (1992) carried out a review of almost 200 articles, chapters and theses on the topic of consultation effectiveness written over a 29 year period. While the majority of these used group designs rather than single case designs, 'only a small handful' were experimental in nature. Of these studies, 50% looked at behavioural consultation, 13% at mental health models and 8% at process models. Teacher or pupil behaviour was used as the sole criterion for judging effectiveness in the majority of these studies and the majority took place in primary schools with only 8% taking place in secondary school settings. Fuchs et al conclude that 'researchers must generate new knowledge about which type of calls for what

type of consultation and how consultation may be made more effective efficient and attractive to teachers.'

Consultant-consultee interaction and characteristics

As noted above, much of the research into consultation has focused on identifying aspects of the process and characteristics of consultants which are present in consultations positively valued by consultees. Erchul, Hughes, Meyers and Hickman (1992) studied the interaction in 61 consultant-consultee pairs and found that the more the consultants and consultees agreed on their respective roles, the nature of the consultation processes and the goals for consultation, the more positively consultees rated consultation outcomes and the consultant's effectiveness. This has important implications for aspiring school-based consultants as it emphasises the need for clear, explicit and mutual understanding of the consultation model by both teachers and consultant.

Miller (1996) reports a study in which 24 primary teachers who had experienced behavioural consultations with EPs which they rated positively were interviewed to find out which aspects of the consultations contributed to the positive rating. Analysis showed their comments referred to four broad categories of EP knowledge, skills, personal qualities and role. While the teachers tended to assume that the EP had extensive knowledge of theory and research about child behaviour, their comments showed that it was not this kind of knowledge they valued. Rather, the EP's practical experience of strategies which had successfully resolved similar problems in other settings was valued, along with their experience of the problem in situ that is by spending some time in the classroom, however briefly. Time spent observing in the classroom contributed greatly to the consultants' credibility with these teachers.

With regard to skills, the teachers' comments showed that they valued the EPs' active listening, their elicitative questioning which they felt helped them to think through the problem in a different way and the emphasis on joint problem-solving.
The EPs' lack of a dogmatic stance was identified as helpful, as was the fact that teachers felt free to challenge and reject any of the consultant's observations. Personal qualities which were valued by the teachers were the EPs' encouraging approach, their empathy with the teachers' emotional reactions to problem behaviour and their ability to facilitate social interaction. Miller comments that these qualities in themselves are not sufficient to bring about greater feelings of self-efficacy in teachers dealing with difficult pupil behaviour, but without them consultation is unlikely to be effective irrespective of the extent of the EP's knowledge.

Aspects of the consultant's role which were felt to contribute to the success of consultation were the EPs' detachment from the emotional effects of the difficult behaviour, their ability as newcomers to the situation to ask basic information-seeking questions and their ability to act as arbiter particularly between school and parents.

Labram (1988) describes the phases of consultation from the marketing of the idea at the beginning to the transition and withdrawal at the end, showing how different consultant skills are important at different points in the process. He suggests that 'ineffective consultancy will be characterised by nervousness and lack of confidence on the part of the consultant, as well as by over-criticism, impatience and the offering of instant solutions, together with a resentment of aggression or resistance on the part of the consultee.'

Conoley and Conoley(1990) conclude that 'few hard and fast generalisations about best practice can be made' with regard to consultation. It is however clear that 'interpersonal skill is at least as critical to consultant success as is content expertise.'

Turner, Robbins and Doran (1996) suggest that the role played by the consul tee also contributes to the success of consultation. They propose that a consultant can use de Shazer's classification of brief therapy clients to aid their understanding of the consultee's position and to

adjust their approach and expectation of change accordingly. De Shazer (1985) characterises clients as visitors, complainants or customers. Visitors do not see themselves as having responsibility for resolving a problem, locating this outside their sphere of influence. A visitor-teacher might therefore feel that a difficult pupil should be placed in a special provision as she does not see it as her job to deal with such pupils. A complainant- teacher would recognise that it was her responsibility to do something but feel that she had tried everything and nothing worked. A customer would recognise the problem, own it and be willing to work with the consultant to plan and implement strategies. Conoley and Conoley (1990) make the point that both individual teachers and schools as organisations vary in the extent to which they are ready to take on the consultation model of service delivery and that some preparatory work with them may be necessary.

Consultee perceptions of consultation

Gutkin (1986) noted that 'in practice a school psychologist's effectiveness as a consultant often is mediated as much or more by the subjective perceptions of a consultee as by objective reality.' He argues that both the consultant's content expertise and his or her interpersonal skills are important to the success of the consultation. He developed a consultation feedback questionnaire which was completed by teachers at 24 schools which had experienced a consultation model of service delivery over a period of 6 years. He hypothesised that consultees' perceptions of consultation outcomes relate to a number of variables including their understanding of the consultation process, the extent of their willingness to collaborate in devising strategies, the consultant's process skills, the consultant's content skills and the consultant's enthusiasm. Analysis showed significant relationships between each of the latter three variables and the consultees' perceptions of outcomes. The highest correlation was for content expertise, followed by process expertise. If the consultee respects the consultant's skills in these areas they are more likely to perceive the outcome of the consultation favourably.

Gutkin and Curtis (1982) caution that while consultation' can be an effective and valued model of service delivery, it is not a panacea. Its success demands a certain degree of skill and motivation on the part of the consultee and some teachers may be unable or unwilling to develop these, in which case consultation with them is unlikely to have a successful outcome.

To conclude this section on consultation research, there is empirical evidence of successful consultation outcomes. This is mainly in respect of behavioural consultation as there are methodological problems in obtaining similar evidence with regard to the other models. Studies of consultant-consultee interaction and consultee evaluations of consultation have however identified those aspects of consultant behaviour which contribute to success, while characteristics brought to the interaction by the consultee have also been shown to be important.

Gutkin and Curtis concluded their 1982 review with a plea for the development of an integrated model of service delivery, incorporating a consultative approach with aspects of the EP's traditional ways of working where these are felt to be appropriate. This comprehensive and unified approach is one that is offered by the model of service delivery proposed by Wagner (1995) which will be discussed in some detail in the next section.

Wagner's model of consultation

Key Features

In common with the models of consultation already described, consultation is seen as **collaborative** work with teachers which is considered to be at the centre of an EP's activities. Assessment is an ongoing process which the EP and the teacher conduct together, with traditional psychometric assessment carried out as and when it is deemed to have a role. Thus this approach to consultation does not completely abandon the EP' s traditional activities but equally does not make them an automatic consequence of EP involvement.

Consultation is seen as a **preventive** approach to work with schools, where the EP is called in to assist teachers in their problem-solving efforts. This contrasts with traditional referral-driven models of service delivery which encourage teachers to struggle to solve a problem until they become stuck at which point they want to hand over responsibility to someone else. Consultation aims to offer assistance before the problem escalates to this stage.

The key process in consultation is the **meeting of peers** over school-based concerns. Wagner emphasises that the meeting should be with the person most concerned as this will be the person most motivated to try to change the situation.

The focus of a consultation can be at anyone of three levels- the **individual**, the **group** or the **organisation** and the focus can shift as the problem is explored.

The material of the consultation is the exploration of the **teacher's concerns**, the **strategies** which have already been tried and their **effectiveness**. If the teacher feels they have been ineffective the reasons for this will be explored.

Model of Psychology

Wagner argues that as the school is a complex social system a sophisticated model of psychology is required to illuminate the processes that take place within it and to generate strategies which will address the problems which arise. Traditional methods of service delivery are based on the within-child deficit model of psychology which is too simplistic to match the complexity of human interaction which takes place within the school.

Wagner's model of psychology is derived from three theoretical frameworks - Personal Construct theory, symbolic interactionism and systems thinking. The key idea in Kelly's Personal Construct theory is that of man the scientist, trying to understand, predict and have an effect on the world.
Every individual has constructs which he uses to make sense of what happens around him and these can make the individual respond to a problem in a way which may seem irrational to an observer. Consultation can help clarify how a teacher construes a particular situation and may enable them to construe it differently after discussion which in turn may enable them to think of new strategies to try.

Symbolic interactionism was developed by Mead. It is concerned with the social dimension of behaviour and seeks to explain human behaviour in terms of the social interaction between people which gives rise to the meanings that things have for individuals. Social interaction is the process by which an individual develops an awareness of the meaning of his behaviour in particular contexts. This in turn contributes to the person's view of self. Wagner suggests that a pupils interaction with others within school will have a powerful effect on how the pupil learns to see himself This in turn influences his behaviour. Similar processes are at work for teachers within the school.

Systems thinking concerns itself with making sense of sequences and repetitive patterns of behaviour in groups such as families, schools or organisations. Ideas about the effects of stress on a system, about how communication takes place and about organisational aspects of a system are useful to the EP seeking to understand the meaning of particular events and phenomena within the school system.

Wagner's model of psychology incorporates all these ideas and is thus a complex and sophisticated tool to assist the EP in making sense of the events in the complex social system that is the school.

Underlying principles

Wagner's model is based on several assumptions:

- that children have the right to be educated alongside their peers

- that schools are complex organisations whose aim is to promote the development and success of all their pupils

- support services such as the Psychological Service are there to assist schools in these aims, not as agents of segregation

- teachers are skilled and effective professionals doing a complex and demanding job

- teaching some children is more demanding than others and requires the teacher to reflect on their practice

- seeing a problem as being within-the-child can cause teachers to become 'stuck' and to feel de-skilled as a result

- EPs' actions should be consistent with the idea of collaboration as the key to Change

- EPs are not effective as direct change agents in schools

- EPs can be effective indirect agents of change when working collaboratively with teachers using problem-solving skills

- EPs are well-placed within the system to act as consultants

The benefits of this model for teachers pupils and EPs are clear from these underlying principles. The model supports the principle of inclusion, supports teachers by recognising their professional skill and the difficult nature of their job and allows EPs to become involved in helping teachers in a more direct and meaningful way

Practical Features

Time allocation is a key feature of this model. The school need to be aware of the amount of EP time available to them in order to be able to decide what they want the EP to do. They need to be aware that the method of time allocation is fair relative to other schools. They need to understand the amount of time required for consultation meetings- Wagner advises 45 minutes for a full consultation.

There needs to be an identified **link person** in the school whose role is to manage the EP's work in the school. This involves prioritising the problems which arise for EP attention, arranging cover to free staff to consult with the EP and ensuring that parents understand and agree to their child's being discussed with the EP.

Recording frameworks are provided by Wagner to ensure that an adequate record of the consultation process is kept. This ensures that further meetings build on what has already taken place and ensures that all participants are aware of what has been agreed.

Wagner also states that **systems for communicating** about consultation with schools are required, to ensure that everyone including staff new to the school understand the system and how it operates. Regular review through termly or annual discussion with key members of staff is recommended and an annual meeting of the EP with the whole staff to discuss the role and tasks of the EP is also suggested.

This has been a brief outline of the main features of Wagner's approach which has been included because the pilot project which forms the main focus of the rest of this report concerned the implementation of her model and frameworks in a group of Aberdeen schools. Her ideas are described in more detail in the handbook *School Consultation*: *frameworks for the practising EP* (Wagner, 1995).

Consultancy : effective cooperation between teachers and consultants

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Introduction

Take a few moments to remind yourself of your time at school, the teachers and the relationship that they had with the school adviser. The image of this adviser might be clarified by this next exercise. It is necessary to have a relationship between the school staff and the advisers when a pupil presents a problem.

Often the advice which is offered is "Give him more attention" or "This pupil needs to be given structured limits". The line is fixed for the teacher because "Who can say more?" and "What is a structure?". The adviser makes a huge investment, sometimes with his/her time and energy in analysing the situation but never sees the benefits of his/her efforts. It is due to the unsatisfactory nature of this approach to the work that we wish to re-think this way of working.

An action-based approach is replacing this old methodology. The advisers adopt an approach which has more involvement with classroom practice. In this way the advice is developed in the most practicable and feasible way. "More attention" or "lack of structure" becomes "Sit next to Kim for five minutes every day and play with her" or "If the child doesn't start a task, check that he understands the task that has been set".

The same factors exist between the advisers and the school staff. Certain teachers do not act upon the advice they have been given because it doesn't meet their own expectations/intentions. Some will see the problem differently or have different expectations from those of the adviser. Some are ready to act upon the advice but, through inconsistent application, do not achieve a successful outcome.
When teachers consider that advice is appropriate and valuable, they accept it and will implement it successfully.

1.   Consultancy is cooperation

Since the 1970s the discussion about pupils between advisers and teachers has intensified and developed. The dialogue has not always flowed smoothly. Advisers concentrated upon diagnosis, establishing a precise description and definition of the problem that the child was encountering. On the other hand, teachers wanted to know what they could do for the child in the class or in the school. These different interests led to feelings of dissatisfaction on both sides. It was as a result of this dissatisfaction that advisers moved towards being associated with classroom practice. The action-based approach allowed one to make an assessment which was based on what one could do to support the child. This resulted in the advice being more practical and feasible. The advisers concentrated more and more upon what could be done to support the child in the class or school.

However, after a while it appeared that this approach was not sufficient. The advice was more practical but was not always followed. A degree of disharmony still existed between the adviser and the school staff. The teacher did not follow the advice when it didn't correspond to their own expectations. Sometimes the teachers saw and formalised the problem in a different way from the adviser. Sometimes the teachers perceived certain things but received too little help to be able to integrate the advice into their classes.

Not following advice is a well-known phenomenon. It is the same thing as a patient who visits a doctor for some reason or other. One would think that the patient would follow the medicines prescribed by the doctor. The practice doesn't match the theory. Certain patients "forget" to take their medicines, or take them irregularly or simply don't finish the course. There are others who believe that the doctors are at the root of the problem. They query any advice that the doctor gives and thus are not sufficiently motivated to take the prescribed medicines. From all this we learn one thing: that advice and prescriptions are more readily accepted when we believe in their efficacy.

Bearing this in mind, the methodology of "collaborative working" was introduced into support work. Many advisers and teachers have already adopted the methodology into their work situations. Thus, there is a defined way of working - and more: a defined way of collaborating. Joint working provides a model that defines this collaboration. The adviser and the teacher work together for as long as it takes to reach a shared solution to a problem facing a child. A solution which should be both acceptable to and workable for the teacher and which can then be undertaken with security. The methodology can be applied to difficulties encountered by small children in nursery school, by children with socio-emotional difficulties or with learning difficulties.

2.   Practical collaboration

The aim of consultation is, primarily, to establish dialogue between the adviser and the teacher. Other activities, such as observation, making assessments and using standardised tests, are valuable exercises and can be integrated into the consulting process.

Central to the discussions are the clarification of the child's problems and the proposed interventions. When adopting this approach you need to proceed via certain stages. Each stage has the objective of focusing the discussion on a different element: What is the real problem? How do I understand it? What can I do and how should I organise the support? Does the plan contain success criteria? In this way, both parties clearly understand the task they are tackling.

In practical terms, what are the differences between consultancy and the traditional way of working? Different elements clearly require different emphases.

Each player's role is not necessarily predetermined. The knowledge and experience of both parties should be used to optimum effect. It is not merely a question of routine distribution of standardised tasks but of reaching an agreement after every discussion. For example: who will co-ordinate the assessment information? Who will provide the support? Who will work with the parents? And so on. In this way, teachers feel more involved in the perceived problem and in its solution. Their understanding and contribution are valued and will not be disregarded by the adviser.

Another vital difference is that, at the heart of the discussion, particular attention is paid to the teacher's description of the child's problems. This is logical, because of the amount of time the teacher spends with the child, learning to understand the child's view of things. It is precisely because of this that it is vital to weigh the advice that is directed at a problem and the way in which it has been arrived at. Anyone wanting to support a teacher must have studied the problems in depth. Central to the success of discussions is to never forget the real difficulties faced by teachers.

In conclusion, more time must be devoted to putting advice into practice than was the case in more traditional ways of working. Advice must be developed and evaluated by both sides, which involves regular discussions. Some approaches will be more quickly effective and thorough; only in the course of time does the best support for the child's predicament become apparent.

Stages in the process of problem solving

Fundamentals

Before addressing the process of resolving problems, an introduction to the method of working is established. The purpose of the discussion is to clarify the different stages of the consultation process.

Identifying the problem

At this stage it is important to identify accurately the nature of the problem that is to be the focus of the discussion. Before seeking solutions to the problem it is, at the very least, necessary to agree as to the type of problem that is being addressed. This may, at first sight, seem to be an obvious step. After all, the teacher has not asked for help for no reason. However, misunderstandings often arise because the partners do not explain clearly enough the expectations they have of their joint working.

During this stage discussion concentrates on the nature and extent of the problem. The aim is to achieve a clear description of the particular pupil's problem as perceived by the teacher. This description will form the basis for resolving the problem. But the description is only provisional: it can be modified or adapted later.

Analysis of the problem

Before being acted on, the problem must be analysed. The analysis will provide a shared view of all the contributory factors that will produce the most suitable outcome. The analysis focuses on all the factors that have a direct bearing on the problem. In addition to the main factors, associated factors will be considered: the pupil's individual characteristics and family background may be influential in examining the problem from every perspective. If they in any way contribute to the genesis or continuation of the problem they cannot be ignored.

Choice and preparation of interventions

During this phase the emphasis is on finding alternative approaches to addressing the defined problem. It is necessary, firstly, to choose from the various options. The choice will be determined by what is perceived as the most desirable and practicable outcome. This is a central element of consultancy. These questions must be posed: are the alternatives realistic? Will changes necessitate unrealistic demands on work or time? Can a joint anticipation of the outcome of the change be reached? How are the necessary resources to be determined? Eventually, agreements are reached as to the implementation of the intervention.

Intervention and evaluation

The interventions are implemented on the basis of the agreements reached during the previous stage. Solutions to practical problems are eventually found. There is an examination of the expected outcomes and whether they will be achieved by the interventions. Attention should be given not only to the effects on the child but also to the way in which the teacher provides support and what he regards as being practicable. Then there are the remaining unanswered questions...

3.   Collaboration: not an obvious choice!

"Working together to resolve a child's problems" is a laudable principle. In practice, however, finding the time, reaching agreement, organising the interventions and so on do not always run smoothly. Practical difficulties exist, as do more fundamental ones, relating to the different views of the teacher and the adviser; each person's view will invariably condition the way in which he will approach matters. A bird sees a building in a completely different way from a frog. The same principle applies to the teacher and the adviser. Even if they share the same approach to a problem, the different views that they bring may produce a completely different evaluation of the problem and different feelings about the matter.

The teacher is an expert in teaching, in daily practical work and interactions with pupils. Thanks to this, the teacher knows the pupil as an individual and can make comparisons with what other children of a similar age can do. He experiences the daily ups and downs. He frequently faces the pupil's limitations and difficulties. The adviser is involved in daily practice to a lesser extent, which means that he has different duties and looks at problems differently. He may have less difficulty in establishing links. When he meets a child with difficulties he is often able to put the pieces of the puzzle together simply because he himself is not a part of the puzzle. Sometimes he will understand things more quickly than the teacher.

It is precisely the contrasting roles of teacher and adviser that makes collaboration anything but simple. The adviser is often tempted to assemble the puzzle on his own and, when the pieces are fitted together, to formulate his advice. Meanwhile, he forgets that the teacher is also working on the jigsaw. The adviser fails to take proper account of this. It often turns out, after the event, that the puzzle that the teacher is putting together offers a completely different picture when it is assembled. Or the adviser may underestimate the problems the teacher encounters while putting the pieces together, not to mention the frustration of looking for a missing piece.

The teacher is often tempted to abandon the puzzle. Sometimes he tires of it and has no faith in the adviser's puzzle. He may have underestimated the number of pieces he has already added to the picture.

Collaboration is, indeed, like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Alone, neither of them can complete the puzzle. When they work together, solutions emerge and understanding is built up, thanks to their combined expertise. The consultancy approach demands a solid framework with shared expectations of what is and what is not possible. It presupposes that the teacher's viewpoint - knowing "which pieces of the puzzle are already in place" - is accepted as a starting-point. What is his/here understanding of the problem? Where is s/he vulnerable? What qualities and strengths can he bring to the problem? This is why s/he must learn to work with the available pieces of the puzzle: we don't look for the "ideal" solution - rather, the most practicable.

4.   Collaborative working: a challenge for the teacher and the adviser

Working together with a shared aim is a real challenge. It implies seeking a solution that is not always immediately apparent. This may result in uncertainty or pressure to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. Experience of the consultative approach has shown that it is important to discuss together the child or children who have difficulties; but it is just as important to examine the approach of the teacher or adviser who is facing those difficulties. Here are some pointers:

▪ **Talking about success and failure**

Discussion of a child can often throw up anxieties: "How can I help this child without losing sight of the needs of the other children in the class?"; "How will the other children react when I focus on this child in particular?"; "How am I going to put the intervention in place?" A discussion is

too often seen in terms of a "personal way" of approaching the problem, whereas in reality each element in the discussion must be examined entirely objectively. By spending time on this aspect of the process it is possible to anticipate certain difficulties and develop strategies to overcome them. Thus follows an evaluation of the feasibility of the proposed solutions.

▪ **Discussing the underlying assumptions**

Difficulties faced by children often have repercussions in different contexts: at home, in class, during play, and so on. We cannot influence all these different arenas and it may be that we feel discouraged and anticipate failure before even starting. Have you ever thought "If the parents don¹t cooperate there is nothing we can do"? People often expect too much of the professionals. There is great external pressure, from parents or colleagues, to resolve the problems. And we sometimes submit to this pressure, taking on burdens that are too much for us. We find ourselves thinking "The teacher in the next class is going to wonder what I¹ve done with this child. I must, whatever else, tell myself that he will keep up".

During the discussions it is important to dwell on these feelings and underlying worries. We may feel it necessary to revise our expectations and targets in a fundamental way, whatever the pressure. Realistic expectations will help us to achieve something positive for children with difficulties, while identifying a feasible intervention.

▪ **Discussing collaboration as such**

Consultancy is not a magic wand, one wave of which will blow away the difficulties. Nor is it an easy option for the adviser or the teacher. It is therefore essential to allow plenty of time to reflect on every step, on the possibility of abandoning certain strategies, on the correct moment to take a break from the work. Make time to understand and evaluate the aims of the collaboration.

5.   Consultancy: opportunities and limitations

When is it appropriate to adopt a consultancy approach? And is this new approach applicable to all situations? Are there occasions when it is better not to use this approach? Are there limitations to this way of working? In other words, are there indications or counter-indications for using consultancy?

We advocate a flexible attitude, so that the nature of the situation determines which approach is adopted. It is clear that a consultancy approach is less desirable in a crisis, where speed of action is at a premium and where there is insufficient time for consultancy. Problems may arise that cannot be resolved in the class or the school and alternative solutions must be found.

In consultancy, the main emphasis is on the willingness of the teacher and the adviser to follow the same path in supporting the child. And this is at the heart of the matter. As the process develops, limitations in the approach may become apparent. Or it may emerge that the problems are more significant and profound than originally envisaged. When this occurs alternative approaches have to be sought to provide appropriate support for the child.

Conclusion

Consultation brings together the adviser and the teacher at the same table. Here they can discuss the child or young person who is experiencing difficulties. This approach makes it possible to improve the way in which the discussion develops, while reaching a more satisfactory balance between the contributions of the adviser and the teacher. This method cannot help being beneficial to adviser and teacher, as well as to the child. And this is the ultimate aim: to improve the situation of the child with difficulties - by making different choices

for the child, by discussing different options, by leaving options open. In conclusion, this approach benefits the whole class. If the difficulties of one child are addressed there will be gains for the whole class. Consultancy affects teaching, class management and the way in which it is achieved, and relationships between the children. And thus it is possible to prepare to include children with difficulties.

Consultation:
Developing a comprehensive approach to service delivery

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Summary

This article brings together some of the thinking that seems important in illuminating key aspects of a consultation approach to the work of an educational psychology service. It begins by considering some current forces that influence the pattern of service, and the value of locating these forces historically. Definitions, assumptions and underlying psychological models for a comprehensive consultation approach to educational psychology service are considered, and an outline is offered of how it is carried out, how it works and its outcomes. Common pitfalls regarding consultation and the implications for change in a service context are described.

A Personal Context

I write from the perspective of an educational psychologist (EP) who has been involved for the past 18 years in developing a consultation approach. For the first eight of those years, I worked in a service where individual EPs devised how best to work with schools. From my earlier experience as a teacher, I had considered how EPs could be most helpful in school, and consultation proved to be a highly effective and fulfilling approach that was appreciated and valued by the schools with whom I worked. For the past 9 years, I have worked in the Kensington & Chelsea (K&C) Education Psychology Consultation Service. In the wake of the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority, the K&C EPCS decided to adopt consultation as a model of service delivery and committed itself to that development. I have also been privileged to work with many other colleagues and with over 20 educational psychology services (EPSs) in England, Wales and other countries on developing consultation.

What is the Problem to which Consultation is a Solution?

Many EPs I meet report concerns about the continuing and grinding emphasis in their work on individual assessment and report writing. They lament a lack of creative and imaginative work with teachers, of preventative interventions in school and classrooms, and of effective joint school-family work. Above all, they sense that the educational psychology they are using is not making a difference in improving the development and learning of children and their schools.

The picture that is painted of current patterns is familiar: a strong emphasis on individual assessment and report writing leads to progressively more children having 'special educational needs'; the cost of providing for these children has spiralled; the positive or significant outcomes for the children concerned are few relative to the time, effort and cost of the process. Broadly put, more 'statementing' has led to less problem-solving.

The work of the EP has tended towards routinised, technical report-writing. The end result for the profession is a restricted and constricted EP role, greater job dissatisfaction, lower morale

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and difficulties in recruitment. These patterns require an analysis of the system and the position of the EP within it.

Learning From our History, to Re-Vision our Future

Professional practice is unlikely to change by simply setting its face against the past. Rather, it is necessary to unearth the unexamined assumptions that have grown up through our history and have become embedded in current patterns of practice. We may then develop a more reflexive understanding of past, present and future. Building up the concepts to deconstruct our history can be helpful in reconstructing the present, and in designing the futures that we seek.

Dessent's (1978) account of the historical development of school psychological services notes that the development of special educational facilities and the associated mental testing movement provided the initial impetus for the development of the profession of educational psychology. Echoes of that history may be detected in our present, despite the questioning of its relevance. The later growth of the child guidance movement led to the location of the EP in a psychiatric clinic setting, and contributed to the further constriction of the role to that of tester. The prevalent psychological model was one of individual pathology, leading to the need for clinical diagnosis and cure by someone with therapeutic training. The profile of EP work which was associated with that position in the system was identified in the Sum-merfield Report (DBS, 1968): a preponderance of individual clinical, diagnostic and therapeutic work, and a relative absence of advisory, preventative or in-service training work. The report identified such a profile as a problem, yet 10 years later, Gillham (1978) described a profile that had not changed.

And where are we now? In some services, it seems that little has changed in the fundamentals, although some surface features may differ. For example, most services have adopted time allocation systems as a means of handling the demand-led nature of the work, but many have also retained the fundamentals of a referral system, thus undermining their own development. If it still remains the case that little has changed, what has prevented change? Two related strands are important.

Legislation in relation to education, and especially to special educational needs, continues to embody a focus on individual assessment. EPs have to some extent colluded with this for a range of reasons, some articulated and some not. For example, EPs may wish to be seen to as 'helpful' to schools or the local education authority (LEA), or to help schools add resources through statementing. Or they may wish to maintain EPS staffing levels in the face of apparent threat through delegation of budgets, or to make or maintain apparent positions of power within the LEA.

On a day-to-day basis, EPs are subject to attributions about their role that affect the work in counter-productive ways and which may impede change. To avoid such attributions and their effects in our own practice, we need to stop, work out what is happening, and apply appropriate psychology to our own situation. To develop this 'helicopter view' or meta-perspective, we need to develop self-reflexive processes as EPs and as services.

In moving on from the models of the past, we also need to pay heed to the view of systemic family therapists: it is hard to leave a social field with a negative connotation. That is to say, it will be easier to move on if we affirm and build on the positive practices and ideas that we have developed. As Hammond (1996) puts it: 'People have more confidence in moving into the future (the unknown) when they carry with them parts of the past (the known)'. She goes on to summarise die steps in Appreciative Inquiry as:

- Appreciate and value the best of what is
- Envision what might be
- Dialogue for new knowledge and theory—what should be
- Innovate—what will be
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Consultation: a definition for the EPS

Consultation is a voluntary, collaborative, non-supervisory approach, established to aid the functioning of a system and its inter-related systems. Within this broad definition, there is a possibility for different practices and models. Conoley and Conoley (1982) describe four models of consultation (mental health consultation, behavioural consultation, advocacy consultation and process consultation), outlining what is involved in each model, its realisation in practice and ethical considerations. Consultation, as practised by the LEA EP, I believe, may have some elements of the four models described by Conoley and Conoley, but none is adequate for the EPs context. What is needed is a psychological model that matches more closely the complexity of the social systems in which the EP is working; systems which include school, family and professional systems, and their inter-relationships. The model also needs to support EP practice that is relevant and understandable in school and related contexts, and that is open-handed, so that the work is not mystified, but is transparent.

Consultation in an EPS context aims to bring about difference at the level of the individual child, the group/class or the organisational/whole-school level. It involves a process in which concerns are raised, and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated that combines joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review. Consultation is not, in this view, an item on a menu. Consultation aims to offer to schools a more useful, egalitarian, less instrumental, individualistic form of educational psychology. It de-emphasises positional authority and gate-keeping within the LEA. When consultation works as it is intended, a greater capacity develops in the system for developing solutions, and there is less amplifying of deviance and pathology. Thus, the psychology used is of great importance, as discussed in the following.

What are the Assumptions of Consultation?

For a service to develop a coherent approach to consultation, assumptions must be discussed and made visible so that all can be sure about the beliefs which guide action. In much EP practice, fundamental assumptions or principles are frequently left hidden and undiscussed, and may even be contrary to the espoused intentions of the service. For example, the service may espouse contextual assessment but provide no opportunities for EPs to develop the necessary practices.

Assumptions about our main role partners, teachers, need to be unearthed. A key principle in consultation is to work with others as equals. It follows from this that *teachers are viewed as skilled professionals*. But do we act as if they are, and do our practices support this principle? Many EPSs espouse the notion that they are there to support the school's work with all children but concurrently operate a referral system. Through this practice, and/or other ways of retaining control of the work, the message to the school is a de-skilling one: I am the expert and I have the control—you are secondary. Similarly, the language that EPs use when referring to consultation needs to be considered carefully from the point of view of assumptions about our role partners. The words 'consultant', 'consultee' and 'consultancy' may have a cachet and meaning which distorts the collaborative and even-handed relations with teachers. As we develop an approach that appreciates the expertise of each party, the language of 'expert' gives way to the language of 'bringing expertise from a psychological perspective'. Paradoxically, our own expertise is enhanced through this process: 'It takes expertise to be non-expert' (Draper, 1997).

Other assumptions and principles which are important to a comprehensive service model include the following:

• *Psychological processes are intrinsic in all aspects of the functioning of organisations.* Therefore, EPs have an extensive contribution to make, not just at the individual level, but at the class and whole-school levels. For this, they need ways of making sense of the school as an organisation.

- *Schools make a difference and different schools make different differences.* EPs can help schools notice the differences they make and support them in making significant differences. In this way, they relate to all aspects of the school agenda.
- *Everything we do is consultation.* Consultation is not a discrete item on a menu. All intentional interactions with others are consultations, whether that interaction is with teachers, with other EPs, with parents and children, with other professionals, etc. In the K&C EPCS, we call these meetings consultations, to uphold the notion a meeting of equals, each with a distinct contribution.
- *EPs are most effective when they work with teachers collaboratively and with a sense of the school as a whole organisation.* To do this, they need to be clear about how to work collaboratively, and sometimes how to help teachers make connections in their own organisation.
- *Transparency helps promote collaboration and skill transfer.* When EPs clarify what is appropriate to their role in the system, and work out ways of explaining it clearly to a range of role partners, they increase the engagement and contribution of those partners.

What Psychological Models are Appropriate to Consultation?

Certain psychological models seem particularly appropriate and useful. These match the complexity of the social systems with which and in which we work, and promote a reflexive stance for the EP. They are symbolic interactionism, systems thinking from family therapy, personal construct psychology and social constructionism.

   Symbolic interactionism (for example, Hargreaves, 1972) helps us to focus on how meanings are negotiated and conveyed in social interaction, especially the meaning that a person constructs for themselves of self, others and behaviour. The EP is interested to understand the meaning that a person makes of himself/herself, of what he/she is doing and of what he/she is making of others. As with other social psychologies which hold that behaviour is a function of the person and the situation, this perspective highlights the way that understandings are particular to situations, as are the possible keys to change. At the classroom level, symbolic interactionism may draw attention to a range of features: expectations and attributions, social climate and groupings, views of self and others, reputations and audiences, styles of teaching and learning, curricular demands, and so on. This perspective also highlights a consideration for the EP role: whether working with the child or young person will contribute to possible imputations of deviance (Hargreaves, 1978). By working collaboratively with the significant others—teacher and then jointly with parents—ideas for making a difference to the situation develop.

   Systems thinking from the family therapy field (for example, Burnham, 1986) contributes ideas about repetitive patterns in social contexts, how they develop over time and how they connect to belief systems. It recognises that cause and effect are not linear, but circular, and that the way a person conceptualises a problem is a particular punctuation, or viewpoint, of a behavioural sequence. The punctuation is often self-defeating, especially when it locates the problem in the individual child. Change occurs when individuals in the system make a paradigm shift to an interactionist and systemic viewpoint, so that the view of the problem changes from within the person to something that happens between people and, in this way, more possibilities emerge. This perspective also highlights the interaction between the members of such systems as school, home and the members of professional systems, and the processes that can occur as a feature of that interaction. Consultation using systems thinking might highlight the developmental stage of the school, stressors on the school, changes in the organisation, and so on, simultaneously using systems understandings to illuminate the relations between EP and school.

   Personal construct psychology (for example, Ravenette, 1997) contributes ideas of how to understand an individual's meaning of self and situations, and is especially helpful when an EP is thinking about how to elicit a person's constructs.

Social constructionism (for example, Burr, 1995; Macready, 1997) draws on themes that help to clarify the importance of language in the construction of meaning, and how labelling, problem amplification and pathologising are constructed and can be deconstructed through language. Social constructionism also provides an added stimulus to our aim to avoid the language of deficit, and motivates us to find interactional accounts for the phenomena we encounter.

For consultation to work in a complex context, a paradigm shift is needed from individual models of psychology to these interactionist and systems psychologies. Once that shift has been made, practices from other psychologies may be in use, but their style and the explanation of any impact they may bring will change. Our profession often has a pragmatic stance, which can be both a strength and a weakness; we are prepared to look for what works, but we can also be uncritical and unpsychological. To achieve the widest goals, our choice of psychology is crucial: this was captured in a reflection by Bo Jacobsen (source unknown): 'The Educational Psychology you create co-creates in turn the social world we all come to live in'.

What Makes the Difference in a Consultation Conversation?

Conversations that make a difference lie at the heart of consultation. In our conversations, we explore a concern, the patterns and sequences around a particular punctuation of a concern and the perceptions, beliefs and ideas that inform that concern. We do this through a process of enquiry with the person who raises the concern, using ideas from interactionist psychology and systems thinking, through asking questions that are intended to explore the features of situations. This process requires our genuine curiosity be shown. We are helped in the process by having frameworks and scripts that are supportive of our enquiry.

We are interested in finding the difference that makes a difference (Watzlawick et a/., 1974; Bateson, 1980), i.e. something that is not more of the same but is a difference which leads towards significant changes in beliefs and behaviours. In consultation, that difference is worked towards through the psychology used and the questions asked. One hypothesis underlying this approach is that the person who had the concern has in some way restricted their view of the things that might make a difference, perhaps because the child's learning or social behaviour is so overwhelming or stressful that the range of possible strategies or solutions has been reduced. This contrasts with other situations for teachers when they do not reduce their strategies, and continue to think in interactionist terms, holding a wide range of influences and interactions in mind. The process of exploration opens up possibilities and options for change. Systems thinking may also take the EP's enquiry to a wider level; for example, through a focus on the interacting systems of school, family and other professionals that may have become enmeshed in negative patterns of interactions and beliefs about a concern. In such examples, the difference that makes a difference shifts the interacting systems to a different level of understanding, relating and acting. 'You change the world every day, by having conversations that make a difference' (Watkins, 1999).

During conversation, the processes assisting change are as follows.

- Externalising the problem (concern). We are helping the person to externalise the concern. It then becomes something different from when it was internal. Once it is externalised, the person tends to see it differently and, therefore, will tend to act differently towards it.
- Getting meta, taking a helicopter view. Questions are typically asked about the concern: what has been tried, the effects of strategies, what changes are sought, the views of the child and others, and other relevant factors. Through these and the lines of enquiry that follow, a more detached and therefore comprehensive view emerges not only of the concerns, but of the roles in relation to those concerns, so that the person concerned may start to access their own problem-solving skills.

- The paradigm shift. Through examining connections, it becomes possible to see more complex patterning between the focus and features of the situation. The person concerned shifts their view of the concern from within-the-person to the interaction of the person and the situation. This, in turn, leads to the emergence of keys to change, both direct with the person and indirect with the situation; for example, adapting some part of the learning and social context, such as group reputation or interpersonal skills in the class.
- Engaging in self-reflexivity. Through the process of consultation, the person engages in a process which helps them to recognise their own role in the patterns of behaviour, so that possibilities for change develop through taking different actions. This avoids falling into the dynamics of blame that, in turn, can make teachers anxious about the approaches which result. It helps each professional view themselves contextually.

Consultations that make a difference can be facilitated by various frameworks, not forms or formats, which aim to provide a supportive structure to the conversations that take place (Wagner, 1995). The frameworks support the EP to be creative and imaginative in his/her work, so there are no prescriptive steps to follow but rather a structure which helps the EP to keep on track, without being restrictive or inflexible. The frameworks used reflect the psychology chosen, and require explanations and discussion with the people with whom we work. They act as a structure that supports the passing on of our skills and approaches to understanding.

What are the Common Pitfalls in Consultation?

The surface features of consultation can be seen as relatively simple, so that one major pitfall is that the casual observer may not see or grasp the complexity of what is going on, or what needs to go on. Beware the view which equates consultation with 'having chats with teachers'. There is no doubt that consultation could easily be trivialised in this way, so we need to ensure that, whatever the stage of development we are at, we are continuing the development of our own learning and complexity.

There are many forces that promote regression towards older models of practice., and a second pitfall is to ignore these and their effect. These forces may arise through the attributions and expectations of others or they may arise through forgetting to regularly explain how we work, to all our role partners whenever we work with them, an approach Kerslake and Roller (this issue) outline to avoid regression of practice occurring in day-to-day work, therefore eroding the consultation model.

The final pitfall relates to the phrase used earlier, 'Everything we do is consultation', and it highlights our communicating to schools what is on offer to them. In a comprehensive model, consultation is not something on menu, and the pitfall is to offer it as such. On these occasions, schools may express an interest and add 'we'll do that later when we've mopped up the individual assessment work'. They are not rejecting consultation per se—it is more that we are proposing unknowns. School staff want more creative, collaborative and preventative work, but it is important to be clear about the ideas, our commitments and the outcomes that staff might expect from a consultation approach. When it is offered in a clear and comprehensive way, our experience is that teachers engage very quickly in such an approach, an experience shared in other EPSs.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Consultation

- *Do you ever see individual children?* Yes, often in a classroom, but also outside. Seeing the child in the classroom is essential to get a sense of the child in a social and learning context, and from there to begin to make hypotheses about how he/she is presenting himself/herself as a learner. The EP asks a number of children about their work: what they are doing; how they know how to do what they are doing; how they get help when they need it; how they get to

know what to do next; why they are sitting as they are and how that might vary; how the class gets on together, etc. It is surprising how much can be done in a classroom in a spirit of curiosity, and how it may lead to work at the group or class level as well as at the organisational or whole-school level.

- *Do you ever write reports?* Yes, but generally only for statutory assessments. When other professionals request reports, it is very often not an EP report that is really required. For example, social services often want a school report but tend to ask the EP instead of the school. We aim to be helpful by clarifying what is required and then re-directing the agency to the appropriate source.

- *Do you provide documentation of your school visits?* In the K&C EPCS, we use frameworks (Wagner, 1995) for our consultations. The aim of these is to provide a structure within which the EP and the other participants can contribute actively and creatively. We are open with these frameworks so that before a consultation starts, everyone present has an idea about how we aim to work together. With these frameworks, we record the main points in the consultation conversations, note our current conclusions and any actions that were planned. These notes are typed and returned to the school. Schools say that they find our consultation records highly professional and very helpful.

- *What do you do about dyslexia and ADHD?* The same as for anything else, we offer to have consultations with the people concerned so that we can help in finding collaborative solutions to the cause for concern; essentially, how the child can be helped to make progress.

- *Do you see parents?* Yes, we always work with parents when the consultation is about an individual child. We believe that parents are important and key partners in the process of a child's development and educational progress, and we work closely with them and school jointly over school-age children and young people. In our reviews with schools, staff tell us that they are particularly impressed with joint school-family work and learn a lot about working with parents through the experience. This helps toward our primary goal, which is to help schools make a difference for all pupils.

How do We Know that Consultation Works?

A survey of research into the impact of consultation in the USA (Gutkin & Curtis, 1990) showed:

- student referrals dropped
- gains generalised to other children in the same class as a result of increased teacher effectiveness
- underachieving children whose teachers and parents received consultation achieved significantly better later
- teachers found problems to be less serious
- teachers' problem-solving skills were enhanced by exposing them to either live or modelled consultation interactions
- teachers reported increased professional skills
- teachers' attributions for the cause of problems changed from internal-to-the-child to interactional in nature, recognising the importance of ecological factors such as teaching methods and other students
- using psychologists in consultative roles provided enhanced learning, psychological well being and skills.

A range of similar findings are beginning to emerge in the UK. In the experience of K&C EPCS, requests for statementing drop but requests for EP involvement do not. Examples of EPSs evaluating their consultation practice include Lincolnshire, Surrey, Wandsworth, Kensington & Chelsea (this issue) and Aberdeen (MacHardy et al, 1997).

What About Change and Development in a Service Context?

Change is not mystical: in EPSs, it happens in a similar way to other organisations in education (Fullan, 1991). Having now seen a number of EPSs make significant change in their patterns of practice, I see the following elements as key:

- a clear desire to do something different
- developing practice from principles
- engaging the whole team
- promoting collaborative development
- regular review with all partners.

When these conditions have been evident, the net result has been the re-positioning and re-vitalising of services.

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Peer Learning Groups for Teachers:
A Norwegian Innovation.

Elaine Munthe and Unni Vere Midthassel

Abstract: This paper presents a method used in Norwegian schools to enhance learning and development in groups of teachers. It is a peer based mentoring method that was first introduced in the 1980s and has developed in different ways over the years. Our focus is on the uncertainty that is characteristic of teaching and schools and the consequent need for teachers to be able to get together in organized groups to dwell on topics or problems in a reflective, critical and constructive way.

Teaching has long been acknowledged as a many-faceted occupation involving on-the-spot decision making and little time for reflection. It is an unpredictable profession and because of its unpredictability it is also fraught with uncertainty.

Lortie (1975) ascribed the endemic uncertainty that he found among teachers in his study to the demands from society and the inability of the school system to provide a means of self-assessment or a system of rewards. Teachers were basically left to work on their own in a school characterized by presentism [1] and individualism. Their uncertainty was to a large extent related to not being sure that they could "make all their students learn" (1975, p.132). This conception of uncertainty is echoed in Rosenholtz's work (1989). She understands uncertainty as "few well-established techniques – codified technical knowledge – to help teachers meet students' widely varying needs" (p.4). Jones and Godfrey (1993) as well as Metz (1993) refer to uncertainty as the daily questions that the teachers continually ask of themselves: "Am I doing enough?"; "Am I too lenient or too tough?"

Uncertainty will continue to be endemic to teaching because so much of teaching is unpredictable and uncontrollable. It is important to stress that the goal is *not* to eliminate uncertainty either (Lange &Burroughs-Lange, 1994; Munthe, 2001a, 2001b). That would mean the same as believing one has all the correct answers, being completely certain about everything. Teachers need to question their methods, they need to question how they interact with parents, whether students are learning enough, whether they are dealing with bullying in a good way, and so on. There are matters where we might even need to be more uncertain than we have been. Uncertainty is positive in that it has potential for change and for learning. Without uncertainty there would be little development. In our decision-making, uncertainty also plays a key role and should be acknowledged as such, needing to be regarded as information, not as ignorance (Funtowicz & Raventz, 1990). Thus, teachers need to be able to cope with uncertainty. They need to be able to deal with uncertain situations and make adequate decisions, or in other words, they need to be professionally certain in relation to professional uncertainties (Munthe, 2001a, 2001b). Being able to cope with uncertainties implies being able to answer questions or doubts with new insights. As Peter Marris (1996, p.88) maintains: "In the face of uncertainty, room to manoeuvre may be as crucial as the resources one controls." Room to manoeuvre includes contingencies, knowing about and being able to implement and choose between several options.

Learning to cope with or master uncertainty is considered a major part of developing professionally (Schøn, 1983; Eraut, 1994). Reflection over actions as well as reflections over thoughts is required. This is in line with the views of Argyris & Schøn (1974) who emphasize the link between one's professional behaviour and "theory of action".

A key to development and change, authors maintain, is in the examination of the relationship between explicit "espoused theories" and the actions carried out in school, or the "theories-in-use". However, since researchers have consistently found a positive relationship between school context variables such as support, collaboration, learning possibilities and teachers' professional certainty (Rosenholtz, 1989; Munthe, 1997), we can assume that the individual's professional development is also contingent on the school she/he is employed at. The role of the principal or the governing body of the school is vital in securing the means for adequate professional development of the staff. Introducing ways to let uncertainty become fruitful rather than detrimental is therefore regarded as a school-level responsibility.

In this article we will present one method that we have worked with for nearly a decade. The Centre for Behavioural Research, where we are both employed, is a national competence centre within the field of social and emotional problems among children and adolescents. One of the ways that we help schools work to prevent such problems from increasing, and promote positive development among their students, is to introduce teacher mentoring or learning groups as a school-level strategy. This is a group method for teachers where they are allowed the time and opportunity to present their uncertainties and reflect on various ways of understanding them, as well as to consider various ways of coping with them.

Peer Learning Groups for Teachers

Since the 1980s, peer mentoring among teachers has been advocated in Norway as one way to enable teachers to enhance their professional development. The first to make an impact in this area were Per Lauvås, Gunnar Handal and Kirsten Hofgaard Lycke (Lauvås & Handal, 1990, 2000; Lauvås, Lycke & Handal, 1992). Since then, others have entered on-stage, emphasizing different aspects of mentoring, for instance a systems perspective (Gjems, 1995), and emotions (Killén, 1992; Tveiten, 1998). Our own work in this field has mainly been focused on mentoring as a method for teachers to deal with uncertainties relating to students whom they perceive as having social and/or emotional problems (Midthassel, 1997).

The learning model that has evolved over the past decade at the Centre for Behavioural Research, is to a large degree based on the example set by Lauvås, Lycke, and Handal (1992). The model has maintained the rigid structure proposed by these authors, but focuses more on time for reflection, since the "problem area" in focus has always been social and emotional problems. The model also includes a system perspective, and teachers are encouraged to ask questions that highlight relationships in the systems in question.

Which concept to use to describe the activity we have in mind is always a difficult choice when there are several possibilities. Supervision, mentoring and counselling are basically the concepts that have been used, and that we also have used in our work. However, all three concepts can imply a difference in status. A supervisor may have a higher position than the person being supervised. A mentor may be more experienced. A counsellor may have more knowledge about certain things. The key words for us are "peer", to describe that the activity takes place among equals, and "learning", to focus on the main goal of the activity. All of the teachers in the group are expected to present concerns and questions that they wish to learn more about, and all of the teachers in the group are expected to help each other think, plan and learn. This also means that members are not to be held responsible for others' actions. Each teacher is responsible for his or her own actions.

The group of about 6-8 teachers meet regularly throughout the school year, about every month. The members form a learning community where their own knowledge, experiences and

challenges are the main material. One of the persons in the group is the designated group leader and calls in and leads the meetings. If the group has decided to keep a log, this will also be the group leader's responsibility. The group leader has previously attended a three-day course to learn about peer group learning and to practise using the model. The time that is set aside for the group session is about 1 1/2 – 2 hours.

The main group session is, however, only one of four stages in the learning process. The stages are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Peer Learning Groups: A Process

1. Preparation for the peer learning session
2. Peer learning session
3. Further work with the problem/theme outside the group
4. Follow-up in the learning group

Stage 1: Preparation

Each teacher knows when it will be his or her turn to present a topic or problem to the group. This has already been decided on at the first meeting. As an example, we can imagine Karen, a secondary school teacher who knows that it is her turn to present something to the group next month. She will spend some time thinking and planning what to present, and before the meeting she will also have written between half a page and one page about her topic to be presented to the group. This document will have a concluding question posed by Karen, and this is the question that Karen wishes to learn more about or be given the time and opportunity to think more about. Perhaps she is planning a meeting with parents and needs help to find out how to do this? Perhaps she is worried about one of the children in her class – is a girl being bullied? What can she do? Or perhaps she is uncertain about her own role as a teacher – is she too demanding of certain students?

Stage 2: Group learning session

The purpose of the learning group is to investigate the problem or uncertainty brought forward by one of the group members ("the seeker"), to help the seeker to reflect about his or her actions, reasons and justifications with regard to the problem or uncertainty brought forward. Furthermore, the group is expected to help the seeker reflect about the actions she/he plans to take and also to find and evaluate alternative actions. (See Table 2 for an overview of the eleven steps in the mentoring group session.) If the seeker wants help from someone else in the group, she/he can ask for this at the end of the session. If Karen's topic is bullying, she can ask a teacher she knows has done a lot of work in this area to help her.

Stage 3: Further work

During the third stage, the seeker works on the problem and tries to improve the situation in question or learn more about it. If the topic presented was a parent meeting, Karen will hold the meeting, carrying out some of the things she planned while in the group session. She will experience how the meeting goes, and can then assess it. If the topic presented was the girl Karen was worried about, she may have decided in the group session that she had to talk to the girl, and may have planned how to conduct this talk. During stage three, Karen would carry out this talk and gain experience from it.

Stage 4: Follow-up

The purpose of the follow-up meeting is for the seeker to report to the group the results of the work carried out. This represents a good opportunity to share experiences and assessments, providing a learning opportunity for both the seeker and the other group members. Making sure that follow-up is part of the process also puts some pressure on the seeker to actually do something. Furthermore, it provides the possibility of giving feedback to the seeker on work that has been carried out, something which is sorely missed in many schools.

A closer look at the group learning session

The stages that we will look more closely at are stages two and four. In Table 1, follow-up is listed as stage four. However, in the learning group, the monthly meeting starts with time for follow-up of a previous problem or topic (about 20+ minutes) if that has been agreed on, and then moves on to the presentation of a new problem or topic. In our presentation, we will follow the stages in Table 1, thus starting with stage two and the presentation of a topic or problem for the first time.

The setting for this process is as follows: Six to eight teachers sit in a circle or around a table so that they can all see each other. One person is the "seeker", or the teacher to present a topic/problem. One person is the group leader. The other four to six people are the "mentors" for this session. The group leader has access to a flip chart. Each member of the group has been introduced to the group learning model and has a copy of the 11 steps (See Table 2).

Table 2

Peer Learning Groups For Teachers: The Main Session

1. Seeker introduces the problem/topic and states clearly what she/he wishes help with.
2. Questions posed by mentors to understand the problem/topic. One question each, but several rounds are possible.
3. Mentors write what they believe the seeker wishes to learn more about.
4. Mentors read their understanding aloud and seeker comments on each. Seeker states again what she/he wishes to focus on in this session (can be revised).
5. Mentors pose questions to enable Seeker to reflect on problem/topic from several perspectives. Questions must be open-ended and not include advice (implicit or explicit). One question each, but several rounds are possible.
6. Seeker states and reasons around goals for this problem/topic. Group leader writes goals on flip chart.
7. Seeker states and reasons on strategies/possible actions to reach these goals. Group leader writes all suggestions on the flip chart.
8. Mentors give Seeker suggestions on possible actions and also provide some reasoning. One suggestion each, but several rounds are possible.
9. Seeker explains and reasons on what she/he wishes to do after having listening to all of the suggestions.
10. Seeker can ask for assistance from a group member.
11. Group leader thanks the Seeker for having presented this problem or topic, and gives the sheets of paper to the Seeker. Group leader asks Seeker when a follow-up session is possible and a date is set.

The structure presented in Table 2 consists of four parts:
- A.   Presenting and understanding the problem (includes steps 1 – 4).
- B.   Reflection (step 5).
- C.   Possible strategies and planning (steps 6 – 10).
- D.   Follow-up (step 11).

Step One is to present a problem or "an uncertainty" to the group. The teacher will read aloud what he or she has written on the document which has been prepared. Some groups request a copy of the document in advance so the mentors can also be more prepared for their job, but this is not necessary. If a teacher chooses to distribute a document to all members in advance, the group also needs to have a routine for destroying the copies afterwards.

Step Two is for the other members to ask questions to learn more about the situation presented by the seeker. Each mentor is allowed to ask one question before passing the word to the next mentor. Questions that are asked here tend to be more technical. The mentors are interested in learning more about the factual situation before moving on to more reflective questions. In Karen's case, her colleagues might need to know how many lessons per week Karen teaches the girls, or how many friends the girl appears to have in class. The seeker answers questions as they are asked, one at a time, trying to give answers that might help the mentors understand the facts in the situation better. Two rounds of questions are usually enough, but the group leader can ask whether there are more questions after two rounds. The mentors can also say "pass" if they have nothing they wish to ask in this round.

Step Three involves individual work for the mentors and gives the seeker time to relax and think. Each member formulates the essence of the problem presented from the seeker in his or her own words in writing: "What is the problem which the seeker wants help with?"

Step Four is the step where one by one the mentors read their formulations made in step three aloud, and the seeker listens. When all have been read, the seeker comments on the formulations and concludes by specifying the problem which she/he wants help with. This might be identical with what was said in ***Step One***, but it might also have changed somewhat. This step can sometimes appear irrelevant, but every so often it does in fact provide the opportunity for the seeker to "get the group back on track", or to revise his or her original question, after hearing the first round of questions and the way the group members have understood the problem presented.

Step Five is when more reflective questions are asked. The mentors ask questions – answered one at a time – providing the seeker with the possibility to reflect over his or her actions so far, understanding of the problem, the various aspects of the problem and understanding of these, as well as his or her reasoning and justification. According to Handal (1991), actions, practical and theoretical reasons and the ethical justification form a practical theory that needs to be reflected upon in order to develop. This is in line with Argyris and Schøn (1974) and Day (1999), among others.

To maintain the structure and prevent any of the mentors from dominating the others, each mentor is allowed to ask one question and listen to the response without interfering with what the seeker replies, before passing the word to the next person. The questions have to be open-ended to make reflection possible. Examples of such questions might be: "How did you come up with that conclusion?", "What made you change your mind?", "Why do you think she behaves this way?", "How do you think the other students react to the situation?", "How do you think this problem of yours affects your working situation?"

The group leader has to be especially aware at this time to ensure that the questions posed take into consideration various perspectives. This is especially necessary in cases where the topic is a problem that the teacher has struggled with for a long time, or has become emotionally drained over. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see other perspectives than one's own. The mentors need to ask questions that enable the seeker to see other viewpoints. This can be to see the problem from another person's angle, but it can also be to see the problem or topic from another theoretical position. If the group is unable to provide good questions for reflection, the group leader takes a time-out to focus on this and remind the mentors to include various perspectives in their questioning. Besides helping the seeker to become aware of his or her practical theory and see the topic/problem in a more differentiated way, these questions also make it possible for the mentors to understand how the seeker reasons.

Step Six marks the transition to action or possible strategies and planning. Here the focus is on the seeker's actual action strategies for further work. The group leader asks the seeker to state his or her aims for the work. What are his or her goals? This information is helpful both for the seeker who has to focus on a future goal, and for the mentors who will be asked to give the seeker advice. The group leader writes the goals on a flip chart exactly as the seeker words them.

Step Seven focuses on the seeker's strategies for attaining the goals. Furthermore, the seeker is asked to think through possible future strategies using his or her practical theory. The group leader writes the strategies on the flip chart as the seeker formulates them.

Step Eight is when the mentors are able to give the seeker specific advice to help further activity on the problem/uncertainty. They are each asked in turn to give one suggestion in relation to the topic, and to elaborate on why they see this suggestion as relevant, referring to their own practical theory. The group leader writes all the suggestions on the flip chart. If there are more suggestions after one round, the group leader can suggest a second round. The others should not discuss the suggestions given. They are simply given, justified and written.

This is often the step that is found most difficult and "unnatural" at first. "Why can't we give advice before?" Very often, members of a group already know what advice they want to give after ***Step One,*** but according to this model they have to wait another hour. Waiting can be difficult for a teacher who is used to action. This model emphasizes due respect for the matters raised as complex problems that need to be thought about and studied from various angles before solutions or possible strategies can be sought. It also recognizes that the seeker is the person who should find out what to do because she/he is the person who will be acting on it – not the other members.

Step Nine invites the seeker to comment on the advice given and to tell the group what she/he plans to do. Comments made should also include underlying reasoning, and thus inform the group why these preferences are being made.

Step Ten gives the seeker opportunity to ask one or two of the group mentors for support in the work, which follows this main session (stage three). It might be an advantage for the seeker to have "an involved colleague" to discuss and perhaps to work with, when trying to deal with the problem/uncertainty.

Step Eleven concerns the follow-up session. The group leader asks the seeker when she/he wants to report her further work to the group, and they agree on a date. The activities in this follow-up session are given in Table 3, the following page.

In the follow-up section the previous seeker is called a "reporter" and the other group members are mentors. The procedure follows through the steps in the table, in sequence. At the end, it is the responsibility of the reporter to decide what should be done, depending on the outcomes achieved.

Table 3

Peer Learning Groups for Teachers: the Follow-up Session

1. The reporter reports on what she/he has done with the problem and what has happened since the group session when it was the topic.

2. The reporter shares his or her reflections and feelings with regard to the actions performed.

3. The mentors ask questions to get a deeper understanding of the situation described by the reporter. Each mentor is allowed to ask one question and listen to the response before passing the word to the next mentor.

4. The reporter decides what will be done next. There are several possibilities; the problem is solved, she/he will continue to work on it the way she/he already is, or the problem needs to be worked on differently and she/he asks to raise the problem in a main session again.

Introducing Peer Learning Groups in Schools

An important part of the course we offer deals both with theories of change, and with research on change in schools (Fullan, 1991, 1993; Hopkins, 1996; Midthassel, Bru & Idsøe, 2000; Midthassel & Bru, 2001; Rogers, 1995; Sarason, 1996; Senge, 1992; Senge et al., 2000; Stoll, 1998). Introducing peer mentoring groups can be characterized as a revolutionary action in some schools, or simply another step in an existing programme of professional development for others. We still find that being uncertain is considered "unprofessional" in many schools. In such schools teachers feel the need to hide uncertainties from colleagues. Uncertainty has been found to correlate positively with routine behaviour (Rosenholtz 1989), and the schools in question where uncertainty is hidden, tend to be the traditional schools where little innovation occurs.

Through the years that we have been involved introducing peer learning groups, we have encountered some key questions raised by the schools or by group leaders who have attended our courses or worked with us during the change process. We believe that many of the questions will prove to be general questions that are of relevance also for schools in other countries. An overview of some of these questions is given in Table 4, the following page. None of the questions have easy answers, just as introducing peer learning groups in a school is no easy route to a "quick fix".

While some schools organize learning groups of teachers from different grade levels within the school, others prefer to establish groups within the same level across schools. There seem to be advantages and disadvantages with both forms. Within-school groups provide sharing and learning in the same school environment (Midthassel & Bru, 2001). Besides the effect this could have on the learning and development of the teachers involved, it might also have a positive effect of creating a culture for learning (Schein, 1992; Senge, 2000). But an obvious disadvantage of the within-school organisation is that the teachers will lack the perspective and ideas brought in by someone outside the school.

We have met several schools where the teachers report having stopped using peer learning groups, for various reasons. This has to be expected of course. Peer learning groups are not designed to be the answer to all our troubles. The method is one way amongst several that schools can use. What we do experience, however, when inquiring further about how the learning groups were used, is that there is often a flaw in either the organisational aspects or the quality of the mentoring that took place. What role has the principal played during the implementation of the groups or in the ongoing learning process? Is time set aside on the teachers' plans? How are the groups followed up, and how is the quality assessed?

Teacher collaboration can also reinforce habits which are not well informed (Little, 1990), and group learning may simply be a vehicle to maintain the status quo if it is not carried out in a critical reflective way.

Table 4

**Questions to discuss when deliberating whether and how
to introduce peer group learning in a school**

- Is this relevant for us? Do we need this kind of collaborative mentoring model? Why? How? For whom? For what?
- Should peer learning be voluntary or mandatory?
- What kind of implementation strategy should we have? Who – when – where – how – why?
- How can we develop a strategy? Who should be involved?
- Should we introduce peer learning on a school level or let one group start?
- How do we introduce the topic to the teachers? In groups or plenary?
- Where do we find the time for this?
- How do we put together groups? Same grade level? Different grade levels? Within school or between schools? Existing teams or new teams? Why?
- Who should be group leaders? Should all members of a group be group leaders eventually?
- Should the principal be a member of a group if the principal also teaches?
- How do we make sure that what goes on in the groups remains within the group and is not discussed openly afterwards?
- How do we evaluate this? When?

Note

1)   Presentism is a word that Dan Lortie uses to describe an aspect of teaching, and since the publication of his book in 1975, it has been used quite frequently to indicate that career rewards in teaching are present-oriented rather than future-oriented. "Most teachers will therefore emphasize rewards they can earn in the present; this propensity affects the kinds of rewards which will matter to them", Lortie explains (1975, p.101).

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