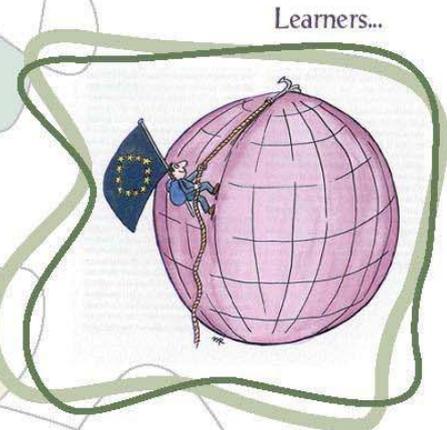




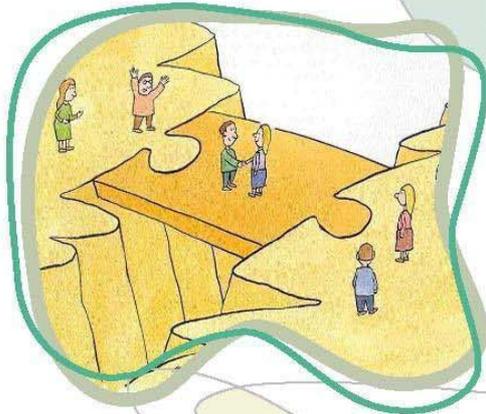
Teachers...



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 **constructive 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 characterised 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 be 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 will 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

- Introduction
- The Comenius Project on Educational Consultation: Summary, 1 p.

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

- 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	HOW ?	HOW ?	IMPLEM.
			basics	general	specific *	**
	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. So far, 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, the 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, even 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.

Acknowledgement

My sincere thanks to Emory L. Cowen and Ze'ev Klein for their thorough review of an earlier version of this paper.

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.

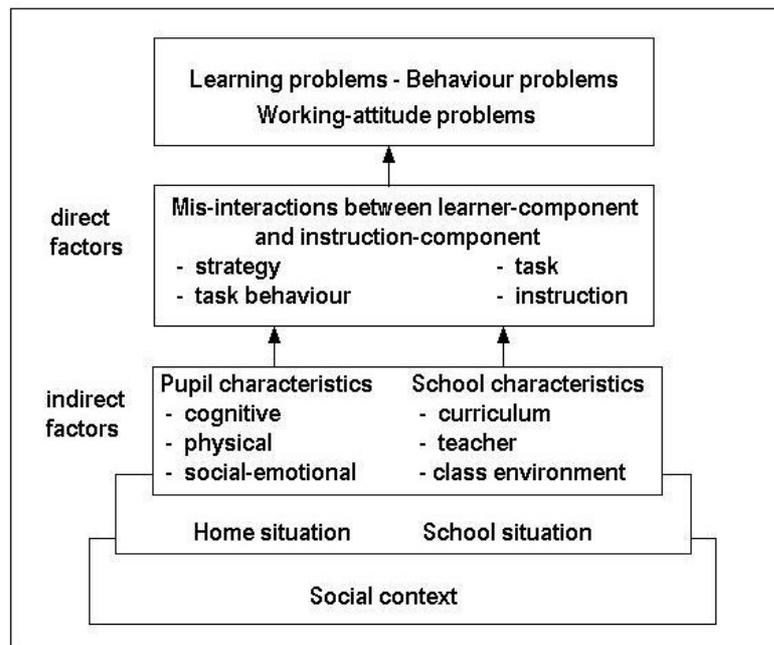
The second notion of educational consultation has to do with the contents. In analysing problems, a reference frame is used which distinguishes between direct and indirect factors. Elsewhere (Meijer 1993), we have shown what such a terminology framework looks like. In short, the line of thought comes 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, elicitive 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 elicitive 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/hers 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 don't 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 I've 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.

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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 the 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

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 al., 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 Schön (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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The Inclusive School Model: A Framework and Key Strategies for Success.

Gordon L. Porter and Julie A. Stone

This article describes how an inclusive environment was created in the school district based in Woodstock, New Brunswick over the past 12 years. After exploring the philosophical underpinnings of inclusion, the article identifies six key areas of effort or initiative that have made a difference. One of them is the development of school-based student services team. The team meetings involved the principal, vice principal, the method and resource teacher. They give indirect service and collaborative support to the classroom teacher. The team tasks are to coordinate, to determine the need for teacher support, to clarify student needs, to define priorities, to define the need for problemsolving and to identify the need for district external support.

Background

The neighbourhood school has changed a great deal over the last decade in Canada. One of the most noticeable change is the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes. This change has attracted attention not only in educational circles, but has also caused a stir in the media and been debated in the courts. In some parts of Canada, considerable conflict has resulted between those who endorse inclusion and those who disagree with it (Porter & Richler, 1990). In many school districts inclusive education has been successfully implemented, while others are still working toward the goal.

Some Canadian school districts have turned to the courts to block parent demands for inclusion. In a most recent high-profile case (Eaton vs. York Region Board of Education, 1996), the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the concept that inclusion should be an ideal of the education system. In this particular case, however, the high court found that it wasn't this child's best option. The implication is that court will view inclusion on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, progress toward inclusion will occur as school after school implements practices that support this model.

The success of inclusionary programs has been well documented. Further growth and development of these methods depends on school districts identifying good practices and sharing them with other jurisdictions. This chapter explores the philosophical underpinnings of inclusion and offers six specific areas of good practice which have emerged in one New Brunswick school district.

The Woodstock Experience

The school district based in Woodstock, New Brunswick, (School District No. 12) has been committed to a "full inclusion" education policy for the past 12 years. The adoption of the policy followed several years experience with a more conservative approach that was based on a special class for students with significant disabilities. Attempts at integration were based on a student's perceived capacity or skill to learn and the regular class teacher's ability to accommodate the student. Diligent implementation of this approach over several years led teachers, administrators and parents to conclude that we had achieved sufficient success to cross a theoretical line and change our model. Our paradigm shifted and our new approach was based on the assumption of full inclusion for all. From this perspective, regular class placement was the starting point and an alternative arrangement would be put in place for an individual student only when the child's

needs weren't being met in the regular class or if the child was disrupting the learning of other students. (Porter, 1991).

By 1985, schools in the Woodstock area had no special classes and every child was served in an age-appropriate classroom where the challenge to teachers was clear - teach all the students in a diverse, heterogeneous classroom.

In the years that have passed since we initiated this approach, we have learned a good deal about what makes inclusion a success in our schools. Much of this success is related to creating a community of people who are determined to make it work - in the classroom, in the school and in the community. We have seen evidence that our community has changed significantly since we adopted an inclusionary approach to education. It is the aim of this chapter to share some of our experiences.

Partnership for Change

The move to inclusionary programs for students with disabilities resulted from the cooperative efforts of parents, district level administrators, and special education teachers (Porter, 1986) Provided the initial stimulus for the effort several parents were particularly effective in sharing the vision of their children enjoying the benefits of being included in a regular school community. It was clear to the parents, and it became increasingly clear to the professionals who worked with them, that their goals for their children could not be attained through participation in segregated classes or segregated programs. In our case, school administrators and teachers accepted the parental vision of inclusion and agreed to work with them to implement a program to achieve that goal. It was in this context of cooperation and collaboration that we developed our program of inclusion.

Getting educators to support the parent's vision of inclusion was vital to its success. Teachers and administrators have the capacity to 'make it work' or to 'see it fail' depending on their attitude toward inclusion. There was a high degree of acceptance and support for the initiative in Woodstock schools. This support was created by ensuring that the need for a change in practice was communicated to classroom teachers not just by administrators, but also through direct communication with parents. In this way, the parent's concern that their child have an opportunity to be able to learn, play and mature with their peers was made very compelling to members of the school staff.

Framework for Support

Once the commitment to inclusion was made it was the responsibility of the district and school administration to see that teachers had the necessary supports to make it work. Those in leadership positions often struggled to provide what was required. Over time, however, three key assumptions were developed, providing a support framework.

First, we accepted the reality that creating inclusive programs in schools is a major challenge to everyone concerned - students, parents, teachers and administrators. Implementing inclusive education is not like adopting a new language arts program or a new science text. It is a much more profound change. It challenges the assumptions we have on the purpose of education; the process of education and teaching (Fullan, 1981). As a result the need for teachers to have the opportunity to learn, reflect and discover new ways of thinking and acting is considerable.

Second, to make inclusive education successful, teachers needed to be supported in their development of new and effective practices for their classrooms and their schools. Teaching heterogeneous classes of students with diverse needs is not an easy task. It is also not an area that has received much attention in teacher pre-service training. As a result, schools and school districts must compensate by establishing in-service training which focuses on school and classroom issues (Perner & Porter, 1996).

Finally, while we were committed to inclusive education for students with disabilities, we made the conscious decision to declare that we did not purport to have a 'program' or a 'process' that would immediately ensure success. Instead, we emphasized that we expected problems and difficulties to occur, and we anticipated that our staff would encounter situations where they were uncertain of what actions to take. We also committed ourselves to active effort in supporting teachers and identifying problems, and coming up with workable strategies to deal with them (Porter, Wilson & all, 1991).

Key Supports for Inclusion

With these three assumptions to provide guidance, we moved ahead with our effort to serve all our students in age-appropriate classes in neighborhood schools. Over several years, we put effort into many kinds of support, however, as we reflect back on our experience during the last decade, we can identify six key areas of effort or initiative that we believe have made a difference. We will describe each of them briefly.

Support Form 1 : Develop School-based Student Services Teams

The *School-based Student Services team (school team)* is the key means by which teachers are provided with support in our schools. The need to develop such a clear idea of a team did not emerge in our first few years with an inclusive education program. We knew that staff members had to work together to collaborate and coordinate support to students and classroom teachers. However, we were not thinking about a 'team', in the way we now do as the focal point for a wide variety of functions.

In our district, one of the critical steps toward developing a school team was the creation of the position of a 'Method and Resource teacher' (M&R teacher) to provide a new role for the special education teacher and the resource teacher. While this new position and role will be described in detail below, it is important to make a few aspects of the role clear in relation to the school team. The new role for the M&R teacher emphasized the provision of indirect collaborative support to classroom teachers, not direct instruction to students as had previously been the case. The result was that the M&R teacher(s) spent a good deal of time going in and out of classrooms, checking to see what was happening and whether teachers were in need of more or different supports. Support might take the form of help in planning or strategy development or it might involve provision of para-professional assistance from a teacher assistant. In larger schools, two or even three M&R teachers might be assigned this responsibility.

The addition of one or more M&R teachers, who visited classes and worked with teachers, provided the impetus for the evolution of a school-based student services team. School administrators - the principal and vice principal - were involved in similar activities with teachers, but for different reasons, and with a different focus. As the process went ahead, the M&R teachers experienced a transition in their sense of professional identity and accountability. Initially they were perceived to be 'special education staff' with a role and mandate that was district-based and focused on serving 'exceptional students' and the teachers in whose classes they were placed. Their role and work were recorded by district staff and a copy was sent back to each member of the school staff. These meetings involved the principal, vice principal, the M&R teacher(s) and the guidance counselor. In some schools one or more teacher assistants might attend the meetings if it was deemed appropriate.

During the last few years, a member of the District Student Services Team is assigned a liaison function to each school-based team. Individual district staff members are typically assigned this responsibility for two or three schools. The school team meets weekly and attends to the essential tasks needed to support teachers and students. Table 1. 1 illustrates the concept of the School-based Student Services Team.

In District 12, the classroom teacher provides the direct service to students and everyone else provides support to the teacher and indirect service to the students. Even teacher assistants, who may be in the classroom working with individual students, do so only under the explicit direction of the classroom teacher.

Table 1
School-based Student Services Team

Direct Instruction	Indirect Service & Collaborative Support
	School team
	Para-Professional(s)
	Direct Staff
Classroom Teacher	M&R Teacher
	Guidance Teacher
	Principal (VP)
	Other Teachers

Team Tasks

1. Coordinate efforts of Student Services Staff and School Administration

We soon found that the M&R teacher(s) and guidance counsellors had to work closely with the school administration to get their work done properly. While their role and function varies, each member of the team plays an important part in the support provided to teachers to achieve the highest possible levels of success with students. Team meetings provide an opportunity to share information and to coordinate their efforts for greater results.

2. Determine Need for Teacher Support

Administrators, M&R teachers and guidance counsellors spend their time visiting classrooms and thus observe and discuss with teachers a range of issues and situations in which the teacher would benefit from support. The Student Services Team Meeting provides an opportunity for these needs to be considered and for the most appropriate strategy to be developed to assist the teacher. In addition, the member of the team in the best position, by role and function, knowledge and skill, as well as time and opportunity, can be assigned the support role. It also allows each member of the team to be aware of the efforts of other team members and thus permits more efficient use of each team member's time. Teamwork at this level also helps in the identification of issues that are less individual and more systemic in nature. In these situations a more generic plan for in-service, or strategy development for groups of teachers may be the result.

3. Clarify Student Needs

Student needs are determined in much the same way as those of teachers - through day-to-day observations and discussions with teachers in their classrooms. Members of the Student Services Team collaborate with teachers to pinpoint specific student needs, for those already identified, as

well as students whose needs emerge during, the work done together. Team members can share information on the needs of students, as well as the perspectives of parents and teachers during their regular meetings.

4. Define Priorities

In every school the work of supporting staff and students is unending. There is always more work than can be done. In this context, the team reviews actions taken on issues raised at previous meetings and agree on new priorities. They can make decisions on the use of their own time, allocate support from teacher assistants or para-professionals, and make other adjustments to programs and activities to reflect the adjusted priorities. They can also provide recommendations for the use of school funds and other resources that might help with the situation. As a team, the priorities they set may be reflected in a school improvement plan, as well as in proposals for projects designed to improve school effectiveness.

5. Define Need for Problem Solving

An efficient school-based team can help resolve many of the difficulties teachers encounter on a regular basis. When support from an Individual team member does not resolve the issue, the team can direct a more intensive approach to the situation, whether it is student- or teacher-based, or whether it involves a group of students or a particular grade level. A concentrated effort by several team members can often make a difference. In other cases a problem-solving meeting may be called for. A description of the 'Teachers Helping Teachers' process used in District 12 is described below as strategy 5.

6. Identify Need for District External Support

It is important that a school team be as self-sufficient as possible, but the team will inevitably encounter circumstances when the involvement of district personnel, or the personnel of external agencies is needed. This external support will be coordinated by the school team and will be used to enhance the school team's efforts. This type of support may be provided by a psychologist, an educational consultant, or a therapist of some kind. It might also be necessary for team members to advocate for additional school- based resources, for example, a teacher assistant or a student mentor. The support might also be funds to support in-service for several teachers on a matter of significant need.

These are some of the ways that School-based Student Services Teams have become a crucial part of the district inclusive education program. The process of evolution, growth, and change is on-going. We know that collaborative teamwork is a powerful factor in the effort to make our model work well for students and for teachers.

IMPLEMENTING A WORKING GROUP ON PUPIL COUNSELLING AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

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The changing society obliges the school to take up counselling. Curative and preventive actions should be structured in a plan of action for pupil counselling. This can only function if the school has the necessary consultation structures and procedures. Such a structure is the working group on pupil counselling (WGPC) who consists of an group of people who think about ways to increase and improve the pupils' relief and who try to stimulate pupil counselling by introducing some actions on both curative and preventive levels. The WGPC consists of permanent members like core and/or master teachers, the principal, the CLB-assistant and the school counsellors. They have all their specific roles and duties. They have regular meetings. Such a WGPC can work efficient and effective when it can realise sufficient information-flow, clear objectives and definition of roles and a well structured framework that supports the participants.

1. The Working Group: some principles

As an introduction to our comments on some principles, together being the starting-points of this innovative action at the school level in Flanders, we have to comment briefly on the translation of the original Dutch equivalent to "Working Group on Pupil Counselling" (WGPC).

In Flanders we are used to the term "Cel Leerlingbegeleiding". The translation into a fair and reasonable equivalent in English turned out to be not so easy. Some colleagues, f.e. Pirjo Laaksonen from the Education Service at the Provincial Government of Uusimaa in Helsinki, use the term 'Student Welfare Team' for a similar action in Finland. Native English speakers from the United Kingdom felt a little bit uncomfortably with this translation.

'Student' although very popular in the United States for all schoolchildren, refers in particular to the elder pupils. Our focus is on primary and secondary, compulsory, education. Therefore we wanted to exclude higher education students from our focus in this book and have chosen pupil instead of student.

The word welfare also refers to more structural and very broad aspects of social policy, far beyond the scope of our focus. Perhaps our option on counselling focuses not enough on more structural aspects, but the idea of pupils being at the core of our initiatives made us decide in favour of this alternative.

Last but not least there was the choice between team or working group (not working party, for the group being not just a study group). Everything is related to teams and networks today. Teams have to be built up, etc... We have chosen for an alternative focussing on the work to be done, not so much on the team to build. Of course teams and groups only function very well under excellent social conditions, but our concern primarily is for the pupil who needs counselling, guidance and support.

The decision on the translation of the term 'Cel Leerlingbegeleiding' has been made, after consultation, by the editor of this book, not by the authors. The editor takes all the responsibility in case this decision is judged to be arbitrary or incorrect.

1.1. Taking care

From all layers of society, the school is called on to take care of its pupils. Teachers are expected to teach the pupils how to study and how to choose but they should also help them to grow up.

Among PMS / now CLB-staff / ⁽²⁾, there is a growing awareness that more time should be spent on the pupil with problems and less time on the location of problems. School and CLB should work together to improve the detection of pupils with problems and they should also provide first help.

The CLB will support the school consultatively to provide good relief for all its pupils. It's an integrated form of pupil counselling, in which CLB, school and parents have a shared responsibility. This view forms the background of this chapter on the "WGPC".

1.2. What is pupil counselling?

The changing society obliges the school to take up counselling. The process of growing-up gets more complicated. The media brings the pupils into contact with plenty of information, information they are not always ready for.

Teachers are faced with problems that occur outside the school, like broken families, addictions, petty crime, vandalism, ... Outside the school, youngsters are sometimes treated like full members of society because they often have part-time jobs and, consequently, a lot of money to spend. Advertising companies take advantage of this and the youngsters are considered to be a specific target group. Inside the school however, they are still considered to be youngsters, and not adults. Confronted with this phenomenon, pupil counselling is not free of obligations but demands vision, structure and organisation.

The school office of a secondary school was confronted with the complaints of duped pupils. Things such as expensive ball-points, purses, personal stereo, ... were stolen during and between the classes. Because of the size and frequency of the thefts, suspicion rose that it could not be one pupil. The headmaster was informed and he in his turn consulted the head of department and the CLB-assistant. How should a school react to such a theft plague?

Some schools only act when a problem occurs. They try to adjust the situation after the mischief has happened. It is a kind of first aid by accidents. Curative interventions are the result.

Other schools try to prevent problems from happening; they work preventative. The teachers pay more attention to arising problems. These problems are dealt with immediately. It requires a lot of energy to solve all the problems and to prevent other problems, not only to work curative, but also preventive.

Curative and preventive actions should be structured in a plan of action for pupil counselling, so as to have a clear view of how to improve the welfare and development of the pupil. If a school considers this objective, it can create the necessary conditions and undertake the appropriate actions.

1.3. Pupil counselling in action

In a school, a lot of participants work together on pupil counselling.

First there is the class teacher (or a master teacher). His proximity makes him best classified to pick up the first signals and to pay attention to the individual and group happenings in the class. He tries to solve the emerging problems.

Then the class teacher can fall back on the class council or the (multidisciplinary team). Discussing the problems of a pupil by a larger group of teachers and looking together for proposals to e.g. remedy deficiencies, can be very enriching. Moreover, it can enable the group to divide the tasks and responsibilities.

In some schools the class teacher and class committee are supported by a number of core members who play a very important role in pupil counselling : the principal (and his deputy), the

⁽²⁾ In the original publication: "PMS": Psycho-Medico-Social Centres. Name changed by law in 1999. Now called: CLB (Centra voor Leerlingenbegeleiding). In this text: "CLB", read: Pupil Support Centres.

remedial teacher, the confidence or green teacher, the head of department, the school counsellor. These core members are confronted with some specific tasks concerning the relief of pupils with problems.

These specific tasks concerning pupil counselling can only function if the school has the necessary consultation structures and procedures.

In reality, a lot of schools already have these structures. We think about structures having different names, but focussing on similar projects: the confidence group, the prevention council, the pastoral committee, ... These groups can both have curative or preventive tasks. Most of these groups work on pupil counselling: they deal with the individual problems of pupils. The prevention council however, refers to consultation at the school level: they organise preventive actions in the whole school, aimed at all the pupils.

The CLB works together with the school to improve school counselling, so that the school does not stand on its own in this respect. They hold a very specific place in the school life. They work autonomously but support the school with their supplementary expertise on psychological, pedagogical, medical and social issues. The school has to ask the CLB to provide the necessary expertise and both parties should aim at cooperation to improve the pupil counselling. The support can only work if there is harmony between the different participants, a complementary collaboration. The teacher is responsible for the primary care but is supported by the school team and CLB. This collaboration can be realised in what we call the WGPC.

This WGPC consists of a group of people who think about ways to increase and improve the pupils' relief and who try to stimulate pupil counselling by introducing some actions on both curative and preventive levels.

1.4. The Working Group on Pupil Counselling

The WGPC consists of permanent members and has regular meetings.

In primary schools the primary focus is on consultation among the principal, the class teacher, the remedial teacher, the school counsellor and the CLB-assistant. Later, this core group can be extended with some other teachers to deal with problems that exceed individual or class problems.

In secondary schools the WGPC co-ordinates pupil counselling activities as well. It takes initiatives to improve the learning strategies of pupils, it helps the pupils to choose study subjects and it helps pupils with socio-emotional problems. The Working Group consists of the headmaster, educational staff and the CLB-assistant. Sometimes, depending on the topics on the agenda, pupils, parents or MST staff can participate as well.

This consultation brings together the expertise of different authorities and provides continuing systematic attention for an integrated pupil counselling. The first aim is to find solutions that reckon with the situation of the pupil. School and parents together can solve many problems. It is of primordial importance that help at school and at home are integrated.

Some pupils can be referred to a CLB-expert. He will then take up the counselling, in close consultation with parents and teachers and with the necessary respect for the privacy of the pupil.

In the WGPC, the members decide whether it is necessary to involve external assistance. These instances can be f.e. a Centrum voor Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg (Centres voor mental health care), a Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn (Public Centre for Social Welfare) (OCMW), a Comité voor bijzondere jeugdzorg (Committee for special youth care) (CBJ), Vereniging voor Alcohol en Drugsverslaving (Association for Alcohol and Drugs Dependency) (VAD). The CLB can have an important bridging function.

The CLB has a profound knowledge of these instances. The ultimate aim is to optimize pupil counselling. On a curative level, they are concerned that the external counselling of the individual pupil is closely related to school life. On a preventive level, the CLB can appeal for

the know-how of external instances, taking into account the individual character of the school. Doing so does not mean that school and CLB are relieved from the task of prevention.

The WGPC concentrates on three areas for special attention. Both during and after the classes, they should pay attention to the act of studying, the choice of study subjects and the socio- emotional development of the pupil. The counselling of difficult classes, for instance, is situated in this last field.

Deliberation upon pupils' behaviour and development and discussing school-related topics should not be strictly separated. Pupil deliberation about a specific problem can soon lead to the notion that this problem is not an isolated case and that class or school measures should be taken to solve the problem. Signals from the pupil deliberation should get enough attention during the consultation over school-related issues in the WGPC.

In every school there are pupils who bully or are bullied. Even if some of them are taught alternative behaviour by the CLB- assistant in counselling sessions, it is very likely that other pupils will take their place and become in turn also victims. If the pupil deliberation only deals with individual pupils, it is like carrying water to the sea. School deliberation should take measures on class and school level. Bullying is often the result of an unfavourable class atmosphere, negative group rules, a lack of agreements between teachers and the presence of areas with a lack of supervision.

In reality, it is possible that the WGPC starts with discussing pupil-related issues and in time will spend more and more time on school-related topics.

The topics that are dealt with in the school deliberation can be very diverse. One can wonder whether it is worthwhile to start with a confidant teacher. If the answer is yes, the definition of his task and the way in which he can be supported by the CLB-assistant should be investigated, as well as the material support he needs. Another possible theme deals with personal development and sex education. Is it not advisable to include relational and ethical education while doing sex education? How do we deal with drug prevention? Is it enough to inform the teachers and pupils about the existing products or should we teach the pupils how to handle stimulants? Does the introduction of Leefsleutels (literal: Keys for living) have a positive influence on the class climate? Does it improve the situation of the individual pupil in our school? If so, are we willing to sacrifice more periods and curriculum time to these Leefsleutels? The WGPC should ask itself questions like these: Which teachers would be best suited to take up these extra tasks? How can we involve parents from the very beginning? How can we inform the participating teachers?

When the consultation on school-related topics deals with this diversity, the need grows to develop a long-term vision. The different projects should also be assessed to be sure the objectives are reached. All this should result in a delineated plan for pupil counselling.

The presence of a CLB-assistant in the WGPC is beyond all doubts necessary and useful. External professionals need a lot of time and energy to find out the specific situation and needs of a certain school. The CLB-assistant is already familiar with these and hence is better placed to supervise a certain project. The assistant is the best person to look after the feasibility, the evaluation and the follow-up of the project.

The CLB-assistant can fully employ his consultative function. He is not just charged with troubleshooting, but is, together with the others, responsible. All the members should build up their level of expertise in order to divide the efforts and to avoid the strain of some.

2. Implementation of the Working Group

(for this section: see pages 49-59 of the book)

3. Functioning of the Working Group

Every school has its own vision and culture. This vision influences the way in which this school deals with problems. A new structure cannot be enforced from without, but should be introduced in the existing school structure. The schools vision and culture should be respected.

Everybody has his own opinions and values. We can think that every teacher should be able to deal with individual problem behaviour of the pupils. From this point of view, it is clear that the confidence or green teacher is very valuable. If we enter a school with this idea, but that school does not have the same opinion, we burden the teachers with the idea that they are wrong. In our attitude towards a school, these opinions are not of primary importance. On the other hand it is very important that we first investigate the values and opinions that live in the school.

A better approach would be an inquiry among the teachers. A WGPC should evaluate and adjust the projects continuously so that teachers and pupils always find themselves in them. In this opinion a school is considered to be a basis for personal development. The school develops its care enhancement from cognitive to socio-emotional emphasis. This means that the school has to provide a good study and work climate, where teacher and pupil feel at home. Pupil counselling should always be related to the world pupils live in and should teach them to take up responsibility.

In the next paragraphs two aspects will be commented on: the composition and functioning of the WGPC as a group (3.1) and the position of the CLB-assistant (3.2).

3.1 Group members and their behaviour

Pupil counselling is teamwork, hence the quality of (social) relations between participants will be fundamental to success. We focalize in this paragraph on three major aspects: the composition of the Working Group, the involvement of the core or master teachers and of the principal.

3.1.1 Composition of the group

The best way to start is with some core or master teachers who are willing to work together on the reform project. Not everybody wants to cooperate on such an innovative project.

A core group also makes it easier to organise the meetings. This core group exists of the core and/or master teachers, the principal, the CLB-assistant and the school counsellors or coordinators. Other staff members can also take part, as well as temporary members, depending on which subjects are dealt with. In primary education, the remedial teacher and/or the special needs teacher) can also be involved in the project. They can all participate in the development of ideas and the project.

Consultation and communication are essential in all phases of the decision-making process: the analysis of the starting situation, the selection of the proposals and the taking of a concrete decision. A majority of people should agree on a certain project. The professional secret and the personal integrity should always be guaranteed. Only if all members feel responsible and if they are supported in their ideas, a team spirit, which is necessary for success, can be developed.

Regular meetings with a set agenda are necessary. The chairperson and the secretary should see to this. The division of the tasks is also very important and the interests and proficiency of the members should be taken into account.

3.1.2 Involvement of the core- and master teacher(s)

The WGPC mainly consists of teachers. Their participation is not free of obligations, here are some consequences. Colleagues will inquire for more information and they should attend all the meetings.

The composition of a WGPC shall be looked at critically by the other teachers. Reactions can be either positive or negative. The other teachers will regard the participation of a popular teacher as positive. Other participants will be highly respected because they have already proven that they can add something to a group. Other teachers feel passed over and they will distance themselves from the project. They will try to minimise or ridicule the project.

It is therefore important that the Working Group gets the authority from the whole group, officially or unofficially. This does not mean that all the teachers have to agree with the appointment of all members. Support and agreement of the principal on the other hand is necessary. The participating teachers have a history in the school: they stand for a certain point of view that is alive in the school.

When the WGPC has introduced a set of ideas, it is quite normal that a difference of opinion will arise. Sometimes the contents of the proposals are adapted, because some teachers criticise the participants, rather than looking at the contents of the proposals.

The WGPC decided unanimously to give a special test to pupils who were treated for dyslexic problems. The special needs teacher was asked to introduce this idea, with all the practical consequences, to the teaching team. The test involved that the pupils would get help in reading the written tests. A lot of teachers couldn't agree with this proposal because the principal of equality was violated. The remedial teacher was the scapegoat: "He should have studied speech therapy", was a common remark.

It is obvious that reactions can be aimed at people, rather than the contents. It is therefore important that all the members of the Working Group support each other. Shared responsibility is necessary because if you want to introduce innovations, you sometimes have to touch some privileges in a school, which is not without risks.

Being a member of a WGPC is often a hard and difficult job. The members have to deal with subject-related matters, values, cross-curricular topics, pupils, the school, the parents, and other teachers. A core member is also part of the school, so objectivity and neutrality are not possible; a core member is not an observer.

A WGPC is working on a vision about the educational project of the school. After some time, this results in the setting up of some projects that afflict the organisation of the school. Certain privileges are touched and they have to reconsider the division of certain tasks to make it clear for both pupils and teachers who is responsible for what. The loss of privileges and the redistribution of tasks create a difference of opinion. The teachers are going to discuss the project from the point of view of their own objections. The discussion becomes personal, the contents of the projects and the innovations are put aside. Teachers who are not immediately involved, also have their influence. Either they feel neglected or their opinion does not fit the opinion of the majority.

You have to take the feelings of these people into account. It is not wise to neglect them. Their critical objections have an influence on the innovation itself, as well as on the speed to proceed with the project effectively.

3.1.3 Involvement of the principal

The principal has the final responsibility for new initiatives. Without his lasting support, innovations stand no chance to be successful within a school. His involvement, recognition and steering are of primordial importance.

The WGPC of a small primary school in a rural environment is convinced of the need for some projects concerning personal development and sex education towards the pupils of the higher forms. The principal is, with cause, worried about the good reputation of the school. He knows that the local community is not ready yet for an open discussion about aids. He expresses his concern and it is accepted by the other members. They are looking for other ways to deal with the problem.

One of the most important aspects of chairing a WGPC is about taking care of the continuity in the activities and discussions and the continuance of thought: meetings have to be scheduled at regular intervals, good notes have to be made, engagements may not be broken. Group discussions can be helpful as long the atmosphere is open and decision-making can be unanimous. The principal will have to co-ordinate the execution of what has been decided.

Special attention has to be given to core or master teachers and other co- coordinators who are confronted with the resistance of other teachers. Resistance always has to be debatable. An authoritarian rejection will hamper a successful implementation of change in the end.

Four areas for special attention are to be focalized on. First of all there is the content of the action.

Core members were fascinated by the a proposed programme on aids prevention as such, but they had forgotten the consequences of the proposed action on the workload of other teachers. Other teachers argued, predictable, the programme was just not going to fit within the constraints of the curriculum. The level of concern among the teaching staff apparently had been underestimated.

Here the second area for special attention comes into play: the teachers. One never can detach the content from the behaviour of those who have to do the job.

The third area of concern is the school as an organisation.

Participation in the process of innovation will lead to necessary re-arrangements of tasks and curriculum periods. Inevitably this will affect the organisational climate in the school.

And last but not least, special attention has to be given to the organisation of support for teachers, including in-service training or discussion groups at school.

These four areas are closely linked together. They are interwoven in such a way that a change in one area automatically is going to influence the others.

3.2 The position of the CLB-assistant as a counsellor

A WGPC is the best working instrument to keep the pupil counselling under constant attention. If the school wants to improve the care enhancement for the pupils, they need the availability of a core group of people inside the school who are willing and able to organise and develop certain activities. The CLB-assistant is one member of this group.

The CLB-assistant, who knows the in and outs of the school, can stimulate a school to look for teachers who are willing to take up responsibility to improve the initiatives on pupil counselling. This is the first step if the school has not yet taken any measures to start a WGPC. Sometimes other groups already exist, e.g. about career choice. In this case it can be considered make the responsibility of this group converge with the pupil counselling initiatives.

The CLB-assistant is co-responsible for the improvements of pupil counselling and should guard the quality of the innovations. The WGPC is responsible for the objectives attached to the innovations. They also have to develop the strategy to achieve these objectives and they decide which activities will be organised. These activities will then be evaluated and adapted where necessary.

The WGPC on the other hand should create the necessary conditions so that the CLB can do its work on a preventive and curative level.

The responsibilities of the different counsellors - the CLB-assistant not necessarily being the only one - can be very diverse. It goes without saying that everybody gets the tasks he is best educated for. This does not mean however that certain tasks cannot be done by more people. The WGPC decides who takes up which responsibility. Not only the expertise but also the function of the participants in the school can play a role in the division of the tasks. The core or master teacher, a coordinator or a head of department, the principal and the vice-principal, the remedial teacher and the special needs teacher, administrative and auxiliary staff, ... are more likely to be assigned some tasks.

The role of the CLB-assistant however is very specific: he is more independent from the school and the principal compared to the other core members involved. This makes it easier for him to act as an advisor, a chairperson, a problem solver, a confidant, etc. On the other hand, he is less well placed to carry responsibility for the concrete actions towards the pupils. However, he should have co-responsibility for the evaluation of the concrete actions. In the next paragraphs, we discuss the tasks of the CLB- assistant in the WGPC.

Four aspects related to the profile of the CLB-assistant as an external change agent will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

3.2.1 Source of inspiration

His training and practical experiences enable the CLB-assistant to bring forward new ideas that can help to solve emerging problems.

In the third grade of a primary school the teacher experiences that he has difficulties in detecting learning problems of some pupils. It seems to him that it would be more efficient if he would know about these problems at an earlier stage, so that he could revise the subject matter individually. This problem is dealt with in the WGPC. The issue is how to improve the information-flow from one form to the other. The CLB-assistant suggests to analyse the existing system of individual pupil riling cards. Should the contents be changed so that there is more space for the description of learning difficulties? Would it be useful to organise a meeting at the beginning of the school year so that all teachers can comment orally on the written cards? How can we involve the principal and the remedial teacher in this process? What about the nursery school teachers? During the discussion it is agreed that the CLB-assistant together with the remedial teacher will alter the filing cards and that they will put forward their proposals at the next staff meeting so that all teachers have the possibility to comment on them. The principal formulates a proposal to organise a few meetings on the subject.

3.2.2 Support from a change agent

In a WGPC people are looking for ways to optimize the quality of pupil counselling activities in a school. During this process, problems between individuals can arise. The CLB-assistant should build up enough proficiency to indicate and deal with these types of problems. He should not only stimulate the cooperation, but also keep an eye on the changing mentalities of the individual and the group.

In the third grade of a primary school, there seemed to be a bullying problem. The principal received complaints from parents whose children were bullied. This problem was taken up in the WGPC and after some consideration it was decided to deal with it indirectly by means of specially planned class activities. The problem was that only one out of four teachers of the sixth form was involved in the discussion, so the question remained. How can we motivate the other teachers to take part in the anti-bullying program? If these teachers would have been involved right from the start, the problem would have been avoided. The willingness of these teachers to do something about this problem could have been measured, they could have had their say in the discussion and they could have decided together what to do about the problem.

Innovation requires consideration and communication, both inside the WGPC and towards the other people involved: teachers, parents, and pupils. The consideration inside a WGPC needs to be well structured.

Apparent unimportant details can seriously disturb the good functioning of a WGPC. Why does one of the members not show up at a meeting without giving notice? Has a date been set for a next meeting? Is there an agenda for the next meeting? Who makes the report and is it distributed among the members? Is there a clear division of the tasks? Are all the problems and feelings uttered so that they are not going to lead their own lives? Have all the action points of previous meetings been realised or followed up?

Evidently, the involvement of other external social services should be considered for consultation and support on specific problems or initiatives. However, the focus always has to be on (or to start from) the school's agenda, not the one from the external agencies.

3.2.3. Providing expertise

Through his training and practical experience in counselling pupils and their parents, the CLB-assistant has reached a certain form of expertise: he can deal with certain problems, both on curative and preventive levels. Problems concerning health, behaviour, social relations, family.... are dealt with from different angles. This expertise can help to improve the pupil counselling in the school.

In a secondary school the WGPC decided to install a primary care team. This team consisted of three salaried teachers who were responsible for the individual and personal reception of pupils with problems. The pupils could see the teachers in confidence. The problems these teachers had to deal with were very diverse: relational problems with teachers and fellow students, special needs, family problems and so on. In a weekly team meeting the CLB-assistant supported these teachers by giving advice, suggesting ways to deal with certain problems, the construction of a plan of action, the preparation of a 'bad-news-talk' with parents. If a problem was beyond the possibilities of the teachers and a more professional approach was necessary, the CLB-assistant took over and dealt with the problem himself.

3.2.4. Referring to external assistance

The CLBs are very closely related to the schools. This does not mean that individual curative counselling of pupils and parents is excluded. To do so, the centres have developed cooperation schemes with other social services and they know where to go with which problems. So, the CLB-assistant can be a link between the school and external instances. He also has a better idea about the kind of counselling that is necessary, the length and frequency. The external counselling can be both curative and preventive. The cooperation can be with a juvenile psychiatrist about the pathological problems of a youngster or with an INSET Agency (in-service-training) about training for certain teachers.

In the WGPC, it was noticed that the class councils did not function very well because the elementary conversation techniques were lacking. Some teachers did not say a word, other teachers did not keep to the point, the discussion was very chaotic and it was impossible to come to a structured solution of the problems. The cell decided to discuss this problem with the class teachers, who had to lead the class councils. The solution was that the interested class teachers had the opportunity to follow extra training in leading techniques so that they could better structure and lead the discussions.

It could be very enriching if the CLBs developed closer links with the INSET Agencies. Their experiences could give interesting ideas about the topics that should be dealt with. The Council on the other hand could communicate their solicitudes to the CLBs, so that they could keep these in mind.

The above discussed job description is of course not compulsory. Personal preferences and proficiency of the assistant can also have an influence on his task.

4. Efficiency and effectivity

Summarising our experiences outlined under the previous sections we now concentrate on four aspects of efficient and effective work: the information-flow, the content of the discussions in the Working Group, the perception of effectiveness as well as on some pitfalls in the process of implementing a Working Group.

4.1. Information-flow

During processes of renewal it is important that, in addition to the core members, those directly concerned are kept well informed regarding the content and progress of the renewal. Good reporting is essential for passing on information. Ideally, a system should be adopted in which

those directly affected are able to respond to the reporting and make any adjustments that may be necessary. No-one must have the feeling of being 'governed' or ignored. In this way, those directly affected become active participants in the renewal process.

The participants in the WGPC must take full account of the views of those directly affected. Sensitive areas should not be treated too lightly. To ensure the success of a renewal project, the majority of those affected by it must be able to agree to it.

In this respect the views of silent thinkers, and any criticisms they may have, can be constructive. Defensive behaviour can act as an early warning and lead to adjustment of the renewal process. Resistance should therefore be interpreted in a positive light.

While it is not essential to involve everyone on the teaching staff in a renewal project, it is necessary to inform the other teachers about the operation and scheduling of the project.

This can be achieved either through written notices or by informing them verbally at staff meetings. The problem with posting messages on notice boards is that they are sometimes read too late, or not at all. Not all information vehicles are equally effective.

A newsletter is time-consuming and labour-intensive. Passing on information verbally is highly effective, but the accessibility of some sections of the teaching staff has to be borne in mind very closely. For preference, the broadest possible information channels should be used. Examples include magazines, letters, working group meetings, staff meetings, verbal transfer, etc.

A school is not an island. Every renewal project will ultimately be felt beyond the school walls. Parents are brought into the process and informed at the earliest possible stage. The impact of some of the actions taken will also be felt in the pupils' families.

Other schools in the vicinity will also look beyond their own walls. Other organisations facing similar problems will at the least try to follow the course of the project with interest. This may result in a discussion, following which a group of schools and organisations may decide to pool their strengths.

Say a secondary school starts a project to tackle dependency. A number of activities are undertaken aimed collectively at the different school years and designed to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy attitude to work and to life. The parents are informed of the project via the school newspaper. The local parents' association responds enthusiastically. It feels that the proposed project should be followed up and deserves broader public support. It gives the impetus for the setting up of a regional meeting with other secondary schools in the area, the municipal youth welfare organisations, the police and the local alcohol and drug abuse centre. A report is compiled on the school project and correspondences are sought between existing initiatives with the aim of combining the efforts and creating a more coherent approach to the problem in the future.

4.2. Content of the discussions

Discussion of the objectives envisaged for the long, medium or short term can be a good starting point in seeking to optimise the pupil counselling process. Long-term objectives are important as a general goal to which all efforts are ultimately directed. In the medium term, a plan can be formulated setting out the goals for the ensuing years. These goals are more concrete than the long-term objectives. Short-term goals are the tangible actions taken now in the field.

The long-term objective of the WGPC is that pupil counselling should be geared to developing pupil independence. To promote that independence, attempts will be made over the next three years to place the emphasis on the counselling of class groups. The aim will be to develop the pupils' social and relationship skills. One of the tangible actions that will inevitably have to be taken will be to encourage class teachers to follow a training programme. After all, they are the ones who feel they lack all the skills to deal with groups of pupils. They want to be able to supervise and motivate the class as a group more effectively.

A WGPC can also start from the basis of existing policy activities. First an inventory is made of all activities; these activities are then analysed to see whether they fit in with the aimed-for objectives. Based on their feasibility, usability and effectiveness, a view is formed as to how these activities can be deployed more effectively.

In practice, attempts to optimise pupil counselling are most frequently based on problems and bottlenecks; an urgent problem is identified and taken as the starting point. It is important here that the problem is carefully analysed and clearly formulated and that the solution is a systematic process. Creative and achievable solution methods are naturally preferred. Knowing what we want to achieve stimulates creativity.

4.3. Perception of effectiveness

It is useless to try and solve all problems at the same time. If a selection has to be made, there are a few criteria that could make it easier to choose: feasibility, available time and proficiency at hand. Also the participants and their extra training should be considered. Next, the moments of evaluation should be set.

The participating teachers should feel that they are supported by a solid, well-structured framework. This support is necessary to let them feel that the actions can be successful. Such a well-structured framework is often missing: some individuals have to pull the cart. This means that these people are under a lot of pressure, which jeopardises the feasibility of the project.

In an early stage, CLB-assistants can be very successful in organising new projects. In a WGPC, they first should be supported but later, their tasks should be divided among the other members.

The response from pupils and parents can be very motivating: positive reactions are very supporting. Activities that guarantee a perception of success, should be stimulated. Immediate result gives people the idea that what they do makes a difference. These positive reactions, no matter how small they are, should be directed towards the participants: it gives them a good feeling.

The WGPC advises to embellish the playgrounds (new benches, new and more plants and trees). Both pupils and teachers agree that it is an improvement because now it is more pleasant to use them. The school climate has improved.

4.4. Pitfalls

In a WGPC, different people have to work together: interested teachers, principal, CLB-assistant, co-ordinator, etc.. Every member of the group has his own ideas, his own responsibilities in the school, his own function. Misunderstandings between these people, or a lack of clarity about the tasks can lead to conflicts.

The principal wants a more systematic approach of the pupil counselling to increase the quality. This is discussed in the WGPC. In the past, pupil counselling was the responsibility of the internal pedagogical counsellor, who had his own ideas about education and counselling. So far he was left completely free by the principal, but this does not mean that all the members of the WGPC will agree with the ideas and actions of the internal counsellor. Some members of the Working Group might have different ideas about education, the tasks and responsibilities in the school. This should be talked through first, before the Working Group can deal with this problem.

It is also important to realise that not everybody is open to change and innovation. Some teachers might be afraid of innovations. Other teachers feel too uncertain to add to the process. Other teachers might be afraid to lose their privileges, advantages or power and oppose the proposed innovations. Still others might have a different opinion about what a school should be and they might feel suspicious of the innovations.

Because of his training and practical experience, the CLB-assistant will be better situated than the average teacher to do pupil counselling. If he feels that his experience and proficiency are wanted in a school, it will increase his self-image. The danger then is that he will be considered to be the only person in the school who actually is able to solve problems with pupils.

The CLB-assistant feels consolidated in his task and will forget about teaching other teachers how to deal with problems.

*A CLB-assistant is very good at introducing learning principles to the pupils, both individually and on classical level. He has managed to improve the learning strategies of some pupils so that their results have increased considerably. The teachers consider him to be an expert on this matter so every time such a problem appears, the pupil is sent to the assistant. The assistant has to put more and more time in this counselling, so he has not got any time left to do other things in the school. In the WGPC, it could be discussed how the proficiency about *Leren leren* (Learning to learn) of the teachers can be increased so that in the future they can deal with this problem themselves.*

It is therefore important to pay attention to consultative pupil counselling, whether it is about learning to learn, curriculum-related or socio-emotional problems. The first question then should be how to improve the knowledge and skills of the teachers, parents and pupils, so that they can solve problems themselves. The CLB-assistant should support the teachers by providing knowledge and skills.

It would also be very useful if a WGPC would think about the objectives in the long term. This will lead to discussions about what pupil counselling should be. A confrontation between different opinions and values is inevitable. This discussion should not be endless, it is necessary to concretize at an early stage and to develop a vision so that concrete activities and an assignment of tasks can be planned. If this vision is missing, it is impossible to come to an integrated project.

*The WGPC is programming an educational seminar. The discussion is about the topics that should be dealt with, who could be asked to give a lecture, how to make this day more attractive to the teachers, how the teachers can be more involved, etc.... The objectives are not discussed, neither is the type of evaluation that should be used afterwards or the way in which the topics could be handled later. The question whether the educational seminar *fits* in the vision on pupil counselling is not asked, simply because there is no vision.*

The introduction of innovations by the WGPC goes in phases. First a WGPC should develop a vision and set the objectives, then some innovations are introduced and executed by the teachers. Finally, the innovations should be placed within the framework of an overall plan for the school.

The average time to institutionalise an innovation is estimated to be five years. This is not surprising because communication is very important and a consensus should be reached. Consequently, not all objectives can be realised at the same time so priorities have to be set.

To optimize the career choice in primary education, a team of nursery school teachers and teachers of the first form work together to realise a plan to break down role patterns in the choice of subjects. Some class activities are developed and planned over the years. On the next staff meeting, all the involved teachers are informed. The influences of the project on the higher years are discussed and it appears to be rather difficult to come to a consensus because some teachers think that breaking down role patterns is rather a task for the family. If at this moment a decision is forced, it will be very difficult to come to a coherent project because some teachers will feel aggrieved and their motivation will decrease.

To improve the well-being of the pupils means that you have to deal with emerging problems immediately, but also that you try to avoid problems with preventive actions. The WGPC has to pay attention to both aspects, curative and preventive actions should be in perfect harmony.

How do we perceive Educational Consultation?

Wim Meijer and Jeannet Smit-Wimmenhove
ORIG. NI.: *School en Begeleiding*, 2001, 18; 3. p.16-20

Summary: *In this report Wim Meijer and Jeannet Smit-Wimmenhove report about an inquiry among teachers and internal consultants into their experience with and appreciation of educational consultancy (EC). Further they examine to what extent teachers and internal consultants find the short term and long term objectives of EC as important as do the external consultants of the educational consultancy service (ECS). The results are relevant for the ECSs that want to introduce EC.*

1 The teacher is central

In educational consultancy the teacher action is increasingly central. The teacher is seen as a key figure for achieving reforms not only in large-scale projects of educational reform but also in the approach of pupils with difficulties. In consultancy this notion led to adjusting the diagnostics and the nature of consultancy itself. The concept of 'action oriented diagnostics' refers to the ambition of making diagnostic examination lead to practical advice which the teacher can go along with. In order to attain this objective there are two things that matter: question oriented working as well as a good cooperation with the teacher.

'Educational consultancy' is a method in which the cooperation between teacher and consultant, though starting from principal grounds, is worked out as a step-by-step consultancy path. This path can be characterised as follows. From start to finish we keep in mind the problem which the teacher has with a pupil; most likely diagnostic examination will be a part of the path. It aims not only to systematically tackle the problem with a pupil in the short term, but also - in the long term - to professionalise the teacher. With EC unnecessary examinations and waiting lists are made redundant, and justice is done to the socioscientific character of the process of consultancy.

The notion 'consultancy' in EC refers to the manner in two professionals cooperate during the process, i.e. the consultant and the teacher. The term 'peer-to-peer consultancy' is used when emphasis is placed on the equal input of both partners in the course of the process. However, when we consider EC as it is carried out by the ECSs, the input of the consultant is partly determined by the pledge which ECSs made towards schools, which is education improvement. We therefore wish to stick to the term 'educational consultancy' instead of 'peer-to-peer consultancy'. A consultancy path consists of a number of steps, being concluded only when the outcome is given a positive assessment.

Educational Consultation (EC)

Various papers show that a number of goals are borne in mind with EC.

- EC contributes to solving such problems as may occur between teachers and pupils in an educational setting (*'solving pupil problems'*)
- EC contributes to teacher *professionalisation*
- EC results in a close cooperation between consultant and teacher.

The teacher-consultant cooperation will for many teachers and consultants imply a change of the accepted operational procedures. Initially the mere development of the cooperation itself is an objective which will require a lot of attention and commitment from the participants.

Later on the cooperation will strive for two goals: the solving of pupil problems and the contribution to professionalisation. From the management perspective we can add a fourth objective: better integration of pupils in a standard elementary school community, and *reducing the referral* to special-need schools of elementary education.

2 Educational Consultancy in Practice

Consultants working along these lines try to correctly interpret the different ways in which teachers express the problems of working with pupils, and try to find solutions. Whether diagnostic examination will take place, the way in which intervention is made appropriate, the way this intervention is carried out, all these aspects are not just determined by the 'corpus of pupil problems', but also by the need of consultancy as expressed by teachers. In addition the existing body of internal pupil-oriented care within a school community will be taken into account. In this way each consultancy path is given its unique features.

In this process both consultant and teacher have their proper parts. The consultant plays the double part of diagnoser and consultant. He will implement his own knowledge of children and of education, but also his expertise as a consultant. He will not automatically perform diagnostic investigation in order to come up with advice, but will ask the teacher to specify the problems as precisely as possible.

The teacher on the other hand is mainly viewed as the person daily interacting with the pupil. The experience and practical skills are expressly relied on when it comes to joint diagnosing and problem solving.

In this context the consultant will try to get the teacher to look for solutions himself, as far as possible, and will discuss how these solutions can be worked out in practice. Consultants sometimes experience a tension between their diagnostic and their consultative role, the emphasis being alternatively on the pupil problem solving and on the teacher professionalisation. The twin objective of the cooperation process demands a high amount of flexibility.

In general consultants themselves have chosen to follow this method. Literature shows that consultants are relatively satisfied about this procedure. But how do teachers see this procedure? And what do the internal consultants think about this? In the day-to-day context they will indeed make up the third party concerned. Some internal consultants do the consultancy to its full extent. Others offer assistance to the group teacher (such as setting didactic tests) or to the external ECS consultant. In practice there is a range of variants when it comes to specific task assignment. In a number of cases the internal consultant acts as intermediary between the teacher and the external consultant, which obviously affects the mode of operation of the EC.

3 Purpose of investigation

Three topics of investigation are dealt with. The first inquiry concerns the previous experience teachers and internal consultants have with the ECSs. How often have teachers gone through the process of consultancy, and to what extent are the various phases of the consultancy path effectively activated? What hitches are encountered in practice?

In second position comes the inquiry into the EC appreciation. Is it true that teachers and internal consultants effectively experience the positive qualities of EC (such as cooperation), as mentioned in literature? What objectives are aspired for by the EC in their view?

It was shown that teachers are satisfied with the traditional ways of pupil monitoring. It is therefore useful to know how the EC is validated in comparison with the more traditional approach.

The third scope of inquiry refers to the differences of EC appreciation between teachers, internal consultants and external consultants. We assume that teachers and internal consultants are mainly interested in the short term objective (i.e. finding solutions for the problems they encounter with pupils) and much less so in the other objectives of EC. External consultants, on the other hand, are expected to be rather more interested in teacher professionalisation.

If *'solving pupil problems'* is deemed an important aspect of the cooperation the following statements will be approved: teachers are able to get started soon; the executability of the jointly decided measures is better; with this approach more pupils can be helped, etc.

If *teacher professionalisation* is given high ratings, then obviously statements are approved that express the participation of the teacher in all phases of the process, those that claim that teachers are better able to report, diagnose and offer assistance, as well as those that refer to increased self-confidence of teachers.

If *the process of cooperation itself* is seen as a primary objective, this is expressed when teachers see the work of the consultant as a good complement to their own, and when they give both parties an equal footing. They will not view the time and dedication required from themselves as too extensive.

The fourth objective, *reduction of the number of referrals*, goes without saying.

4 Results

What experience do teachers and internal consultants have with EC?

The experience varies from person to person. Internal consultants on average have gone through 3 times as many consultancy procedures as have the teachers, they consequently are more familiar with this approach than the teachers.

In practice not all phases of the path appear to be carried out in a structured way. Problem analysis (the exact problem specification) and the search for solutions constitute the core of the consultancy talks. The coaching and the approach activities assessment are clearly less acute aspects.

How do teachers and internal consultants evaluate EC?

EC evaluation is mainly positive. Teachers and internal consultants perceive different advantages to the EC approach. They particularly consider it rewarding to look for solutions together. Both teachers and internal consultants highly value a personal input to the consultancy process. In this way similar problems will better be met in the future. Teachers and internal consultants also feel that their [external] consultant is strongly concerned with the teacher job problem and that his advice is well geared to the action scope of the individual teacher.

EC is also rated more positive than the traditional way of monitoring. A significant majority considers it a positive trend to move from a pupil-oriented to a teacher-oriented approach. It was shown that a large group of teachers and internal consultants appreciates helping to do some thinking and look for possible solutions. The majority does not only expect some research to be done into child factors, but also for the consultant to move into the group and observe interactive processes.

What objectives are held by EC in practice?

Most teachers and internal consultants (91%) feel that EC contributes to *solving pupil problems* in the educational setting. Two-thirds even call EC more effective than another manner of approach. But effects are also seen with respect to their own *professionalisation*; they learn to better deal with problems in educational settings (over 85%). The quality of consultancy is improved by the EC approach, in particular when fast acting is concerned, and complementing the teacher action scope. Opinions are divided on the topic of *reducing the number of referrals*.

About half the respondents expect pupils to be less soon referred to schools of special-need education.

Hitches

Apart from all the positive experiences two important problems are mentioned, namely that not every problem can be solved with EC, and that EC sometimes causes the whole monitoring process to slow down. This has to do with the practical EC execution as part of the ECS range of activities. It has been agreed with the schools that only those pupils that 'have or have been in consultancy' can go in for diagnostic screening. EC is especially seen as less suitable for serious and complex behaviour problems and problems at home. One third of the respondents points out that EC requests certain skills not within their capacities. Only a small minority state EC involves too much time and preparation.

Connection of experience and appreciation

Wimmenhove (2000) also checked if there is a co-reference between the number of consultancies experienced, and the measure of EC appreciation. In order to compute this connection all items investigating the EC appreciation have been added up to establish a new variable. The correlation between this variable and the number of consultations (corrected for the variable internal consultant) is low but significant (1999/2000: $r = .16$; $p < .05$; 1997/'98/'99: $r = .23$; $p < .01$). It may therefore be concluded that teachers and internal consultants will be more positive towards EC as their experience increases.

Differences between teachers, internal and external consultants

To what extent do we see agreement about the objectives aimed at in EC? Table 1 reveals that the differences between the three groups are small.

Table 1 - Appreciation of objectives: median and standard deviation per objective, per group

	External consultants		Internal consultants		Teachers	
	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd
EC objectives						
professionalisation	52.0	5.46	49.8	6.50	47.6	7.65
pupil problem	38.0	5.48	35.1	7.52	32.9	7.17
cooperation	38.1	4.09	38.0	4.71	36.5	5.94
fewer referrals	12.1	3.43	11.6	3.57	11.9	3.46

The scores of respondents differ for the objectives of professionalisation ($F 3.36$; $p < .05$) and for the solving of pupil problems ($F 3.37$; $p < .05$). The differences between groups for the two other objectives are not significant. Groups do not differ in meaning concerning the importance of coog cooperation, and about the question on reduction of referrals. Professionalisation is most highly rated as a main EC objective by the external consultants. This agrees with our expectations. What disagrees is the fact that external consultants also score higher than internal ones and teachers for the objective of solving pupil problems.

5 Discussion

Since EC was introduced in schools as part of the ECS activities scope, it has been rather well implemented. Not all phases are structurally activated in every consultancy path. It is a general fact that teachers and internal consultants who have experienced EC are satisfied about this approach (Wimmenhove, 2000). They note various advantages, also in comparison to the current manner of approach. The more they have been familiar, the more positive their attitude will be with regard to the [new] method. This is an important finding for ECSs that wish to introduce EC

in schools: what you know is what you like. Also worth mentioning is the finding that experiences are diverse. Evidently teachers are less familiar with EC than are the internal and external consultants. For the long term objective (professionalisation) this is a major limitation. This variety of experience among teachers (and schools) means that ECSs must and can adapt the concrete application of the method after a certain time. A case in point is the rule that pupils should first have 'gone into consultancy' before they are eligible for diagnostic screening. At first this rule can be an element for EC to become accepted. But as all parties have gained more experience with it, one can better estimate whether screening is required, and then this rule is no longer needed.

The external consultants score better than the internal ones for two of the four objectives, and the latter in turn score higher than the teachers. For the approach to succeed it has to be stressed that the different parties should aim at the same objectives. Brown et al. (1998) indicate how important it is to outline right from the start of each consultancy path from which perspective the parties concerned view the problems at hand. For instance, a learning or behavioural problem is seen by some as a mismatch between educational activities presented and the pupil expectations. Others will see it as a management problem. In fact both are right.

Since EC considers a number of objectives at the same time, the risk exists that participants with different objectives will also put the stress on different aspects of the consultancy path; as a result the process may fail to be optimally conducted.

However, we fortunately note that no basic assessment differences are found between teachers, internal and external consultants. Unlike our expectations it seems that teachers do not single-mindedly opt for the short term objective (i.e. looking for solutions for the pupil problem), but they also see professionalisation as a major objective of EC.

The conclusion will be that professionalisation as an objective does not interfere with the process of finding solutions for pupil problems. EC does appear to have killed two birds with one stone, as was intended from the start.

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Helping people to become better problem solvers: A constructivist and solution focussed process model of consultation

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Abstract: *What can we do if we want to become more effective in the way we consult with teachers, parents, students, other persons as well as with boards of institutions? - We have at least two options which we may combine: We try to get feedback on the effects of our actual consultation work and improve our action from there. We search for existing process models that tell us how to proceed. Starting from those considerations, it was the first author's quest, to develop a process model of consultation, that scored high on standards of efficacy as well as of ethics and morality. The choice of the "Menschenbild" was on the "coping man" and the qualities of "good problem solvers". The objective was "empowerment". For the didactic approach some elements of brief therapy concepts appeared useful. Thus a practical guideline for the process of consultation was developed. If we follow this guideline as a heuristic, chances are that we become more effective and (morally) "better" in doing consultation.*

What can we do as professionals if we want to become more effective in the way we consult with teachers, parents, students, other persons as well as with boards of institutions?

Theoretically, we have at least two options:

- We try to get feedback on the effects of our actual consultation work and improve our action from there.
- We search for existing process models that tell us how to proceed. Then we explore which one of these would help us the most, to become more effective.

Practically, we may combine the two strategies.

How can we figure out the process model that would help us the most to become more effective?- You may say: The model has to be evaluated in terms of effectiveness. It has to accue to my personal beliefs and values. It must fit to my personal style of working and it has to be "practical".- To the extent that the economic pressure affects our daily work, additional conditions may affect our working organization: effectiveness, efficiency.

A brief developmental history of the process model

Starting from those considerations, it was the first author's quest, to develop a process model of consultation, that scored high on standards of efficacy as well as on standards of ethics and morality.

High standards of ethics could be – besides a certain "Menschenbild" - defined as a high degree of informed consent and as a high degree of client(s) satisfaction.

High standards of efficacy could be defined as achieving high standards of ethics with a small degree of expenditure of time for the client(s) as well as for the consultant. A special aspect of efficacy could be seen in the effect that consultation would – in addition to the help with regard to the specific actual concern – also enhance the client competencies of coping in situations he or she will encounter in the future.

The basic assumption in terms of a “Menschenbild” was that of a “coping man” or “coping woman”. What people perceive as problems represents their attempts to cope with difficult situations in everyday life. From that perspective, research on human problem solving concerning problems of living and working appeared to be useful:

Apparently good problem solvers show two competencies (DÖRNER 1989) which bad problem solvers do not have to that extent:

- They develop a concrete idea of how things will be after the problem has been solved.
- They analyse what had been effective in the past and maintain it while introducing changes.

Considering these competencies of good problem solvers: How could we assist people in such a development? - Searching within the context of pedagogy as well as psychology I discovered various techniques that appeared potentially useful within the approaches of Milton Erickson, of the Mental Research Institute (Palo Alto), the Mailand school and the Milwaukee Brief Family Therapy Center (BFTC).

In the sense of a methodical eclecticism I employed these various techniques in my ongoing consultation work. By means of the feedback I obtained from my clients I tried to get hints as to which ones were useful to them and which ones were not. As an example: The professionals at the BFTC used to give tips to the clients as a standard procedure in their consultation sessions. I took over giving tips – until I had some clients who showed me that they did not want to have any tips, because they had the solution already. So I started asking my clients towards the end of the session whether they wanted to have tips or not. About every fourth declines. That saves my time as well as their time. In addition it is more ethical because I do not impose on them. Instead it may increase their beliefs of self-efficacy because they realize that it was them who found a way towards the solution of the problem.

A group of professionals whom I had trained proceed(ed) the same way. From time to time we exchange(d) our observations and experiences. Based on those “guesses” I selected the “best of ...” amongst the techniques of consultation and therapy that I had found in the literature or I had learned from colleagues. I put the techniques together to a “constructivist solution focussed and developmentally oriented model of consultation”. By that way the model remains open for further development.

At this time (July 2003) and based on hundreds of consultations with teachers, parents, adolescents and boards of institutions the following combination of techniques emerged to be the most ethical as well as efficient to me:

A constructivist solution focussed process model of consultation

The following description of the process model is in the form of a guideline that I use in my training workshops as well as in my research . It has been judged useful by the participants. Some of them use it as memory card in their consultation sessions. The use of this guideline by itself without participation in a training as described below appears not to be a sufficient condition for “good” consultation.

The guideline “names” the phases and – for some of the phases – the kind of induction which has proven useful in helping the client to get into a certain productive mental as well as emotional state. That is to say that the choice of words is not arbitrary but the net result of little experiments with different formulations.

1. Welcome and "setting the stage"

2. Expectations towards the process and the results of the present consultation session and ratification of the working contract

What would have had to happen until (fixed end of the consultation session) so that you could say: "I have profited from it!" –

If you agree to that: I will try to guide our conversation towards that direction, but I cannot guarantee how far we will get.

3. Presentation of concern

Would you please start indicating your concern ...

4. Imaging the desired future

- *Miracle induction: At this point I would have I little mental experiment for you!? If the client does not show indications of decline: Image for a moment: We continue on with our consultation session. We will arrive at (cf. expectations towards the results). You leave and go your way. Evening arrives. It gets dark. You become tired and go to sleep. (Pause) And while you are asleep a miracle happens. (Pause) What will be the first indication which tells you that the miracle has in fact happened?- What will be the next indication which tells you that the miracle has in fact happened? ...? –*
- *Solution induction: "How will you first notice that your concern(or however the client names it) has gone?"*

5. Search for present moments of a desired future

When you think of the last weeks: Were there moments, in which the things you have just described, were already present to some extent?

If so:

What was different then?

Were there additional moments ...? *(Continue until the client stops naming those.)*

When you think of a scale: 10 means the future as you have just imagined. 1 means the opposite of it.

- Where on this scale are you right now?
- Where do you want to be at what point of time?
- How would you notice when you will have gotten there?
- What would have to happen so that you get from (x=scale right now) to (y=where the client wants to be)?

If not:

How did you manage to sustain *(key word for the description of the concern)?*

= *(coping question)*

From where did you take the energy to sustain?

= *(resource question)*

6. "Last call" for important information

Now, I would like to take a little time, to let your words pass my mind again, so that I can see what strength you already have and tell you that. Before I do so I would like to ask you: Is there anything that you think I should at any case know before we make that little break?

If the client adds some information, just listen.

7. Pause for individual reflections
8. Acknowledgement of strengths, recalibration of norms, reinterpretations
<p>9. Suggestions <i>Would you like to have some suggestions?</i></p> <p>If the clients does want to have some: <i>Well, I have some ideas of what might be helpful in general. See whether there is something to it that is suitable to you and to your situation. You may try it , you may modify it – or leave it! Okay?</i></p>
<p>10. Best wishes Immediately after the question about suggestions or immediately after having given the suggestions, you may rise, offer a hand-shake and say to the client: <i>"Toi, toi, toi und gutes Gelingen !".</i></p>

The 10 phases of a constructivist solution focussed consultation session (cf. Spiess, W. (Hrsg.): Die Logik des Gelingens. Lösungs- und entwicklungsorientierte Beratung im Kontext von Pädagogik. Dortmund: borgmann 2000)

Some comments on each one of the phases may be useful:

Phase 1: I try to help the client to feel comfortable and at ease. I refer to the (last) contact we had and the time we had allocated for this session - in order to create some sense of coherence.

Phase 2: I want the client to develop concrete ideas about the state, he wants to arrive at towards the end of the session, as well as about the process, that he believes to be helpful to him or to her. This could be seen as a first animation towards becoming a good or better problem solver.

Phase 3: I follow a social script by giving the client a chance for a (brief) "talking cure": as short as possible and as extensive as necessary for him. I just listen attentively. But since I do not need this information for helping the client to develop ideas towards a solution, the focus of my attention is more on the way he presents his concern than on the content. I do not have to formulate hypotheses about the etiology of the problem. I do not reflect on his emotions. Neither do I give a summary of what I beleave to have heard since this may be seen as a confirmation of the problem, i.e. if somebody else sees it the same way it must be objectively so.

Phase 4: In a second and major "move" I animate the client to develop ideas of how situations or interactions will look like when the problem was solved. It appears that providing a framework in terms of a chronological order (what would be the first thing, ... the next thing ...) makes it easier for the client to go on developing a "vision" of a life without that problem. The degree of "resolution" in which the client develops his ideas seems to be related to the effectiveness of the work in this phase: The more details of how the client acts verbally and non-verbally, the greater the "self-fulfilling prophecy", i.e. the transfer to and changes in the actual situations.

I builded up the so called miracle question (which seems to have been "discovered" by BERG (cf. HARGENS 2000)) into a relatively extended induction. That seems to make it easier for the client to dissociate from the problem talk and get into the mood for creative thinking about new options.

Phase 5: It incorporates what I call "the logic of success". Instead of searching for conditions that may "cause" his problem, the client looks for present moments of a desired future. That is not simply looking for so called "exceptions". This strategy may also be useful.

However it is probably not as efficient, since the “exceptions” are not necessarily identical with the desired future: When do children not show “bad” behaviours? Most of them do not, when they are asleep.

If the clients “discovers” present moments of a desired future: What is the context in which that happens? In terms of good human problem solving, analyse what works – and maintain it or expand on it!

If the client cannot identify any present moments of the desired future, he or she may become very sad. Those moments may be difficult for us to bear. But if we ask the client: “How could or how could you in the past and can right now you bear that?”, the client may be helped to become more aware of his resources from which he or she derives strength.

Phase 6: Asking the client about any information gives him or her a chance to get rid of things he or she had wanted to say but had not found an opportune moment so far. On rare occasions clients do add something. But so far, I do not have enough experience from my own consultation work or from my students to formulate a rule as to deal with this information.

Phase 7: The idea of taking a break stems from family therapy training where it was found to enhance the effectiveness of consultation. I experimented with that break and recommend: Tell the client that you want to use about 10 to 15 minutes of time to meditate about the “words” which you have learned from the client; in order to find out, what assets may be discovered to be part of the feedback after the break. We invite the client to stay or walk around while we leave the consulting room for a walk.

Phase 8 and 9: The rules we have developed for these phases are beyond the scope of this introductory text.

Phase 10: We wish “Gutes Gelingen!” (That has connotations of self-efficacy which go beyond “Good luck!”).

3. Context of usefulness

So far, professionals have worked in orientation of this process model consulting with

- teachers, parents and pupils in the context of behavioural and learning difficulties
- teachers, psychologists and other professionals in the context of organisational development.

The low level evaluations up to date indicate that these clients perceived the consultations as “pleasant”, helpful, efficient and morally “good”.

There are two variants to this process model for other contexts:

- where the teacher has a concern and initiates the consultation session f. e. with the parents of a pupil or with the pupil himself
- where a person wishes consultation without having a presenting problem. In the context of business this may be called coaching. In the context of schools this may be called “Lernberatung” (cf. SPIESS 2001).

English publications of these variants are in preparation (cf. homepage listed below).

4. A didactic approach and a curriculum for the training in the use of this process model

In the development of a training model and curriculum for the process model, I employed the same assumptions, attitudes and techniques - including the zeal for efficiency and ethics.

The basic didactic approach is inductive (instead of deductive, as preferred in the context of academia): participant observation – description of observations and experiences – construction of relations among these aspects.

The curriculum consists of 5 modules comprising approximately 100 hours of course work including “consultation for consultation”; in addition approximately 100 hours of independent reading, practising and reflection in peer groups.

Module I

You get to know the consultation model by participating at live consultations (behind the one way screen) and by afterwards analysing the consultation process together with the other participants.

By that way you can arrive at a judgment whether this model fits to your person as well as to your working context. Through your home studies you acquire knowledge about other models of consultation that you discuss within the group of other students.

Module II

You get to know the consultation model by self-experience. To that end you participate in 2 sessions while presenting some complaints from you working or private life. You observe yourself between these 2 consultation sessions and keep a diary to that respect.

You reflect the process as well as the product with the consulting person.

Module III

Admission requires proof of a certain knowledge about the consultation model. The standards are set by a catalogue of question which need to be answered correctly.

You participate at a specific training of the various steps. You can choose between exercises with another person (tandem) or within a small group (cf. standard training in the client centered model). At the next level you may want to practice the whole sequence of steps using the multi-brain – slow-motion method, studying transcripts, audio- or videos from consultation sessions

Module IV

Admission requires proof of sufficient skills in orientation by the model. The guideline may be used. The competencies necessary for the implementation of each step have to be demonstrated (f.e. by means of the multi-brain – slow-motion method). The jury consists of the trainer and the other students.

You begin practicing consultation with students attending modul II while being assisted through a seminar titled “consultation for consultation”.

Module V

Admission requires that the “clients” (participants of Modul II) to judge the consultations with you at least “satisfactory”.

You do your consultations within the context of our „*compaed*“ office or at your working place while being assisted through “consultation for consultation”.

Certification

Certification is based on the quality of the structure, the process and the outcome of two consultation sessions that you have documented by audio or video and presented to a jury. Details of this procedure still have to be developed.

5. Further work on the process model

Research is currently going on or is being planned to go into two directions:

- Outcome and process studies to evaluate and improve the efficacy as well as the ethics of the process model
- Exploratory studies to find out whether there are other contexts in which this process model may be useful in its present form or for which it needed to be adapted.

Outcome and process studies

Since fall of 2002 Nina WINKLER has joined as research assistant working towards her doctorate. She prepares to explore questions like: How do their thinking and working patterns change when professionals participate in the above mentioned training curriculum and follow the constructivist solution oriented process model in their daily consultations? What changes can be observed in the thinking and working patterns of the persons who consult with these professionals? How do the behaviour patterns of pupils change as the thinking and working patterns of their teachers change?

Previously Heike BERKLING has begun the work of her dissertation. The question, she is about to answer, is "Does expertise knowledge when used within that consultation model augment the efficacy of consultation?" If expertise knowledge on for example learning difficulties or behaviour disorders does not have such an effect, the training of professionals could be much more efficient by sparing the corresponding courses.

New contexts for the application/adaptation of the process model

Vocational guidance: Currently a graduate student uses the process model to enhance the problem solving competencies of high school students with respect to finding a good fitting vocation. This consultation does not include giving information about jobs, careers etc.

ONLINE-consultation: Another graduate student explores under what conditions and to what extent elements of this process model way be useful for the online consultation with high school students.

DÖRNER, D. : Die Logik des Mislingens. Reinbek 1989

SPIESS, W. (Hrsg.): Die Logik des Gelingens. Lösungs- und entwicklungsorientierte Beratung im Kontext von Pädagogik. Dortmund 2000

<http://www.uni-kiel.de/erziehungshilfe/index.htm>

Different models of social and emotional needs consultation and support in German schools

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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on a qualitative, empirical study of different forms of social and emotional needs consultation and support (Beratung für Erziehungshilfe in der Schule, BES) in German schools. The study focuses primarily on consultation services offered to teaching staff at regular schools by trained special education teachers. One of our aims is to give the reader a basic overview of the different forms and models of BES in Germany. The other is to correlate the initial results of the study to the different organizational forms and localization models of BES. The different models of BES were selected according to their differing organizational structures and their localization. Based on descriptions of the respective concrete consultation practice, derived from interviews with the main persons involved in BES (consultants/special education teachers and recipients of consultation services/ teachers requesting consultation), different real types of consultation practices in BES are sketched.

INTRODUCTION

In the Federal Republic of Germany there are numerous forms of consultation on behalf of students with special educational needs, providing various services for regular schools. The services offered range from mobile special needs to permanently integrated forms of consultation. One segment of this range of special needs consultation services specializes in dealing with emotional anti behavioural disorders ~ we call this 'social and emotional needs consultation and support in schools' (Beratung für Erziehungshilfe in der Schule, BES). One aim of these consultation services is to enable regular schools to integrate students with special social and emotional needs into the school community. The other is to take direct intervention measures to support such students. In both BES areas school-level consultation and individual student support - a wide variety of concepts and forms are employed in Germany. We present below six different forms of BES, classified into three localization models according to their concrete situation and integration in the school system.

The emergence of social and emotional needs consultation services in German schools can be seen in terms of two lines of development. On the one hand, we have developments at the global level of changes in society as a whole; and on the other hand, radical transformation processes in the area of special education as one of the key providers of social and emotional needs consultation and support in schools (BES).

This latter phenomenon reflects a global paradigm change in special education in the mid-1970s: in the wake of the integration debate, the increasing expansion of institutions for students with special needs - the extension and enlargement of a special school sector catering for a variety of disabilities - was seen to be questioned, and the previously accepted tenets of a special education policy based on segregation and exclusion were rejected.

The results of this discourse were reflected in a new self-appraisal of special needs support and the development of new forms of such support.

The effects of these far-reaching changes are still being felt, a fact also evidenced by the discussion on the way the profession of the special education teacher has changed. The emergence of a new professional profile for the special education teacher has been described (Reiser, 1996a, 1997, 1998; Wocken, 1997), indicating a change in the way this profession sees itself and a basic trend towards client orientation, the provision of services for special needs students being viewed as working *for* rather than merely *with* children. This basic idea, with its service orientation and strong element of social work, questions the classical diagnosis and support of special needs and, at the same time, adds a new dimension: offering consultation as help for professionals.

The question as to the new professional profile of the special education teacher is ultimately linked to the professionalisation debate among German educational scientists (e.g. Combe and Helsper, 1996).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study constitutes a first attempt to make a comparative analysis of the various existing consultation and support models for social and emotional needs in German schools. It sets out by asking where in the educational system the consultation system is located - i.e. which system or subsystem the respective consultant belongs to, how he/she is integrated into the system structures and to what extent there is networking with the relevant surrounding systems. Referring to these criteria (position and structural integration of the consultant), we speak of *localization*.

No empirical findings are yet available on the relations between organizational structure and consultation practice in the different specific forms of BES in Germany. From this starting-point, we built a research sample covering a wide range of existing BES models in Germany.

The design of the present explorative study follows the Grounded Theory method (Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and aims to take initial stock of the situation in Germany. The study is divided into two phases. In the first phase, consultant teachers and teachers requesting consultation were interviewed, the focus being on the perspective of the consultants whose professional skills facilitated access to the domain being studied. The second phase focuses on the perspectives of those receiving the consultation. The use of questionnaires to reconstruct case details will also allow individual cases to be referred to directly and supplementary interviews to be conducted with the principals of the schools concerned. This paper will present initial results of the first phase of the study, now in its final stages.

The database of the study's first phase was generated using various data collection methods (expert interviews, guideline-based individual interviews, group discussions). During this phase, a total of 40 interviews were conducted with consultant teachers and teachers requesting consultation (consultants and recipients of consultation services) from six different forms of BF-5 and coded with computer support following the Grounded theory (Willman 98). The results of the coding process were used to develop a key category, which localizes the studied BES consultation practices in a continuum *of assistance ranging between consultation and support*. What is proposed here is differentiating the consultation work in BES principally according to which specific concept the consultants follow, and whether their work here tends to be more teacher orientated (consultation) or more student orientated (support). The category can thus be used to map the whole range of consultation work in BES.

Finally, by analysing the consultation practices described in the interviews, different real types of consulting activity in BES were created using sociological typing methods, in order to highlight the different approaches and strategies employed by the consultants. We now go on to present the different forms and models of BES and describe their essential characteristics. This is followed by an examination of the study's theoretical implications.

The six forms of school-based consultation presented here can be paired off to form topographical localization models based on homologies in terms of their organizational

structures. Localization model A (internal) refers to *consultation using regular schools' internal resources*. The position of the Beratungslehrer (BL) and the special education teacher in elementary schools is system-internal; in both forms, the consultants are themselves part of the system in need of consultation.

Localization model B (system-interfacial) refers to *consultation at the system interface between regular and special school*. The two model B forms of consultation and support - the Lotte-Lemke-Schule and the Mobile Service for Social and Emotional Needs Support (Mobile Erziehungshilfe, MFH) - can be localized at the system interface. In terms of their organization, both forms are based on the educational support centre offering mobile services to the regular schools in their catchments area. Unlike localization model A, here the consultation service does not form part of the regular school itself, but is provided by an educational support centre as a separate element of the school system.

Localization model C (external) refers to *consultation through independent consulting institutions*. Both the Centre for Social and Emotional Needs Consultation (Zentrum für Erziehungshilfe, ZfE) in Frankfurt am Main and the Regional Service Centres for Consultation and Support (Regionale Beratungs- und Unterstützungszentren, REBUS) in Hamburg are independent consulting institutions, which are affiliated to (ZfE) or integrated into (REBUS) the school system, but which are independent of the regular and special schools, providing consultation and support services only. They do not have their own permanent school classes.

LOCALIZATION MODEL A: CONSULTATION USING REGULAR SCHOOLS' INTERNAL RESOURCES

The Beratungslehrer

The introduction of the Beratungslehrer (BL) into the regular school system, an extension of the teacher's role to include special counselling (students and parents) and consulting (colleagues) functions and duties, emerged as an element of educational policy in direct response to the 'counselling boom' of the 1970s. The BL is a home-room teacher who has received supplementary training. Depending on the size of the school, the BL is assigned a limited number of periods for the counselling and consulting duties, on average, some five per week. This number is deducted from the average of 28 periods teachers are required to give per week (the statutory number of periods varies from one federal state to another).

The BL is a regular member of the teaching staff, and thus a part of the system he/she is meant to serve as counsellor and consultant. The localization of the BL can therefore be described as maximally internal.

On a general level, the BL can be seen as primarily performing a relief function at the school he/she serves. In particular, the group that makes most use of the consultation service - the other members of the teaching staff - see cooperation with the BL as relieving their workload. A frequent problem here is the desire of other members of the teaching staff to exclude troublesome students from classes, at least temporarily. This desire for immediate relief is often based on the idea of the BL 'repairing' the troublesome student, as well as on a tendency to delegate problems.

The concrete duties and activities of the interviewed BL cover the areas outlined in the ministerial directives: school career counselling, individual support, and consultation with the school and the teachers. In everyday consulting practice, these directives are fleshed out by the individual BL in different ways, and with different priorities. However, our empirical research results also indicate that there are BLs whose activities clearly exceed the limits of internal school consultation, consciously extending into the area of parent counselling (Willmann and Hüper, 1999).

In the interviews, BL did not attach particular importance to the area of school career counselling; they saw their main duties in the domain of individual support and consultation with

teachers. Here it is mainly school-specific factors that determine the respective orientation of the services offered by the BL. The principal factors are, on the one hand, the respective school philosophy and staff culture, which define both consulting needs and expectations, and on the other hand, the individual consultants with their own personal skills, convictions and any additional qualifications. Both factors shape the form cooperation takes in everyday school consulting practice.

The maximum internal localization of the BL proves to be something of a mixed blessing. The strength of this form of BES lies in the low level of inhibition regarding taking advantage of the consultation services: the BL, as a member of staff, is known to all the other teachers, is permanently based at the respective school and is therefore available at all times. By the same token, the consultant knows all the other members of staff and most of the students from everyday school life. This situation puts the BL, as an internal consultant, in an exclusive 'insider' position which no external consultant can ever attain. But it also means that the internal consultant is part of the very system he/she serves. And it constitutes the blind spot of the consultant's internal localization.

The interviews with the BL also illustrate the fragility of this role structure. The problems associated with the consultant role here can be described in a series of role antinomies which, in turn, result principally from the internal localization and integration of the consultant at the centre of the system being served. These antinomies are reflected in paradoxical dimensions, such as contradictory interests and goal setting situations and the conclusion of contracts with several parties (e.g. schoolteacher- student-family/parents), who pursue differing, sometimes diametrically opposed, interests. The special and exclusive position of the BL also results quite frequently in a competitive situation with respect to the colleagues seeking advice (during consultation on the colleagues' teaching conduct) and, on occasion, with the school principal (e.g. in cases relating to something like the school's 'pedagogical leadership'); a detailed treatment can be found in Willmann and Hüper (*ibid.*).

Special Education Teachers in Elementary Schools

In terms of localization, there is a strong structural homology between the special education teachers in elementary schools (Sonderschullehrer in Grundschulen) and the above-described BL. Both types of consultant teachers are, in their capacity as consultants, also members of the very systems they are meant to serve. This instance of what might be called 'inequality among equals' is, in the case of special education teachers in elementary schools as compared with the role of the BL, additionally evident in the different kind of (and compared with other members of the teaching staff, more specialized) training as special education teachers.

The origin of this model can be traced back to the Small Class Ordinance issued by the federal state of Hesse (cf. Reiser *et al.*, 1984). In pursuance of its overall goal of integration, the concept is meant to follow a preventive approach. Here the consultant special education teachers tend to be deployed in social trouble spots. Their range of duties is similarly broad to that of the BL, encompassing consultation with other members of the teaching staff on teaching, learning and support issues, individual and small-group support, networking with institutions outside the school and, to a certain extent, parent counselling as well.

However, given the special skills required in the special education sector, such teachers enjoy a much higher formal expert status as consultants than can be attained by BL in their brief training for counselling and consulting duties. Ideally, the special education consulting work and the cooperation with regular school teachers should provide an input of special education skills into regular schools. Such skills are manifested, for example, in changed perspectives, by adopting an approach orientated to the individual child and his/her specific situation (rather than an approach to teaching based on the fiction of a supposedly homogeneous group of learners), and, consequently, in a more profound understanding of the concrete problems and difficulties of the individual student, as well as in a different observer perspective (resulting from the

performance of a different function in the concrete teaching situation and a more specialized professional training based rather on observation).

In practice, the same antinomies and processes of dependence and counter-dependence sometimes occur as described above for the BL. The latent desire to compete with the colleagues they are meant to consult with for what they believe to be the 'better' reaching methods can make cooperation with them difficult or even impossible. Overlapping competencies between the consultant teacher and the school principals result from the proximity of the consulting work to a type of educational leadership function, thus also holding considerable potential for conflict.

Basically, the consultants' specialization and a conceptualization of the services they offer - i.e. the defining of specific concrete consultation and support services - would appear not only to have a positive effect on their role satisfaction, but also to increase the transparency of the services offered for the potential clients. In other words, if the consultation and support services offered contain clear contracts on concrete forms of work, all the parties involved are able to make a proper assessment of the consultant's role and function. If, on the other hand, consultants have no clear idea of their own function or if they give the impression of being responsible - and equipped with the necessary skills - for almost everything, there can be some confusion about the concrete services offered. Drawing up agreements (with the school principals, the other members of the teaching staff or for individual concrete cooperation processes) helps to clarify the consultants' position and the services they offer.

Synopsis of Localization Model A

Integrating the consultant teacher as closely as possible into the regular school's teaching staff enables, for both forms of consultation, above, the services to be provided directly on site. Such consultants have a permanent workplace and are, theoretically, always present and available to their colleagues. The consultants' proximity to - or better, direct integration with - everyday school life makes these two kinds of consulting service very popular with colleagues. It does, however, give rise to some problems concerning the roles they play.

A feature that applies to both forms of consultation is the individual consultants' freedom to set their own priorities in the work they do. Their field of duties is, of course, limited depending on the resources available (roughly divided into consulting with colleagues and counselling parents, offering individual student support, networking), but the individual consultants are responsible for the concrete implementation and weighting of the tasks. There are no procedural directives at the institutional level. The consultants' work context is defined only by the regular school itself. With no procedural directives to refer to, consultants enjoy a great deal of scope in interpreting and fleshing out their roles, though this situation can engender a sense of uncertainty and confusion about such roles.

LOCALIZATION MODEL B: CONSULTATION AT THE SYSTEM INTERFACE BETWEEN REGULAR AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Mobile Service for Social and Emotional Needs Support

The Mobile Service for Social and Emotional Needs Support (Mobile Erziehungshilfe, MF-H) is an integral element of the Mobile Special Education Services in Bavaria, and is based on either a special school providing support for social and emotional development or an educational support centre.

In characterizing the particularities of the Mobile Special Education Services in Bavaria, Hillenbrandt (1999) points to two important aspects: on the one hand, these services have established integrative support as a standard state-wide feature of regular schools; but on the other hand, there are considerable regional differences in the way it is organized and the number of periods allocated for this purpose. Our study confirms substantial differences between local

variants of MEH, but also shows that the blanket implementation of integrative schooling for students with special social and emotional needs, accompanied by mobile support through MEH, only exists on paper. With most of the special education teachers engaged in MEH concentrated in a small number of schools from their own catchment area, the services they offer are by no means reaching all students.

Generally speaking, MEH is organized as follows in Bavaria: one or two teachers provide mobile services - accounting for a not permanently fixed portion of their regular workload - at an educational support centre or special school providing support for social and emotional development, serving a city or rural district. Local differences in the MEH services offered depend on a number of factors. Apart from the policy of the special schools' principals, the supervisory authorities and the regular schools cooperating in the scheme, the main factors here are the personal skill and interest profiles of the special education teachers involved - teachers who, in addition to their basic training as special education teachers, have completed a wide variety of further training measures. Specific local conditions have given rise in practice to highly diverse forms of MEH, leading in each case to a particular form of cooperation with the respective regular school. This large number of special variants of MEH can be roughly classified according to whether it is still based on the original idea of providing intensive pedagogical-therapeutic support to the individual student, or whether priority is given to perspectives and forms of intervention that take into account the situations and conditions in the respective school and are based on a solution-oriented approach.

There are great similarities between the concrete working methods of consultants who follow traditional student-oriented intervention practices. After receiving a formal written explanation of goals from the regular school and obtaining a declaration of consent from the parents, consultants begin their concrete case work by making a detailed diagnosis. Here the special education teachers themselves make use of a wide variety of test methods (cf. Schor, 1994), besides drawing on diagnostic information collected by BL or other institutions like the youth welfare service of the child and youth psychiatric support services. The diagnosis and the initial consultation with the regular school teacher, which sometimes involves classroom observation, serve as a basis for deciding on appropriate support for the child in question. On the one hand, this entails ascertaining whether the regular school itself can provide the support needed, whether the child's weaknesses in terms of learning and performance are such as to necessitate its transfer to a special school providing support for learning problems or whether MEH constitutes the most suitable form of support. And on the other, it means developing an individual educational plan based on the diagnosis. Generally speaking, the student will receive this special support on a one-to-one or, in some cases, a small-group basis for one or two periods a week over a span of one to two years. Very frequent use is made here of behaviour modification programmes and various other pedagogical-therapeutic techniques. Two main objectives can be defined for the work with the student: solving a specific behavioural problem and generally stabilizing the development of the child's personality. The primary goal of cooperation with regular school teachers here is to involve them in putting into effect behaviour modification programmes. A secondary goal may also entail a limited amount of consultation with teachers on the teaching methods they use or the way they deal with students they consider difficult. The special education teacher's work with parents focuses on arranging additional support services from other institutions. It may occasionally involve direct counselling on pedagogical matters as well. Mediation between parents and school on the key task - in both qualitative and quantitative terms - of supporting the individual student.

The situation is a different one with MEH because it has ceased to focus exclusively on the individual indicated student: a school-related perspective has been added here, extending the overall objective. These variants of MEH seek to use consultation to also effect a long term change in and broadening of the regular school teachers' perspectives and scope for action, as well as a general extension of the respective school's capacity for integration.

This objective is to be attained by spending less time on individual student support. Instead, more resources are invested in consultation with regular school teachers and in primary prevention in the form of further training of teaching staff, the moderation of conferences on relevant issues and the launching of specialized school projects. Not surprisingly, solution-oriented and systemic approaches play a greater role in these forms of MEH.

Educational Support Centre for Social and Emotional Needs Consultation: Lotte-Lemke Schule

The mobile service offered by the Lotte-Lemke-Schule in Braunschweig is similar to MEH in terms of its organizational structure, in that it is based *in* a special school which makes part of its resources available, for the mobile service. In the case of the Lotte-Lemke Schule, however, the entire teaching staff are involved in consulting work at regular schools, this accounting for a small portion of their regular workload. Unlike the forms of MEH practised in Bavaria, this project dispenses entirely with individual child support. The distinctive feature of this mobile special education service is its exclusive focus on consultation, the service having been developed on the basis of a systemic concept. Accordingly, all members of the team at the Lotte-Lemke-Schule have received supplementary training in systemic therapy, which, for the type of work they are doing, is probably more important than their respective basic training as teachers, special education teachers or social workers. Since 1994 the LLS has been operating as an educational support centre serving elementary and junior high school classes at regular schools in Braunschweig.

Some of the work is standardized; the concrete methods used depend on the respective requirements in each case. However, it can generally be said that great importance is attached to goal setting. Questions relating to the precise definition of the goals, as well as to the estimated time it will take, are actually contained in the application forms, and also form part of the initial consultation with the teacher. This makes it possible to reject goals like excluding a particular student and transferring him/her to a special school. At the same time, the attempt is made to adopt a solution-oriented approach from the start.

Subsequent work on the case, requiring relatively little time - on average, some 20-30 hours - focuses on contextualizing and processual diagnosis. The student's problemized behaviour is analysed with respect to its contextual relationship with the teaching and class situation, as with family processes. The provisional interpretations - primarily generated through consultation with the home-room teacher, and occasionally by classroom observation as well - either serve, themselves, to perturb the home-room teacher's construction of the problem or function as diagnostic hypotheses, from which intervention options can be developed for the home-room teacher in the course of consultation. In the choice of interventions, classical methods of systemic therapy are largely drawn on - e.g. paradoxical interventions, symptom prescriptions, positive connotation, reframing, etc. The aim of such interventions is to irritate the systemic conditions in which the problem develops at some point so as to stimulate new self organization processes which lead - in the perception and experience of the persons involved - to improvement and relief. Diagnosis, hypothesis building and perturbation are conceived here as a circular development process that can lead to a case being wound up if the school seeking consultation is itself able to cope with the problem - either by developing new action options or changing perspectives - or if the parties involved agree that this will not be possible within the confines of the regular school.

In addition to working with the individual teacher, other parties are, also addressed to differing degrees and with differing frequency. In the whole context, several teachers can be brought together to make explicit the differences in their perceptions of one and the same student. Other measures with a strong preventive orientation are organizing conferences on relevant issues or further training programmes for the entire teaching staff.

Another important aspect is networking with other institutions, particularly with the young welfare authorities. This can involve both organizing or participating in helper conferences, with a view to inter-institutional transparency and coordination, and arranging concrete help for the families. In the case of communication problems between parents and school, mediation between the two sides can play an important role.

Synopsis of Localization Model B

The consultation and support models presented in the context of this localization model are based on the organizational form of an educational support and consultation centre within special schools; they are therefore localized inside the school system and outside regular schools. The picture is more complex in terms of the specific work forms used. Here the same organizational structure allows quite different ways of establishing connections with regular schools.

The typical work form of MEH in Bavaria is that of an enclave: special education teachers working in regular schools can be seen as the temporally limited and microcosmic entry of the special school into the regular school.

The Lotte-Lemke-Schule practises a contrasting work form that sees networking as a stimulus to schools' enhancement and transformation. Here the support service, remains outside the regular school to the extent that it does not directly assume any educational duties in the latter, but rather enables the school/home room teacher to deal with their educational problems themselves, either by individual consultation with teachers or by school-related empowerment.

LOCALIZATION MODEL C: CONSULTATION THROUGH INDEPENDENT CONSULTING INSTITUTIONS

Centre for Social and Emotional Needs Consultation

The Centre for social and Emotional Needs Consultation (Zentrum für Erziehungshilfe, ZfE) is an organization combining two institutional elements that are normally separated from each other: the Youth Welfare Office and the Special School. This integration in a single unit is unique in Germany. Its aim is to improve the overall conditions for cooperation and collaboration between the two systems (Reiser, 1996b).

The institution is organised decentrally, with several stations distributed throughout the city. Every station has its own interdisciplinary team, consisting of special education teachers and social workers, who join forces to form a new, so-called 'tandem' for each case. The division of labour within the tandems follows the specific requirements of the individual case.

The ZfE works on a purely mobile basis and has no student body of its own. Only students of grades 8 and 9 have the additional option of attending a Lernwerkstatt ('learning workshop') at a municipal youth centre. The centre's overriding goal is the integration of students with special social and emotional needs.

At the ZfE inquiries are processed according to a standardized procedure consisting of the following steps: information/orientation, goal setting, diagnosis, support and case conclusion. The standard procedures for case work and clarification of goals were established to create a framework for the development of technically sound, process-controlled work routines. Mandatory steps and activities such as standardized documentation and discussion procedures serve to ensure the transparency and quality of case work.

An initial orientation interview is designed to show the client the potential and limits of the ZfE's work, but also offers all opportunity to discuss the conditions attached to it and possible alternatives. If the centre takes on the case, a new phase of goal setting begins, consisting of individual consultations with the parents and teachers to clarify what the concerns are. Acceptance of an assignment is confirmed in writing by the ZfE. Then follows a diagnosis phase designed to guide the parties through a dialogue-oriented and communicative process to an

exchange of views on the problem and how to set about solving it. At the end of this phase, a common understanding of the problem should have been reached and a consensus emerged of proposed support measures. Consultations are held with the teachers, the parents and the student. Round-table talks involving all parties are designed to bring together the different perspectives and provide a platform for the exchange of views and ideas. By sitting in on classes, making home visits and establishing contact with social services and other relevant parties, the tandem gains a detailed insight into the problem. If the case requires, inquiries are also made about the student's academic progress.

The results of the negotiation processes conducted during the diagnosis phase are recorded in a written help and support plan and serve as a basis for the subsequent support phase.

In the support phase, extending over a maximum period of two years, the help and support plan is constantly reviewed and modified to take account of current needs. The tandem provides the teacher with support in the classroom. If necessary the student can be temporarily supported in a small-group context inside or outside the school. Parallel to this, consultation with all parties continues. The initiation and coordination of further measures - e.g. establishing leisure-time contacts for the student - is an interim strategy designed to foster and secure additional support.

A distinctive feature of both the ZfE (Frankfurt) and the following model (REBUS) in Hamburg), which is described in the next section, is the extensive use of quality assurance measures. At the ZfE quality assurance, is an established feature: in addition to opportunities to reflect on the case work within the tandem and the team as a whole, each case is detailed in a case report. And if required, there is the additional option of consultation on the case with the school principals and of supervision. Initial research results are reported in Reiser (2001).

Regional Service Centre for Consultation and Support

Like the ZfE, the Regional Service Centre for Consultation and Support (Regionale Beratungs- und Unterstützungsstellen, REBUS) in Hamburg is an independent consulting system with no student body of its own. The REBUS is an organizational unit of a department of Hamburg's Office for Schools, Youth and vocational Training (School Office).

The REBUS was designed to provide help to students who are in danger of being excluded from existing educational programmes or who can no longer be reached by traditional educational services. Like the ZfE, the REBUS works from decentrally organized stations, distributed throughout the city, which are intended to provide, coordinate and guarantee consultation and support services for particular areas of the city. Implicit in the REBUS concept is the idea of improving the schools' long-term problem-solving capabilities through the services it offers. The establishment of the REBUS in Hamburg brought with it the closure of various existing institutions, including the special schools for children with behavioural disorders. In 2000, after a three-year test phase, the consultation model was extended to cover the whole city.

In addition to teachers with various specialisations, the REBUS is also staffed by school psychologists and social workers. Interdisciplinarity was made a key feature of the concept in order to take account of the multiple factors influencing the problems experienced by students with behavioural and learning difficulties. The services offered by the REBUS are aimed at teachers, students and parents, with a view to tackling problem situations in the school context. To avoid their exclusion from school, students are to officially remain in their regular schools during the process of consultation.

If it appears meaningful to illuminate the problem from a number of perspectives, or if help and support are needed in designing and implementing support services, several members of the REBUS staff contact the parties involved and interdisciplinary teams are formed.

In many instances, it is not until during a case that the need arises to call in additional help to assume various support duties, to work with the different parties involved or to assist team colleagues as reflecting partners during work on the case.

The initial interviews with the person that has consulted one of the REBUS stations are designed to pinpoint the concerns and clarify what further steps are to be taken. If the problems do not fall within the scope of the REBUS, the clients are referred to the relevant institutions and agencies.

The scope of the REBUS activities is similar to that of the ZfE: diagnosis (sitting in on classes, making home visits, learning diagnosis, etc.), providing support, counselling parents and consulting with teachers, and arranging the support of other services in consultation with the parties involved. It also includes activities not directly related to specific cases, such as close cooperation and collaboration with the general social services and networking with other institutions (Pape and Köberling, 1999, p.91). In addition, there are specific priorities set by individual members of staff, extending the range of services offered. These include both pedagogical-therapeutic services (e.g. group work) and preventive work in schools by adopting projects and further training measures or providing support to teachers at school conferences.

Like Frankfurt's ZfE, the REBUS also apply various measures to ensure the quality of their own work routines. At the REBUS, each case is detailed in a case report following a standardized procedure. In addition various optional quality-assurance tools are available: there are a wide variety of ways in which members can exchange ideas and reflect on the case they are dealing with, or seek specific advice or support from colleagues not involved in the case or from the head of a REBUS station. At regular weekly meetings of fixed groups, so-called "sub teams", cases are examined in more detail by asking concrete questions. And, at irregular intervals, external supervisory services can be consulted.

Synopsis of Localization Model C

The two presented models constitute independent consultation systems, which, being external institutions, are no longer a part of the systems they serve. This external localization of the ZfE and the REBUS affords the consultants a certain neutrality, which in specific cases may make it easier to mediate between parents and school. The specialization in consulting work opens up new fields of activity for special education teachers, differing considerably – where such activity takes the form of cooperation with other professions in the consultant institutions' interdisciplinary teams – from their classical field of duties: neither traditional teaching nor classical test diagnosis play an important role. Instead, the consulting and support activity involves a wide variety of tasks requiring other "new" skills. So far, though, professional training here has been geared only to a very limited extent to imparting such skills as conducting interviews and the ability to successfully cooperate, coordinate and moderate with the result that in many cases these skills have to be acquired on the job (Reiser 2001).

To a substantial degree, the described areas of activity are covered by the different professions in the same way, resulting in a convergence here in the content of their work. This, in turn, frequently gives rise to the need for awareness of the specificity of one's own work within the team (cf. Loeken 2000). In addition to this convergence of task profiles, the special education teachers face changes in the overall conditions affecting their work. For instance, there has been a convergence in terms of labour law through a harmonization of working hours and vacation regulations (Reiser 1996b, Pape and Köberling 1999).

Working together in interdisciplinary teams is a new experience for all the professions involved and can lead to synergies. An essential aim of both institutions is to provide the best support options and the most promising location for the support work in each case. They therefore remain in constant contact with local support institutions to ensure regional networking and promote exchange and cooperation among them.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Sociological Typing in BES

Analysis of the interviews with special teachers providing consultation services enabled different aspects to be determined that are relevant for understanding the way the various models and forms of BES work. Some of these aspects can be described in analytic categories:

- localization (position and structural integration of the consultants)
- organizational structure (internal organization and functioning of the consulting institution/s)
- recipient of the special-education service (recipient and recipient-specific aims)
- specific support services (i.e. concrete activities of the consultants in the areas of support and consultation)
- kinds of intervention (type and form of the interventions in the problem system)

By analyzing the interdependence of these categories, it was possible, in the present study, to highlight different approaches and strategies used in the consultation work, which we describe in terms of a typology of "*empirically based*" *real types* (on the method of empirically based typing, c.f. Kluge 1999 and 2000). Here, the category "recipient" served as the major category. The data analyses yielded four different real types of consultation practice in BES. The typology is likely to be extended as a result of the study's next phase.

*Type I: "Sustained consultation provided to the teacher by an external consultant"
(teacher-oriented)*

The inner logic of this variant lies in the aim of sustained, skill-enhancing consultation being provided to the regular school teacher by the special-education consultant. This form of consultation was able to be reconstructed in the model of external localization (with a tendency for the consultation work to become independent of and separate from the special school/special-education support centre).

*Type II: "Student support by an internal counsellor – "classical" student support
by offering personal commitment and through relationship work" (child-oriented)*

With this concept, the support work focuses on the "classical"/"traditional" special-education support of students, consultation with the regular school teachers playing a much less important role. Working intensively with the student (for a limited period of time), the special-education teacher offers personal commitment, thus supporting the student by enhancing his/her social skills (relationship work).

*Type III: "Student support coupled with teacher consultation in the form of
cooperation between colleagues" (child-teacher-oriented)*

The two opposites "consultation with the teacher" and "support of the student" are by no means mutually exclusive in empirical reality. Some of the interviewees describe practices that combine both forms. The third type is thus a hybrid form combining Types I and II. Here, the enhancement of the regular school teacher's skills results from the latter's collaboration with the special teacher in certain areas of everyday school life and through the mediation of special-education expertise. This variant emphasizes an aspect called "*collaborative consultation*" in discussions in the literature on consultation (e.g. Idol, Nevin and Paolucci- Witcomb 1993).

*Type IV: “ Mediating consultation between school and parents ”
- Consultation as moderation or “ mediating between the different worlds ”
(teacher-parents-environment-oriented)*

This type sees its principal task in mediating between school, parents and environment (e.g. institutions and services performing social work) in the case of communication breakdowns and problem situations. The establishment of a forum brings the different sides together and the interrupted communication is restored. The consultants moderate the process from a neutral and independent position. With this type, direct support of the student plays a lesser role. The different support variants classified in real types are *not* representative of a specific model or organizational form of BES. Instead, in some models several of these different types can be described, while in another only one single type can be reconstructed. The different models of BES thus exhibit differences in terms of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the consultation practices described. Different factors affect the occurrence of a certain type in a certain model.

As regards the consultant's localization, the present study shows that external localization is more conducive to Type I and/or Type IV consultation. Another remarkable finding is that with these types of consultation there is also a tendency toward the consultation becoming independent of the organizational structure of the school system.

If, on the other hand, the special-education support system provides classical support (Type II), only a small portion of the teacher's mandatory number of periods is left for consultation work: intensive personal commitment to the student is relatively time-consuming. Consequently, the consultants following this concept can only deal with a very limited number of cases; they often work at only one or a few schools.

This restriction also applies to Type III; Type III is principally practiced to promote students' academic skills and appears suitable for this purpose, but less so for counselling in the case of behaviour problems. Type III appears especially suitable for combined support by internal counsellors in the case of learning and behaviour problems; however, as Type III does not suffice to solve the problems, the consultants would also have to perform Type IV consultation/counselling. On the individual level, this requires reconciling contradictions in role definition.

In practice, the “ repair ” function of special education (Type II) is often in demand. Here, teachers are keen to delegate responsibility for the indicated student to the special teacher (they order a “ repair job ”, so to speak), hoping in this way to reduce their own workload. This situation frequently prevents teacher oriented consultation. Teachers who call for BES with these expectations are mostly not “ amenable ” to Type I and IV consultation. In such cases, the teacher's request to the consultant must, if possible, be changed in the contracting phase.

A reduction in the special-education services provided often occurs as a result of the special teachers' meeting this request. Special teachers who have no training as consultants confine themselves to classical individual student counselling and remedial work. The more the special teacher's range of duties includes both promoting students' academic skills and dealing with behaviour problems, the better suited is Type III support; the more the support is focused on social and emotional development, the more need there is to develop Types I and IV.

Trends within the consultation and support concepts studied suggest that, according to BES logic, Types I and IV are particularly effective and important for the future. This view leads us to plead here for special-education services at regular schools which, besides supporting individual students, also see the provision of consultation services for teachers as an essential element of social and emotional needs consultation and support in schools. The sustainability of such services is thus viewed not only from the perspective of supporting individual students with special needs, but also underlines the need to provide professional assistance through consultation to the individual teacher and the school.
