

The Move to Doctoral Training: A Study in Systems Change

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Introduction

The vignette that sets the scene for this chapter reports on a very positive professional learning process that equips educational psychologists (EPs) well to make a positive difference to the education and well-being of vulnerable children and young people in a range of contexts. However, the process was not without challenges. The process was a testament to all involved that the hoped for positive benefits have been so quickly realised, particularly in the light of the less than ideal circumstances in which three year doctoral programmes replaced the longstanding one year masters training route in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

According to the first government report on psychologists in the United Kingdom (UK) (DES, 1968), the first one year programme of professional training in educational psychology was a post-graduate diploma programme developed at UCL in 1946. This was disputed by the director of that programme who located the inauguration of the UCL diploma in the early 1930s, and reported having previously led a masters programme at the London Day Training Centre (the precursor of the Institute of Education) from 1923 (Burt, 1969). However the

International Bureau of Education as well as the American Psychological Association (APA, 1948, p.29), would remain essentially unchanged for the following 60 years, despite influential calls for its extension from as early as 1968. Over the same period professional training in clinical psychology was extended from one, to two, to three years, with most programmes awarding a doctoral qualification from the mid 1990s (Turpin, 1995). This chapter examines the history of failed attempts to extend training from one year to two years, as well as the eventual success in introducing three year doctoral level training in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2006. Lessons about the conditions necessary for achieving systemic change of this kind are drawn to inform future developments.

Reference will be made to an influential model of change in human systems, that developed by Kurt Lewin (see Lewin, 1952), which has served as the foundation for most models of change processes in the literature, across diverse disciplines (Elrod & Tippet, 2002). The model comprises two key concepts, the first of which proposes that social systems maintain a balanced status quo, or are unbalanced into a change process resulting in a new state. Force field analysis (see for example Figure 1 from Schein, 2002), based on this aspect of the model, is a widely used technique in organisational development whose value has been recognised in educational psychology (see for example Fox & Sigston, 1992; Jensen, Malcolm & Phelps, 2002; Smith & Reynolds, 1998).

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requirement of the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), founded seven years earlier, and that many promotion opportunities for educational psychologists were restricted to qualified teachers. Teaching experience was to be a recurrent issue for debate between the BPS and the AEP over the next 50 years. While the AEP had significant influence in local authorities (LAs), it is doubtful that opposition to the loss of teaching experience was a decisive resisting force. The Secretary of State also highlighted an increase in the numbers being trained in universities between 1965 and 1969, substantially

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training within existing resources by reducing the numbers being trained by half. However once again the primary driver for change, graduate unemployment, had become significantly weakened by the time the report was produced.

Following the passing of the 1981 Education Act a number of LEAs reassessed their demand and a number of new posts was created in this increase in the number of authorised posts has mopped up this pool of unemployment and still left some unfilled vacancies. (DES, 1984, p.12)

The 1984 Working Group drew representation from the Association of County Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Society of Education U~&A!•ÉP^!Á æ•c q ÁQ•J ^&ç !æ Ê@ ÁÖÙÊ@ ÁV, ã^!•ã ÁÖ!æ ç Á Committee, the AEP and the BPS. Whether influenced by the substantial employer representation, the nature of the drivers for change, or some other factors, in this report there was no debate about teaching experience. Despite taking particular note that it was not a requirement for professional training in Scotland, the Working Group expressed conviction that teaching experience was an essential prerequisite to training as an educational psychologist. Indeed consideration was given as to whether the minimum of two years teaching experience was long enough. However it was also noted that since the early 1970s psychology graduates had, in addition, to complete a one year post-graduate teaching qualification, and asserted that: ã ã & ÁÁ æ Á [, Á accepted that psychology, although not generally a subject taught in schools,

was relevant to teaching in schools, there should be no difficulty for a suitable

Over the following decade psychology graduates encountered increasing

difficulty obtaining places on PGCE courses, despite the increasing popularity of psychology as a school subject. Indeed there was evidence that substantial difficulties were being experienced by psychology graduates applying for teacher training in the early 1980s (Brady, 1982; Long, 1982) despite the assertions in the report to the contrary. These difficulties were subsequently compounded by the introduction of the national curriculum in the late 1980s and the corresponding focus on recruiting graduates able to teach national curriculum subjects.

Broader Economic and Social Forces

In a further foreshadowing of difficulties to come, the funding arrangements for training, whereby LAs could reclaim the whole cost of seconding a teacher to train as an EP, or an EP to tutor on a training programme, were described

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teaching experience was accepted as equivalent, even though it usually contained no formal postgraduate study of psychology and might actually take place prior even to the acquisition of an undergraduate degree in psychology.

While the anomalous position of educational psychology training programmes in relation to the criteria for chartered status was an increasing focus of concern for the BPS (Lunt, 1993), the predominant issue for training in the early 1990s was the crisis in funding. Given the diminishing percentage of the cost of a secondment available through the DfE Grants for Education and Training Scheme, the supply of educational psychologists to LEAs failed to keep up with demand due to the reduced number of secondments.

Secondments were not linked to course places so each secondment advertised was applied for by almost all successful applicants to courses across the country, creating a large administrative task for services and a further disincentive to offer a secondment.

Following discussions between the BPS, the AEP the DfE and the Local Government Association (LGA), in 1995 the DfE allocated earmarked funding for training educational psychologists via a mechanism involving a top slice from the Revenue Support Grant, to be administered centrally initially by the LGA. This created a period of relative financial stability in training, until 2007 when the top-slice mechanism was abolished and replaced with arrangements for pooling of LA contributions. The rapid and complete failure of this approach again demonstrated, hopefully for the last time, the need for central funding of EP training (which was re-established in 2012).

The period of financial stability from 1995 and the establishment of a nationally representative steering group for EP training (the lack of which had been commented on as a barrier to change by the 1984 Working Group) facilitated the move to extend the length of training, which gathered momentum again in the mid 1990s. The national steering group comprised PEP representatives from each regional grouping of LAs in England. Chaired by a Director of Children Services who was a former EP, the group also had representation from the higher education institutions, the BPS, AEP, DfES and HMI. In addition to the removal of a key restraining force through the establishment of this national body with responsibility for EP training, the mid 1990s saw the emergence of new drivers for change.

New Drivers for Change

Europe was the source of the first of the new drivers for extension of the length of EP training in the 1990s. Lunt and Farrell (1994) described how the European Community Directive 89/84/EEC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications led to concern that this could be used by governments to reduce qualification requirements. Consequently the European Federation of Applied Psychology Associations agreed a minimum 6 year training period which, in the UK, would involve GBR and 3 years of professional psychology training. Resolving the anomalous interim arrangement in educational psychology training in England Wales and Northern Ireland had become a European as well as a national issue.

representatives from different regions (Farrell, 1996). The AEP was also presented to the BPS Membership and Qualifications Board in May 1997, practitioners were in the majority on the working party and held the chair. In the mid 1990s, by contrast to the early 1980s, the move to extend training was driven by the profession, not the training institutions.

A range of consultations were carried out by the DECP working party: with 1995), Principal Educational Psychologists (Morris, 1997), and course tutors (Frederickson, Curran, Gersch & Portsmouth, 1996). Frederickson (1997) summarised commonalities and differences in the views of these groups.

There was widespread support for the principle of extending initial training and agreement across groups on a number of potential benefits: an increase in the quality of training, for example in the breadth and depth of knowledge and the integration of theory, research and practice; more comprehensive practical experience leading to increased quality of service delivery by new EPs;

improvements in image/status/self-esteem of the profession; and opportunities for developments to the research base of professional practice.

However alongside broad support for the principle, there were a number of concerns relating to the implementation of extended training in practice. Of universal concern were funding and demands for increased placement supervision from services. The likelihood of recruitment problems during the transition period and the potential loss of teacher qualification/experience were also raised in more than one of these consultations. In addition to these

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of training and qualification. While the situation had clearly passed into the
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that rapid change was likely, or the eventual nature of the change certain. The
following cautious prediction on timescale proved remarkably accurate.

*I think the BPS proposals are so much pie-in-the-sky. Sorry as I
may be to say this, I really do not think that three-year, wholly*

*in place by 2001 What the BPS has done, and I greatly
welcome it, is to set us all a target
have now got something to aim for. It may be three year training in*

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professional development of educational psychologists. It was distributed to:
Chief Education Officers in England, the Local Government Association, the

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multi-[†] & Á c æ • Á ~ } á^!Á Ô@á^} qÁ Vi~ ••É and including clinical psychologists with doctoral qualifications, that newly qualified educational psychology needed to be eligible for HPC registration on the same basis as clinical psychologists.

In February 2005 @ÁÓÚÁ^•][] á^áÁ[Á@ÁÖ^] æ{ ^} qÁæ } [~ } &{ ^} cÁ^ Á issuing a statement that re-

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Year 1 . a full time University-based programme with reduced placement

In this context - which has been communicated clearly by the Department - we do not understand why the BPS seem apparently intent on undermining the crucial role of EPs in improving outcomes for children with additional needs.

But given our extremely limited locus, we are not in any position to get involved in detailed negotiations about the way forward. We have nothing to bring to the table, and the statement from the BPS is certainly not going to change that. (Coates, 2005)

However, Tony Dessent took a different view. Describing the BPS position as principled he made it clear that compliance with its requirements was a necessity. The LGA could not provide funding to support training on a course unless it had professional body accreditation and no public service would take the risk of employing graduates of an unaccredited programme. The BPS proposals were supported by the great majority of the regional PEP representatives on the national steering group (albeit with the recognition that the details would take some working out and hard work to implement). A number of concerns were raised by the AEP, relating for example to stress on

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2007). However

Returning for the final time to the question, to what extent can the situation surrounding educational psychology training be said to have re-frozen? In many respects acceptance by the Health Professions Council in 2009 of doctoral level, or equivalent, as the threshold qualification for entry to the profession might be taken as an indication that a new status quo had been established. As such it would seem an appropriate point at which to conclude this chapter in the history of professional training in educational psychology. However given the significant drivers that have emerged since then, for example the report on sustainable arrangements for EP training (DfE, 2011) and the Children and Families Bill, it does appear that an eventful next episode is already in full production.

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