

HSRC Winter Conference, Bridgwood, Bereen 27-28 July 2005

# THE CHANGING ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Dorethea Herbst

July 2005

HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS

3433

# **BACKGROUND**

*(Research in progress)*

**Tradition**

**Trends (similarities and differences)**

**Questions that arise**

# **Traditional role of Educational Psychologists in SA**

- Developed from the position of psychometrician to a scientist-practitioner.
- The needs of children are no longer viewed in special education terms. The scope has broadened to include all children at risk .
- In view of this changed environment, there are suggestions that Educational Psychologists should adapt their professional services.

# Similarities and differences

A gap developed in research and practice.

A gap has developed - different reasons.

Populations consist of immigrants

Include all children; majority is disadvantaged

School system established

System changes

Mainly English

English

**EP as profession is well established.**

**EP recognized and acknowledged.**

# **The profession and the field**

- Definition of the profession
- Suggested role in the context of education according to the HPCSA
- Training
- Private practice

# **Trends in the field of Educational Psychology**

- In SA re-specialization has followed international trends.
- Because of our present context and past history, reasons are similar for some aspects, and different for others.

## **Questions that arise**

- **Who does the educational psychologist hope to serve? (HPCSA and DOE)**
- **What does he/she hope to accomplish?**
- **How will this be achieved?**
- **What is the future direction of educational psychology?**

# **Who does the educational psychologist hope to serve?**

## **Past**

The needs of  
schools and  
students in  
special education.

## **Present**

All children at risk -  
crisis intervention,  
mental health, with  
a strong focus on  
prevention.



# **Definition of the HPCSA (for the profession)**

**Assess diagnose and intervene in order to facilitate the psychological adjustment and development of children and adolescents within the contexts of family, school, social or peer groups and communities.**

# **What does he/she hope to accomplish? (in the context of education)**

The EP endorses the RNCS (2002:7) to support each learner to develop his/her full potential, to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

# **What is the future direction of educational psychology?**

**Suggestions for the education context**

**Follow international trends by broadening the scope of services (Engelbrecht 2004)**

- **As collaborator the EP should become part of teams within schools and communities**
  - **As consultant the integrity of EP depends on sharing his/her expertise in different areas as required\***
- (Engelbrecht 2004:23).

# **Consultative role**

**Behavioural consultants** involved in interventions for learners with behavioural problems.

**Diagnostic consultation** (traditionally used by EP in SA). This kind of consultation refers to identifying and assessing an individual learner's problem, prescribing strategies for resolving it.

- **As organizational consultants and facilitators** by examining the environment (school system, assisting educators) to support learner outcomes.

EP should assume roles as **mental health consultants** in the development, implementation and evaluation of school-based mental health programmes.

# **Results reported by Kirsten**

## **Theoretical training**

## **Practical training activities**

Family therapy	Assessment 100%
Educational therapy	Parental guidance 100%
Cognitive-behaviour therapy	Career guidance 90%
Psychoanalytical theory	Psychotherapy 90%
Person-centered theory	<u>Learning support 90%</u>
Rational-emotive therapy	<u>Research 50%</u> and
Eclectic theories and	<u>Prevention 20%</u>
Systemic theory.	

# Work setting

Most EPs work in private practice: 70% vs schools 30%

Client population include children, adolescents, students and adults (including parents and educators and couples

**Practice include:**

Assessment

Career guidance

Forensic work

Parental guidance

Psychotherapy

Learning support

Psychotherapy

Training

Supervision

Research

Employee assistance

Health promotion

# Training vs Practice

## Practical training activities

- Assessment 100%
- Parental guidance 100%
- Career guidance 90%
- Psychotherapy 90%
- Learning support 90%
- Research 50% and
- Prevention 20%

## Private Practice include:

Assessment 80%

Career guidance 80%

Forensic work 40%

Parental guidance 90%

Psychotherapy 90%

Learning support 70%

Psychotherapy 80%

Training 70%

Supervision 60%

Research 50%

Employee assistance 50%

Health promotion 40%

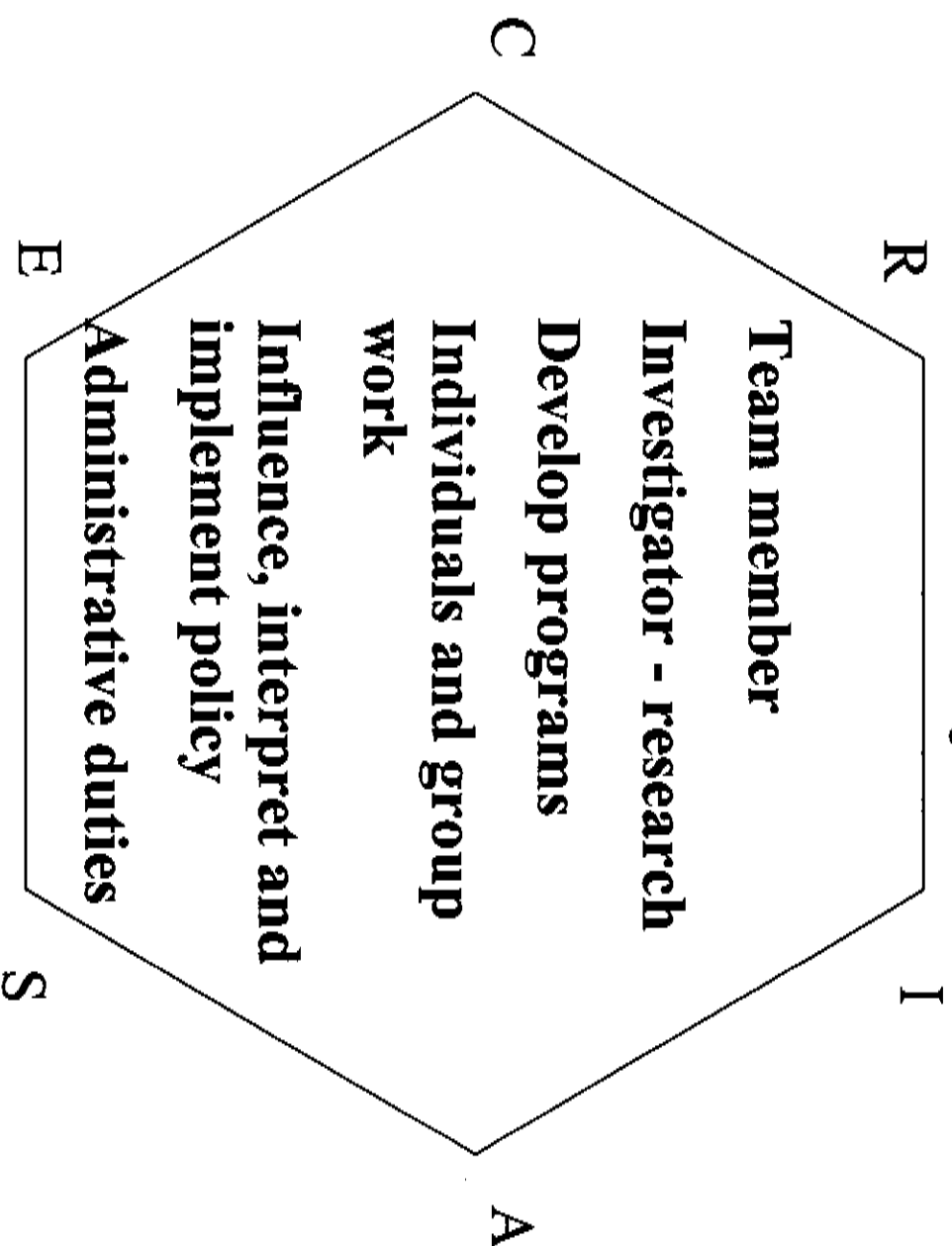
## **Suggestions from the profession**

**Findings from a survey involving practitioners was reported at PsySSA (Kirsten 2004). The focus was on the present state of EP in SA as it relates to:**

- (a) training**
- (b) education and**
- (c) practice \*.**



# Holland's Theory of Interest and Personality



## **Changes in role and activities**

- Superficial functioning (shallow)
- Ratio or EP per child (research?)
- Top down changes – “adapt or die”
- Additional research to develop framework
- Specialization :emotional-social, **orthodidactic** including language theory and practice
- Career guidance
- Whole child approach

## **Facts to consider**

**Kriegler (1995) – Guidelines for parents**

“Children who read at home regularly get more practice at reading than those who do not. It is well established that practice consolidates a skill, promotes fluency and minimises forgetting. It thus promotes acquisition of reading skills, it enhances familiarity with fostering of learning skills and application of enquiry and search strategies in home and school settings. Ultimately it prepares the child for adult competence in an information technology society”.

## **The child with learning problems**

The new integrated or inclusive approach to keep children in the classroom rather than arranging individual support means that the child who need it most, cannot get it.

Specialized assistance may come too late.

If the parents cannot afford private educational support, that child gets “lost” (Heugh: 2005).

## **The child as a person**

All learning-disabled children experience repeated academic failure. Social rejection and low self-esteem results in lack of motivation and guarantees future failure. This may lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms.

“Intrinsic motivation should be stimulated by judicious implementation of rewards ... more effective cognitive and meta-cognitive intervention and exciting teaching aids”  
Kriegler (1989:24).

# **Alternative roles for EP**

## **(The field and the profession)**

- Develop a framework based on participatory research
- If educational psychology is to make an impact in preventative and development work they should start with work in the foundation phase, including pre-primary education
- Training should be planned according to the nearest possible ratio of EP per child for the following decades
- Enhance language development theory in training
- Training should focus on closing the gap in terms of gender and colour
- Standardized instruments should be developed according to new approaches (services should be child-level accountable and program-level accountable)
- A new job description should be compiled for potential EP.