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THE EXPANDING ROLE
OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST
IN THE EDUCATION SERVICE

*Inaugural Lecture
delivered at the College
on October 25, 1977*

by
Professor M. CHAZAN
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THE EXPANDING ROLE OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE EDUCATION SERVICE

Most givers of inaugural lectures confess to feelings of trepidation associated with the occasion ; few, however, make any reference to the mental effort involved. I myself was unaware of the connection between anxiety and brain-activity until I came across, in the 'quotables' column of a recent issue of the Bulletin of the British Psychological Society, an extract from the writings of James Sully, who was appointed Professor of Mind and Logic at University College, London in 1892 and who was a pioneer in scientific child psychology. The extract runs as follows :

' . . . but this is not the whole effect of brain-activity. In cases where the powers of the organ are taxed for a prolonged period other organs are liable to be affected. Thus, since prolonged brain-exercise draws off the blood in too large a quantity to that organ, it is apt to impede the general circulation and so to give rise to the familiar discomforts of cold feet.'

Certainly a great deal of brain-activity is needed in choosing a theme for an inaugural lecture, and in the fields of educational and developmental psychology many issues vie for attention. It seemed, however, that it would be particularly appropriate for me to talk tonight about the role of the psychologist in the education service, for three main reasons. First, the Department of Education at this University College has been training psychologists for local authority work since 1963 ; ours was one of the earlier University-based courses, and is still the only one in Wales. Those of us who are involved in this aspect of the Department's work must frequently reconsider our objectives in training, and the present occasion affords me an opportunity to take a fresh look at the changes in the profession that have taken place—and are still taking place—in England and Wales since the first governmental report on 'Psychologists in the Education Services' (the Summerfield Report) was published in 1968. Second, a discussion of the work of educational psychologists engaged in

the school psychological service illustrates the problems met with in the application of psychology to education and to the resolution of children's developmental difficulties. And, as University Departments of Education are often thought of as pursuing highly abstruse theoretical studies far from the scene of battle, I hope that this discussion will also show that they are very much concerned with the realities of school life, as well as with the professional development of those working in the education service.

Third, it was tempting to take the chance offered by this occasion to do something to remove the misconceptions commonly held about psychologists. Most local education authorities have had psychologists on their staffs since the 1940s or earlier; it is in fact over sixty years since the first appointment of a psychologist to a local authority—that of Cyril Burt to the London County Council in 1913. However, one still finds widespread public misunderstanding of the role of the educational psychologist, who now works in a separate local education authority school psychological service as well as in the Child Guidance Clinic, even though the mass media, notably radio and television, have done much in recent years to spread knowledge about child development and the services available to help children.

Nor is a lack of knowledge about the work of the educational psychologist confined to non-professionals: teachers, head-teachers and even school counsellors are often uncertain about what educational psychologists actually do, or have different expectations of their role from those held by psychologists themselves. Perhaps I can illustrate this point by mentioning a study, carried out by one of our former students, of the attitudes of teachers in junior and secondary schools to school psychological and child guidance services.¹ This enquiry showed that few of the teachers interviewed were well informed about the functions of these services and few had more than minimal contact with them. Only a small number could say what an educational psychologist was in more than the vaguest terms, many thinking that 'psychoanalysing children to uncover their unconscious desires and fears' was a major aspect of the educational psychologist's work (incidentally,

this equation of psychology with psychoanalysis has been found to be common amongst sixth formers interested in taking university or polytechnic courses in psychology). Many of the sample, too, agreed with the popular image of the psychologist 'as a bit of a joke'. The findings of this study may, of course, not be representative, but I do not think that they give a grossly exaggerated picture.

Another study which illustrates differences in role expectations between educational psychologists themselves and the schools was one carried out by a local authority school psychological service.² Whereas nearly all of a sample of 74 head-teachers (in all types of school) thought that the main work of educational psychologists should be with individual children, the educational psychologists themselves in that authority considered that the main emphases of their work should be 'general involvement in schools', 'research and development' and 'policy and planning'. And in a national study, carried out in our Department, of the relationships between educational psychologists and trained counsellors working in secondary schools, we found that while the counsellors in the sample had reasonably positive attitudes towards educational psychologists, many of them had little face-to-face contact with psychologists, whose role they saw in more limited terms (in some cases, mainly as testers) than the psychologists themselves.³

Such misconceptions and conflicts of expectation as I have touched upon inevitably reduce the effectiveness of educational psychologists. A profession cannot function adequately unless its role is clearly defined to all who come into contact with it. It is, admittedly, not easy for educational psychologists to show a coherent and easily understood pattern of professional behaviour, since they engage in a variety of activities and since they are not agreed amongst themselves on what they should be doing. You all know the old joke about the two psychiatrists who, meeting in the street, greet one another with the question, 'How am I today?' Perhaps this joke could be updated to refer to educational psychologists asking each other, professionally, 'Who am I?' This Eriksonian identity crisis is not surprising in a developing profession, but

it is important that psychologists should explain their work both to other professional groups and to the parents with whom they deal.

I cannot hope tonight to give a full explanation of the work of educational psychologists, but rather I shall try to point to some of the influences which are shaping the profession, give a personal view of some of its main concerns, and glance towards the future. Before doing this, however, I need to say something about the way in which educational psychologists are trained, as this has obvious relevance to their professional development.

Background and training

Those wishing to enter a training course in educational psychology are required to have academic qualifications in psychology acceptable for graduate membership of the British Psychological Society. In addition, they are usually expected to have at least two years' experience as qualified teachers. By no means all psychologists are happy about this teaching requirement. The Summerfield Report itself recommended a new route to the profession which would enable graduates in psychology to proceed immediately to postgraduate training and to qualify as educational psychologists in two years. So far, the profession itself has stood out for retaining teaching experience as a prerequisite for training, mainly on the grounds that educational psychologists could not fulfil their tasks in the field and communicate with teachers adequately without experience of the classroom. It is certainly the case that a number of psychology graduates are deterred from becoming educational psychologists by the thought of the prolonged training and of having to desert psychology, if only temporarily, for school teaching; and it is also true that not all of those who take the long route to a professional qualification are satisfied with their training as teachers or with their experience in the classroom. However, in a follow-up study of our former students carried out in 1974, my colleague Mr. Tim Carroll⁴ found that a significant majority of the respon-

dents thought that teacher training and experience had made a contribution to their competence as educational psychologists.

Opportunities for training as an educational psychologist have increased rapidly in recent years, and there are now fourteen postgraduate training courses, eleven of which are University-based. In the session 1963-64, when our own course started, 22 candidates in England and Wales successfully completed training; in the academic year 1975-76 124 students were receiving professional training.

The content of the training courses, as one would expect, varies considerably, being determined by the philosophy and interests of the tutors involved and the facilities available in the locality as well as by the needs of the profession. In our own course, which lasts for a full calendar year, we try to prepare students for a preventive role as well as for coping with the immediate problems they will have to face when they take up a post. We aim to give them skills in assessing the educational and psychological needs of a wide range of children and adolescents (in particular those with handicaps or difficulties in learning or development) and in advising on appropriate forms of intervention and treatment. We stress the importance of working closely with other professions, and in this our students are helped by being members of a Department which trains teachers and school counsellors, and of a University College which trains social workers. Our students are also given training in research methodology. The research interests of the tutors involved lead to an emphasis on, amongst other things, the early identification of children educationally at risk, the importance of working with parents and teachers of young children, the relationship between poor emotional adjustment and school failure, and the role of language in learning. We are conscious of the difficulties faced by trainees in mastering a diversity of skills, and covering much theoretical ground, in a single year, and yet there are still gaps in training that we should like to fill.

Before leaving the question of preparation for the profession, I should mention that, while our students go to posts all over Britain and even abroad, our course has helped to train Welsh-speaking educational psychologists with a particular

interest in working in Wales. A special feature of the Swansea course, too, is the opportunity given to newly-qualified psychology graduates to enter an integrated four-year period of training. This involves the initial teacher training year in our Department, varied teaching experience in the locality while maintaining contact with us, and a place on the final year's course of professional training. Although there is now one other such course, the integrated course introduced here by a former colleague, Professor Phillip Williams, was the first in England and Wales. Thanks to the co-operation given by the local authorities concerned, this type of course has, I think, been successful in meeting the needs of young graduates in psychology wishing to enter the field, some of whom would otherwise be lost to the profession.

New demands and changing emphases

The number of psychologists in the education service has grown rapidly since the time of the Summerfield working party. In 1965, 324 educational psychologists were employed in England and Wales, a ratio of approximately one educational psychologist to 22,000 children in maintained primary and secondary schools. In July 1977, according to figures recently available from the Association of Educational Psychologists, 896.85 psychologists (full-time equivalents) were employed in the 104 local authorities of England and Wales (Wales has 43 educational psychologists). Although the establishment varies greatly from authority to authority, this figure means that the overall ratio of 1 educational psychologist to 10,000 children recommended by the Summerfield Report as the target to be reached 'as soon as possible, certainly by 1990' has more or less been achieved. However, demands on educational psychologists have multiplied to such an extent since the Report that the ratio of 1 to 10,000 seems woefully inadequate if the needs of children and schools are to be met. This ratio, anyway, compares unfavourably with that in some other countries: Denmark and Norway have ratios of about 1 educational psychologist to about 2,000 children, and Israel 1 to 1,000 primary schoolchildren.⁵

At the time of the Summerfield Report, educational psychologists, though engaged in a variety of activities, were putting most emphasis on psychological assessment. They did not devote very much attention to the psychological treatment of children, and while they acknowledged the importance of discussing individual children with teachers and others, in practice they gave relatively little time to this. What information we have suggests that there have been marked changes in focus over the past decade, but educational psychologists are still unable to apportion their time as they would like. The Division of Educational and Child Psychology—a division of the British Psychological Society—has just concluded a national survey of the functions and perceptions of psychologists working with children, and I have been fortunate enough to be allowed to see the preliminary summary of the findings of this enquiry prior to publication. The survey shows that educational psychologists still spend most of their time on assessment and educational placement, and have to deal with an increasing number of referrals, most frequently for behaviour disorder, poor school attainment, educational subnormality, school attendance problems and communication difficulties. Nevertheless, they are giving more attention to prevention and treatment, both indirect (through parents and teachers) and direct. They are seeing children at a younger age, the majority having some contact with under-threes; they are also spending more time in the child's natural setting than in the clinic. In spite of the heavy demands on school psychological services for crisis intervention, many services are striving to adopt a broader, community-based approach, undertaking projects with parents (for example, through discussion groups, workshops and toy libraries), meeting adolescents in youth centres, or contributing to adult literacy programmes.

The new emphases in the role of educational psychologists stem, in part, from their own view of what they ought to be doing, but also from new pressures from a variety of sources. Local government reorganization, legislative measures affecting the social services, changes in the National Health Service and developments in educational policy have all carried implications for the profession. With fewer and generally larger local

education authorities, most have teams of psychologists rather than one or two working on their own. Such teams are in a position to be more forward-looking and to highlight gaps in the services they provide ; the need to develop specialist functions is increasingly recognized, for example in working more effectively with particular types of handicap. Both the Children and Young Persons Act of 1969 and the Social Services Act of 1970, which directed more attention to the community care of deprived and delinquent children and adolescents, have led to the greater involvement of educational psychologists in the work of Social Services Departments.

Changes in educational policy have affected the role of the educational psychologist in a number of ways. The loss of faith in selection procedures and the gradual abolition of the 'eleven-plus' have meant that psychologists are no longer concerned with categorizing pupils for differentiated forms of schooling, but rather with the maximizing of educational opportunity for all children. Many educational psychologists have identified themselves with the compensatory measures that have followed in the wake of the recommendations of the 1967 Plowden Report for a policy of 'positive discrimination' in favour of schools in neighbourhoods where children are most severely disadvantaged by their home environment. Although the interest in compensatory education has not been confined to nursery and infant schools, it has resulted in a greater recognition of the needs of young children. I shall return to the topic of early intervention shortly ; it suffices to say at this point that it has proved difficult for educational psychologists to give as much time to young children as they would wish, in the face of the demands of secondary schools for their help.

Secondary school re-organization and the raising of the school leaving age have led to schools paying more attention to pastoral care and to the management of behaviour problems, especially aggressiveness, truancy and delinquency, but also to less overt difficulties such as over-inhibition and social immaturity. As a consequence, secondary schools have made increasing calls on the school psychological service. Sometimes, it must be said, the educational psychologist is initially seen by

the school as the chief agent in securing a placement elsewhere for an intractable adolescent, but out of such an unpromising beginning a constructive partnership between psychologist and school may develop, both in establishing suitable facilities for disturbed and disturbing pupils within the school itself and, more importantly, in discussing how some adolescent problems may be prevented.

A further development during the past decade which has given new responsibilities to educational psychologists has been the bringing of severely subnormal children, previously in training centres under medical auspices, into the educational system, through the Education Act of 1970. Educational psychologists, who previously had little contact with these children, are now trying to meet the demands made on them by school staffs for practical help in designing suitable individual programmes, and by parents for guidance in helping their children to develop to their fullest potential.

One other trend in educational policy that is likely to affect the work of educational psychologists in important ways relates to the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools. The report of the Warnock Committee of Enquiry into Special Education, expected in the not too distant future, will no doubt have much to say on this issue, but already there is provision of special education in many primary and secondary schools, and Section 10 of the Education Act of 1976 has firmly established the principle that handicapped children should be educated in ordinary schools unless it would be impracticable to arrange this. Although the full operation of this section has been left in abeyance, it is likely to give encouragement to education authorities seeking to integrate handicapped children to a greater extent than in the past. I am sure that the principle of integration is one that should be supported as far as is humanly possible, but the assimilation of children with fairly severe handicaps into ordinary school life is a complex matter. Its success depends largely on the extent to which thought is given to meeting a handicapped child's individual needs in the context of a school geared to 'normality'. In ensuring that adequate facilities are provided and that attitudes towards handicapped children are conducive

to integration, educational psychologists, together with their medical and other professional colleagues, have much to contribute.

Implications of expanding knowledge

Although administrative, legislative and organizational changes over recent years have been important factors in determining the direction in which the profession of educational psychology is going, I would not like to give the impression that they are the only major factors. We still have much to discover about children and the influences on their development, but considerable advances have been made in the last twenty years or so in the fields of developmental and educational psychology which have affected approaches to children and adolescents. These advances are particularly well illustrated in the case of early childhood. Young children are now thought to develop more rapidly and to be more sensitive to stimulation than has previously been supposed. We must not exaggerate the importance of the early years of life as opposed to the later years, but as Ellis Evans,⁶ a leading American psychologist, has pointed out, our understanding of the psychological development of young children has been greatly enhanced by Piaget's creative insights into children's thought processes, the work of Bernstein and his colleagues into the relationship between learning, language and socio-economic background, new interpretations of the structure of knowledge and the relationship of early to later learning (stemming largely from Bruner's work), and changing views about the nature and assessment of human intelligence. Educational psychologists have yet to work out the full implications of this new knowledge, but it is guiding them in their involvement with the younger age-groups.

We are finding out more, too, about the intimate connection between success in school and emotional adjustment, at all stages of the school system, and this is encouraging educational psychologists to take a greater interest in social, emotional and personality factors than hitherto. Psychologists have long been aware of the many factors influencing performance in

school, but recent work on the part played by the family and community in the educational process, and on the dynamics of the school and classroom, has helped us towards a more sophisticated model of the differentiation of achievement in school and therefore of life chances. As John Eggleston⁷ states, we no longer see this differentiation as determined solely by the individual differences in ability among children, nor even by the interaction of these abilities with children's differing social backgrounds. Rather, school achievement is determined by a complex interaction of factors, including the ways in which teachers and children perceive the curriculum and social roles. This model is increasingly bringing educational psychologists out of the office or clinic into the school and classroom. This move in its turn is drawing their attention to the need to understand institutions as well as children—how pupils' self-concepts and learning are affected by their school environment, including the attitudes and relationships of members of staff, and how individuals react to innovation and change. Not only is it impossible to assess a child's problem in school adequately without an understanding of the school itself, but such insight can often help to prevent problems arising in the first place. In seeking to advise on changes within the school, educational psychologists are, of course, treading on delicate ground and they are dependent on the willingness of the school to ask for advice of this kind, but some schools at least are seeing the value of the educational psychologist acting in this broader advisory role.

Pressures from parents

There are pressures, too, from parents themselves, who, through well-established or newly-formed groups or associations, have taken a hand in drawing attention to problems where they would like more help from educational psychologists, among others. They have appealed for skilled advice and practical guidance in their own handling of mentally and physically handicapped children, especially those at the pre-school stage. They also want more help for 'dyslexic' children, i.e. children of normal or superior ability who have serious and

specific difficulties in reading (whatever one thinks of the concept of 'dyslexia', a problem does exist); for autistic children—children who are socially very withdrawn and uncommunicative and show some unusual patterns of behaviour; and also for gifted children, whose needs are often said to be unrecognized in our educational system. Parental pressure-groups do focus attention on deficiencies in services and provision for children, and it is right that their voice should be heard.

Let me now turn from general trends to say something more specific about the work of educational psychologists. In selecting five areas for a brief discussion—namely, early identification and intervention, assessment, treatment, the educational psychologist's advisory role and research and evaluation—I cannot, of course, do justice to the full range of activities in which educational psychologists are engaged, nor to the individual differences in philosophy and practice which exist in the profession.

Early identification and intervention :—Educational psychologists have become increasingly dissatisfied with waiting for children to be referred to them, as many problems are allowed to drag on for far too long, thus reducing the chances of effective action. Most school psychological services carry out some form of screening for learning difficulties at about 8 years of age and follow this up as far as their resources allow. However, many of the children identified at this stage would have benefited from much earlier help. Studies in the U.S.A. and in this country have stressed the desirability of giving attention as early as possible to the needs of young children living in conditions of social disadvantage, and much of the effort put into early intervention has been directed at these children. But 'socially disadvantaged' children are not the only children educationally 'at risk'. In a research project currently being carried out in our Department, we are finding that a surprisingly large number of four-year-olds (at least one in five) present their parents or teachers with some kind of problem—not only by reason of physical or mental handicap, but per-

haps because of developmental delay, speech or language difficulties or poor emotional adjustment. There is evidence from a variety of sources to suggest that, while developmental problems in early childhood are often transitory, some at least are indicators of later trouble and even of failure at school. Preventive action is still at an experimental stage, and, as is well-known, financial constraints have prevented the growth of pre-school education to the extent envisaged in the government White Paper of 1972 (*Education: a Framework for Expansion*), so that not all young children who can benefit from it are enjoying some kind of pre-school educational or group experience. Nevertheless, a growing number of educational psychologists are giving thought to methods of identifying children educationally 'at risk' in nursery and infant schools, and to designing intervention strategies to help these children. Most emphasis to date has been put on developing language programmes and on helping parents to play a greater part in providing appropriate stimulation at home, but we still have much to learn about effective forms of intervention, including those likely to promote good social and emotional adjustment. Many evaluative studies of the effects of early intervention have come up with somewhat disappointing results, but recent work in the U.S.A. suggests that, if programmes are properly designed, with full parental participation and sustained follow-up, the outcome is much more encouraging. It would now seem that one of the principal effects of well-planned early intervention programmes in America is a dramatic reduction in the number of children requiring to attend special schools or classes later on.⁸

One further point needs to be made about early identification and intervention. It is important that educational psychologists, in their efforts to pick out young children 'at risk' and to take action, if possible, before any real crisis occurs, should be sensitive to the dangers inherent in this approach. Apart from the fallibility of prediction in the early years, sociological and psychological studies of the labelling process have drawn attention to the influence which terms like 'disadvantaged', 'slow-learning' or 'maladjusted' have on parents' and teachers' expectations and on educational

achievement and behaviour. Psychologists are indeed becoming very cautious in using terminology which may have adverse effects on the child. However, I do not think that they should be deterred from trying to tackle problems at the earliest possible stage. Rather, they should be careful, in their work with young children, their parents and their teachers, to take account of strengths as well as weaknesses and to preserve, at all times, the dignity of the child and his family.

Assessment :—A circular issued in 1975 by the Department of Education and Science, dealing with the discovery of children requiring special education and the assessment of their needs, gave the major responsibility for making recommendations about special education to educational psychologists and advisers rather than to medical officers. While educational psychologists have warmly welcomed this move, they are anxious to dispel the idea—still commonly held—that they are predominantly concerned with assessment, and that their main function is to provide an I.Q. or other global measure of dubious value. Psychological tests have recently come under heavy attack from many quarters, chiefly on the grounds that the results they give are of limited validity and practical use, that they encourage a static view of child development, and that they are culturally biased, thereby failing to do justice to children from working-class backgrounds and minority groups. Psychologists themselves have joined in the attack. Burden⁹ has argued for the complete rejection of standard psychological tests by educational psychologists, stating that such tests ‘by offering deceptively easy solutions . . . encourage laziness and shoddy thinking’. Probably this view is still a somewhat extreme and unrepresentative one, but many psychologists in Britain are certainly disenchanted with most of the test instruments they use. Others¹⁰ have emphasized that formal testing is an inadequate approach to multi-faceted problems, and that performance in the classroom does not always relate to performance in the testing situation, especially in the case of young children.

The tendency to move away from a simplistic use of tests is a welcome one, but in my view it would be unfortunate if it

were to lead to a denigration by educational psychologists of their role in assessment, which after all is essential before making recommendations or carrying out treatment programmes. As we have seen, many demands are still being made on educational psychologists for advice about individual children, and I would agree with Wright¹¹ when he says ‘much of the specific contribution which a psychologist makes stems out of his study of the individual . . . applying his scientific techniques for the assessment and management of the individual child. This is still a special contribution which the psychologist makes and which differentiates him from most other advisory officers in the educational service’. Rather than abandon or diminish this contribution, psychologists need to adopt more sophisticated approaches to assessment. As Berger¹² has suggested, both the range and types of assessment procedures will have to be extended if we are to utilize our current knowledge of children’s linguistic, cognitive and social development and their sensory, motor and perceptual functions. Educational psychologists have already made a contribution to producing more reliable and informative test instruments, and they are refining their techniques for observing children in real-life situations. They are also making more systematic use of teachers’ and parents’ knowledge of the child, and taking into account the child’s own constructs of his world. All this work needs to be extended, and educational psychologists should seek to link assessment more closely to special education programmes or other forms of intervention. They should always think of assessment as a continuing process, with feedback from all who are involved in the care, education and treatment of the child.

Advisory role :—Since the local government re-organization of 1974, many L.E.A.s have developed and extended their advisory services. In some cases, educational psychologists have become an integral part of these services ; in others, they have remained outside them but work closely with advisers. Whatever the structure of the L.E.A., the advisory role of the educational psychologist has assumed a greater prominence in recent years. Not only do they make recommendations to the author-

ity about the most suitable educational placement for a child, and give very specific advice on management to parents and teachers, but, increasingly, educational psychologists are called upon to act in an advisory or consultative role in local authority policy-making. They may contribute to committees or working parties concerned, for example, with recommending or deciding what provision should be made for various categories of handicapped children, what kinds of help immigrant children should receive, or what pre-school facilities are needed in a local authority. They are ready, also, to be invited to give advice to schools on general matters relating to educational guidance or to aspects of curriculum development, or to be consulted by schools wishing to adopt preventive measures in relation to problems of educational backwardness, disadvantage, absenteeism, maladjustment or delinquency. Finally, they are playing a greater part in the in-service training of teachers and other professional groups. In these ways, educational psychologists are becoming more and more involved, both directly and indirectly, with children and adolescents other than those who present problems.

Treatment :—Ever since the inception of local education authority child guidance and school psychological services in this country, educational psychologists have been involved not only in assessment and placement but also in the treatment of children referred for help. In this context, I like to use the term 'treatment' in a very broad way, since modifying the attitudes of a child's parents or teachers may do more good than directly treating the child. Thus much of the work I have mentioned when discussing the educational psychologist's advisory role relates to the treatment of the child. However, many educational psychologists have not been satisfied with their contribution to the treatment aspects of their role, and are seeking to improve their skills in helping children towards better adjustment or educational progress. While continuing to work with psychiatrists, psychotherapists and social workers in the child guidance team, they have been extending their own role in treatment in two main directions. First, they have taken the initiative in setting up special facilities within

the ordinary school. Examples of such initiatives are 'nurture groups' for immature infant school children, therapeutic play groups in junior schools and special units for disturbed pupils within comprehensive schools. Such provision has the great advantage of ensuring the maximum involvement of members of the school staff in treatment. Second, they have been developing what are called 'behaviour modification' techniques to help children with a wide range of behaviour and learning difficulties, since this approach seems to offer a methodology which is based on a sounder theoretical foundation than 'psychotherapeutic' approaches derived from psychoanalysis. I cannot enter into an explanation here of behaviour modification techniques, but essentially they are based on learning theory derived from Pavlov and Skinner, and on the systematic application of reinforcement for desired behaviour. Behaviour modification does not appeal to all psychologists, some of whom find it too rigid and mechanistic, and anyway it is not easy to carry out a full behaviour modification programme in the ordinary classroom.¹³ But this approach is encouraging the more precise identification of the behaviour that needs to be brought under control, and is promoting collaboration between psychologists and teachers; and it is having some success. Perhaps in the future we ought to consider how behaviour modification techniques can be extended to take account of a broader concept of learning than hitherto, giving more attention to cognitively-orientated theories and making the child a more active partner in the treatment process.

Research and evaluation :—Because of their scientific training and their opportunities for first-hand contact with children, their families and their schools, educational psychologists are in a unique position to undertake research into many aspects of child development. Although it is encouraging to see useful research projects being carried out by some practitioners, including, in at least two authorities, ongoing evaluation of their own psychological services, it is not unfair to suggest that, to date, the research role of the practising educational psychologist has been given low priority. It is not difficult, in the light of the ever-increasing demands on educational psychologists,

to understand why this is so, and why so much rich material languishes in filing cabinets. But it would be unfortunate if the situation were to continue where, because of excessive daily pressures, educational psychologists were not to have opportunities to engage in systematic research in areas relevant to their work. Graham¹⁴ (writing from the point of view of a child psychiatrist) has suggested that psychologists should take a leading role in evaluating the effectiveness of the measures adopted to treat childhood problems. Such evaluation is sorely needed. Research to date has cast doubt on the efficacy of some of the procedures used in psychotherapy and remedial education. Reviews of such evidence as we have show that impressive short-term gains or improvement are often recorded, but these are infrequently sustained in the long-term. However, doubt has been cast, too, on the way in which evaluation studies have been carried out and on the interpretation of the findings. The fact is that we know very little about the value of our strategies, and we should look to educational psychologists to add to our knowledge about such questions as the relationship between type and severity of problem and the outcome of treatment, the best ways of sustaining short-term improvement and the implications of childhood problems for mental health in later life. In examining such questions, psychologists will, as Graham suggests, need to draw from a variety of theoretical models, some of which may differ from those used traditionally in the psychological laboratory.

Conclusion

I have already indicated some of the tasks that lie before educational psychologists. Much of the work in which educational psychologists are involved is still at an experimental stage: they need to develop greater expertise in many of their functions, for example in preventive work in the nursery school, in ensuring that children get off to a good start in the infant school, and in helping to ease the difficulties faced by many adolescents today. They should play a greater part in education for parenthood and in counselling parents, especially those with young children or with children who are handi-

capped in some way. They need, also, to be seen as having a contribution to make to many aspects of the general policy of schools, and to bridging the wide gap between psychological theory and educational practice.

As we have seen, there are many different views on where the emphasis should lie in the future development of the profession. Some would argue that the predominant concern of educational psychologists should be with individual children needing help; but others are unhappy about this clinically-orientated concept of their role, and think that they should be more concerned with the application of psychological knowledge to the general problems of the school, or be more active in the corridors of power, influencing educational policy. Still others would argue that the paramount need is for the educational psychologist to make his role that of an educational innovator, changing the system rather than being content with helping the child to adjust to the system. I would hope that there will continue to be room within the profession as a whole for sustaining individual differences in approach and philosophy, and I find the healthy style of debate amongst educational psychologists today encouraging.

Perhaps I can conclude this lecture by pleading for a re-examination of the relationships of educational psychologists with many other professions concerned with children and adolescents, to ensure that inter-disciplinary collaboration is more effective than it now seems to be. Indeed, such a re-examination is already on its way. A dialogue has begun between L.E.A. psychologists and clinical psychologists working in the health services, to promote closer and more constructive liaison between two professions with very similar concerns. The 1974 government Circular on Child Guidance, which recommended that more flexible ways of using the joint skills of the child guidance team should be worked out, is leading to a reconsideration of the relationship between educational psychologists and child psychiatrists, often a fruitful partnership in the past but one not always without friction. And the recent Court Report on Child Health Services,¹⁵ while underestimating the skills of educational psychologists and the range of activities in which they are already involved, sees an



expanding role for psychologists, educational as well as clinical, in new inter-disciplinary child health teams.

Inter-disciplinary collaboration needs to be extended, too, on the theoretical side, and I would like to see psychologists and sociologists coming together more than they have done in the past to work out the implications of their advances in knowledge for children, families and schools. Other disciplines which are relevant to the work of educational psychologists include psychiatry, paediatrics, social policy and statistics.

I have tried to present a picture of educational psychologists as a rapidly developing profession, growing in importance in the education service, receptive to new ideas, eager to contribute to knowledge and anxious to work with others. If they are to extend their expertise, educational psychologists will need far more opportunities for advanced and specialized training while in the field. In providing such opportunities universities, in partnership with local education authorities, have a great deal to offer, and I hope that, despite economic stringencies, they will be able to meet the challenge.

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