

**Educational psychologists' perceptions of their role in the
Pietermaritzburg area**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master of Arts (Educational psychology)**

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28 April 2008

ABSTRACT

With vast changes occurring in the South African context since 1994, it is clear that the role of educational psychologists has also shifted. While changes have occurred, numerous difficulties still exist within the education sector highlighting the need for educational psychologists. However, there appears to be disagreement about how the role is perceived in the Health Professions Council of South Africa, training institutions and in practice. For these reasons, this study seeks to unpack educational psychologists' perceptions of their role within the Pietermaritzburg area. A qualitative methodology is employed using semi-structured interviews with a number of practitioners in the area. The study found that the role of educational psychologists is complex, affected by individual variables and various contextual shifts and tensions. This finding has implications for the training of educational psychologists and raises questions around their place within education itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people who contributed in various ways to this project.

- I would like to thank my supervisors, Angela Hough and Nyameka Mankayi for all the hard work they put into guiding me through the process of putting together this project. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

- I would like to thank the Educational Psychologists who so willingly gave of their time to participate in the interviews for this project. I greatly appreciate the time invested and enthusiasm with which they engaged in the process.

- Finally I would like to thank Gaelene Wellbeloved for the hours of hard work put in to help with the transcription of interviews. Her contribution in this way is much appreciated.

DECLARATIONS

I declare that, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, this dissertation is the result of my own work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Educational Psychology). It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signed: Tessa Pitchford

3 September 2008

As the candidates supervisors we have/have not approved this dissertation for submission.

Signed: Angela Hough

Nyameka Mankayi

3 September 2008

CONTENTS

Cover page	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Declarations	iv
Contents	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Aim and rationale	2
Chapter 2: Literature review	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 South African Context	6
2.2.1 Barriers to education.....	7
2.3 South African education context	11
2.3.1 Apartheid education	12
2.3.2 Post apartheid education	16
2.3.3 Implications for considering the role of EPs	26
2.4 Educational psychology in South Africa	26
2.4.1 A brief history of psychology	27
2.4.2 Psychology in the South African context	29
2.4.3 Educational psychology	32
2.4.4 Roles filled by EPs	37
2.5 Training	40

2.6 Professional identity	41
2.7 Conclusion	42
Chapter 3: Methodology	43
3.1 Theoretical framework	43
3.2 Methodology	44
3.2.1 Sampling	45
3.2.2 Participants	46
3.2.3 Data collection	46
3.2.4 Data analysis	47
3.2.5 Theoretical framework for analysis	51
3.3 Validity and reliability	53
3.4 Ethical issues	54
Chapter 4: Results	56
4.1 Introduction	56
4.2 The role of EPs at present	57
4.2.1 The work of EPs	57
4.3 Working within a community of professionals	62
4.4 Challenges to practice	67
4.4.1 Resources	68
4.4.2 Language and cultural diversity	68
4.4.3 Human resources	70
4.4.4 Time constraints	71
4.4.5 Scope of practice as a challenge	71

4.5 Shifts in practice in recent years	72
4.6 Perceptions on what the role of EPs should be	74
4.6.1 Individual work	75
4.6.2 Support services	76
4.6.3 Advocacy	78
4.7 Tensions around inclusive education	79
4.8 Tensions around categorisation	82
4.8.1 The nature of the work	82
4.8.2 Professional identity	84
4.8.3 Career opportunities	86
4.9 Tensions around social responsibility	87
4.9.1 Desire to make a difference	87
4.9.2 Helping the disadvantaged	88
4.9.3 Efforts to help	88
4.9.4 Limitations	89
4.10 Implications for training	90
4.11 Summary	93
 Chapter 5: Discussion	 95
5.1 Introduction	95
5.2 The roles of EPs	96
5.3 A framework for understanding the emergence of a role for EPs	97
5.3.1 Individual factors	99
5.3.2 Contextual factors	102
5.3.3 Interaction	108

5.3.4 Conflict in defining the role of an EP	108
5.4 Training implications	110
5.5 Limitations of the study	111
5.6 Reflection on researcher role	112
5.7 Recommendations for further research	112
5.7.1 Training of EPs	112
5.7.2 Education and educator needs	113
 Chapter 6: Conclusion	 114
 References	 116
 Appendix A	 131
 Appendix B	 133
 List of Tables	
Table one: Themes and codes	48
Table two: Coding of interview transcript	50
 List of Figures	
Figure 1: A model describing the emergence of the role of EPs	99

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The last 14 years in South Africa have seen dramatic shifts preceded by enormous efforts to change the patterns, governance and policy of the previous ruling party. While primary changes have occurred at a policy level in government, countless subsequent alterations have occurred in almost all levels of South African society. In this way, major changes in government and national policy have had a cascade effect on other South African organisations, constructs and activities. The result is a complex system of interacting components impacting on the people of South Africa and the social structures upon which they rely.

Education is one area which has been greatly affected by post apartheid policy change. For this reason, it follows that a discipline so closely linked to education as educational psychology must also have experienced related shifts. With education in a state of difficulty in South Africa, it is presumed that there is a great need for the work of educational psychologists (EPs). However, this is countered by what is perceived to be a lack of formal employment positions for this role and a perceived lack of demand for such a role. This thesis explores the shifts in role of EPs as a result of changes in practice and policy in education.

The following study involves a qualitative study of various perceptions of the field of educational psychology from the perspective of EPs in the Pietermaritzburg area, sampling from the population of registered EPs within it. Their varied perspectives regarding the role of EPs, the changes that have occurred, challenges experienced in practice in addition to tensions existing within the field of educational psychology, particularly related to practice and role, are explored. It is recognised that it is useful to explore the perspectives of other

stakeholders such as educators and Department of Education officials, but for the scope of this research and in depth understanding, the particular perspective of EP's is explored, according to the following aims.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The role and practice of EPs in Pietermaritzburg is the result of a complex interaction defined by (i) educators/schools needs, (ii) research findings outlined in academic literature, (iii) government educational policy, (iv) individual practitioner's training and v) personal choices.

There are a number of challenges presented in the complex context of educational psychology practice. This study aims to explore the role of EPs. The study aims to explore this role in terms of a comparison between literature and actual practice, the relationship between educational service provision and EPs, inconsistencies between policy stipulation and the actual role of EPs and finally shifts in the role of EPs and its relationship to their training. These will be viewed in light of the complex educational context experienced in South Africa broadly and, for this research, Pietermaritzburg specifically. In addition, it will explore the challenges experienced in the work done by EPs, as a result of these tensions.

There are a number of questions that will be asked by this study in response to the above mentioned aims. These are:

- (i) What are EPs in Pietermaritzburg doing in their practice, roles and functioning in the system?
- (ii) What is their experience of the challenges to their practice, with regard to policy change, contextual issues specifically around change, roles defined by academic literature as well as the needs in Pietermaritzburg?
- (iii) How do they respond to these challenges in their role?

- (iv) How did their training prepare them for these challenges? And
- (v) How do the above factors result in the emergence of their role?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

South Africa's history is one characterised by a major shift between apartheid and the current democracy in social norms, policy and economic states (Gwalla-Ogisi, Nkabinde & Rodriguez, 1998). The resulting context is a diverse one with both great difficulties and great potential. This shift in 1994, initiated numerous changes in policy throughout various sectors. One area greatly affected by these policy shifts is education (Botha, 2002) and, indeed, those disciplines closely linked to it, such as educational psychology. Although policy has changed for the betterment of education in South Africa, the inequalities of the past, as seen in the deliberate resource deprivation of non-White schools, have resulted in vulnerable, underdeveloped portions of the education sector which require assistance (Hartshorne, 1992). It is in such a sociohistorical context that one must consider the role of EPs, which, due to the shifts in South Africa has changed. This literature review aims to explore factors affecting the role of educational psychology in South Africa.

There are several factors which have influenced a shift in the role of EPs in South Africa. These include: (i) Changes in the South African political context, (ii) Socioeconomic factors, (iii) Changes in education policy, (iv) Adjustment difficulties to new education policies, (v) Changes in psychology and (vi) Questions around the scope of practice for psychologists. *These issues will be unpacked in this chapter.*

On a broad level, shifts in government policy, both independent of and in the education sector have prompted shifts in education and hence educational psychology. In addition, despite attempts to remedy the inequalities within education as a result of apartheid policy, there are

a great many difficulties within education at present. Some of these difficulties lie within the education sector itself, while many are the result of social and economic difficulties in South African (Greenstein, 1997; Sayed & Soudien, 2005). For this reason, the shift in education, particularly in relation to the needs of vulnerable South African children has resulted in uncertainty regarding the role and importance of EPs in South Africa.

Many South African children are rendered vulnerable by the effects of poverty, lack of resources and the growing concern around HIV/AIDS (Richter, 2004). This vulnerability is bound to affect the education of such children, and hence, it is in dealing with this portion of the population that one must consider not only the role of EPs, but the imperative to provide a full range of psychological services in attempt to optimise both their education and living circumstances.

Lastly, while the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, no date) publishes a document outlining the scope of practice of the various categories of psychologist, various authorities, academics and theorists have proposed various perspectives on the matter. The scope of practice of educational psychology is one that greatly influences the role of such practitioners in this country. Therefore it is important to unpack precisely what falls within the scope of practice in educational psychology

Given the changes mentioned above, an additional site of change is that of training in educational psychology. It is important to note that changing roles, policy and contexts must imply changes in the training of EPs. Although the specific issue of training extends beyond the scope of this study, it is important to bear in mind in relation to this topic.

This chapter will endeavour to unpack the various issues mentioned above in order to understand the context in which the role of EPs is called into question. By way of setting the scene, the South African context, both past and present will be explored. Following this, the education context and policies in South Africa, past and present will be discussed. Finally, psychology and in particular, educational psychology will be explored in terms of theory and practice, both in general terms as well as in relation to the South African context. This will lead to an exploration of the plausible roles fulfilled by EPs and the context within which EP's work. This will provide the basis for this study's reflection on the perceptions of EPs in South Africa on their role and the effect the changes mentioned above have had on it.

2.2 South African Context

The general election of 26 May 1948 saw the surprising victory of the National Party (NP) (Kallaway, 2002; O'Meara, 1996) resulting in Christian Nationalism and a host of apartheid policies implemented to privilege White South Africans (Kallaway, 2002). The movement, employment, education and governance of Black people and other non-White race groups was strictly controlled with the implementation of pass laws, the deliberate deprivation of resources to schools for non-White people and the limiting of employment opportunities (Kallaway, 2002; O'Meara, 1996). Not only was education utilised to deprive non-White people, but it was also actively used to maintain apartheid (Kallaway, 2002).

Ultimately apartheid ended and in 1994 South Africa's first democratic election was held (Howarth & Norval, 1998). Despite the abolishment of apartheid laws, the remnants of apartheid can still be seen in the resulting South African context. With the escalation of political violence during the early 1990s, particularly in Natal (Howarth & Norval, 1998), the resultant social and political climate is one characterised by the after effects of such trauma,

poverty and with growing urgency, the impact of illness, specifically, HIV/AIDS. As a result, there are many barriers to education.

2.2.1 Barriers to Education

A recent study carried out in the Richmond area of KwaZulu Natal undertook to map the barriers preventing the education of children in the district (van der Riet, Hough, Killian, O'Neill & Ram, 2006). Of significant concern is the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and their education. Richter (2004) presents a model of the impact of HIV/AIDS on children, which incorporates issues of poverty and violence. An integrated summary of these two sets of findings is presented below to illustrate the contextual barriers to education experienced by South African children.

Poverty

One of the most pervasive barriers noted in the study related to poverty (van der Riet et al., 2006). Research indicates that orphaned households have up to 30% less income than those with parents with as much as a 60% reduction in income being noted in some African countries where a family member has AIDS (Richter, 2004). With inadequate funds, access to nutritious food, health care, transport and clothing is difficult. These factors significantly impact the readiness of children to learn by causing the deterioration of their physical health and well being (Foster, Levine & Williamson, 2005; Richter, 2004; van der Riet et al., 2006). In a direct manner, lack of finances often means the inability to pay school fees or purchase uniforms, which in many instances has resulted in children being denied access to school or their reports (van der Riet et al., 2006).

Due to poverty, many parents struggle to find employment and are thus forced to work and often live away from home in order to support their families (van der Riet et al., 2006). As Richter (2004) also notes, with parents away from home, children experience new responsibilities within the household, and in many cases are drawn into child labour and street work as a result of poverty. This prevents children from attending school with regularity (Richter, 2004).

Finally, poverty at a community level affects infrastructure in communities (van der Riet et al., 2006). The distance between schools, in addition to lack of transport, often resulted in children arriving at school late, with the dangerous nature of travel conditions often acting as a deterrent from attending school at all. Within the school environment, poor school infrastructure (such as a lack of sanitation and electricity) mean that the basic needs of learners are often not met. In addition, lack of funding has resulted in neglected school buildings with furniture and supplies in disrepair, adding to the already present challenge of large classes. Finally, educational resources, ranging from staff, to text and library books are often scarce in rural schools (van der Riet et al., 2006). It is evident that this greatly hinders education.

School related difficulties

Numerous factors related specifically to the schooling environment and participation of the learners impact upon the quality of education. These begin on the broadest levels of policy, and filter down to the management of schools, the efficiency of educators and the presence and participation of learners (van der Riet et al., 2006).

Van der Riet et al. (2006) make the point that while specific policies, such as outcomes-based education (OBE) and the banning of corporal punishment have been instituted since 1994 (Chisholm, Motala & Vally, 2003), their implementation is inconsistent. Jansen (1999b) indicates numerous difficulties surrounding the implementation of OBE, while policy around discipline is problematic with many educators still using corporal punishment (van der Riet et al., 2006).

There are also difficulties related to educators who are experienced by learners as disrespectful, frequently insulting, physically punishing and discriminating against children (van der Riet et al., 2006). It would seem that frustration results from inadequate training and knowledge (particularly with regard to alternative punishments) (Carrim & Tshoane, 2000). As in apartheid times, many educators working in rural schools are in fact under-qualified and poorly trained (Vally, 2000). This adds to the already present difficulties within community and schooling contexts, reinforcing the difficulties in education.

Finally, difficulties related specifically to learners themselves hinder the education process. A primary problem is that of high rates of absenteeism (van der Riet et al., 2006). In addition, learners in van der Riet et al.'s (2006) study indicate that their participation in class activities is poor due to intimidation by educators and other learners. Bullying in many schools is noted as a problem, which is left uncurbed due to discipline difficulties as mentioned above. However, learners also report emotional difficulties relating to their life and home circumstances as affecting their ability to fully engage in classroom life. Where barriers to education are concerned, the emotional challenges experienced by children are significant.

Emotional stressors

Many children experience significant emotional stressors on a daily basis which not only diminish their ability to concentrate in class but also prevent them from attending school (Richter, 2004; van der Riet et al., 2006). While some stressors are broadly societal in nature, others are rooted in the home.

An issue that pervades both community living and school attendance is that of violence. Learners expressed feeling insecure in their environment due to the presence of gangs and violent crime (van der Riet et al., 2006). The school setting is affected at its lowest level in the form of bullying (van der Riet et al., 2006). This is a significant difficulty that can be traced to the break down in family systems as a result of apartheid violence, migrant labour and most recently the effects of HIV/AIDS of family structure (van der Riet et al., 2006).

This leads to the salient issue of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is currently devastating South Africa and impacting education through a cascade effect (Foster et al., 2005). When a family member (particularly a parent) is suffering with AIDS, it is often the children of the home who have to take responsibility for caring for their sick relative, managing the home and, in many cases, finding employment to create some income for the family (van der Riet et al., 2006). Not only does this frequently result in absenteeism, but it lowers the quality of the exhausted child's participation when at school (Bauman & Germann, 2005; Foster et al., 2005). It is evident that this set of circumstances is also likely to increase poverty and its effects on the child.

Finally, children are repeatedly faced with the emotional strain of shifting family compositions in addition to factors associated with bereavement (Foster et al., 2005; Richter,

2004). While migration has been identified as one of the significant contributing factors to HIV/AIDS, it is also a consequence of it and causes significant upheaval in the life of a child (Richter, 2004). As a result of this, children affected by HIV/AIDS often experience changes in family composition and caregivers (Richter, 2004). Although there are many things which make a child resilient to such hardships (Bauman & Germann, 2005), many children, due to their circumstances do not have the resources to bolster their resilience. Thus, the emotional impact of death and bereavement is also felt in the child's ability and participation at school (Richter, 2004).

Given the above stated contextual barriers to education it is useful to explore South African education both as it was and as it is now.

2.3 South African education context

There have been numerous alterations in education since the establishment of formal education in South Africa. Like most European nations, education between 1652 and the mid 1820s was strongly embedded in religion, following the notion that "all aspects of life, including education, should be regulated in accordance with the law of God" (Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p. 3). Secular education, however, first emerged in the early 19th century (Behr & MacMillan, 1971). As South African society changed, the education system adapted to suit the shifting needs of its children (Behr & MacMillan, 1971). Although many changes in the organisation of education occurred during the latter part of the 19th century and the early 20th century (Behr & MacMillan, 1971), it is the period from 1948 to the present that is of interest to this study.

2.3.1 Apartheid education

The period before democracy is an important one in South African education as it laid the foundations for education as it stands today and for the issues education is now attempting to address. Throughout apartheid, education was not governed by a central body, but by provincial departments. In addition, the four race groups, White, Black, Coloured and Indian people, were treated separately by distinct state departments (Behr & MacMillan, 1971; Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998; Hartshorne, 1992; Horrell, 1968; Horrell, 1970). Each system operated under vastly different standards and conditions and each underwent various changes in policy throughout the 43 years of apartheid.

Black South Africans were educated under what was known as the Bantu Education Act which was passed in 1953 and initiated in 1954. It must be noted that the word 'Bantu' in this document is used only as pertaining to the education system named for it during apartheid. No offence or discrimination is intended with its use. In addition, race distinctions are made in order to discuss inequalities that arose in the education system as a result of this Act. Bantu Education was characterised by a number of difficulties and deliberate injustices resulting in high learner drop out rates, and poor quality education (Hartshorne, 1992). While education for Coloured and Indian children was treated separately, their education systems and structures resembled one another. It was early established that the education of South Africa's Coloured population would fall under the responsibility of the church (Behr & MacMillan, 1971). Ultimately however, separate systems of education were created for this community (Behr & MacMillan, 1971). While education for Coloured and Indian learners was also deprived to a large extent of those resources necessary for education, the extent to which this occurred was not as great as in Bantu Education. Finally, White South Africans were educated in accordance with Christian National Education (CNE) which was well resourced

and managed by the state (Kallaway, 2002). As in education for Black, Coloured and Indian children, the purpose of education was to facilitate learning within the cultural context of the learner, with skills development in areas deemed to be of future use to the child (Kallaway, 2002). A fuller understanding of the current inequalities in education can be achieved by comparing these three systems of education as they occurred before 1994.

The most noticeable discrepancy pertains to funding and resources. It is noted throughout literature that the amount of money spent per capita each year on White children was always significantly greater than that spent on other race groups, with Bantu Education receiving the least (Hartshorne, 1992; Horrell, 1970). Indeed, Black children paid towards their education while other race groups did not (Botha, 2002). In addition, the provision of resources, such as furniture and text books to schools for White children exceeded that seen in other sectors (Hartshorne, 1992; Horrell, 1970). This is a fundamental inequality, the effects of which persist today.

A second issue to address pertains to curriculum. The curriculum offered to White learners was to enable learners to take management positions and prepare them for white-collar jobs, while the curriculum for other race groups was designed to prepare these learners for subservient positions and blue-collar labour. While education for White people was largely aimed at preparing learners for tertiary training at a University level, other race groups were educated according to what the state believed would equip them for participation in their specific culture (Hartshorne, 1992). For example, although theoretically the same as White education, the curriculum provided for Coloured children placed emphasis on handicraft and domestic science, subjects deemed appropriate for children who would go on to be a part of that cultural community (Horrell, 1970).

Medium of instruction is another area of inequality and iniquity. Coloured, Indian and White children were generally able to be educated in their mother-tongue (Hartshorne, 1992).

However, for Black children, the medium of instruction was an issue grappled with throughout the course of Bantu Education. While at times instruction at primary levels was in the mother-tongue of the learners, secondary education was undertaken in one of the two official languages (English or Afrikaans) (Hartshorne, 1992; Horrell, 1968). Learning occurred with difficulty in many cases due to language difficulties and drop-out rates, as a result, were high.

Another important difficulty experienced in non-White education was the availability of qualified teachers. Although Black teachers during this time period were over burdened with large class sizes, statistics released by the Department of Bantu Education (1972, in Hartshorne, 1992) and the Department of Education and Training (1988, in Hartshorne, 1992) indicate inadequate levels of teacher qualification. In addition, the lack of adequately qualified educators in Coloured and Indian communities meant that not all subjects could be offered at higher levels (Horrell, 1970). Thus, despite the syllabus being theoretically the same as for White children, the range of opportunity was limited for these children.

One area in which education in the different race groups was similar was in teaching modality. During apartheid CNE offered in schools for White children, as well as schools for Black, Coloured and Indian people all offered extremely authoritarian didactic forms of education (Akhurst, 2002). High school instruction particularly is seen to have been conservative, "authoritarian, teacher-dominated, content-oriented and knowledge based" (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 60). Such teaching methods and content were employed as a means of social shaping and control through the transmission of assumptions held by the NP regarding

culture, and identity (Hartshorne, 1992). This resulted in the indoctrination of South African learners by ensuring that learners were kept isolated from contemporary debate (Kallaway, 2002). This ensured groups of “docile” (Kallaway, 2002, p.11) school leavers unaware of societal change and debate occurring around them (Hopfer, 1997). This served the ruling party’s efforts to maintain and indeed strengthen their political and social control.

In conclusion, it can be seen that non-White people were educated in such a way that steered individuals into manual labour, rather than academic based professions. Hopfer (1997) asserts that education was “aimed at preparing the African majority in South Africa and Namibia to serve the European minority” (p. 47). In addition, apartheid saw schools for non-White people starved of resources and quality education (Botha, 2002; Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). The collective result of this overall discrimination was vast inequality (Simmonds, 1990); a difficulty which lingers today (Engelbrecht, 2004).

Special education

Special needs education refers to the educational facilities provided to cater for the needs of children (and adults) with disabilities or difficulties, making it problematic for them to cope in mainstream educational environments with learners deemed to be of average ability (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). Gwalla-Ogisi et al. (1998) provide a brief history of special needs education in South Africa. As in general education policy preceding 1994, special needs education faced similar levels of racial discrimination. In addition, a degree of marginalisation of those with disabilities throughout the population was observable. The first school for children with visual and hearing difficulties was established in 1863 (Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). It was approximately a century later that a similar school for non-Whites learners was founded (Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). While further schools were established,

services for Black learners with disabilities were minimal (Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). Special education was based at this stage largely on the assumptions and assertions of a medical model of thinking (Engelbrecht, 2006; Naicker, 2003). This ignored systemic factors related to learning, assuming that inability lay with the child alone. It can be seen that on both theoretical as well as demographic grounds, special education before 1994 was exclusionary.

2.3.2 Post apartheid education

The constitution, which was finalised in 1996 (RSA, 1996a in Motala & Pampallis, 2002) states that every person has the right both to basic education and adult education, as well as further education. For this reason, it became imperative that equal education for all be addressed. This naturally implied both the availability and equality of its provision. In addition, as indicated in policy pertaining to growth, employment and redistribution or “GEAR, as it has become known” (Motala & Pampallis, 2002, p. 21), education was not only to benefit the development of the individual, but indeed determined the “long-term economic performance and income redistribution” (Motala & Pampallis, 2002, p. 21) within a country. With this in mind educational reform became a priority of South Africa’s newly elected government.

Authors suggest that reform implies change which, in turn, implies improvement (Mungazi & Walker, 1997). Thus, in order for reform to occur, individual growth and benefit as well as the long-term interests of society should form the ideological basis for education systems, rather than crude issues around race (Chisholm & Kgobe, 1993; Mungazi & Walker, 1997). By beginning with individual development at an education level, change on a larger scale can occur (Mungazi & Walker, 1997). The process of educational change was initiated in South Africa with the implementation of the following policy: the South African Schools Act; the

National Education Policy Act; the Higher Education Act and The White Paper on Education and Training (Motala & Pampallis, 2002). One can begin to reveal the shifts occurring for EPs by exploring briefly these policies affecting education.

South African Schools Act

The South African Schools Act, passed in 1996 is a piece of legislation aimed at the transformation of education (Kgobe, 1996). The purpose of this document was to bring about non-discriminatory equality in education, addressing issues of racism, sexism, poverty and language (Motala & Pampallis, 2002). According to the Act, these ends were to be met through various means, including the fair and equitable distribution of finances, arranging management in governing bodies under central government leadership and instituting language policies (Kgobe, 1996). It can be seen that this was to open the door to the restructuring of education.

National Education Policy Act

Similar to the South African School Act, the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996 in Motala & Pampallis, 2002) was instituted to assist in the transformation of education within the democratic government. Its main purpose was to ensure personal as well as societal development through available, equitable, quality education which respected the constitutional rights of all South Africans seeking to be educated (Motala, 1997; Motala & Pampallis, 2002)

Higher Education Act and the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education

These documents as explained by Motala and Pampallis (2002) served also to establish a system geared to create equality, democracy, development, freedom and academic quality both in and through higher education. These were all laid out in accordance with the basic human rights of South Africans according to the Constitution (Department of Education, 1997, in Motala & Pampallis, 2002).

White Paper on Education and Training

The final document to be presented in this section is the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995, in Motala & Pampallis, 2002). Primarily, this document serves to identify areas and illustrate the extent to which inequality exists in education as a result of the apartheid system (Greenstein & Mabogoane, 1994). The goals of this policy were indeed to redress the inequalities related to resources, services and learning (Motala & Pampallis, 2002). In terms of the developmental initiatives set out in the paper, issues in need of further investigation related to curriculum, special needs education, teacher education, adult basic education and partnerships with other constituencies, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's).

While broad policy has been implemented to begin address the difficulties present in South African education, it would seem that factors such as, previous inequalities in provision, poor previous learning opportunities and emotional difficulties due to poverty, HIV, bereavement and migrant labour, are indicators for specialists in education, including EPs. Some further policies such as Curriculum 2005 (Greenstein, 1997) and White paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) describe systemic responses to these concerns. However it will be shown

that these are implemented with difficulty and indeed seem to somewhat compromise the role of EPs, rather than enhancing their ability to contribute in times of such need in education. The following discussion will explain these policies in relation to the needs in South African education.

Curriculum policy: Outcomes-based education

Although Curriculum 2005 (Greenstein, 1997) was only launched in the late 1990's, it was in 1990 that the debate around curriculum became an issue of primary importance. As mentioned previously, teaching methods and curriculum during the apartheid era were not ideal for an educational environment promoting critical thought, freedom of expression and unlimited development (Akhurst, 2002). Jansen (1999a) puts it succinctly and accurately when he describes the apartheid managed curriculum as "racist, Eurocentric, sexist, authoritarian, prescriptive, unchanging, context blind and discriminatory" (p. 4). It was as a result that a curriculum founded in OBE theory emerged.

OBE "is a way of managing curriculum and assessment" (Malcolm, 1999, p. 77) Though OBE has different forms (Malcolm, 1999) it is couched within a set of assumptions and goals. OBE operates on the basis of predetermined, clearly set learning outcomes (an action that can be demonstrated in concrete performance as a result of a learning experience, beyond the abstract concepts of knowledge and values), with the aim of establishing means and opportunity for all students to achieve these outcomes (Spady, 1995). The overarching goal of OBE is to equip all learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to function successfully in the world outside of the schooling environment (du Toit & du Toit, 2004). For this reason, OBE does not focus a great deal on the content of a curriculum, but rather on the application of content to usable skills and abilities (Spady, 1995). This results in a

participatory approach to learning with group work and complex mediation relationships frequently being made use of (Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004). A key issue that relates to this is the aim of OBE to create learning environments in which outcomes can be achieved to the maximum ability of all learners (Spady, 1995) a step towards addressing the inequalities of South Africa's past. Thus, OBE regards learning as a universal ability which must be built on from a base level. In addition, the responsibility of successful education is seen to lie in educational institutions and their employees (Spady, 1995). OBE makes use of intensive group work and hands on instruction from the educator. As a result of the complex structure of OBE, many assert that significant resources and educator training are required to achieve that which is expected of it (Burke, 1995). It is in this respect that one begins to consider the importance of intervention by EPs in implementing such a system.

Due to the style of instruction and loose association to content, OBE is considered integral in shifting the mode of learning and inequalities as was seen during apartheid, to a place where critical thinking and value development are integral to education (Chisholm, 2005)

Special education: White Paper Six

An important feature of South Africa's previous education system was the exclusionary approach to educating those deemed disabled in some way (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). This is particularly pertinent in light of the some 15% disabled learners requiring special education (Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). Thus, in 1994, the reform of special education began (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). This has led to the implementation of plans to introduce, over a period of twenty years from the year 2001, an inclusive education system ensuring equal education opportunities for all children in South Africa (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). Not only is this inclusion to be

implemented as an educational strategy, but as a means to achieving equality, justice and democracy (Engelbrecht, 2006).

Inclusive education was developed through the conceptualisation of the various contextual factors affecting children. Engelbrecht (1999) illustrates a multi-systems understanding of society and how its various subsystems interact with it and each other. Rather than framing disability as an irreversible individual deficit (Engelbrecht, 2006), inclusive education acknowledges impact that various systems have on the individual's difficulty. Thus, barriers to education are viewed as existing within the system, rather than just the individual. For this reason, intervention need not be entirely focussed on the individual, but on the system too. In this way, inclusion is viewed as a human rights issue (Engelbrecht, 2006). For these reasons, schooling has been restructured to fairly accommodate learners of varying ability (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001).

It is recognised that while some learners currently placed in special schools could be integrated within mainstream, others will require specialised, intensive support. For this reason, it is envisaged that provision will be made for all learners in one of three types of schools; mainstream schools, full service schools and special schools or resource centres. Mainstream schools will remain places of learning for children without special needs, but who may present with behavioural difficulties (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). Full service schools will incorporate learners with some degree of special need. At first, one such school will be developed within each ward of the education sector (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). Finally, resource centres (currently special schools) will provide for children who require intensive support (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). In addition, professionals based at such schools will, in alliance with

district support services, provide support and training to educators dealing with special needs learners in other schools, with a focus on full-service schools (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). District support teams, which fall under the auspices of education management systems will be comprised of other professionals, such as EPs who will provide guidance and support to teacher support teams within schools in addition to evaluating specific programmes of intervention and issues around curriculum and the like (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). It would thus seem that the Department of Education's (White Paper 6, 2001) primary focus is on capacity building in educators to cater to the needs of a range of children. However, it must be noted that this system reduces EPs access to schools needing support by externalising them through a referral system, internal to schools.

In order to shift from a learner-deficit approach to a learner-centred approach to education, factors pertaining to curriculum and teaching style and method are to be adjusted (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). For this reason, training and education of educators with the necessary skills and knowledge is an imperative. In addition, curriculum and teaching methods are to become more flexible, in line with OBE, in order to cope with the varied pace and ability of the learners (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). These aspects will be monitored and evaluated by the district support teams (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). It is with these strategies and ideas that South Africa hopes to eliminate the segregation, discrimination and inequality experienced by those learners with reduced ability to participate in mainstream education.

Difficulties with outcomes-based education

It was noted above that one of the barriers to a child's education is the inconsistent use of policy within the school environment. OBE is one such policy. The emergence of OBE in this

country has spawned enormous amounts of doubt and criticism, not only from external authors, but from committees in the employ of the Department of Education (Chisholm, 2005; Jansen, 1999b). While Jansen (1999b) outlines specific reasons for the inappropriateness of OBE within the South African context at this time, there are also broad, conceptual difficulties with the rationale behind it which need not be explored in the context of this study. This issue is important as many of the contextual difficulties associated with OBE are similar to the challenges facing EPs.

One of Jansen's (1999b) primary concerns regarding OBE is the enormity of the conceptual leap from traditional teaching methods, in addition to its complex theory, confusing and ever changing terminology and copious administrative requirements. Thus, for its implementation, highly skilled, motivated educators with a great deal of time are required (Jansen, 1999b). Such human resources in South Africa, however, are scarce. In addition, other resources, both in finance, equipment and parental involvement are required. Again these are things that South African education cannot at present have unlimited access to due to the socio-economic climate (Jansen, 1999b). Ultimately, it can be seen that the South African context renders the implementation of OBE problematic.

Difficulties with inclusive education

Of relevance to this study are the difficulties associated with the implementation of White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Such difficulties are relevant also to EPs. Not only is inclusive education a philosophical shift based upon reconsideration of the importance of basic human rights, but the practical implications of its implementation are no small matter. The structural shifts involved have implications for the change in role of educational psychology as noted above. Similarly therefore, the contextual difficulties hindering its

successful implementation are similar to those impacting EPs. Indeed such difficulties with inclusive education are likely to directly influence the nature of the work engaged in by EPs.

While the notion of inclusive education is founded on ideas of equality, democracy and observance of a child's basic human rights, much of society does not adopt such notions. While social inclusion is one reason for inclusive education (Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart, Kitching & Eloff, 2005), acceptance of diversity in individuals is often the exception rather than the norm (Engelbrecht, 2006). Aggravating this is that schools are often prematurely required (by law) to accept children with special needs. As a result, needs are simply tolerated rather than accepted and honoured (Engelbrecht et al., 2005). This lack of readiness is often the basis for further discrimination and labelling.

A related issue is the attitudes of stakeholders to the notion of inclusion. Engelbrecht et al. (2005) found that parents of special needs learners felt that the attitudes of educators as well as school management are crucial in determining the success of inclusion. This is due to the importance of collaboration and commitment to the implementation of inclusive education (Engelbrecht, 2006). Educators in particular are hesitant with regard to inclusion (Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002). Studies indicate that this is largely due to feelings of being ill-equipped and unprepared for coping with the special needs of these learners, in addition to the conservative nature characterising South African schools (Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2002). Though largely unintentional, this results in a significant barrier to education (Engelbrecht et al., 2005).

A large amount of resources, in terms of personnel, finance and time are required to implement inclusive education over the budgeted twenty years (White Paper 6, Department

of Education, 2001; Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2002, Naicker, 2003). Marshall et al. (2002) note the need for additional administrative support and sufficient personnel to assist with special needs learners. Thus, training such personnel is essential, an endeavour which costs money (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001; Engelbrecht et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2002). In addition to this, resources and materials are required to accommodate learners both in lessons and in the general school environment (Marshall et al., 2002). Again, time and money are the cost of such changes. Marshall et al. (2002) also indicate the need for time devoted to planning and implementation of such a system. It is questionable as to whether the types of resources outlined here are feasible within the current South African context. Finally, given the apparent need for specialist practitioners, such as EPs, in education, the difficulty of limited financial resources, reduces the accessibility of such resources.

Finally, a brief note with regard to effectiveness must be tentatively made. A review of a set of international studies on the effectiveness of inclusive education between the years 2000 and 2005 indicates only marginally positive outcomes from such a system (Lindsay, 2007). Although the question of effectiveness alone is pertinent, one may argue that it is particularly so in light of the specific challenges the system faces in South Africa's climate of limited resources.

With these difficulties in mind, it is noteworthy that potential points of intervention for EPs lie in preparing education; both its staff, recipients and infrastructure with the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to implement inclusive education successfully within the allotted time period.

2.3.3 Implications for considering the role of EPs

The contextual difficulties impacting education on both a practical and a policy level have been discussed above. Given these issues, the need for specialist professionals such as EPs in education is noteworthy. The difficulties observed in educating South Africa's youth beg the questions underlying the current study: what is the role of psychology in South Africa and indeed, what is the role of educational psychology as a specific category? In addition, how can it contribute to bettering education in this complicated context and how are practitioners reacting to the context?

2.4 Educational psychology in South Africa

While psychology is western in origin, its growth has extended into the African context. Given South Africa's complex social and political context, it is useful to mention the role and practice of psychology in this country, before focussing on educational psychology as a category in and of itself. With the dire situation regarding the most basic needs, such as nutrition and health care, of so many South Africans, it is important to note the seeming irrelevance of psychology as an individualist approach to mental health and well-being (Vogelman, Perkel & Strebel, 1992). For this reason, Vogelman et al. (1992) recommend that psychologists should, through training, education and a reflective questioning of their own ideology, consider the true nature of the context and the possible value of their service within it. Given this, it must be noted that through collaboration with other professionals and specifically through organisations with links to relevant communities, psychologists can access and provide for the array of psychological needs of South Africans (Vogelman et al., 1992). With this view in mind, it becomes clear that, the role of psychology in South Africa is an important one.

It is evident from the literature reviewed above that the social, emotional and educational difficulties experienced by South Africans in general, but learners in particular are many. Despite this need however, research indicates that, the demand for EPs does not seem to match this (Richter, Griesel, Durrheim, Wilson, Surendorff & Asafo-Agyei, 1998). This minimal demand is evident in the lack of EPs and positions available to graduates. Richter et al. (1998) indicate in their study that a mere 2% of positions offered to psychologists specified the need for those registered in the educational category. Indeed, at an international level, studies indicate that interest in educational psychology as a career path is minimal (Frederickson, Morris, Osborne & Reed, 2000). It is this discrepancy between the need and demand for EPs, evident also in the Pietermaritzburg area, which prompts one to investigate more fully within the South African context, the role of educational psychology and its practitioners.

In order to explore the role of EPs, it is important to situate current educational psychology within a historical context as well as a theoretical one. The following discussion, couched in an understanding of psychology's shifts over the past century, will attempt to explore the shifts seen in psychology in South Africa over the past century, both practically and theoretically with a focus on the application of educational psychology. On this base, the various models of educational psychology and roles played by EPs globally will be noted.

2.4.1 A brief history of psychology

Though psychology has its roots in the writings of the Greek philosophers (Hagstrom, Fry, Cramblet & Tanner, 2007), major growth occurred around the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, particularly with treatment of soldiers after WW1 suffering from shell shock. From early on psychology established itself as a science, implying empirical methods of

information gathering resulting in empirically based theories and knowledge (Mwamwenda, 2004). Psychological practice was thus established in a similar vein, operating from within a medical model. Such a frame implies individual deficit as a basis for psychological difficulties, rooted in impairment caused by physical damage or disease (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000), thus translating into medical model treatment of the identified problem, eradicating the symptoms and possibly the cause of the difficulty (Freeth, 2007). Although the theoretical and treatment paradigms present within psychology over the years are many, the medical model of understanding psychological difficulties is a significant one. Despite its merits, criticisms of the medical model towards the later part of the 20th century resulted in shifts where the understanding of psychological difficulties are concerned (Freeth, 2007).

The first criticism lies in the concern that neuroscience and physical brain structure cannot fully account for psychological difficulties, nor can it fully explain the impact of psychotherapy in treating them (Freeth, 2007). It is argued that other processes, perhaps social in nature, complete such explanations (Freeth, 2007; Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). Second in the list of criticisms is the notion that psychological constructs in experience and social interaction are too subjective to be viewed objectively as one would within a medical model (Freeth, 2007). A third concern pertains to the power held by a medical model practitioner as expert in his or her field. Freeth (2007) notes that where psychotherapy or psychodiagnosis is concerned this power imbalance between practitioner and patient could prove to be oppressive and destructive in a psychotherapeutic relationship. Where the therapeutic relationship is considered fundamental in the treatment of many psychological difficulties the medical model falls short of allowing for it (Freeth, 2007), while not sufficiently recognising the impact of social and economic factors on psychological life.

Many areas of psychology have emerged from the notion that understanding and treatment cannot occur within the medical model alone (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). As an example, it is noted that the nature of disabilities, both physical and mental, though they may have biological causes are mediated in severity by social and relational phenomena (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). It is this realisation, that human development, behaviour and experience is mediated by social variables, that has resulted in shifts in psychological theory and practice. Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) point out the move to a more systemic approach to understanding disability and indeed other psychological difficulties. They make mention of Bronfenbrenner (1989 in Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000), whose ecosystemic model describes how characteristics of a person are consistently in interaction with varying levels of their social context. Another example of such a shift exists in learning theory. While early in the 20th century, Piaget's notion of progressive cognitive development implied biological development as the foundation of intellectual growth (Donald et al., 2002), his notion was to be replaced in many circles by Vygotsky's notion of socially mediated learning through relational interaction and mediation through language (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). Again it is noted that a shift has occurred in psychological theory as a result of the move from the medical model to a systemic notion where social context is of importance. It is such shifts in psychological theory that have influenced shifts in the practice of psychology as a discipline. Such shifts are observable in South Africa, although the politicised nature of psychology in South Africa has to an extent dominated thought over the last century.

2.4.2 Psychology in the South African context

Psychology has played an integral role in South African policy and human rights issues since the early 20th century (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). In addition to theoretical and practical shifts, somewhat related shifts have occurred in psychology's place in South Africa.

Psychology in apartheid South Africa

Psychologists and indeed EPs operated within the medical model during apartheid. In this manner, intervention was carried out with the individual. However, in broader political terms, psychology's impact in South Africa with regard to apartheid is observed to have been more extensive than one would expect (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). While Gobodo-Madikizela and Foster (2005) argue that psychology is perfectly placed to deal constructively with human rights issues (as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005)), it is accurate to note that in effect, psychology in South Africa played a role in maintaining and perpetuating the human rights abuses inflicted by the apartheid regime. It is noted that the South African Psychological Association (SAPA), the former professional body of the discipline, actively excluded Black psychologists from membership (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). Following inclusion, a break away board, exclusively for White people, formed calling itself the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). This board was actively in favour of apartheid (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). Given this, it is clear that services for non-White people and indeed research into pressing issues affecting Black South Africans were largely insufficient (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). This is noted in the poor distribution of educational psychology resources to schools for non-white people (Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998). Despite the human rights violations as were carried out by the apartheid government and perhaps acquiesced to by some psychologists, change did begin to occur in the years before 1994 (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005).

Psychology in post-apartheid South Africa

While some psychologists remained opposed to apartheid as illustrated in the inclusion of Black people to SAPA, more visible movements of opposition to the state policies began to

emerge in the 1980s (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). Services began to be provided to Black South Africans suffering under the oppression and human rights violations inflicted in prisons (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). In addition, research was conducted and evidence gathered around issues such as torture and the effects of abuse and trauma on such citizens (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). Ultimately, while some remained in favour of apartheid, many psychologists began acting in the interests of the basic human rights being denied to so many South Africans. This too translated into shifts in the understanding of psychology in South Africa and indeed in the realm of educational psychology.

As these political shifts occurred, a greater awareness of the contextually situated nature of psychological difficulties emerged with the shift in psychology's theoretical stance noted above. Community and systemic modes of understanding as well as interventions began to emerge (Donald et al., 2002).

In post-apartheid South Africa, psychologists are potentially in a prime position to begin righting the wrongs of the past. With this aspect of the profession in mind, the central governing body of the health professions, the HPCSA presides over the practice of psychologists. In addition to bringing about and ensuring the maintenance of equality in membership and services, the HPCSA also provides a scope of practice for the varying categories of psychologist. According to the HPCSA (no date), EPs are to be primarily concerned with children and adolescents. More specifically, EPs are to assist in the psychological adjustment of such individuals in a number of contexts through the process of assessment, diagnosis and intervention (HPCSA, no date). Contexts of interest to EPs include the family, school or any social setting or community in which the child is a participant or member. The Department of Education allows for this in their Psychological Guidance and

Special Education Services (PGSES) as stipulated in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). It can be seen that in terms of context the scope of practice for EPs is a broad one which must provide for cultural diversity in addition to eleven official languages (Mokgalane, Vally & Greenstein, 1996).

Given the role played by psychology in the history and current development of South Africa, it is useful to now explore educational psychology in more detail. This will allow for an account of specific roles played by EPs internationally.

2.4.3 Educational psychology

Donald et al. (2002) base their writing on the premise that education should be developed in a process which takes into account the social context in which it exists. In much the same way, educational psychology should evolve under a similar notion. As the South African context changes, the role of EPs will change. This is a process observed, researched and documented globally in psychology (Stobie, 2002). While this study is concerned with the current role of EPs, it is useful at this point to note the shifts within educational psychology in general, in addition to summarising current trends in practice as well as possible future educational psychology practice.

A brief history of educational psychology

On a broad level, educational psychology, and as noted above, the discipline of psychology, has moved away from traditional practices based in large upon the medical model and an individualist understanding of human functioning. More and more, psychological practice is seen to move towards alternative methods, encompassing biological, psychological and social aspects of influence where an individual is concerned. This is particularly pertinent within the

South African context and culture (Pillay, 2003). People are no longer viewed simply as products of their biological predispositions, but as products of a complex system of forces acting on the individual (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). While the developments of Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky (Donald et al., 2002) have been introduced above, another important example in educational psychology pertains to cognitive assessment. In recent years there has been a shift away from traditional IQ testing, to dynamic forms of assessment, which look at learner potential, given social interaction, rather than static knowledge and current ability (Tzuriel, 2001). Dynamic assessment is embedded in learning theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) and Feuerstein (Feuerstein, Rand & Hoffman, 1979, cited in Tzuriel, 2001) regarding the mediated learning experience. Vygotsky presents a socio-cultural approach to cognitive development (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992) which employs the notion of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1984). This can be described as the distance between an individual's current level of development and the level achievable through various processes, collectively known as mediation which can, for example, involve the assistance of an external person (Wertsch, 1984). In this way, an individual's current ability is not considered to be static, but can develop and improve. It is this idea that is evident in inclusive education policies, both in South Africa and globally, where emphasis is placed upon the potential for development in all learners, through increased participation, rather than the management of their current functioning, through placement in an environment, effectively excluding them from 'ordinary' society (Engelbrecht, 2006). For this reason, educational psychology is being pushed to determine inclusive methods of practice too (Farrell, 2006; Hick, 2005). As such, psychology is moving away from a medical model understanding of human functioning.

It can be seen that there has been a global shift in the way in which educational psychology approaches the understanding of its clients, both in assessment and intervention. Although this describes a shift in practice, it sheds little light on the paradigm from which the profession operates. The following discussion will attempt to explore various models of intervention in addition to different authors' views regarding the possible, or perhaps required, work to be done by EPs.

Models of educational psychology

As noted, a shift to a biopsychosocial mode of understanding has led to approaches to educational psychology more aware of system structures and social interaction. Intervention on an individual level is still a model followed (appropriately in many cases) by numerous practitioners. However, due to theoretical shifts, the scope for other models of educational psychology practice incorporating more than just the individual has increased and indeed been fulfilled. Models of individual intervention will be explored followed by discussion around two interlinked models of broader systemic intervention seen globally.

With many practitioners understanding children and intervening on an individual level, it is useful to explore three models of educational psychology used commonly today which effect intervention on a primarily individual level. These are: behaviour modification, cognitive constructivism and humanistic approaches (Smith, 1998). With the emergence of evidence based practice cognitive behavioural models of practice have grown in popularity (Westen, Novotny & Thompson-Brenner, 2004). A model frequently employed by EPs is that of behavioural modification. Such programmes of intervention involve targeting desired behaviours in a child and designing a programme which enable reinforcement of said behaviour (Smith, 1998). In the event of such a programme being initiated, assessment of its

success and subsequent modifications to the programme for improvement are systematically made (Smith, 1998). It is noted that such strategies can be employed where social, behavioural and educational difficulties are presented by the child in question. This model has grown in credibility in recent years. A second model is known as cognitive constructivism. Such a model notes the importance of taking into account a child's level of cognitive development in addition to their cognitive processes involving thought and feeling when formulating a diagnosis or intervention (Smith, 1998). Again, this model has application in a number of areas. Finally, a humanistic approach is proposed. Broadly, humanistic treatment plans focus on emotional content underlying broader social or educational difficulties (Smith, 1998). For this reason, treatment would revolve around the child's emotions. In addition however, relationship is noted as key to the healthy development of a child. For this reason, humanistic approaches begin to focus on certain aspects of the child's relationships with key people in their world (Smith, 1998). While these three approaches focus on intervention with the individual, all begin to account for important features of the surrounding environment and systems of people. As mentioned above, the move towards the inclusion of more systemic approaches to psychology in general and indeed educational psychology has resulted in shifts towards other models of practice.

Related to the shift away from focus on the individual is a move towards more systemic and context-bound formulations and interventions (Donald et al., 2002). Indeed it is frequently suggested that a range of parties be included where a child's educational or psychological well-being is concerned (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005; Pillay, 2003). Pillay (2003) asserts that, community psychology could perhaps be the most appropriate intervention paradigm within the South African context. The associated epistemological shift is of relevance to the practice of EPs (Moore, 2005). Previously, within the individualistic understanding of human

functioning, educational psychology has been framed and developed as “narrow, instrumental and often asocial” (Moore, 2005, p. 103). While Moore (2005) argues for a social constructivist approach to educational psychology, it is clear that a shift to a more relational stance, both in assessment and intervention, is desirable and perhaps necessary in effective practice (Moore, 2005; Pillay, 2003). Based upon this recorded need for more community based interventions and indeed systemic understandings of psychological difficulties, the move towards a model of collaborative consultancy where EPs are concerned has occurred.

In addition to work directly with the ‘index patient’ (or patient presenting with a difficulty), or even with members of the community, there is literature pertaining to the ideal, all encompassing role of EPs in an education system. Engelbrecht, Swart & Eloff (2002) suggest a complex, multi-faceted role for EPs where they operate in the capacity of collaborators. This suggests team work with other professionals in the education sector and its support frame (Engelbrecht et al., 2002). White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) suggests that EPs work collaboratively in community based teams with other educational support services. In this manner, consultancy work is to be engaged in as suggested by Engelbrecht (2004), Gillies (2000) and Watkins and Hill (2000). Consulting work is done with schools and educators in order to improve the quality of schooling for all children within the education system through training and support (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001). Thus, change is effected in communities through collaborative consultancy with relevant organisations.

It must be noted, that although various models of educational psychology exist, theorists since early in the 20th century have agreed that psychology should operate as a science, thus endorsing scientific rigor in both knowledge acquisition and practice. Hagstrom et al. (2007)

describe the scientist-practitioner model of training and practice which ensures such standards within educational psychology. In this method, training EPs are exposed to psychological theory and the practical application of it (Hagstrom et al., 2007). In addition however, the ability to both conduct and make use of scientific research and its findings is also valued and incorporated in training (Hagstrom et al., 2007). This ensures that best practice methods are employed and updated on an ongoing basis in individual practitioners.

Given the current understanding of educational psychology's theoretical stances at present, the various roles carried out by EPs internationally can be explored. The following discussion will outline various authors' views regarding plausible roles for EPs.

2.4.4 Roles filled by EPs

While the label of "EP" seems to imply practice limited to the educational and perhaps cognitive needs of learners within the education sector, literature indicates that the scope of practice engaged in by such practitioners should be and often is far more extensive in reality (Rees, Farrell & Rees, 2003).

Firstly, EPs engage in one-on-one work with clients. Work in cognitive and educational ability or needs is a primary focus for EPs as noted in numerous studies and texts (Donald et al., 2002; Elliott, 2000; Rees et al., 2003). However, the ability and perhaps necessity for EPs to assess and/or intervene where general emotional or behavioural problems exist is an important task (Rees et al., 2003). Examples of emotional or psychotherapeutic work for EPs abound. The issue of trauma in school children is a salient one in today's social climate. It is argued that EPs taking a therapeutic stance within a school could assist with such difficulties (Greenway, 2005). Nugent, Labram and McLoughlin (1999) emphasise the need for EPs in

response to victims of child sexual abuse. Related to this is the assertion that EPs have the potential to play an integral role in child protection (German, Wolfendale & McLoughlin, 2000). As Kakkad (2005) notes, "given the increase in human rights abuses and suffering in the world, psychologists bear an ethical responsibility to become more vocal and active on issues of social justice" (p. 293). In a context where children's rights are abused so frequently, the focus of EPs on the, emotional and physical rights of communities is a possible facet of their professional identity (Kakkad, 2005). Finally, a feature of educational psychology work involves dealing with career counselling and development. The importance of promoting career development and "lifelong learning" (McCombs, 1991, p. 117) through skills development and motivation is pertinent in the secondary and tertiary education of South Africa's children and adults as well as in the professional sector. McCombs (1991) argues that the skills and knowledge possessed by EPs could be utilised in this type of forum.

It is suggested that the role of EPs extends beyond diagnostics and subsequent intervention, but can assist at a preventative level, particularly within the school frame (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005; Engelbrecht et al., 2002). Baxter and Frederickson (2005) argue that preventative intervention can occur at three stages. Firstly, normal populations can be prevented from ever developing a harmful dysfunction (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005). Secondly, intervention can occur at early stages of symptom onset to prevent severe conditions (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005). Thirdly, the impact of already established conditions can be minimised through intervention at a later stage (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005). Ultimately the role of EPs in preventative intervention would be to build resilience, particularly in children (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005). As risk and resilience interact through complex psychological processes, the task of the EP would be to understand this, through

relational interaction with the target individual/s (Moore, 2005). This could apply to both emotional/behavioural as well as educational risks.

Another area of work is with organisations or communities. As noted above, the model of collaborative consultancy translates into numerous interventions. It is suggested that such a role aids in the prevention of problems within the schooling environment as well as the development of education through interactive planning and training with schools and educators (Engelbrecht et al., 2002). In addition to this role, Engelbrecht (2004) and Watkins and Hill (2000) suggest that EPs, in their role as consultants, can apply their unique skills and knowledge in order to train and advise educators (and indeed parents) on matters such as behavioural interventions (Engelbrecht et al., 2002). In addition, clinical consultation is a means by which EPs can exercise their diagnostic abilities where learners present specific problems (particularly related to learning) in need of specific solutions (Engelbrecht et al., 2002). EPs can act as consultants to schools and larger educational institutions (Engelbrecht et al., 2002). Finally, EPs can apply their knowledge as mental health and psychotherapeutic experts in efforts to ensure mental well being in school going learners as well as their immediate support groups (Engelbrecht et al., 2002; Farouk, 2004). Indeed, the need to more fully understand the emotional difficulties of learners is strongly felt by educators (Leason, 2002). In this way, the knowledge and skills possessed by EPs can be distributed, directly and via the cascade effect to professionals at the frontline where dealing with children's emotional and educational needs are concerned. As Cameron and Monsen (2005) note, "the EP can be a very important resource to a school" (p. 283).

A final point raised by authors regarding the role of EPs is twofold. With educational reform occurring in South Africa, as well as in many countries in the world, research in education

and indeed in the psychological constructs of the system and its participants is important. For this reason, research within an academic setting is viewed as part of the work of an EP (Pressley, 2005). Related to this, EPs, with their ability to research, in addition to their skills and knowledge in the areas of learning, teaching and human functioning can contribute to both the development and implementation of educational policy (Pressley, 2005).

It can be seen that the role of the EP extends well beyond one-on-one work with children struggling academically or emotionally. More and more, the value of the EP's role within the subsystems of education and indeed in the education system as a whole is being acknowledged in academic circles. On a practical level, changes in educational policy in response to the unique South African context have led to changes in the role identified for EPs. However, there are limited posts available for EPs within the education department, while privately practicing EPs seem to serve the needs of a specific population group largely on a one-to-one basis (Richter et al., 1998). Thus it is important to determine how EPs position themselves and their role in South African education, and given these factors, how they evaluate their training experience.

2.5 Training

Although the issue of training for EPs falls beyond the scope of this study it is useful to briefly mention key components of it, both in South Africa and globally. Above, the scientist-practitioner model was noted as a means of training and practice for psychologists in the global arena (Hagstrom et al., 2007). Though initially utilised for clinical psychology students, the model has been generalised and adapted to suit the training of EPs (Hagstrom et al., 2007). The model traditionally involves four years of study including four components. Initially, course work regarding psychological and medical principles is completed

(Hagstrom et al., 2007). Following this a year of course work around therapeutic and assessment techniques is engaged in (Hagstrom et al., 2007). Once complete an internship is carried out, and finally a dissertation submitted (Hagstrom et al., 2007). The idea behind such a model ensures that both scientific rigor and competence in psychotherapeutic, diagnostic and assessment skills is achieved. Similar components (coursework, practical and research) comprise South African training in educational psychology, though the four year framework is reduced to three. It is clear that such training is broad, lengthy and varied in content. However, there are some issues highlighted in the literature as important and pervasive to all training in educational psychology.

Research indicates that practical experience is noted as vital to adequate training as an EP (Hagstrom et al., 2007). This of course must occur in conjunction with adequate primary skills training (Hagstrom et al., 2007). However, it is noted that despite primary training and skills development, competence and indeed confidence and respect is only achieved through practical experience (Webster, Hingley & Franey, 2000). In this manner, it is implied that training as a professional of any kind and certainly as an EP is ongoing. Both experience and further training courses in fields of interest serve throughout the career of an EP to enhance skills and competence (Webster et al., 2000).

2.6 Professional identity

Finally, it is useful to note the possible implications of such varied roles and training in the field of educational psychology. With such varied opportunities open to EPs, one begins to question precisely what an EP is. The broad definition offered by Glover and Ronning (1987 in Hagstrom et al., 2007) indicating that educational psychology as a field “applies the principles of psychology to education” (p. 799) is all inclusive, yet vague. Moreover, it

becomes evident that obtaining a professional identity specifically as an EP is a complex process. As noted by Webster et al. (2000), EPs, particularly fledgling professionals, are not taken particularly seriously, either by members of their own profession, or those of others. With the training and development of competent educational psychology professionals being an ongoing process (Webster et al., 2000), it is clear to note that development of one's identity within the profession is difficult. Despite this point however, little literature appears to explore the EP's professional identity.

2.7 Conclusion

It is argued above that in 1994 South Africa emerged from a past characterised by many inequalities. These impacted many sectors, including education. Since the end of apartheid, numerous shifts have occurred, in governance, policy, education and psychology. It is these changes that call into question the role of the EP. Given the shifts that have occurred in the field as well as the models of educational psychology represented globally, it is interesting to note the varied roles taken on by EPs on an international level. Given these factors it is useful to consider the role of EPs in the Pietermaritzburg context, specifically in relation to the challenges that they face. The aims of this research are therefore to explore EPs perceptions of their role in relation to education, policy, literature and their training. In addition, the study aims to unpack the challenges experienced in practice and the shifts that educational psychology as a profession has experienced in recent years.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical framework

The methodological framework for this study arose out of a hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy (Ihde, 1971). This approach combines the assumptions of both hermeneutics and phenomenology in an effort to understand human experience (Ihde, 1971).

The hermeneutic framework requires that one take into account the meaning, purposes and intentions of an individual's lived experience in order to understand the way in which their action is oriented within a particular context (Peavy, 1998 in Mkhize, 2005). This psychological framework makes various assumptions concerning the individual within the world. According to Valle and King (1978) the individual constructs their own world while at the same time; the world influences and constructs the individual. This reciprocal relationship results in specific meaning which is of interest to the hermeneutic frame (Kvale, 1996). The second assumption is that due to the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the individual and the world, the freedom or experience open to the individual is limited based upon the context of the situation (Valle & King, 1978) It is this influence of context that informs the meaning created by the individual (Kvale, 1996). Finally, due to the notion that one's understanding and action is based upon the influence of context and others, Valle and King (1978) describe the human consciousness as defined and structured by one's lived experience, rather than being an objective concrete entity. Given this manner of understanding the reciprocal construction of one's world within a lived experience, hermeneutics then aims to reflect theoretically upon the meaning held within such experiences (Schökel, 1998). This occurs through the interpretation and understanding of a spoken or "performed" (Schökel, 1998, p. 18) narrative or text.

Phenomenological approaches, though varied, consider the lived experience of the individual as fundamental (Ihde, 1971). In this manner there is “a unique emphasis on the concrete experience of the subject” (Ihde, 1971, p. 3). This, according to Paul Ricoeur, a proponent of hermeneutic phenomenology, is however, insufficient in interpreting human experience (Ihde, 1971). With the introduction of a hermeneutic stance (as described above) to the phenomenological school of thought, a focus on linguistics emerges (Ihde, 1971). It is through a careful analysis of language that one can search for counterpositions or tensions in experience as produced by other actors in the individual’s life (Ihde, 1971). This is based on the assumptions of hermeneutics mentioned above which imply, according to Ihde (1971) that no “man may know himself directly or introspectively” (p. 7) enough to experience meaning isolated from the influences of other people. For this reason, one considers the individual’s experience, while noting influences in it from external sources (Ihde, 1971).

The most basic implication for research within the realm of hermeneutic phenomenology is that research must break away from traditional positivistic, reductionist models of data collection and analysis in order to obtain full and rich description of individual experience. In addition to this, in analysing the data one must refrain from applying assumptions and knowledge already held by the researcher (Giorgi, 1971). This is done in order to truly access the subjective experience of the participant. It can be seen that qualitative exploration in research aims at a holistic understanding of the individual within his or her lived world and seeks to understand an individual’s experience in response to their context.

3.2 Methodology

As implied above, a qualitative research design has been employed for the purposes of this study. The reason for this is that the study is exploratory and descriptive in nature (Terre

Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In attempting to collect the opinions and perceptions held by individuals of interest, rich descriptive data, lending itself to qualitative analysis was collected in order to study the practice of EPs in Pietermaritzburg in relation and response to the complexity of the changing context.

3.2.1 Sampling

For the purposes of this study a single sample of EPs was required. The selection of participants was purposive in that the sample is specifically of EPs working within a particular geographical context. Within this specific sample diversity of perceptions was sought by sampling EP's depending upon their placement within private and public sectors of psychological practice. This was done to ensure that opinions and perceptions were gleaned from people with a vested interest and understanding of the role of EPs in South African society. The sampling process was also based on convenience (Kerlinger, 1986) to an extent in that psychologists were sampled only from the Pietermaritzburg area. Choosing a specific geographical sample was done firstly for convenience but also meant that we could focus on the effect of context, and limit the differences of perceptions being a result of context.

Snowball sampling (Kerlinger, 1986) was used. This method samples individuals based on referral by previously selected participants (Kerlinger, 1986). This was utilised in an attempt to seek saturation in data by which new participants tend to express what has already been expressed. A strategy of constant comparison (Silverman, 2005) was used to assess differences in participants' views and compare data between such individuals on an ongoing basis (Silverman, 2005) seeking a point of saturation in perceptions and data being collected. EPs were sampled from private practice, the Psychological Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES) and non-governmental organisations. This aimed to increase access to the diversity present in the EP community. This was deemed important given that literature read

in the area of EP's roles (see Chapter 2) indicates a great deal of variation in the types of work EPs can engage in. In addition, diversity in participants increases the extent to which the sample is representative.

It is important to note at this point that informative data could have been collected from other sources, such as, educators, policy makers in education, lecturers in tertiary institutions as well as other practitioners operating within education, such as occupational therapists. However, such sampling extends beyond the scope of this exploratory study.

3.2.2 Participants

Using the sampling method described above, eight participants were selected and interviewed throughout the duration of the study. As described, participants were selected in such a way as to represent a variety of roles or posts occupied by EPs. For this reason, six private practitioners were interviewed, one employee of PGSES and one EP working both in private practice and for an NGO. As the majority of EPs in Pietermaritzburg work in private practice the sample is weighted in favour of those EP's in private practice. One Black African woman, one Indian woman, three White men and three White women were interviewed. In addition it is important to note that EPs selected had experience ranging from two years to greater than twenty.

3.2.3 Data Collection

Individual interviews were held with the EPs. These interviews took the form of semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is based on a set of broad questions that guide the interview, but allows one to expand upon and probe deeper into unique issues that individual raise that seem to contain useful information (Kvale, 1996). Please see Appendix

A for list of questions. These interviews aimed to explore the perceptions, experiences and beliefs of the individuals regarding the role of EPs in South Africa. In addition they probed the perceived incongruency and ambiguity between their role, current policy and literature regarding the need for EPs in the South African context. In addition, their thoughts regarding their training in relation to their roles was investigated.

The interviews were conducted in English and were audio taped. Following data collection, the interviews were transcribed for analysis.

3.2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out in five steps as described by Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999). The first step involves familiarisation with the data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). As the researcher in this study also collected the data, this process began at data collection and continued with an initial reading of the transcripts. Following this initial reading, the second step involves inducing themes in the data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). In this way, themes in the data were recognised and coding schedule was developed using a method of thematic analysis. While Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that coding can be carried out at a number of different levels which vary according to degree of detail, it is useful to begin with a very general set of themes.

A method of thematic analysis was utilised to develop themes and codes for the analysis of the data. Thematic analysis is a process whereby information is coded on the basis of specific themes and their qualifications (Boyatzis, 1998). The first stage is the identification of these themes. This can be done in various ways, however, in this study they arose directly from the text as per the requirements of phenomenological analysis described above (Boyatzis, 1998).

Once themes had been identified, issues qualifying the themes were identified resulting in a complex set of themes and codes which could be used to describe the entirety of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Following this process a coding schedule was developed for analysis. These themes and codes are set out below in table one.

Table 1: Themes and codes

<p>A. Current role of EPs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting 2. Client group 3. Activities 4. Problems dealt with 5. Difference between expected and actual practice 	<p>F. Perceived future role of EPs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources 2. Research 3. Educating educators 4. Case management 5. School support 6. Family or parent work 7. Child work 8. Policy development
<p>B. EPs in a community of professionals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools 2. Therapists 3. Doctors 4. PGSES 5. Businesses 6. NGOs 7. Other psychologists 	<p>G. Tensions around categorisation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work cross over 2. Client group cross over 3. Process nature of work 4. Professional identity
<p>C. Challenges to practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disparity of wealth 2. Language barriers 3. Cross-cultural issues 4. Scope of practice 5. Capacity of educators 6. Time 	<p>H. Tensions around social responsibility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Payment issues 2. Imperative to serve the disadvantaged 3. Weight of decision making 4. Imperative to make a difference
<p>D. Tensions around inclusion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional 2. Educational 3. Resources 4. Capacity 	<p>I. Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Useful aspects 2. Ongoing nature of training 3. Gaps in training
<p>E. Shifts in recent years</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Departmental 2. Medical model diagnosis 3. Systemic intervention 	

Once this second step was completed the third step of coding the data could begin (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Coding of the data, according to Terre Blanche and Kelly, (1999) occurs through a further reading of the data. During this reading, codes and labels (as seen above) are applied to sections of the text (Boyatzis, 1998). This process of thematic analysis was in fact carried out over two thorough readings of the texts. This decision arose from a method that was adapted by the researcher from a hermeneutic frame of voice-centred analysis. According to Kvale (1996), interviews can be interpreted within the hermeneutic frame through an analysis of the conversation co-created by the subject, interviewer and others in the individual's construction of meaning. According to Mkhize (2005), an appropriate method of achieving this understanding is the voice-centred relational method. In this method, participants' stories are explored by looking at the various "voices" or points of view represented in their narratives with the interviewer as well as significant others constituting these voices. By looking at the power held by various voices particularly in relation to the voice of the participant, one can access the meanings, purposes and intentions of the participant's lived experience (Mkhize, 2005). This is achieved through four readings of the text, each focussing upon a different set of potential voices (Mkhize, 2005). However, this method was adapted for the purposes of this study. Two readings of the text were embarked on during this third step in the analysis: 1) As in voice-centred analysis, the first reading focussed on the plot or the main content themes emerging within the participants' stories (Mkhize, 2005); 2) The second reading aimed to code tensions arising in the perception's of the participants as a result of the various voices informing their understanding of the topic. In order to ascertain the influence of the researcher on the expressed perception's of the participants, the researcher asked herself the questions, how do they want me to see them in what they are expressing here? And what issues do they expect the researcher to want to hear?

An example of how the themes and codes depicted above were used throughout the two readings is given below, based on the following excerpt.

We probably only work with a very specific part of it. Um. The whole idea, that whole whole paradigm shift from hey, maybe the problem is the school, is the school's inflexibility which is the issue rather than some inherent problem with the child is a breathe of fresh air. Its wonderful. Um... The problem is that having suggested that we then have got to capacitate schools to be able to make the shifts that we need to. So some some teacher who has always taught something in a particular way not taking into account the learning disabled child or the child, its all very well to you know to tell her that the school should be more flexible, but somebody please help her to do that which is the job of the TST I think.

Table two: Coding of interview transcript

Theme	Excerpt	Code
E	We probably only work with a very specific part of it. Um. The whole idea, that whole whole paradigm shift from hey, maybe the problem is the school, is the school's inflexibility which is the issue rather than some inherent problem with the child is a breathe of fresh air. Its wonderful.	E2
E	The problem is that having suggested that we then have got to capacitate schools to be able to make the shifts that we need to.	E3
D	So some some teacher who has always taught something in a particular way not taking into account the learning disabled child or the child,	D4
F	its all very well to you know to tell her that the school should be more flexible, but somebody please help her to do that which is the job of the TST I think.	F5

According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999), the fourth step in data analysis involves elaborating on the themes and codes labelled in the previous step. This process involves noting interactions and apparent tensions in the data. This step began with the second coding of the text (described above) and continued in an effort to expand upon the various tensions and conflicts revealed.

Finally step five involved the interpretation of the coded findings within a specific theoretical framework.

3.2.5 Theoretical framework for analysis

While the research design was founded within a hermeneutic frame, a suitable framework in which to situate the findings was required. Given the socially situated nature of the data collected, it was decided to make use of a Vygotskian understanding of the perceptions, opinions and feelings of the participants. While Vygotsky's writings explored intellectual development, his understanding of the roots of human functioning assist in the interpretation of participant perspectives. The central theme in Vygotsky's argument is that human functioning does not occur in a "cultural, historical, and institutional vacuum" (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992, p. 329). Rather, thought and action exists within a contextual frame which is socially situated (Wertsch, 1991). Understanding that context is central to the interpretation of intrapersonal constructs is the primary departure point in working through a Vygotskian frame. However, this notion can be unpacked into three underlying notions. These pertain to what is known as 1) genetic analysis, 2) the social origins of mental functioning and 3) the mediation of human action. Together these three ideas assisted in the analysis of the data collected in this study.

The first notion of genetic analysis determines that one can only understand human functioning, cognition and behaviour while noting its history, origins and the transitions it has undergone (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). Important to this notion is the influence on functioning based on an individual's characteristics and features. For this reason, data collected in this study could not be understood without noting the historical foundations of

education and educational psychology in this country. Nor can individual's perceptions and choices be interpreted without noting the individual's professional development and past.

The second idea held by Vygotsky and subsequent theorists is that all intramental functioning has its origins within social life (Wertsch, 1991). In this way, personal ideas and functions existed first within an intermental plane (Wertsch, 1991). Thus, once such mental processes have become the individual's they still maintain a social foundation and thus continue to be informed by social functions (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). In this way, transformations occur. In this study, it must be noted in interpreting the data social influence on perceptions and opinions forms an integral part in determining both the role of EPs and how the various roles have been constructed.

Finally, Vygotsky notes that these social functions as expressed above are mediated on both intermental and intramental planes by certain mechanisms (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). Thus, the social development of concepts and ideas occurs through the use of various tools such as language (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). It must then be noted that the social discourse around such issues as raised by participants in this study was to be taken into account when interpreting their perceptions and ideas.

Based upon the theoretical stand point discussed above, the analysis in this study was interpreted based upon a contextual understanding of human functioning. It was considered that ideas, perceptions and career role choices would be based upon an interaction between social discourse around EPs and education as well as individual notions and preferences.

3.3 Validity and reliability

In order to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative methods of analysis, a number of specific criteria must be satisfied. The first is known as transferability (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). This refers to the generalisability of a study and its findings. Due to the non-probability sampling used, this project relies upon its saturation sampling procedure in order to ensure that the generation of information is accurate and in a sense generalisable or transferable to the greater population of EPs. A second criterion refers to credibility (William, 2006). As this refers to the internal validity of the data and interpretation, only the participants themselves could be judges of this criterion (William, 2006). However, efforts were made in analysis to remain true to the data. A third issue is that of dependability (William, 2006). In this manner, the research methods must be clear to the reader such that the research could be replicated. This is difficult in qualitative research due to contextual variation (William, 2006). While contextual shifts are accounted for in the interpretation of the data, the thorough outline of methods described in this chapter aims to optimise confirmability. The fourth criterion to be taken into account is that of confirmability which aims to ensure accuracy in the analysis of data (William, 2006). This issue was taken into account with the rechecking as well as supervision of analysis. A final criterion refers to reflexivity (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999). This term refers to the mutual, unavoidable influence that the researcher and participant have on each other within the research situation (Eagle et al., 1999). Although unavoidable, it is possible to account for this in one's analysis of the data. In this research, the use of a method adapted from a voice-centred relational method of analysis allows for the researcher to search for their influence within the data produced. Through careful control over the qualitative method of sampling and analysis, validity was be ensured for this study.

3.4 Ethical issues

When conducting research, three ethical principles must be considered. These are autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999).

The principle of autonomy in research places responsibility with the researcher to ensure that participation is voluntary and informed (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). Part of the voluntary participation implies the right and ability to withdraw from participation at any time (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). Finally, ensuring participant anonymity is essential on the part of the researcher (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). These issues were addressed in the research by obtaining informed consent. The research and the rights (as described above) of the participants was discussed with all subjects and then consent to proceed was attained by means of an informed consent form (see Appendix B). This document informed participants of the nature of the process as well as the advantages and disadvantages of participating. Part of this consent process involved negotiating with the participants the need to record the interview sessions. Consent for this was also obtained by way of the consent form.

Anonymity was ensured by refraining from using the subject's name and referring to them in text according to a participant number assigned to each individual.

The second principle refers to nonmaleficence. This according to Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999) ensures that the researcher not harm the participants in any way. Where possible harms do exist they must be carefully considered in light of the possible benefits of the research and participants must be informed of them. The only ethical concern anticipated in this regard was that there were a small number of participants all of whom are key stakeholders within education and educational psychology. Due to the small size of Pietermaritzburg and in particular the community of EPs, there is a risk of recognition by

other members of the community where data from the study is concerned. Steps have been taken to reduce the risk of recognition, such as the use of pseudonyms and the removal of any identifying information, as mentioned above. Beyond this, participants were given the opportunity to voice concerns in this matter and were given the opportunity to raise their concerns regarding how the data collected from them would be dealt with and stored and who would hear or see their interview tapes and transcripts. This was covered during the process of informed consent as noted above.

Finally, beneficence refers to the principle which states that the research must be of benefit either to the participants themselves or to the wider community or the broader community of researchers (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). The primary benefits or advantage to participating in the research as noted in the form of consent, was the facilitation of a process whereby EPs could reflect on their work and their role in South Africa. In terms of benefits to the broader community, it is considered that the exploration of the topic at hand could be utilised in exploring EP training with a view to optimising it for the South African context and the specific needs of its schools and children.

The research was approved by the University of KwaZulu Natal research ethics board and the School of Psychology.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The data collected in the form of individual interviews focussed on the current professional activities of the participants. In addition, their role relative to various contextual factors, and to their training, was explored. It was noted in the data collection process that the role of EPs in the Pietermaritzburg area is a broad one. It will be made evident that the range of practice, in addition to the factors influencing it are numerous and diverse, resulting in a complex understanding of the role of EPs in a South African context. The points made below will be illustrated with excerpts from the interviews conducted with participants one to eight (labelled P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7 and P8). All participants hail from the Pietermaritzburg area, but function within their role as EPs in different capacities. P1 is a private practitioner, in addition to operating a non governmental organisation (NGO) focussed on the school sector. P2 works for an employee assistance programme (the EAP), seeing individual cases. P3 owns a business contracting businesses requiring staff development training. P4, P5, P7 and P8 run private practices. P6 works in a departmental position as an education specialist. While there is a range of work opportunities available to EPs, it seems from the sample that the primary source of employment for such professionals is in private practice of some sort.

The following chapter will describe the results of the study along various themes. Initial sections will explore the current activities of EPs and the professionals with whom they work. Based upon these activities, the challenges and recent changes to practice experienced by EPs will be explored. Finally, various tensions experienced by EPs in relation to both their work and their profession will be noted, with particular reference to perception about what the role of EPs should be, inclusive education, the categorisation of EPs within the HPCSA and social

responsibility. Finally, the issue of training will be briefly mentioned with regard to role issues.

4.2 The role of EPs at present

To begin it is useful to describe the full range of professional activities engaged in by EPs. It must be noted that the range of activities engaged in, client groups seen and problems addressed are broad. As indicated by one participant:

Int: if you'd like to just start by telling me typically what you do in a day.
P4: Um. Ja, uh, (...) It's a bit of a mixed bag to be honest

It is important first to note that the client groups engaged range extensively as well. While the primary group of private clients includes children of school going age, many practitioners will see adults for sessions pertaining to various types of interventions. In addition, client groups often involve school staff, particularly educators. EPs generally work with an individual client, however, group work of various forms, with groups of children, couples, families and school staff is also common. This point will be made clearer in the illustration of specific tasks taken up by EPs, described below.

4.2.1 The work of EPs

Assessment

Perhaps the most common and pervasive task of EPs in Pietermaritzburg is that of assessment. Most frequently, EPs receive referrals where children are not coping with academic expectations in the classroom. In these cases an assessment is required to ascertain the origins of such difficulty, in addition to its severity. Thus many practitioners spend a great deal of time conducting intellectual assessments with school age children.

Although educational difficulties are frequently cited as the reason for referral, it is acknowledged that often, school related difficulties are precipitated by emotional ones. For this reason, assessment is generally more holistic including an assessment of the child's emotional well being.

P8: As a standard assessment we do intellectual and emotional together

A final aspect of assessment is career related. Many EPs will see adolescents and young adults for career guidance and assessment. While assessment tools are still used in this regard, the current best practice methods of career assessment are holistic and include an element of counselling and narrative building related to identity formation. This is illustrated below.

P7: I would deal with the emotional issues of finding themselves, before embarking on on the on the looking for guidance with regards to what career to choose and I think um you know, the qualitative technique of assessment

Counselling and psychotherapy

Another significant portion of their practice involves psychotherapy, in various forms. Many EPs engage children in psychotherapy, ranging from play therapy, to cognitive-behavioural therapy to hypnotherapy. It is found according to participants, that many children struggle with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. In many instances these are reported to be linked to educational difficulties. However, psychotherapy work by EPs is not limited to children or even young adults. Although some EPs prefer to refer adult clients, many EPs engage these individuals or couples in therapy, particularly where parent difficulties underlie difficulties in a child. Participant 5 explains this range.

P5: So, uh, from my youngest client is two and a half and my oldest is 76.

EPs may deal with individual adults. In addition, EPs may address marital difficulties in couple's therapy. Finally, family therapy techniques may be employed to assist a struggling family system. There are other instances where consultation occurs with parents in a non-psychotherapeutic manner. Rather, a psychoeducational stance is adopted as in Participant 7's case, where EPs educate clients with respect to some aspect of their difficulties.

Int: Do you do parenting skills?

P7: Yes, I think its a very very very very important area of educational psychologists, because parents come in not knowing exactly how to handle situations

Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation appears to be an important, regular part of the work of EPs. Many participants reported the importance of engaging in psychoeducation with parents of children seen for difficulties of some kind (as mentioned above).

In addition, EPs have assumed the role of imparting useful information regarding the various aspects of a child, to educators dealing with them. With more children struggling with intellectual, social and behavioural difficulties being included in mainstream schools, EPs have found educating the educator (if not the entire school) about the pertinent issue, an important part of dealing with a child's particular case. While in some cases the education is provided in relation to a specific child, at other times, EPs will run workshops or give presentations in schools regarding more general child-related issues.

P5: Well I do sometimes do workshops with teachers.

Support for schools and educators

While psychoeducation forms an important part of EPs interaction with schools, evidence collected suggests various other supportive roles EPs have assumed where schools and their staff are concerned. In addition, where educators are struggling emotionally, both personally and professionally, the role of the EP in providing support, at least in the form of a referral for psychotherapy or counselling, is integral both in supporting the school and in ensuring an optimal learning environment for children. This is noted below.

P7: With teachers, then what I do is I chat to them in a very subtle and tactful way in terms of engaging psychological services for themselves, uh, because a lot of them would confide, saying "I'm just having a very tough time personally"

It is recognised that a school operates as a system and, like most professional systems, the motivation, cohesion and personal development of staff members is important in ensuring the forward momentum of the schools growth and development. For this reason, EPs engage in encouraging staff development through personal growth in individuals. Such work takes the form of staff or human resource development workshops and programmes as in Participant 3's work.

P3: I retain and quite fair contact with education because we've developed a lot of relationships with schools so... the focus is on staff development more than anything else.

Finally, in a context where many schools run on limited financial, infrastructural and human resources, some EPs have taken to intervening at the level of providing such resources (both financial and human) to schools where possible. This is done through contact networks with other professions and organisations as in Participant 1's case.

P8: A lot of the private companies now days are using money to, pro, community outreach, social responsibility. And um, my husbands company has started a Saturday school.

In these ways, EPs provide many levels of support to schools and the staff systems comprising them.

Policy issues

Finally, a task undertaken by EPs, particularly within the government sector pertains to the development, implementation and evaluation of educational policy. This occurs through field observation and assessment of policy-bound structures and provisos. Participant 6 notes this task.

P6: At head office level, they work, operate quite differently, because they are in the business of both developing and disseminating policy. And overseeing the implementation of policy.

Scope of practice

It can be seen that the range of clients seen and tasks performed by EPs varies a great deal and does not necessarily illustrate the bounds of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)'s latest description of scope of practice for EPs. This is not only evident given proposed scopes of practice. The notion was suggested or implied in participants explanations of their own practice. It was noted that participants indicated two separate segments of practice. The first and most commonly stated as traditional practice indicated those tasks which participants perhaps thought the interviewer and reader to consider the appropriate tasks of EPs. The remainder of practice however, was presented as out of the norm or differing from the traditional work of EPs. This is illustrated below.

P1: I'm in private practice for one day a week, doing, probably a third of that is probably what you would call education psychology, assessments, school related stuff and the rest of it is more of a counselling nature

It is evident simply from statements regarding current practice that there are tensions that exist between what participants perceive to be the appropriate practice of EPs and what their actual practice includes.

4.3 Working within a community of professionals

One of the noted features of the current practice of EPs is the multidisciplinary nature of the work. For this reason, EPs do not work alone, particularly where children are concerned. As one participant noted:

P7: As an educational psychologist I don't think it is possible to actually work isolation because children have very often other needs.

As a result of these varied needs, EPs seem to work within a community of various professionals depending on the nature of the work being done.

P5: I believe that, especially working with children, you don't work in isolation, you must work as a team so I bring, I get everybody involved, so its teachers, its the OT's, the speech therapists, the whatever is required

A range of interactions occur between EPs and these various professionals. Below, the types of professionals with whom EPs network will be presented.

School staff

A primary area of interaction occurs within the school environment. EPs are frequently compelled to work directly with school staff, including educators, management staff as well

as other individuals such as boarding house staff. Participant 5 indicates the range of professionals in the school environment potentially called upon to work with.

P5: Its often the HOD of, of the grade or the school counsellor or um, particular teachers.

It would seem that in most cases, EPs work with school staff in one of two manners. In the first instance, school staff will be drawn in to assist in the case of an individual child experiencing difficulties. The staff, particularly educators may be called upon to provide insight into a child as indicated in the following extract.

P5: I then make contact with the teacher, chat to the teacher, will often go back into the school, have a round table with everybody that's concerned, if necessary.

In similar instances, EPs work with staff in building capacity to deal with the difficulties presented by a specific child client.

P7: if it comes to a situation where a teacher doesn't have good classroom management skills um and doesn't know how to manage a child, especially with ADHD and the conduct disorders then I would sit and do skills training.

It can be seen then that the inclusion of educators in work with individual clients can be useful in both assessing the state of the child's difficulties in addition to intervening in order to correct or manage the difficulties.

The second way in which school staff are worked with is in capacity building and psychoeducation of a more general nature where current, relevant issues are raised for discussion with an EP. Participant 5 has experience of this.

P5: Matrons as well, in boarding schools. Just in terms of being able to identify um, and deal with issues like depression or (...) or self-mutilation, that kind of stuff.

In these ways, EPs consider their professional collaboration with school staff an integral part of their current role as well as their ideal role in this context.

Therapists

EPs consider their professional relationships with various therapists as vital in their work with children. EPs consider therapists to include occupational therapists, speech therapists and remedial teachers.

P7: Yes, Occupational therapists, very regularly and speech therapists, (...) yes I do a lot of referrals there and even to remedial teachers, private remedial teachers.

It would seem that there are broadly two kinds of interactions which occur with such practitioners. In the first instance, referrals are made between EPs and such therapists, as indicated in the above quote. In addition however, a consultative relationship often exists, where EPs contact therapists (and vice versa) for advice or guidance in interpreting certain tests and presentation of difficulties as described by Participant 8, in talking about her interaction with other therapists.

P8: Not for the case of actually having someone to refer to but um, I think also on the level of um having to confer, because you don't have the multidisciplinary approach that's nice at a special school, (...) Um, I have lots of them phoning me, I phone lots of them, especially with the interpretation of results.

Doctors

EPs also find themselves liaising with medical professionals such as general practitioners, psychiatrists and paediatricians where some difficulties (such as attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder) are concerned. Participant 3 presents as an example the importance of working with paediatricians.

P3: We had access to; I got very close to the paediatricians who were a big part of the team.

Other psychologists

Other professionals included in the network formed by many EPs comprise other EPs or psychologists registered in another category. Due to scope of practice issues, personal professional preferences as well as ethical questions around dual roles, EPs frequently refer clients or their relatives to other psychologists for assistance, as suggested by participant 7.

P7: Where teenagers present with suicidal tendencies and could have the beginnings of personality disorders and very, serious psychiatric uh stuff, then I would refer on to a clinical psychologist or a psychiatrist and then I would deal with um just the educational um stuff.

PGSES

With EPs being concerned with the educational potential and academic progress of children, many participants considered an amicable professional relationship with the Psychological Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES) to be necessary where learner support is required in a case. Participant 7 conveyed this need well.

P7: Say for instance I see a child with learning disabilities or learning difficulties, and needs appropriate placement uh, where their current school is not able to address all their specific needs, then I would then direct my psychoeducational report to the psychologist with the PGSES and then we would work together on effecting a placement.

NGOs and other state departments

In some cases, working with non-governmental organisations devoted to work in education is important to EPs. Although this is less frequent than relationships occurring with other

professionals it is note-worthy. This perhaps is most pertinent in the practice of government employed EPs, who also find working with other state run departments important.

P6: So, what we have done is, we have also introduced ourselves to hospitals to clinics, to NGOs.

Businesses

Finally, where EPs are involved in the gathering of resources and providing education related services to disadvantaged communities, working relationships with local industry and businesses is both useful and important. This was noted by two participants both engaging in this type of work. Participant 1 gives a useful example.

P1: We are working on two levels, three levels I suppose, the one is um... we set up an adopted school programme which means that we... we adopt a business. The business that adopts the school commits to being more closely involved in the school.

In this case close collaboration between the EP and business is fundamental to the success of the programme.

In terms of working with a community or a network of professionals working in their private capacities, an amicable, professional relationship where professionals respect one another's role in assisting a child with needs, while acknowledging the needs and usefulness of the other professionals, is of primary importance. Participant 8 illustrates this type of relationship as held with PGSES.

Int: And have, how does PGSES feel about private psychologists going into the schools?

P8: I know as far as um the Western Cape is concerned, they were getting quite strict with it. [private EPs working in schools] Um, Because what it was developing into then, and I can understand this, was you were then having a monopoly of all those children access to them and you sort of becoming the

unofficial psychologist at the school (...)I'm not sure what they're like in KwaZulu Natal, I did speak to (PGSES employee), who works there, and she came into one of the learners who we were trying to get into a special school. And she seemed quite happy with the fact that that was the arrangement, that I was actually helping kids who couldn't afford it too. And she said to me you know, " would you go to this school as well and help them out".

This excerpt illustrates the importance and usefulness of carefully constructed, respectful relationships built between professionals.

An important feature of the EPs involvement within a community of professionals is case management. It was the perception of most participants that the EP can and indeed should play an integral role in managing for the client the involvement of all the professionals mentioned above. In this was the broad base of knowledge held by the EP can assist the client in understanding processes occurring in addition to linking them to useful resources. Participant 3 describes the EPs role within such a network succinctly.

Int: Do you think it would be useful for educational psychologists to work in a team with other disciplines as well in that kind of context? In a consulting context?

P3: Ja, I do. Except that maybe its self importance declared in a way. I think educational psychologists are key people. I think they can often be captains of those teams.

Ultimately it can be seen that both at present and for the future role of EPs, working within a community of a range of professionals in a case management role is perceived as vital.

4.4 Challenges to practice

Given the practice engaged in by EPs within the context in question, many challenges seem to be experienced. While many of these relate particularly to the South African context, others relate to the nature of the work of EPs.

4.4.1 Resources

The primary difficulty associated with practice in South Africa pertains to wealth, or the disparity thereof. As a result of apartheid policies, a vast proportion of the population struggles to make use of EP services, and more primary needs exist. As Participant 5 explains:

P1 I'll never forget when I was on the Phelophepa one principal saying to me, (...) "right now I'm more concerned about these children having food in their stomach when they get to school"

Indeed, primary attention is given to financial and infrastructural needs.

P1: the whole school um just needs, it needs to be developed on an infrastructural level, there's got to be playing fields for high school boys to kick a ball around, uh there's got to be adequate toilet facilities for teachers

It would seem that these needs necessarily take precedence over the individual psychological needs of the child. However, even when psychological or related services are required by the individual, financial constraints act as a significant barrier to the accessing of them.

P5: And kids that don't have... (money), even if you've got medical aid, OT, speech therapy, its not always covered by medical aid, so a lot people don't have access to that.

Thus, the pervasive disparity of wealth and poverty in certain sectors in South Africa poses a significant challenge to EPs attempting to make some sort of difference in various settings.

4.4.2 Language and cultural diversity

Working in a country where there are eleven official languages and working with individuals or groups who speak a language different to one's own was also raised a challenge or perhaps

even a barrier to practice. Participant 2 notes the difficulties presented in the demographics of her practice as a result of language barriers.

P2: If I work with the little ones, now, in in in um, play therapy, I mean that is just, the language barriers are there. I I I see quite a lot of Indian children. Not that many Black children. But many Indians, Coloured, Whites obviously as well. But not that many Black ones.

Related somewhat to the issue of language is that of cross-cultural applicability and the accessibility of EPs. Many EPs expressed the opinion that the ability to identify with the culture of a client or community is important in working as an EP. Indeed, Participant 6, who was raised in a multi-cultural environment, considers her ability to identify with a range of clients as fundamental to her success in the work that she does. As a result of her multi-cultural upbringing, she expresses the following:

Int: Do you think you're quite accessible to a range of South African educator?

P6: I think I'm the most accessible person here [PGSES]. That sounds really boastful, but I think I am.

Conversely, many EPs find it challenging to approach work with individuals of another culture.

Int: You're speaking now of sort of underprivileged schools, um, do you feel that you, with your sort of training you're accessible to those kinds of schools?

P5: No, not really, no. No. Unless I make myself accessible, which I have, at times, but also it, I'm quite a foreign body in that kind of environment

However, it is important to note that this challenge is not viewed as an impermeable barrier to work across cultures. EPs perceive the basic skills associated with openness and attempts to understand sufficient in many respects to assist a person within their cultural frame.

Participant 1 points out understanding as key, while Participant 8 uses an example of working in situations where EP and client have different experiences.

P1: I think the first constraint is um... not properly understanding. (...) the constraint is to try to understand what are the real needs over here. We only have a limited number of t.. uh, amount of time so the better one's understanding of of the issues, uh the more strategic your intervention can be.

P8: You know at the start, um, I remember UNISA telling us that um it would be better to have a half trained psychologist in Soweto that was from the same culture, than to have someone there that... you know was fully trained and wonderful but couldn't identify with them. So I think... that to me makes a lot of sense, but on the other hand, it doesn't mean that I can't work with a rape victim because I wasn't raped myself.

4.4.3 Human resources

A final challenge experienced in the South African context relates to the commitment of role players in a position to support and intervene with a child experiencing difficulties. The participants felt that educators and schools frequently do not provide the support required for interventions with children. Participant 1 articulates this difficulty.

P1: The other limitation on our work is finding the right people to work with. (Int: ya) Finding schools and particular teachers that uh, that are still motivated that that that are prepared to put time into this thing, rather than working with people who are really really quite tired.

As participant 1 begins to allude to, educators are often unable to assist, simply due to fatigue and being overworked. Participant 5 highlights the source of this challenge.

P5: But if the child's just a number from a poor family, and there 35 in a class, well, teachers are stretched, and exhausted, so you don't always get back-up.

It can be seen that many features of the South African context pose challenges to the work of EPs. However, there are also factors related to the nature of work in educational psychology itself which create difficulties in practice.

4.4.4 Time constraints

The first challenge faced by EPs both in private and public sectors was the limited time to cope with the volume of children requiring assistance. While in some cases this was also a constraint consciously put in place by EPs in order to limit their practice, it was also due to the lengthy nature of assessment work. Ultimately however, time is considered to pose a significant limitation on the work done by EPs.

Int: What would you say are the sort of constraints, in your work, the challenges.

P8: Time. Time um... for me it's a personal thing, because I've decided to only run my practice while my son's at school. (...) I work fast, in the sense that, when we were at the Department of Education we would sometimes have to do 5 assessments at one school in one day. So, as far as the test administration is concerned, you can't really change the time.

4.4.5 Scope of practice as a challenge

Finally, a somewhat less obvious constraint on the work of EPs is the difficulty around actually knowing what work is meant to be done by such professionals. EPs themselves are unsure of what falls within their scope of practice which poses a difficulty in setting themselves up in a position as an EP, either in private or public sectors. This difficulty will be elaborated on in section 4.8. Participant 4 however, illustrates this difficulty when talking about his idea of the ideal and appropriate work of the EP.

Int: What do you say are the constraints to doing that sort of job apart from what you mentioned? (...)

P4: Well there isn't a job like that [specifically for EPs] so how where you going to get, how're you going to get it?

Clearly, the concern is that jobs, and the work of EPs is not set out formally with a usable job description. This matter will be mentioned and indeed expanded upon at later stages.

4.5 Shifts in practice in recent years

It became evident during the data collection and analysis that a number of shifts have occurred in the practice of educational psychology in the past 13 years. As expected, structural shifts have occurred as a result of departmental and policy change in South Africa in general. In addition however, shifts in the nature of intervention have also occurred, both in response to policy development as well as shifts in psychological theory.

Although a number of policy changes have occurred since the end of apartheid, some shifts have directly and dramatically impacted the role of the EP in practice. As noted above, some participants worked for the Department of Education until the early 1990s, while others have experienced PGSES in more recent years. Comparisons will be drawn between the two situations.

The most noticeable shift has been in the number of EPs in the employment of PGSES. It was noted that numbers of EPs were dramatically reduced through the mechanism of retrenchment.

P2: Yes, we we ended in 1990 or or was it 1990 or 1991. Because then uh, we were retrenched, so called retrenched. (...) We were all we were given the choice, did we want to stay in the Education Department, they only wanted to keep 18, half of us.

In addition to the number of EP's employed in PGSES, it was pointed out that in fact, PGSES does not fill posts for educational psychology. Rather, education specialists are employed, some of whom are EPs.

P6: I'm in the post of a senior education specialist. So within the education department, if you are office based, you are either at the level of a senior education specialist, deputy chief education specialist, or a chief education specialist, at middle management level. So I'm a senior education specialist,

and so, as such am not necessarily employed as an educational psychologist, even though the work which I perform falls within the realm of educational psychology.

Related to this is another shift which has impacted the actual practice of Department of Education employed EPs. It would seem that the practice has shifted from hands on interaction with children suffering with various difficulties to work which resembles consultancy. Participant 6 describes her work within the previous dispensation.

P2: So everywhere, every day you'd drive up and you'd visit a school and do assessments all day. So, academic, in the majority of cases, you know where children who had problems (...) and of the emotional in the high school. I'd say more of the primary school we had the the academic or scholastic problems and then in the high school more more um, behavioural and emotional problems.

It can be seen that direct work with children dominated daily activities in the past. Current departmental work however, involves work with schools and educators, with less emphasis on direct work with children. Participant 6 revealed this, suggesting that more children can be assisted by educators and schools where capacity building has occurred by PGSES EPs.

Int: So educational psychology within the government department anyway, would be quite removed from the children actually?

P6: it will always be quite removed.

Int: Because there so few of us (EPs), relative to the number of children?

P6: Yes yes.

This shift, though it is related to factors associated with policy and context also links to issues around shifts in general psychological theory and practice.

The primary shift suggested has been a move away from medical model diagnosis and intervention in which learning difficulties are seen to reside within the child in the form of a

disorder, to considering barriers to learning as related to context. Whereas previously individual deficit was cited in diagnosis, now, a more context-bound approach is used.

P3: in a sense it's kind of more realistic than a kind of classic medical model stuff where you where you take someone who is supposedly sick, you know cognitively and throw a whole lot of resources at that, but you don't impact the environment that the person is in, the classroom or at home and those things.

Certainly, assessment of cases no longer necessarily involves formal, standardised assessment. This is most obvious in government employed EPs where assessment is more contextual.

P6: We don't use any standardised tests now.

Int: Ja, what do you use now?

P6: Um.... There isn't a particular tool that the education department uses.

Um.. We refer to what we call screenings. Um. So, you'd basically use your clinical judgement at the first interview.

As suggested by Participant 3 in the previous excerpt, not only has diagnosis and testing shifted, but so has intervention. EPs indicate that when dealing with a child with difficulties, attention must be paid to all systems comprising the child's environment. This differs from what was perceived to have occurred in the past as suggested by Participant 3.

By implication, the nature of practice engaged in by EPs must be altered as shifts in context and theory of best practice occur. With these factors in mind, one must consider the future role of EPs, as the participants did.

4.6 Perceptions on what the role of EPs should be

Participants were asked to express their opinions around what the role of EPs should be or could be. In addition to this were discussion of policies which affect the role and practice of

educational psychology such as inclusive education. With the South African context as well as factors associated with psychological theory in mind, EPs suggested the kinds of work the profession should engage in, in the future. Similar to their current practice, this encompassed a broad range of activities. Indeed, it was suggested that there is no set answer to a question regarding the future role of EPs. As one participant expressed when asked about plausible work in educational psychology:

P4: It's not formalised, you've got to kind of make it up as you go along.

For this reason perhaps, various suggestions were made.

4.6.1 Individual Work

The first role suggested by EPs as essential to their profession, entails work with individual clients, primarily children, although some EPs enjoy some work with adult clients. This sort of role involves both assessments and therapy with children with a range of educational, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Such work was discussed above as a part of the work EPs are already engaged in.

P5: So, ja, in terms of kids um, a large portion of what I do with children and I'm talking about uh... ja I suppose, primary, senior-primary, pre-primary, junior primary, senior school, but a large portion of that is assessment work its when a child is not coping

P8: if they come in with some kind of scholastic problem we'll do the emotional (assessment)

Although the primary client is generally viewed by EPs to be the child, or index patient, it is widely observed (as mentioned above) that work with the child's parents (and in some cases family) is both essential and indeed already occurring. This work could involve parenting

skills training, marital support, individual counselling or family therapy, as indicated by participant 5:

P5: If they in senior primary or, senior primary its generally education program, uh problems, but those are very often related to family stuff. And if its, I mean, if a child is referred to me under the age of 5, I will see the child, but invariably I don't have to see the child, um, I see the parents.

EPs differ as to their opinions regarding whether or not work outside of parenting support should fall within the role of EPs. Many feel that such issues should be referred to other psychologists. While this is in part to avoid dual relationships, it also relates to what kind of work practitioners feel falls within their scope of practice. Many express feeling comfortable engaging in such work. These opposing views are expressed below.

P7: I would refer the mum for psychotherapy to another psychologist. Um. If its parents having also marital difficulties, just to clarify, I send them off to a marriage counsellor.

Conversely, the following participant would see such cases.

P8: I have a couple of adults, (...) This mom came to me because I assessed her son.

As mentioned in a previous section, EPs play an important role in case management. It is general consensus among EPs that working within a community of professionals in a management role should continue to constitute a large part of the role of EPs in the future.

4.6.2 Support services

While work with the index patient is considered important in the role of EPs, a newer development which seems to represent a large part of the future of educational psychology involves support services for those supporting children with difficulties or special needs. For

this reason, work with schools and in particular educators is noted by EPs. At a one-on-one level, EPs could provide support, knowledge and training to individual educators struggling with a particular learner or learners in their class as indicated by Participant 7.

P7: I would sit and do skills training.

Int: Ok. With the individual teacher or would you engage with the whole school in a workshop.

P7: Being a private practitioner it is an individual teacher because you actually enter the school on the basis of uh acting in the best interest of your client. So I cannot address the entire staff, it wouldn't be ethical.

In addition, EPs view the role of educational psychology as extending to school support. While EPs already consider the liaising with schools in case management as crucial, the support of a staff is also important. This could be in one of two ways. In the first instance, training could be provided by EPs to schools in their area on subjects related to various psychological difficulties.

P7: I'm often called in to schools to give talks to teachers, um, like uh little workshops on how to handle things. And that is purely voluntary

In addition to this, staff development and the support of staff through their own personal development can be achieved as suggested by Participant 3.

P3: Absolutely, its kind of, all of our work is designed around organisational, cultural development, so it's really trying to lift the culture in an organisation to higher levels of trust and better communication (...)it's more than just the staff as a group of people, they're individual people too, you know, its up there. There are lots of educators at the moment who are really taking strain.

It must be noted that the traditional role (as perceived by EPs and mentioned above) of EPs must move away from including simple small group and one-on-one interactions in therapy and assessments. Indeed, it is argued that EPs should in many instances take on the role of

facilitators, particularly where work with school staff is concerned. This was indicated by Participant 3 as he considered the future role of EPs.

P3: So that's one that occurs to me, that if you could develop capacity around leading groups of people as a as a facilitator in the purer sense of that, that would be awesome.

Finally, many participants express excitement regarding attempts to provide resources, financial, material and psychological to children and schools in disadvantaged settings. With the knowledge and understanding of children and education as possessed by EPs, this is a role considered to be of importance in the future. Participant 1 expressed excitement at the prospect of EPs using the model he currently employs to bring resources to the disadvantaged.

P1: For sure, that the idea. You know, we want, we're very excited about this model.

4.6.3 Advocacy

Finally, one participant spoke of advocacy, which he regards as important to develop within the role of EPs in the future. It would seem that his understanding of the term encompasses the development of knowledge and resources in order to inform policy and action within schools and the lives of individual children. There are two facets to advocacy, which include research and policy development, identified by various participants during this study.

It is argued that EPs, with their knowledge of education, and psychology as well as with their access to schools, are in a prime position to engage in research around topics relevant to South African schools and their children. Participant 4 was eager to express this point.

Int: Would you say that the place where there should be ed psychs in the role of school counsellor?

P4: I think its fantastic, ja, I think its a really great placement.

Int: So ideally every school should have a school counsellor?

P4: It's a good thought, actually, ja. I think I agree with that, I think it would be fantastic, ja. If you think of the research that could be done, generated.

It is argued that not only will such research and its findings impact on psychological practice, but could go towards informing and evaluating policy and its implementation, a function perceived to fall within the capabilities of EPs. Participant 4 describes such commenting on policy.

P4: educational psychologists are perfectly placed to make comments on all sorts of things from language policies through to discipline through to inclusivity.

It can be seen that the possibilities where the role of EPs is concerned are vast. For this reason, the choice of EPs with regard to their personal role is informed not only by their abilities, but by other factors as well.

While the possible roles played by EPs is diverse there are a number of challenges and tensions related to the shifting South African and Educational psychology context which are felt by EPs within varying roles. These tensions pertain to education policy, issues around categorisation as EPs by the HPCSA and finally, the imperative to take provide a service to a range of South African communities. The following three sections will explore the feelings of EPs around these issues.

4.7 Tensions around inclusive education

The major shift in South African education (second only perhaps to racial integration) has been the introduction of inclusive education. With EPs working so closely with education, it is unsurprising that not only has it affected their practice (as mentioned above), but it has

evoked mixed reactions and opinions to its appropriateness. While some EPs agree with the implementation of inclusive education, there are those who are firmly against it. Primarily however, there are those that feel the concept has its advantages, but that contextual issues reduce its possible efficacy in South Africa, as noted by participant 2.

P4: I actually don't think its [inclusive education] working. That definitely isn't working. If if anything because its badly-resourced.

It is useful to unpack the tensions around inclusive education as voiced by those EPs The most basic concern pertains to educational progress. Many EPs expressed concern that it would not be possible to optimise the educational progress of special needs learners within an environment required to also cater for 'ordinary' learners. Participant 5 expressed her concerns when talking about the educational progress of special needs learners.

P5: [I] worry about kids, because as it is, too many fall through the net, far too many, we don't have the facilities, we don't have the resources.

Reasons for this are largely contextual and will be discussed later in this section.

Another concern pertains to the emotional wellbeing of children. EPs expressed concern that a child's self confidence may suffer if placed in a situation where other's functioning in some area is noticeably more advanced than their own. Participant 2 notes her observations with regard to this.

P2: The ones that are in special classes, you know the ones that are not academically uh, achieving. The way I've seen people, (...) looking after those little ones. Um uh, to see them grow and see their self-confidence blossom , so I'd also say 'no', don't put them in a, they'd just get lost in a bigger class.

Perhaps related to this concern is that integration may prove difficult where many individuals are not understanding or accepting where disabilities /difficulties are concerned. This could impact the child's emotional wellbeing as well as the degree of support received in education. Participant 4 expresses concern in this regard.

P4: I think that these kiddies are prejudiced against they're not really really given an environment that understands or actually accommodates their learning (...) historically people are kind of massively fearful and reluctant and I understand that.

As mentioned above, contextual issues impact the plausibility of inclusive education in the minds of many EPs. In the first instance, a shortage of resources inhibits the successful implementation of inclusive education. According to EPs the lack of financial resources impacts on provision of infrastructure and teaching tools. In addition, there is a shortage of human resources to carry out inclusion, which is viewed as highly problematic. Participant 5 notes this difficulty using the example of remedial units currently available to children.

P5: there's so few facilities, I mean, remedial units, there are are far, far far more kids than there are remedial, places in remedial units.

Finally, capacity is raised as an issue. EPs question whether or not schools and indeed educators possess the skills and knowledge necessary to deal with the special needs of learners. Related to this are the similar difficulties associated with training and creating capacity in such educators. Participant 6 notes her opinion regarding the cause underlying less than optimal inclusion.

P6: Children have been absorbed, and they've been accommodated, whether it's been optimally? Ya (Int: that's another question) It's another question.

Int: What would you say prevents them being handled optimally in those schools?

P6: Lack of capacity and lack of knowledge on the part of educators.

For the reasons cited above, the majority of EPs are concerned on some level about the implementation of inclusive education.

4.8 Tensions around categorisation

When considering the role of EPs in any context, one must take into account the scope of practice stipulated by the specific governing body for EPs. This issue is particularly pertinent in South Africa, where scope of practice is not rigid in its boundary setting. This is an issue which concerns many EPs it would seem. It became apparent that there are a number of tensions around the categorisation of EPs and how this affects the work they do. As Participant 1 points out, distinctions between categories are difficult.

P1: I've always been uncomfortable with this, not artificial but definite, differentiation between educational psychology and counselling.

4.8.1 The nature of the work

The first concern regarding categorisation relates to the nature of psychological work and in particular, work with children. The complex nature of psychological practice implies that it is difficult to distinctly separate the work of EPs from other professional psychology categories. The most noteworthy example of such complexity pertains to children experiencing educational difficulties who present for assessments with EPs. In most instances, EPs assess for emotional indicators as well as intellectual and report that frequently, the basis of an educational problem is in fact an emotional one. In such instances, many EPs will engage in some form of psychotherapy with the child. Participant 5 notes this type of cross over.

P5: a large portion of that is assessment work its when a child is not coping, um, ja I hesitate because obviously there's sometimes other stuff that comes up. (...)Yes he has concentration problems, but he actually had huge anxiety problems, concentration in this case I think is related to anxiety.

Although this is not regarded as inappropriate in the work of an EP, a sense of guilt around this was noted from some EPs, suggesting that they were concerned that such practice was not regarded as falling within the role of an EP.

Of more concern to the EPs interviewed was the fact that assessments conducted with children often reveal emotional difficulties with the parents of the child. While some consider it their role to refer the parent for assistance, others will engage in psychotherapy with the parents themselves, a role not perceived as strictly falling within their scope of practice. Participant 8 reveals this phenomenon in her practice.

P8: I've got mom of a child who I assessed and um she's got a lot of issues that she wants to work through so we're doing hypnotherapy with her.

While parenting skills sessions are regarded by EPs as appropriate to their scope of practice, again, a sense of guilt was conveyed where it seems that EPs feel that although they engage in such work due to the process and revelations of assessments, that it should not necessarily make up part of the role of an EP.

In a similar vein, it seems that their experience is such that, the process of psychological intervention is one that shifts naturally with time. For this reason, EPs suggest in their descriptions that work that begins as an appropriate task for EPs, will shift to work that they imply is perhaps not. Participant 8 revealed this in describing that her adult client who was referred for assistance with study skills soon revealed emotional difficulties which she assisted him with. By emphasising that she takes adults into her practice with study related difficulties, she implies that other practice is inappropriate. However, she at times feels compelled to and interested in following up with such cases in psychotherapy.

P8: ... and then I have a couple of adults, but they are related to studies. So I've got a student who's who's coming, he initially came for study methods and now its become more of psychotherapy.

It can be seen that EPs regard the nature of psychological work as flexible and ever changing, resulting in the necessity to at times work with clients and difficulties which perhaps fall outside of the official scope of practice set out. This has been some of the complication of defining a scope pf practice for EPs.

4.8.2 Professional identity

There are a number of issues impacting the professional identity of EPs and the subsequent career choices made by them. Of initial importance is the identity of EPs as perceived by the public, including professionals in other psychological, educational and medical fields. It was alluded to on a number of occasions that educational psychology is considered to be less important and less prestigious than other categories, particularly clinical psychology.

Participant 4 expresses this notion vehemently.

P4: The way training is structured that somehow ed psychs don't get some, there's something about an ed psych that kind of seems to be an (also-ran) type of category. So that for me is a fundamental problem, there's no sense of kind of real sort of ownership and passion and pride.

It would appear that in part the result of such perceptions in others is the perception in EPs that in fact the work they do is of a lower calibre and of less importance than other psychological work. This results in notions that assessment is not real psychology as noted in the excerpt below.

P4: Educational psychologists I think quite often, (...) live with this constant kind of call to say "you're not really, you haven't really qualified yet because you only do", for arguments sake, "assessments and liaising with the school, its not like real psychology". And to my mind that's just you know, I mean it doesn't make sense really, because its just perception.

As he points out below, this results in a great emotional upset to EPs and particularly their own professional identity.

P4: So then you know so an ed psychs gotta to a little bit of a kind of emotional flick flack. You've gotta kind of take that knock on the chin, and then you've gotta say ok ok, dust myself off but I'm still going to be proud to be ed psych

The result it would seem is the distancing of EPs from their category. Participant 4 explains why EPs will rather simply call themselves 'Psychologists' in many instances.

P4: I think that educational psychologists spend a lot of their time trying not to be educational psychologists. They don't really own that kind of category. Somehow they're kind of embarrassed about it.

Perhaps for this reason, EPs interviewed frequently seemed to justify their categorisation as well as their practice to the interviewer as if attempting to persuade regarding its importance.

Participant 1 illustrated this justification, talking about his EP training.

P1: It was my first choice, I wasn't one of these people who wanted to go and do (something else) and obviously didn't get in, I wanted to do educational.

Finally, the notion of professional identity is complicated somewhat by the simple fact that EPs too have areas of personal interest, which inform their career decisions and the content of their practice. Participant 4 for example chooses the kind of role he will fulfil quite specifically.

P4: I like to bypass um, some of the more kind of traditional assessments that a psychologist would do. (...) If I felt like I understood the problem a little bit, I would refer them on to one of my colleagues who does those assessments. (...) I would definitely listen to information from from that quarter (...) And I will try to respond to that. (...) I just don't really want to do it myself, I have other interests.

It is important to note that in many instances, such work may extend beyond the work, which falls strictly within the EP scope of practice. This raises questions around how flexible the scope of practice can or should be in order to allow for choices based upon personal interest. As noted previously, referral to other psychologists is important in the work of an EP. However, it is noted by participants that it should be the responsibility of the particular EP to discern what he or she can competently deal with and to make the conscious choice to refer to other practitioners where they cannot handle a certain referral question.

P4: I think that's where ed psychs have to take it on the chin and say, be brave enough to say, "that isn't my work, I can step into new clothes and be a clinical psychologist for this hour, but I'm not an educational psychologist right now" (...)Or being able, or being brave enough to say Yes to some role and No to others.

4.8.3. Career opportunities

A final point to note pertains to the opportunities available to EPs. As a result of perceptions and assumptions made about EPs, in addition to provision made by organisation for the utilisation of EPs, evidence suggests that EPs do not perceive it to be easy to find a niche as an EP.

P4: there are so few openings for a young educational psychologist to imagine herself in a future, exciting, dynamic role as an educational psychologist. (...)So she'll re-invent herself. She'll say, well I'm gonna go and do the next hypnotherapy course, and I'm gonna come closer and closer to being a clinical psychologist.

For this reason, as mentioned previously, EPs are left to 'make it up' for themselves, thus creating their own work environment and repertoire of practice. The lack of formal job opportunities complicates sticking to the scope of practice as well as defining oneself as an EP.

It can be seen that issues around categorisation are salient and resonate strongly within the EP community. Not only do these issues inform and influence the role of EPs but they also result in somewhat distressing emotions in EPs.

4.9 Tensions around social responsibility

During the data collection process it was noted that EPs felt a burden of responsibility as practitioners. In addition, it was noted that EPs felt that it was expected of them both by the interviewer and society to take responsibility for making a difference and assisting the disadvantaged. This was noted in a number of instances and ways of fulfilling such responsibilities were noted. In addition however, limitations to achieving high standards of humanitarian work were also noted.

4.9.1 Desire to make a difference

In describing their work, it was clear that EPs felt the need to make some kind of difference in the lives of those individuals they work with. Not only was this a goal in their work, but in some instances it was apparent that this need in fact steered their career choices. Participant 5 expresses this need.

P5: I enjoy working in the more privileged schools, because (laughs) because you can see results. You can actually see a person that it is being helped, but I mean, that's not, that's helleva elitist, that's not what we should be doing.

Indeed, Participant 5 illustrates another dimension of the imperative to make a difference. In her final comment she alludes to the idea that personal and public expectations of EPs is to make a difference.

However, with feeling responsible for make a difference is the fact that in many instances decisions made to initiate such change, in fact carry a lot of weight. This is a vast responsibility, which weighs on the minds of EPs.

P6: you know that I wasn't arbitrarily making, making decisions about children's lives that weren't necessarily correct.

Int: Cause that's a big responsibility.

P6: It's a huge responsibility.

4.9.2 Helping the disadvantaged

Linked to the desire to make a difference is the fact that in South Africa particularly, many people are disadvantaged. The pull for EPs to make a difference and serve such disadvantaged is perceived as an imperative by many. Participant 5's comments about what EPs 'should be doing' begins to illustrate that certain expectations regarding who requires assistance exist. Participant 7 expresses this imperative quite clearly.

P7: I volunteer my services, not volunteer my services, but it is free of charge basically. They're not charged for it. (...) Which I do because I feel that is my way of just giving back to the community. Obviously being a private practitioner you can't see everybody and you can't reach everybody and I think that's my source of frustration.

This is an imperative which initiates various attempts and strategies in intervening with such individuals.

4.9.3 Efforts to help

It would seem that two strategies are employed to serve the needs of the disadvantaged. In the first instance, some EPs engage in work mobilising resources for various communities or schools. In this way, communities and groups are empowered by the effort of the EP.

Participant 1 explains how his organisation reaches out to disadvantaged communities.

P1: The detail about (organisation) and really is essentially an attempt to harness the resources of the business sector for the benefit of the township um.. communities.

Alternatively, EPs assist on an individual or family level. With private sessions with an EP costing a great deal, many EPs operate on a sliding scale, charging clients an amount which they feel appropriate given their socio-economic status. Participant 8 gives an example of one way in which rates are adjusted to suit the needs of the individual seeking assistance.

P8: I work on a system where, um, we charge, the cheapest rates that we can for the assessment we sometimes even charging for an assessment up to 60% of what medical aids will pay, so that if the parent needs help afterwards, then the funding is there

While these strategies are considered to be effective, EPs do express concerns regarding the limitations of engaging in such work.

4.9.4 Limitations

The primary limitation pertains to the financial needs of the EP. It was noted in many instances that in both forms of assistance mentioned above, one is limited based on ones own financial constraints. Participant 5 expresses this concern when talking about work in a disadvantaged community.

P5: To be quite honest, if you were going to go and work in that system, you'd have to be either financially very um, stable yourself or be completely and absolutely dedicated to the point of that's your life. Because if you're going to make a profession out of it, then its quite difficult without the infrastructure.

Int: So basically you're not going to make any money? For yourself.

P5: (laughs) ja

This means that the capacity for an EP to assist the disadvantage is limited depending on individual needs.

4.10 Implications for training

Given the findings set out above, one must note the implications for training of EPs. While EPs identified aspects of their training, which were useful, they also noted gaps in their training, citing matters which would have been useful to learn at an early stage. In addition however, they imply in their discussion, the fluid, flexible and ongoing nature of 'training'. These issues will be discussed briefly.

Useful aspects

A number of useful components in EPs' training were noted. Although some of these were technical and/or theoretical, EPs indicated that practical experience is of primary importance during the training years. Although this was agreed upon by many, Participant 7 expressed this point specifically.

P7: I think exposure and practical exposure is of extreme importance, because reality is so different from working through a text book and through idealistic situations.

Supervision of such practice is vital in optimising practical experience. Participant 8 was adamant regarding this point.

P8: Having that supervision was amazing. That was probably the most, the best thing they could have sent us for.

In terms of technical or theoretical training, EPs seem to value eclectic approaches to training, allowing them the flexibility to decide on interventions based upon the specific client as well as their own preferred styles. Participant 8 particularly valued this in her training.

P8: But the training itself was very eclectic and I think that was really good. They didn't have one school of thought, they didn't have one certain therapeutic method, it's it's, it was really personality-wise.

Gaps in training

While various EPs had different training experiences, some themes regarding gaps in training in a South African context arose. The first and most basic issue pertains to language. It was felt, given the challenge of language barriers in practice that some training in *isiZulu* should be included for EPs. Participant 1 would have liked training in *isiZulu*.

P1: I think that masters training uh um... should have a Zulu component, just to speak conversational Zulu would be so helpful.

Related to this is the difficulty of cross-cultural practice. Where South African contexts differ a great deal, it was felt that experience, or at least exposure to rural South African schools would be a beneficial inclusion in the training of EPs. This is noted particularly when comparing the abilities of EPs who due to their own background, have exposure to such contexts. This need was expressed by Participant 1 who felt exposure to a rural school setting would add value to the training of EPs.

P1: If I were designing the course to do what I'm doing then it would involve obviously a lot more just squatting on a primary school floor in Imbali, taking it in, to feel what its like, to come up with some response to it, see I don't think there's enough experience.

On a broader level, EPs agreed that exposure to the school environment, and an understanding of the processes that occur in schools is vital to optimising the practice of EPs. Being accessible to schools and educators requires some empathy to the situation they are in. Participant 3 expresses the need to understand schools and importantly the need to be flexible depending on the particular school environment. This implies the need for exposure to the school setting during EP training.

P3: You would need real confidence, so you'd need familiarity with with the kind of dynamics that happen. We all have experience, our own experiences at school, sometimes they're misleading, you know set of perceptions based on that. We found from one school to another, the whole culture was different. So you'd have to treat this headmistress differently to that headmaster.

Due to the shift in intervention strategies in schools, from individual assistance to group capacity building, the need for group facilitation skills has become important. The need for this kind of work has been explained above, while Participant 3 notes the importance for training in this skill.

P3: So it wasn't just the children, it was the systems, it was the staff dynamic, it was even ultimately the kind of leadership style in the school and those kinds of things. So, if it was those things that you really wanted to make a contribution to, you would need this stuff around being able to facilitate conversations and discussions.

Development as training

A final note regarding training indicates that not all the skills required of EPs can be taught or learnt. In addition, training is never complete as an EP, nor is it the same for all practitioners

In the first instance, EPs noted the need for flexibility in working with individual clients and groups. Although this is a skill that perhaps can be practiced, it is one which cannot be learnt. Participant 6 however, described its importance when discussing the benefit of her culturally varied up-bringing.

P6: And you count your successes differently and I think changing that perspective is quite rewarding for me.

Int: So it sound like sort of flexibility and insight and experience are quite important things for a psychologist to have, and aren't necessarily things you can teach.

P6: Absolutely.

In a similar vein, participants noted the importance of personal maturity and life experience in their work. Again, it is clear to see that this is not a quality that can be learnt, or even practiced. Participant 8 however, felt it an important quality in the development of an EP.

P8: I was a lot more mature when I went into the whole therapy thing. And having a son made a big difference, being able to say to a parent, "oh, I went through those sleepless nights too," you know, "I went through those, worrying whether he was developing properly".

Int: So it sounds like, an important part of the "training" if you can call it that is sort of just maturing and gaining insight and experience yourself.

P8: Yes, ja, definitely

Finally, it was noted that training is never complete. With continuous professional development points, as well as individual interest, EPs frequently attend courses and training workshops on various topics. As a result, training continues and one's repertoire of skills and knowledge diversifies with time, frequently in different directions to one's colleagues. Participant 8 notes the value of such extra training after completing the qualifying training.

P2: But then you're then you're out in the field and you just have to do it by yourself, you can go on courses and ja.

4.11 Summary

The role filled by EPs in the Pietermaritzburg area is a complex one. The type of work engaged in varies a great deal both between EPs and within the practice of individuals. In addition, the type of client dealt with varies a great deal. It would seem that the role of EPs is greatly influenced by a number of factors. Tensions around education policy, categorisation and responsibility inform the work of many practitioners. In addition, challenges facing both education and educational psychology appear to shape the role of such EPs. Other contextual issues related to the social-political climate in addition to theoretical construct issues appear to inform the practice of EPs. In addition personal factors such as finance and individual preference play a role in informing practice. The following section will discuss the results

and resultant themes in relation to the literature raised earlier in this document utilising a model drawn from the findings depicting the factors informing the role of EPs in addition to focussing on how changes in these factors have in recent years, shifted these roles.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, among other things, provides a detailed description of the various different roles and functions EP's in the Pietermaritzburg area described themselves as playing. It would seem that though some functions fall within the bounds of what various literature sources and indeed the HPCSA describe as the definition and role of EP, many roles carried out are not strictly within this scope of practice. As noted in Chapter 2, EPs are to concern themselves with children and adolescents (Health Professional Council of South Africa, no date), while other sources specify a focus on education and difficulties within this area of the child or adult's life (Hagstrom et al., 2007). With divergence into adult psychotherapy, and interventions at an organisational level for example, one must consider how then this unexpected role of the EP emerges. Following this, one can explore how shifts in context have contributed to the emergent roles of EPs.

The present study has found that there are a number of factors influencing the practice or role of EPs within the Pietermaritzburg context. However, the interplay between such factors and the resultant role of EPs is not a direct or linear relationship. The interrelationship between factors is complex and results in the emergence of varied roles for EPs. It is also interesting to note that the factors influencing the role of the EP have themselves shifted with the South African context. Such shifts, though necessary, result in shifts in practice and therefore also raise questions around EP training.

This chapter will first explore these interactions and the ways in which contextual shifts have influenced shifts in practice. It will also attempt to illustrate the means by which the resultant

role of the EP is mediated using Vygotsky's idea of socio-cultural learning (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). Conflicts occurring in this mediating process will be explored.

Finally, a section will be devoted to pointing out the strengths and challenges with this study, highlighting areas in which this research could be expanded.

5.2 The roles of EPs

Based on their own experience in practice and observations of shifts in various contexts, what should be the role of EPs (as perceived by participants) is outlined below. A primary focus on individual work is emphasised by many practitioners. Individual assessment and intervention (be it educational or psychotherapeutic) is noted as an important role to be played by EPs. Both participants and various authors agree that a focus on emotional (Greenway, 2005), social (Kakkad, 2005), behavioural (Rees et al., 2003), educational (Donald et al., 2002; Elliott, 2000; Rees et al., 2003) and career (McCombs, 1991) difficulties occurs within this scope of work. This is particularly with school age children or adults involved in study of some sort. It must be noted that, although focus is given to the individual client, intervention is perceived to occur at any number of systemic levels around this individual. Thus, work can extend to the family, parents or educators involved, as noted by Engelbrecht et al. (2002). Finally, referral sources for related difficulties are perceived to be of importance, with the EP playing a case management role. It must be noted that different participants placed importance on dealing with different groups of individuals along socio-economic lines. In this way, the issue of social responsibility was raised with some participants noting the importance of intervention with 'disadvantaged' individuals.

As part of interventions often including systems surrounding the individual, support services

are seen to make up the role of the EP. Support can be provided to families of an index patient. More importantly however, participants perceive the role of the EP in the school environment as essential. In this role, skills, knowledge and support can be provided where children with difficulties are present. This is aimed at building capacity in educators to be able to support a child in that context. Knowledge and skills can also be provided to staff, where they may be limited or lacking in specialisation. This is a role for EP's supported by Engelbrecht et al. (2002).

Finally, participants spoke of advocacy as essential. Advocacy involves EPs in a role where research is conducted and interventions or policy implemented to address the systemic difficulties found in schools. Pressley (2005) notes that EPs' role in research in educational and related issues is important. This places emphasis on the role of EPs as experts, with scientific-practitioner (Hagstrom et al., 2007) skills in both research as well as the action pertaining to its findings. As Hagstrom et al. (2007) note, it is vital that EPs can engage in research and its findings in order to adapt their own methods of practice and indeed theory pertaining to best practice.

Based on these perceived roles, it is useful to consider how they have emerged.

5.3 A framework for understanding the emergence of a role for EPs

As noted by Vygotsky (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992), learning and development occur within a social context, mediated by a relational interaction. Thus, human functioning is the result of an interaction between the individual and the context within which they find themselves (Wertsch, 1984). In a similar manner, the role of EPs is one which is informed by the mediated interaction between the individual EP and their sociohistorical practice and training

context. Such a model for this understanding can be seen to involve a bidirectional interaction between factors associated with the individual, and factors related to the context in which they work.

There are a number of factors, outlined in Chapter 4, which are associated with the individual and their context. Individual issues relate to individual preferences, financial issues and professional identity. Contextual issues relate to: the theoretical context, the South African context, the educational policy context, the HPCSA context and the training context. Not only do individual factors interact with contextual factors, but a vast number of interactions occur within individual and within contextual factors too. The result in a complex set of interactions which ultimately results in the emergence of what the individual EP deems an appropriate role for their practice. This model described above can be represented pictorially as seen in figure 1 below.

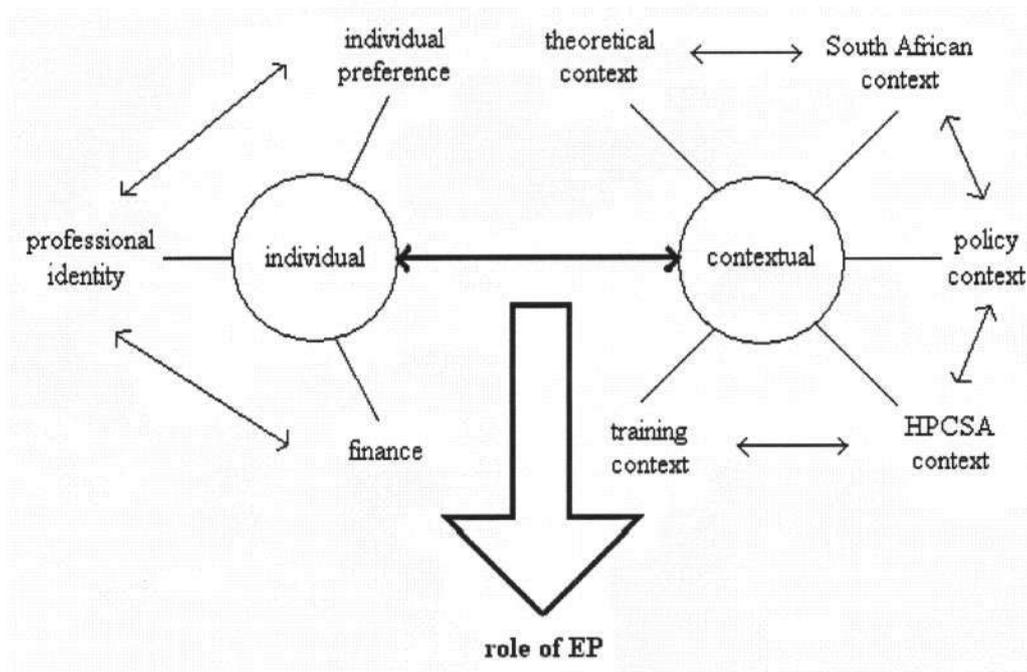


Figure 1: A model describing the emergence of the role of EPs in the Pietermaritzburg area

It must be noted that the degree to which each factor impacts the individual EP varies a great deal. Although all factors illustrated above emerged as themes in the data, different EPs placed differing emphasis on each. With this in mind however, it is useful to unpack first the individual factors and then the contextual factors contributing to the emergence of the perceived role of EPs.

5.3.1 Individual factors

Individual preference

The primary individual factor influencing the role of EPs is their particular preference for different kinds of work. Clearly an initial preference lead most EPs down this particular professional path, however, other factors will have contributed to role choices within the profession. As noted by various authors, the range of possible tasks for EPs is vast

(Engelbrecht et al., 2002; German et al., 2000; Nugent et al., 1999; Pressley, 2005; Rees et al., 2003). Many EPs indicate an interest in traditional psychological roles where psychotherapy and assessment are concerned. However, their actual roles and practice are far more varied including, for example, community interventions, capacity building. This is due the fact that this is mediated by other individual and contextual factors. There is, in addition, an interaction with training in South Africa. Often psychological training in South Africa although very thorough is still rather generalist, as training aims to address such wide need with limited resources.

Professional identity

Of importance when considering individual preference is the development of professional identity in EPs. As noted, Webster et al., (2000) attribute difficulties in this development to a lack of professional camaraderie among EPs, which manifests most significantly in the support provided to training EPs. However, adding to this, as discovered in this study, is the diminutive status of EPs as perceived by psychology professionals. EPs, in the Pietermaritzburg context, perceive that the public and other professionals consider educational psychology a second rate profession, therefore the practice of tasks strictly associated with educational psychology is carried out with some degree of embarrassment. This perhaps leads to the inclusion of other work with a higher profile into their practice. Contributing to this need is the perception that there are few job opportunities available to EPs for the kinds of work that they are trained for. This is confirmed by Richter et al.'s (1998) study which noted the limited availability of educational psychology jobs being offered. It can be seen that the interaction between a lack of job opportunities as well as a poorly developed professional identity, characterised in some cases by a degree of shame, can result in divergent paths of practice and a move to a more generalist professional identity.

This could operate in alignment with personal interests, but alternatively could go against them, depending on the need of the individual EP to develop a professional identity in a certain way.

Social responsibility

An aspect of the professional identity of EPs as evidenced in this research is that of social responsibility. This is in line with the arguments that psychologists carry a great deal of social responsibility in their position to provide assistance to the less fortunate (Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). Participants showed that there is a notion that as an EP, there is an imperative to provide a service to communities, particularly those who are disadvantaged in some way. It would seem that this disadvantage usually refers to the effects of poverty on individuals and the education system. This imperative seems to be amplified for those in educational psychology because there is such need in South Africa's educational services. This appears to be a factor taken into account where the career decisions of EPs is concerned. However, the notion of social responsibility is moderated by factors related to the individual. One's personal preference for such work is important in weighting the degree to which social responsibility will affect one's ultimate role choices. In addition however, participants indicated that the issue of finance is another factor, impeding the weight carried by social responsibility in mediating the role of EPs, as discussed in the next section.

Economic resources

In the South African context it is important to note the issue of finances. It is widely acknowledged that one of the biggest difficulties facing the country, its education system and most importantly its children is a lack of resources (van der Riet et al., 2006). Due to limited resources (Chisholm, 2005), there is not a lot of money available for people working in

educational services directly. It is therefore unsurprising that the experience of EPs is that many individuals and indeed organisations requiring assistance cannot afford the fees charged by EPs. With such a challenge to the practice desired by EPs, financial constraints result in alterations to their roles. In the first instance, fees are frequently reduced by EPs. Alternatively, the intensive, consultative work required in South African education (Engelbrecht et al., 2002), cannot be undertaken by EPs on a full time basis as it is not financially viable. This then contributes to the emergence of the role played by EPs.

It is clear that each of these four factors influence an EPs choice of role. However, as illustrated, they do not stand in isolation from one another when influencing an emergent role. Rather they interact with one another, thus moderating the ultimate affect that individual factors will have on the outcome.

5.3.2 Contextual Factors

Various contextual factors feature in the ongoing process of role definition where EPs are concerned. However, these are not static. Thus, when considering influencing factors for EPs it is useful to note not only the current context but how it has shifted in recent years.

South African context

As noted in Chapter 2, psychology is necessarily embedded within a national context (Vogelman et al., 1992). Depending upon the specific context serviced by EPs, their role will vary. It is in the South African context that perhaps the most fundamental shift affecting EPs is seen. With the integration of race groups (Chisholm & Kgobe, 1993), issues of language and culture have emerged as affecting EPs. With this integration, legislation now enables professionals to deal more with a varied demographic of learners. Not only this, but as

indicated, it is found that there is a greater imperative to do so. This is particularly pertinent given the inequalities of South Africa's history which pervade today (Motala & Pampallis, 2002). This particular contextual shift has resulted in EPs engaging in work related to resource building in order to address financial inequalities affecting learners and, indeed, education. In addition, capacity building is a support service more frequently offered in the new context. While this relates to theoretical and policy shifts in South Africa, it cannot be denied that the need to rectify the inequalities in education and training as a result of past injustices (Motala & Pampallis, 2002) is one strongly influencing the shift in practice where EPs are concerned.

In this newly developing context, EPs are faced with a number of issues informing their decisions regarding practice, including being a multicultural and multilingual country, with many contexts lacking in financial resources and services. With eleven official languages (Mokgalane et al., 1996) the challenge to EPs within this context is to appropriately deal with clients who speak a language other than their own as a mother-tongue. It is clear that such a limitation to practice will influence decisions regarding the types of clients seen by specific EPs in addition to the kind of work, assessment tools and interventions they can engage such clients in. A related issue pertains to the varied 'cultures' present in South Africa (Mokgalane et al., 1996). As noted in Chapter 4, differing cultures are at times experienced as a challenge by practitioners in terms of considerations for assessment as well as considerate practice. This is likely to inform decisions regarding which groups of people to work with.

It is important to note that limited resources is a difficulty experienced in South Africa (van der Riet et al., 2006). As noted in section 5.2.1 this difficulty and challenge to practice, as it is perceived by participants in this study, plays an important part in steering the role of EPs in

this context. Engelbrecht et al. (2002) note that given the difficulties in the South African context, work with communities and organisations is important in bringing about change. This is a feature of the South African context influencing EPs to take on the role of arranging community interventions with regard to training as well as resources.

Theoretical context

Theoretical shifts in psychology in general have resulted in changes to psychological practice in order to align with current best practice (Westen et al., 2004). Participants all indicated that work solely with an individual is insufficient, particularly when dealing with childhood difficulties. While there still is a focus on the individual with EPs engaging in psychotherapy and other forms of intervention such as occupational therapy, a systemic focus is emerging as important. According to experienced participants this is a shift that has occurred over the last two decades. It would seem that this aligns with the more systemic or social notions of psychological difficulties as presented by Bronfenbrenner (Donald et al., 2002; Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000) and Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch & Kanner, 1992). With such a shift towards the understanding of a social construction of knowledge and mediated cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978), it is also unsurprising to note a shift toward more dynamic assessment techniques (Feuerstein et al., 1979). In accordance with such theories, EPs will not only assess the child but will take note of their family system in addition to school related factors. Following this, while some intervention is likely to occur with the child, an important part of the process now includes consultation with the child's parents, either in relation to parenting skills or emotional support for themselves. Another avenue of intervention might occur within the child's school or community. It is important to note that it is such theoretical shift that has influenced educational policy which in turn has

initiated clearer shifts in the role of EPs.

Educational policy context

Perhaps in part linked to the theoretical stance of psychology in the country is the context of education. With EPs in most instances directly servicing education or its learners, the policy around education is important. Shifts in policy around education are noted in this document both by participants and in a review of recent literature and policy documents concerning education in South Africa. Ultimately, these shifts in policy have resulted in one primary change in the role of EPs. Inclusive education as outlined in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) emphasises the inclusion of special needs learners in mainstream schools. With EPs in place to mediate such inclusion and assist in district support teams it is clear that the role of EPs is quite clearly defined as one of collaborative-consultant (Engelbrecht, 2004; Gillies, 2000; Watkins and Hill, 2000). With White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) emphasising the district support team model, EPs are moving towards playing a role whereby intervention is undertaken with educators and schools in an effort to train, educate and provide support around various learning and emotional difficulties seen in their learners. Indeed, EPs perceive their role to be in managing such multi-disciplinary teams and consulting with professional directly involved in children's education.

In addition, as Jansen (1999b) notes, inclusive education as presented in Curriculum 2005 (Greenstein, 1997) requires a vast conceptual leap from traditional learning theory and training in new methods. Such assistance of educators is another, smaller area where education by EPs is playing a role. It can be seen that the move away from an individual medical model style work towards such community or support based interventions has been prompted by education policy which advocates for intervention occurring at the level of the

school or even community (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001).

HPCSA context

Another factor one must note is the scope of practice as stipulated by the HPCSA (no date). With this stating the role of EPs as relating to children and adolescents (HPCSA, no date), the role of EP is somewhat limited. This has been perceived as unfair as the training is the same length of time as other categories. The board however is the regulating body of psychologists and therefore their rulings may result in conflict about how to define one's role. It is however worth noting at this point the finding that many EPs work outside of this bracket. This is perhaps a result of mediating factors relating to other contextual factors as well as individual choices. It is therefore appropriate at this stage to consider the nature of the interaction between individual and contextual factors in mediating the emergence of roles played by EPs in South Africa.

While the HPCSA has not finalised any changes to the scope of practice of EPs, the possibility of such shifts in scope of practice, would inevitably result in changes to the role of EPs, or perhaps the roles that EPs are permitted to continue playing. It will be with interest that any such change in HPCSA policy will be observed where EPs roles are concerned. Of importance to note however is the feeling held by many EPs that through further training differing EPs now hold differing competencies. As ongoing training is found (both in literature and data collection) to be a crucial component of the development of EPs (Webster et al., 2000), rulings made by the HPCSA's policy may need to take the issue of competency into account.

Training context

Finally, although there has been a move to more systemic approaches in training many core psychological skills are still individual focussed. For this reason, training does not necessarily suit the current theoretical context educational psychology finds itself in. Thus, it is challenging for EP's to evolve their practice in such a way as to align with theoretical stances and methods suggested by literature. For this reason, there appears to be a conflict in terms of how to shift to a form of practice in which one should be a consultant. This is particularly so where these roles are not guaranteed and one's training has prepared one for individual work. In this way, the training context has implications for decisions around role for EPs. In addition, the act of considering training calls into question the usefulness of its current form in today's context.

Summary

It can be seen, as stated in section 5.3 that the various contextual factors have for many EPs interacted with one another to result in an overall shift in practice. The combined effects of national, educational and theoretical contexts have resulted in a more systemic approach to educational psychology with the primary shift seen to have resulted in EPs taking on a more supportive role through consultation with educators and schools, with an additional emphasis on resource and capacity building, thus addressing systemic concerns around children's education. Despite this however, other factors, largely individual ones have seen the endurance of individual work with clients. Even this however has been moderated by theoretical shifts allowing for an added systemic approach to individual consultation. Ultimately a trend in practice and role has been seen, though at this point the general role of EPs is diverse and varied, as a result of the complex interaction of factors noted above.

5.3.3 Interaction

Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural learning (Wertsch & Kanner, 1992) indicates that interaction between the individual's current knowledge and that held within the social context will mediate the further learning of the individual. In a similar way as expressed above, factors related to the individual will interact with factors related to the context to mediate the direction in which the EP will take his or her career. In this way, despite personal preference, drives to create a satisfactory professional identity and feeling a need to act in the interests of society, factors pertaining to the context of the country, in addition to features of best practice and the limitations of the HPCSA scope of practice, will always influence the EPs decisions. The number of possible interactions is countless and thus far beyond the space provided in this document. However, many of these interactions are an expression of numerous conflicts which characterise the mediation of the role of EPs..

5.3.4 Conflicts in defining the role of an EP

Although precise interactions occurring between influential factors noted above are varied depending largely upon the individual EP, there are a number of core tensions which arose in the data collected for this study.

Based on authors' notions of educational psychology (Engelbrecht et al., 2002; German et al., 2000; Nugent et al., 1999; Pressley, 2005; Rees et al., 2003), it would appear that some degree of conflict exists between these notions and actual roles played by EPs. Not only does this conflict exist in theory, but it would seem that it is one that EPs are conscious of themselves, acknowledging areas of their role not strictly fitting with literature describing educational psychology. While there are many reasons for EPs to breach the confines of their recognised role (to be discussed in the following paragraphs) this tension is factored in when

EPs engage in the ongoing process of defining their role.

It was found in this study that EPs felt the weight of social or even moral responsibility where providing meaningful services to South Africa's disadvantaged communities and individuals are concerned. While such pressure is exerted by society upon EPs, it is worth acknowledging that such practitioners in a helping profession desire to act for the betterment of those who are less fortunate than most. Despite this however, the opposing pressure from another factor moderates the degree to which such activity can be engaged in. Due to the lack of resources, particularly financial in South Africa, many EPs cannot afford to focus too much attention on work with South African's poorer communities. This is a tension experienced by all EPs and one which worries them greatly.

Another core tension exists in relation to educational policy, specifically inclusive education. White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) includes EPs role in education as part of district support teams. However, it is evident in the perceptions of participants that job opportunities specifically for EPs are few. Thus, a conflict arises between the ability to fulfil the role as stipulated by government policy and the availability of jobs. This is only aggravated by financial constraints similar to those discussed above. As resources are few, the financial rewards of such posts are not particularly alluring to EPs. This is particularly pertinent in light of the seven years of training undergone by EPs in accordance with the Scientist-practitioner model (Hagstrom et al., 2007).

According to psychological theory in addition to policy and indeed the needs of the South African context, community or even school oriented intervention is required of EPs at present. However, there seems to exist somewhat of a tension between this imperative and the

individual preferences of EPs. Many EPs express an interest in individual work. However, it would seem that the requirements noted above cause EPs to move away from this preference in some aspects of their work.

A final tension exists in light of public and indeed personal perceptions regarding the professional identity of EPs. It would seem that EPs perceive that their role is deemed less significant than that of other categories. This results in a conflict between wanting to fulfil the true role (as defined by literature, policy and the HPCSA) and wishing to prove oneself as a competent valuable professional. This perception may account for the difficulty around establishing a secure identity as an EP within a specific role.

It would seem that the result of these difficult tensions and conflicts is a somewhat insecure professional identity as an EP among participants. This difficulty is perhaps confounded by the vague way in which the role of EP is set out by the HPCSA and the vast expanse of possible roles an EP could fulfil according to literature as well as the broad training received by EPs.

5.4 Training implications

An area investigated briefly during this study has been the training of EPs. Given the recent shifts in the role and practice of EPs, the question regarding training becomes a pertinent one. As noted in Chapter 4, EPs found value in some aspects of their training and yet also indicated deficits. Given the proposed roles of EPs including clinical type practice as well as research and policy related activities, it would seem that the scientist-practitioner model of training for EPs as proposed by Hagstrom et al. (2007) is appropriate. However, when considering the changing role of EPs, it is useful to reflect on the content of the 'practitioner'

portion of training. Participants in this study listed issues such as South African languages, exposure to schools and group facilitation skills as aspects required in the training of EPs. For further exploration of such ideas, a study concerning itself with the current training of EPs and the benefits and deficits therein would be a useful way forward. This study could compare findings of this study with various curricula at different institutions. It would also be of benefit to consider the ongoing training opportunities and continued professional development opportunities for EPs. Participants in this study and Webster et al. (2000) emphasise the existence and indeed importance of professional development occurring after formal training.

5.5 Limitations of this study

When considering the validity and specifically the transferability (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999) of this particular study, one must consider the context in which it was carried out, a consistent feature of qualitative research. As this study was carried out in a limited area of Pietermaritzburg, its generalisability and applicability to the South African context as a whole is not recommended without further exploration. Although a strength of this study is that it explores the interaction of various factors within a specific context, for generalisability to the larger South African context further research will need to be done. It is suggested that further development of the ideas presented could occur through the investigation of EPs in broader regions of the country of South Africa.

Another difficulty where transferability is concerned pertains to the demographic range achievable in this study. As noted in a previous section, the demographic of EPs in this region consists primarily of White people. It is perhaps accurate to say that this difficulty is the case on a national level due to the educational inequalities remaining from the past. While

Universities attempt to rectify this inequality, it would be of use to further explore perceptions of issues around the role of EPs with a greater number of practitioners across demographic diversity. In addition, few EPs work in government related posts. For these reasons, the scope of this exploratory study is limited.

5.6 Reflection on researcher role

A criterion of qualitative validity is reflexivity which pertains to observing and taking into account the influence of the researcher within the social interaction of the interview (Eagle et al., 1999). With the researcher describable as, a young, White, female training EP, it would seem that the data gleaned from participants was rich and honest. At no point is it noted in the data that participants felt uncomfortable disclosing any information as a result of the researcher's presence. Furthermore, it would seem that participants felt particularly able to be open about certain difficult issues indicating their sense that the researcher, as an EP herself would understand and perhaps even identify with their perceptions, difficulties and the tensions they experience. While the difficulties associated with the presence of a potentially judging researcher are noted in qualitative research, it would seem that in this study, the effects of this were minimal and that the characteristics of the researcher perhaps even allowed for greater openness and honesty in participants.

5.7 Recommendations for further research

5.7.1 Training of EPs

As noted above, the findings of this study call into question the issue of training where EPs are concerned. It is suggested, as above, that further research could occur in the area of EP training, both as it was in the past, as it is now and how it could be structured in the future. This study could include an analysis of present educational psychology training programmes

across the country and possibly internationally and compare these with the findings of this study and other literature regarding context and role of EPs.

5.7.2 Education and educator needs

Another area not covered by this study pertains to the needs in education and indeed the needs as perceived by educators. This study's findings indicate that a key role of EPs involves interacting closely with schools and educators in a supportive, capacity building way. Given this finding it would be useful to discover what the needs of schools and educators actually are in South Africa, and what their perception of the present role of EPs is and how it could be improved to assist them. Not only could this inform the practice and role of EPs, but it could lend to the knowledge required to accurately design training for EPs.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study has revealed a set of findings which have implications for our understanding of the role of EPs, within the South African context and more specifically Pietermaritzburg. This understanding in turn has implications for the training of EPs.

It has become evident that the emergence of a role for individual EPs occurs through a complex interaction between individual and personal factors as well as contextual factors. One can understand the way in which a role emerges by applying Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural learning to discover interactions between factors linked to the individual such as personal preference and factors associated with context such as the current policy around education. In addition, specific areas of tension which characterise this mediated interaction came to light.

Areas of conflict for EPs result from pulls toward different directions in their practice. Financial constraints compete with a need to serve disadvantaged communities. In addition, a lack of economic resources plays a role in pulling EPs away from government based educational services. Another tension around such employment is the apparent lack of job opportunities in this area. While there is an attraction to the type of work indicated by education policy and indeed literature in the area of EP practice, difficulties around public perceptions of EPs being inferior result in some movement away from this work in order to appear more like other psychological categorisations. Indeed, this acting in a role outside the perceived bounds of educational psychology in itself is a tension for EPs. Conversely however, EPs also struggle where their personal interests seem to extend beyond the stipulated scope of practice as set out by policy, literature and indeed the HPCSA. It can be

seen that grappling with the role they are to play as EPs in the South African context is an extremely complex task.

Another complicating issue is the shift seen in the South African context since apartheid. As changes occur in the various contextual factors present in the model of the emergence of a role for EPs, it is clear that indeed the role that emerges will shift. Ultimately, at present, the shift has resulted in a role characterised to a larger degree by collaborative consultancy.

Despite this major shift, it would seem that in fact, the actual role played by EPs is diverse and complex. It is important to note at this point that as change continues to happen in South Africa, so the role of EPs will continue to shift leaving EP practice dynamic in nature. Due to recent changes, EP's are currently in a place of needing to carve out a new niche for themselves.

Finally, it is useful to note there are implications for the training of EPs. Already, in this study EPs indicated areas of content that they perceived as missing from their training both during their Masters training as well as in ongoing education during their careers. Though this is an area beyond the scope of this study it is important to consider the implications of these findings where training is concerned.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

1. Please describe a typical day at work, listing your main activities.
2. Describe the setting you work in.
3. Describe the problems and/or issues that arise in your workplace or in society more generally that you are called on to address or 'work with' in the course of your working life. *Please list and then provide a description of the two most common problems or issues that you deal with in your daily practice.*

Please list *specific problems* (e.g. eating disorders not individual mental health, personnel selection, not human resource management, and HIV/AIDS) Maybe choose some more educationally related issues, i.e. Learning difficulties assessment, career assessment.
4. What do you think is the *basic cause* of each the problem/issue? *How you understand these problems.* Please think broadly and discuss these causes in detail.
5. Educational policy has affected school. How has it affected your role as an educational psychologist?
6. Describe how has the structure of the educational department and referral sources and schools affected your work.
7. How do you think educational psychologists should be working?
8. What are the constraints on that?
9. How has your training in psychological methods (for example theory, assessment techniques, research method etc.) aided your understanding of the problems and issues you face?
10. What do you do to manage these problems/issues? Please describe your actual practice.
11. What do you understand the needs of educators to be in terms of educational psychologists?

12. Do you feel that you are accessible to the range of South African educators?
13. Do you feel equipped to deal with the needs of educators in a South African context?
14. In what ways has your Masters training equipped you with the skills necessary to help you achieve the goals and manage the problems that you deal with? What aspects of your training were specifically helpful to provide you with the skills to manage these problems?
15. In retrospect, what do you think were the limitations of your training – what needs to be included in the training syllabus to better equip you to deal with the types of problems discussed above?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

My name is Tessa Pitchford (202518312@ukzn.ac.za 0845059429) and I am conducting this interview as part of my Psychology Masters Research Project at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am being supervised by Angela Hough (hougha@ukzn.ac.za 033 260 5364). The project will explore the perceived roles of educational psychologists within the South African context, particularly in the Pietermaritzburg area. The aim of these interviews is to gain an understanding of the disparity between the high perceived need for EP's and the low demand, as well as the disparity between the new role of EPs according to policy and what is necessary to carry out in practice. You are asked to participate in one interview of approximately one hour in length. We will arrange a time for the interview that is convenient for you. Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and for this reason, you may withdraw at any time.

The information attained during this interview will be recorded on audio-tape and then transcribed. After the project is completed transcripts and tape recordings will be destroyed or handed over to you as you so wish.

The interview will be confidential, with only me and my supervisor having access to the tape and transcripts. The transcripts will be anonymous, through you taking on a pseudonym (giving yourself another name), but we recognise that you might be recognised due to your work in close professional proximity to others. For this reason, once I have transcribed the interview, I will let you read it so that you can decide which parts of the transcript you wish

to be made available to the project. In this way I will negotiate the process of confidentiality with you.

The transcripts of the interview will be coded and the information gleaned from them used anonymously in the above mentioned project.

The benefits of participating in this project are:

- An opportunity for you to reflect on your role as an educational psychologist within the changing context.

Some of the disadvantages of participating in this project are:

- The process may result in you thinking about issues which you have not considered before.
- There is a risk of exposure regarding your views of the education system and your role within or in relation to it. However, this will be mediated by confidentiality at your discretion.

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

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