

# Consultation training in the UK: initial and in-service perspectives of Educational and Child Psychologists [ECPs]

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## **PART 1:**

# **Consultation training in the UK: An exploratory qualitative analysis of current pre-service teaching and learning for trainee Educational and Child Psychologists [ECPs]**

Dr. Sandra Dunsmuir & Dr. Emma-Kate Kennedy



# Objectives

- Provide background and context to initial training in consultation
- Present methodology of present study and key points emerging from thematic analysis
- Identify limitations of research and provide suggestions for future developments in this area

# Background and context

Need for an **evidence-based approach to training in consultation**

How do initial training providers integrate:

*...the best available research on teaching consultation*

*...their professional expertise about what, when and how to teach and assess consultation*

*...while accounting for the preferences and characteristics of learners?*

Current professional, legal and socio-political variables affecting training more generally in a UK context



*At end of programme, trainee educational psychologists will demonstrate:*

**4.1** knowledge and understanding of models of psychological consultation that are evidence-informed

**4.2** effective interpersonal and communication skills that enable them to consult with children, families and other professionals (e.g. effective listening, a non-judgemental stance, empathy, acting as advocate)

**4.3** competence in using consultation to respond to needs and concerns at individual, group, class and whole organisation levels

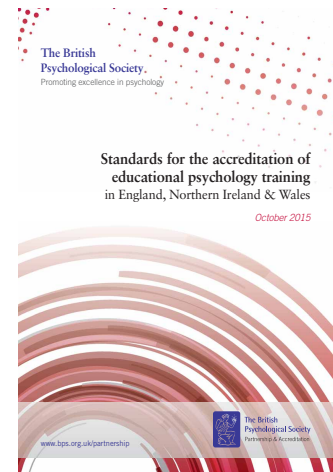
**4.4** skill in offering a clear explanation of the model and process of consultation being used

**4.5** use of a transparent, systematic problem-solving approach within the consultation process

**4.6** ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their own consultations and interventions

**4.7** skill in empowering consultees and in working collaboratively, identifying the strengths and skills of others that can be utilised

**4.8** use of evidence-informed person centred approaches to ensure that children, young people and other consultees are appropriately included within the process and are able to contribute to plans and decisions that are made for them.



# Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted to explore:

- i) theoretical models, course content and teaching practices
- ii) structure of consultation training
- iii) supervision of consultation
- iv) assessment approaches used
- v) evaluation in terms of student, consultee and client outcomes

Interviews audio-recorded/transcribed [use of Atlas.ti, qualitative data analysis software]

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)



# Participants

Participants nominated by heads of programs, who were contacted by e-mail

Post-graduate qualifications in educational psychology

Part-time professional practice

Part-time academic and professional tutor

Gender distribution: 12 female, 4 male

Age distribution:

- 3 tutors aged between 30-39 years of age
- 4 tutors aged 40-49 years
- 7 tutors aged 50-59 years
- 2 tutors aged 60+





# Themes identified

1. Definitions of consultation
2. Methods (activity theory, solution focused approaches, RADIO, motivational interviewing, appreciative enquiry, Schein-Humble enquiry, video (e.g. VERP))
3. Frameworks (problem solving models, COMOIRA, staged systematic approach, process consultation, Wagner's model, mixed frameworks)
4. Theory-practice connections (theories, theory-practice links, evidence-based/informed practice)
5. Assessment of student (formative, summative, multiple sources)
6. Development of consultation skills (processes, curriculum content, range of practice)
7. Evaluation (service delivery, consultee outcomes, client outcomes)
8. Commissions (time allocation models, traded services, statutory work)
9. Marketing/raising awareness of consultation





# Other emerging lines of enquiry

1. Lack of **shared agreement** on ‘consultation’
2. ‘**Golden thread**’ between theory, frameworks and methods/techniques, and how these are applied in ‘the age of evidence’
3. **Developmental progression** in consultation competence
4. Coherence between the **university and professional practice placement**, including the place of supervision
5. Approaches and issues in **assessment**



# Delivering consultation

*"...I think they would probably like a bit more multi-agency consultation...."*

**multi-agency consultation**

*"...writing up consultation, some services have a format for writing up consultation and that kind of varies across practice..."*

**recording**

*"...and again it's based largely on implementation science...and other organisational psychology where the consultation processes are, they are just huge...what is the most effective way to capture an organisation's beliefs and practices...."*

**consultation at the level of the organisation**

*"...we would encourage them to model that if they were working with a group of teachers in a school in that we will maybe chair the first few sessions and as time goes by we will take a lesser role...."*

**consultation to groups**

**Teachers, parents, children and young people**

**Assessment of children and young people**



# The 'how' it is taught [Methods, Frameworks & Processes]

Activity theory

solution focused approaches

RADIO

Video Enhanced Reflective Practice

Appreciative enquiry

Schein-Humble Enquiry

Motivational interviewing

problem solving models

COMOIRA

Process consultation

staged systemic approach

Wagner's model

mixed frameworks

peer supervision

interpersonal skills simulation

role play

tutor providing shaping feedback

peer review

peer mentoring

didactic teaching

Reflecting Teams



*“...so to some extent I guess it would depend on to what extent the service delivery model defines consultation as a discrete activity...[the trainees] all have a theoretical sense of what they think consultation is but it is defined in different ways...”*

*“...I sometimes think that in the time I trained I wasn't really taught consultation, so I think conceptually I know what it is in my head but I think sometimes I would find it more tricky to explain it to another person...”*

*“...we've been having a very explicit debate for the past five years among our team in terms of what our shared understanding of consultation is and how we teach it...”*

*“...and what we emphasise as well is the difference between the broad church of the definition you have given and I suppose the very specific, very clear, triadic model which is working with a child usually but once removed...”*

**definitions**









# Developmental progression (Year 1)

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Academic (4 day blocks)	<p><b>PBL 1: Educational Psychology: Practice and Context</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>PBL 2: Raising Achievement: Whole School and Community Focus</b></p> <p><b>PBL 3: Literacy Difficulties and Bilingualism in the Primary School</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>PBL 4: Reducing Social Exclusion</b></p> <p>Workshops &amp; seminars ✍️</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials Formal Progress Review meetings</p>	<p><b>PBL 5: Secondary Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>PBL 6: Promoting Inclusion: SEN and Disability Focus</b></p> <p><b>PBL 7: Children in Early Years Settings: Language and Behaviour issues</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>PBL 8: Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD): Challenging Behaviour - School and Family</b></p> <p>Workshops &amp; Seminars ✍️</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials Formal Progress Review meetings</p>	<p><b>PBL 9: Neuropsychology and Autistic Spectrum Disorders</b></p> <p><b>PBL 10: Individual Interventions</b> ✍️</p> <p>Workshops &amp; seminars</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials Formal Progress Review meetings</p>
Placement (44 days – 1 day a week)	<p><b>LA Observations and visits</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>Primary School Placement</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>English as an Additional Language (EAL) assignment</b> ✍️</p>	<p><b>CAMHS and Social Services meetings</b></p> <p><b>Shadowing Educational Psychologists</b></p> <p><b>Multi-Professional Working interviews</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>Secondary School Placement</b> ✍️</p>	<p><b>Early Years Placement</b> ✍️</p> <p><b>Visits to Special Provision</b> ✍️</p>
Research	<p>Research Methods Workshops</p>	<p>Research Methods Workshops</p> <p>Conducting systematic literature review workshops</p> <p>Conducting a meta analysis workshop</p>	<p>Thesis consultation sessions</p> <p>Research thesis tutorials</p>

# Developmental progression (Year 2)

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Academic (10 x 3 day UCL blocks)	<p>PBL 11: Dyslexia and ADHD PBL 12: Family/Community Interventions</p> <p>Workshops &amp; seminars </p> <p>Professional Development tutorials</p> <p>CBT Supervision </p> <p>Peer supervision</p>	<p>PBL 13: Tribunal, Parent Partnership and LA Provision </p> <p>PBL 14: Children &amp; Young People in Public Care</p> <p>PBL 15: Multi-agency Organisational Development Project: Promoting Psychological Well-being </p> <p>Workshops &amp; Seminars</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials</p> <p>CBT Supervision</p> <p>Peer supervision</p>	<p>PBL 16: Educational Psychology: Professional &amp; Personal Review</p> <p>Workshops &amp; seminars</p> <p>PD tutorials</p> <p>Peer supervision</p> <p>VIG Training</p>
Placement (130 days – 3 days a week)	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Review meeting (at Placement Service)</p> <p>Supervisors' Training Day</p>	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Review meetings at UCL</p> <p>Supervisors' Training Day</p>	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Review meetings at UCL</p> <p>Supervisors' Training Day</p> <p>Submit Y2 Portfolio</p>
Research	<p>Research thesis tutorials and panel presentations</p>	<p>Research thesis tutorials and panel presentations</p> <p>Meta-analysis surgery session</p>	<p>Research thesis tutorials and panel presentations</p> <p>Advanced research methods workshop</p> <p>Thesis consultation sessions</p>

# Developmental progression (Year 3)

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Academic (6 x 3 day UCL blocks)	<p>PBL trigger sessions PBL case presentations</p> <p>Workshops/ Master classes/ Innovative practice sessions </p> <p>Professional Development tutorials</p> <p>Peer supervision</p>	<p>PBL case presentations</p> <p>Workshops/ Masterclasses/ Innovative practice sessions</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials</p> <p>Peer supervision</p> <p>VIG supervision </p>	<p>Workshops/ Master classes/ Innovative practice sessions</p> <p>Professional Development tutorials</p> <p>VIG supervision </p>
Placement (130 days – 3 days a week)	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Review meetings by teleconference</p>	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Review meetings by teleconference</p>	<p>Placement tasks </p> <p>Formal Progress Reviews at UCL</p> <p>Supervisors' Training Day</p>
Research	<p>Research thesis tutorials (focus on empirical paper)</p> <p>Group research thesis tutorials (focus on Dissemination and Impact)</p>	<p>Thesis tutorials</p>	



*"...I suppose once you are in the service environment the supervisor is the next key person because you can still be in an environment where there isn't a lot of consultation going on or you can have a supervisor that's committed to it and so they can model and the trainee can shadow some good consultation..."*

*"...because we've got supervision training and especially in recent years I think a lot of supervisors have been through the doctoral programme themselves so have more knowledge and understanding and sympathy with a more reflective approach where you go into depth about the process of what's happening when the trainees go into schools..."*

*"...there is a weakness there, because it depends on how the supervisor is supervising consultation, and quite a lot of the trainees will have had possibly more training on it than the supervisors..."*

*"...there are local authorities out there who are literally wading through Education and Health Care Plans and assessment and meetings and consultation only comes in in the broadest sense, which might be when you are sitting in a room with a bunch of people and trying to go through a staged model of problem solving and trying to get some outcomes. It really is a mixed bag out there, so a central problem is the variation of opportunity to practice and that filters through..."*

*“...we also do an interpersonal skills and consultation simulation... they each have different competencies which we hope to see addressed and then in between each station the person would give them some formative feedback...”*

*“...what we do encourage them to do is to make use of peer assessment where as dyads they use this...”*

*“...as we do with every skill on the course really, it’s a self-evaluative checklist to start with, which the trainee completes and then discusses with their supervisor on placement and then brings it in to the tutor. And that’s formative in that it happens several times over Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3...”*

*“...in terms of demonstrating knowledge we have two assessed products, one is writing up an initial consultation which the trainee observes from a theoretical perspective...”*

*“...it would be basically, on placement, the feedback that we receive from the supervisors as to the progress they are making, the skills they are acquiring and whether or not they have been deemed to have passed the requirements for that placement...”*

*“...theoretically, epistemologically it relates to what I said [before]...it’s not about weighing and measuring people. We expect people to be able to demonstrate levels of proficiency, we expect qualitatively to see people thinking and their practice develops and we do. And we appreciate that and we work with them to appreciate how they do change. But we don’t have any systematic way of measuring their progression...”*

## assessing consultation competence





Promoting conceptual clarity between psychological theory, frameworks, models and approaches/techniques

Investigations of processes for teaching and effectiveness in the development of consultation competence and capability

The role of professional associations in promoting frameworks to support best practice



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## **PART 2:**

# **Consultation training in the UK: in-service training themes and issues**

## **Questionnaire Survey Initial Outcomes**

Dr. Jeremy Monsen



# Objectives

Provide a background and context to a recent England wide Questionnaire Survey of practicing EPs views on aspects of 'consultative working practices' (2016)

Present an overview of the methodology used and key points emerging from an initial thematic analysis of responses.

Identify limitations of the current study and provide suggestions for future developments in this area



# Background and Context

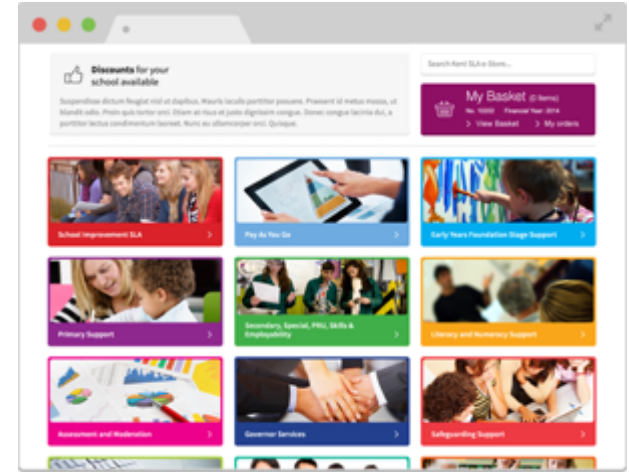
1990s: consultation standard model of EP service delivery

2008+: increasingly 'traded models' of EP deployment

Concern: robustness/applicability of 'consultation' in a business-type environment

In addition:

- no agreed definition or understanding of what consultation is
- confusion for EPs, clients and stakeholders





# Methodology

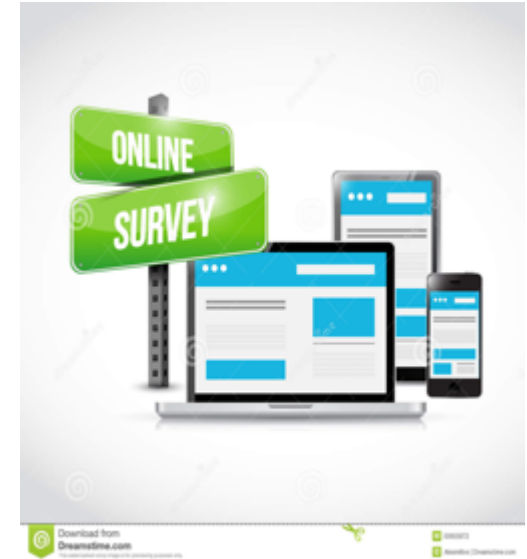
Ethics approval part of wider study  
(Part 1 & 2)

Semi-structured on-line questionnaire survey  
developed and piloted

21 main questions (open, closed, scaling  
options, demographic details)

Informed by reviews of the literature

On-line responses coded, initial content analysis and thematic analysis



# Participants

54 in total

Represented 43 distinct Educational Psychology services across England

8 (15%) male; 46 (85%) female; 3 (5%) did not specify

45 (85%) reported that their initial training course covered consultation, 8 (15%) reported that it did not

53 (98%) reported using a consultative model to inform their practice



# Headline Themes identified

A lack of a clearly defined and agreed **definition** of what ‘consultation’ actually means

*“...the definition does not do justice to the complexity of the task of consultation...”*

Confusion between **levels of analysis:**

*“...I don't think I'm thinking theories and frameworks much in consultation although I can see that there is a place for that with some EPs...”*

- Theory
- Techniques/Strategies (e.g., Solution Focused Therapy)
- Models (e.g., Interviewing skills, Attachment Theory)
- Overarching Executive Frameworks (e.g., Problem Analysis)



A tendency to go for a **default ‘eclectic’** position

Confusion over what a **traded** or business model is and how consultation can be creatively used

Variable experience of **practice supervision** to support a critical appraisal of actions

*“...I wish we did not have to do this. By being bought in by the school, they feel they are buying a product and the school, by definition, becomes the client. This messes with our independence...”*

*“...Supervision has changed over the years and now, seems to be less about psychological supervision and more a chance to catch up on admin etc...[I] hope that the younger EPs are not missing out on too much...”*



# Suggested Future Directions



Complete full analysis of questionnaire survey data

Setting up a National Working Party of EPs to explore:

- definitions of consultation
- enhancing clarity around psychological theory, frameworks, models and approaches/techniques
- promoting the role of critical supervision and Continuing Professional Practice
- define and clarify what a 'traded' context is and the role of consultation within this



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