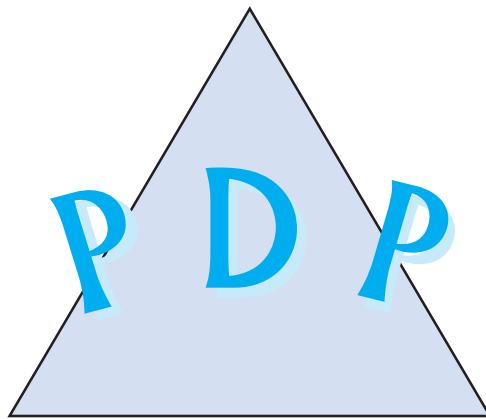


1996-1997



Professional Development Programme  
for Educational Psychologists in Scotland

**COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT ISSUES**

# **COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT : ISSUES IN CONTEXT AND PRACTICE**

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## **FOREWORD**

**Charles Walker, PDP Co-ordinator**

The concept of assessment was an important focus for one group of project workers who took part in the first cycle of the PDP in 1995/96. The papers produced by the group covered a wide range of examples of empirical work, often in contexts of collaboration with other professionals (PDP, 1996). The notion of collaboration, both between psychologists in different services and with colleagues in other disciplines, is a key principle of PDP in times of local authority disaggregation and the establishment of some 32 separate psychological services.

One imperative that seems to be emerging from the experience of recent developments in local authority organisation, so far as the professional development of psychologists is concerned, is the need to find ways of establishing ongoing forums and mechanisms to promote inter-service and cross-professional work. This is a professional development need embedded in whatever projects themselves might be elaborated by psychologists. The lessons and opportunities that we offer each other in the process of collaboration are at least as important as the products of our labours. The challenge of helping to establish such processes is an appropriate and timely one for the yet juvenile PDP initiative.

Within the 1995/96 assessment team there was a group (the 'issues' group) which undertook to examine some of the underpinning issues emerging from the process of team discussion as projects were developed, as well as from the literature in this area (Beck, Hewitt, Lamont and Littlefair, 1996). The conclusions reached by the issues group were of some importance to the profession as a contribution to an understanding of the complex nature of assessment in current practice and they are reproduced as an appendix to this foreword.

One of the objectives of the current PDP was to offer psychologists an opportunity to reflect further on the work of the assessment issues group and to extend it into their own practice in specific areas of interest. Possible tasks which had been particularly identified by the issues group were:

- ❖ elaborating the model for assessment in the area of children's social and emotional difficulties
- ❖ investigating in more detail the psychologist's contribution in individual assessment of children's learning styles, and the area of metacognition
- ❖ identifying further issues in assessment which can be addressed through cross-boundary investigation. (Beck et. al., 1996)

Initial meetings of the current group explored how the professional development interests of members could be supported by and continue to address these issues. It was seen as important that there should be some continuity of focus between the two cycles of the initiative.

**Barr, McIntyre, Lamont and Munro (Clackmannan, Dumfries and Galloway, Ayr South and Fife respectively)** set out to explore the contexts for practice in the area of emotional and behavioural difficulties for children in the four local authorities represented. Their work follows directly from the first of the 'issues' noted above and represents a further step forward in developing the analysis of the psychologist's role in collaborative assessment in this complex field.

These workers were based in services offering very different opportunities and challenges and widely separated geographically (as indeed was the case for all participants in PDP this year and last). It is not the least of the achievements of PDP that it is beginning to offer a forum for the coming together of such different experiences and for the sharing and extension of knowledge which this brings. Barr et. al. offer, amongst other things, some

important questions in relation to how this collaboration might continue within the profession in Scotland.

**Gavine, Nixon and Arnaud (Dundee, Edinburgh and Perth and Kinross respectively)**

undertook work in the areas of affect and metacognition as they relate to children's achievement in school. This took as its starting point the second of the 'issues' noted above. They were concerned to extend their thinking regarding the unique contribution of the psychologist in this area and their paper presents us with a thought-provoking 'map' of assessment territory, within which they locate three approaches for practice, drawing upon the important document 'Effective learning and teaching and educational psychology services in Scotland', produced by the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (Currie, Gavine and Reynolds, 1995), as well as previous PDP and PDI project papers. The more practical aspect of this group's work was to select one paradigm (the solution-focused approach, Rhodes and Yasmin (1995) and, through case studies in collaboration with classroom, guidance and learning support teachers, to develop mechanisms for skills building through peer professional supervision and training. This has to be regarded as largely 'work in progress' at the time of writing this report, though the general approach and some materials for orientation and illustration are provided.

Again, it should be emphasised that the contribution of PDP is seen as developing process thinking alongside the production of specific project reports. The very mechanics of arranging a series of meetings between representatives from three local authority services in the first year of disaggregated authorities should not be discounted. To produce a project report is yet another achievement. The establishment of a working relationship between services and involving teacher colleagues is, however, the real bonus.

**Fisher and Wood in collaboration with Fox (City of Edinburgh)** revisited an area which has been the scene of many disagreements within the profession, and elsewhere. Dyslexia

(Specific Learning Difficulty) continues to present challenges for practice, not least in the need for assessment tools which possess cross-professional validity. Through their work with learning support teachers across Central Scotland this project team has made significant inroads into establishing a device for assessment of early reading difficulties. Only preliminary results can be reported here, but these are encouraging and will provide the basis for future papers. Again, not the least of the group's achievements has been the bringing together of a range of professionals from widely separated areas of the country.

The three projects presented in this collection are by no means definitive in the area of collaborative approaches to assessment. Each group has come to its task from a position of awareness of the complex issues involved, and in a spirit of open-minded enquiry. They have adopted a perspective which suits a programme of development in professional practice, and it is hoped that they will continue to add to the achievements that they have recorded here.

It is, of course, also to be hoped that the work reported here will encourage and engage others in educational psychology and related disciplines.

A large number of people have contributed to the work presented in this publication and their efforts are greatly acknowledged. The key contacts are those educational psychologists who were nominated by their education authorities as participants, and their names, with current addresses, are included in an Appendix at the end of this document.

**Please make direct contact with the authors if you would like further information on the papers.**

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## **APPENDIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS OF THE 1996 PDP 'ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT' GROUP**

1. Assessment is a process which takes place in a context and the psychological validity of any assessment procedure undertaken in isolation would have to be questioned.
2. The nature of the assessment task will be the main factor in informing the type of assessment tool to be employed. Debates on which form of assessment is 'correct' can only be meaningful if the context of assessment and the question(s) to be answered have first been clarified.
3. Assessment is essentially a collaborative process in which the psychologist, among others, may have a contribution to make.
4. The contribution of the psychologist to the assessment process is multifaceted and involves working at differing levels, each with its own skills and focus.
5. Much of the work concerning assessment currently engages the psychologist in a consultative role rather than a direct one. There are cost benefit advantages in this arrangement.
6. There is evidence that in a number of respects the role of the psychologist in collaborative assessment has unique features.
7. Stages models of assessment which tend to ascribe a later-stage assessor role to the psychologist are unhelpfully rigid and do not reflect current practice.

# **COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES**

*Jenni Barr, Elizabeth Lamont, Elizabeth McIntyre, Shona Munro*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper examines the process of collaborative assessment within the field of emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). It follows on from the 1995-96 Professional Development Programme (PDP) project topic of Assessment. In particular, the group took as a starting point Barr's (1996) contribution to this collection.

Barr (1996) focused on the question of multidisciplinary assessment in an EBD context and the implications for the psychologist. This account was based on the experience of a team of psychologists in one authority working with a secondary school support service and three secondary schools. A general trend, as the input from the multidisciplinary team became clarified and well co-ordinated, was for the psychologist to become involved in less direct casework, and for consultancy and facilitating roles to assume a greater importance.

The assessment task was one shared by the whole team, and roles and tasks were allocated to those best suited to undertake them. The assessment picture rarely depended upon the primary output of one individual but emerged as a composite picture, tested across settings and across time. The psychologist was integral in overseeing and guiding, however discreetly, the interlocking process of assessment, intervention and review.

This, however, was an analysis arising from one authority. How real were the lessons for other authorities and for other Psychological Services? To what extent might the context prove to be crucial, particularly when exploring changing roles for psychologists?

The writers involved in this PDP project resolved to look at such questions, drawing on the fact that each brought experience from different Authorities and from a range of local

practice settings. The project has been genuinely collaborative. Themes have been developed through frank discussion, and the effort required to make explicit the working assumptions and details of the contexts within which the writers work, has added considerably to the richness of the developing debate. Sections in italics denote illustrations from practice drawn from one or other of the Authorities concerned.

As this study progressed, it became clear that two fundamental issues had to be addressed:

- ❖ can a distinction be drawn between assessment of EBD and any other area of educational assessment?
- ❖ can the influences on an educational psychologist's practice be identified and are they uniform across the profession?

This paper argues that the process of collaborative assessment can be applied across the range of practice of an educational psychologist. That practice is defined by a range of influences which will be examined later in more detail.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 1981 Education Act outlined the manner in which a child's educational needs could be identified and met within mainstream and special schools. The integration and inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools was seen as best practice. The notion of a continuum of special educational needs was developed and there was a shift away from categorisation of learning or behaviour difficulties to an educational approach to meeting identified needs.

Assessment processes now therefore should mirror this needs continuum and should avoid giving the impression that there are discrete areas of functioning identifiable by assessment.

Assessment is no longer to facilitate decision-making about placement but should facilitate individual educational programming within the least restrictive environment. These

developments are supported by policy and Scottish Office guidelines (HMI, 1994; HMSO, 1996).

In a number of areas, for example that of learning difficulties (LD), there has been a gradual shift in emphasis away from a single psychological assessment, to a process of contextual and functional assessment carried out within a collaborative framework. Curricular developments in schools are also moving in this direction (Assessment 5-14 for example). Over recent years, psychologists have changed their practice from offering unitary test results to giving an analysis of a child's learning processes, the learning environment and the interaction of the two, and this advice is seen as congruent with the expectations of the service users. However, in the field of what is known as 'emotional and behavioural difficulties', psychologists' practice and the expectations of service users do not always coincide. What might be contributing to the fact that practice and expectations in the area of EBD seem to have a greater disparity than in other areas?

Children perceived as experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties may historically have been seen by some as belonging to a continuum of disturbance that ends with psychiatric disorder. Such children may have been perceived as requiring therapeutic rather than educational help. On such a model, the purpose of assessment was seen as diagnosis in order to prescribe treatment.

Psychologists were given, or took, a role as expert in this area. They were perceived as having a unique knowledge of disturbed individuals and how to 'fix' them, as having access to resources and as having unique tools which could explain why a person was behaving in an unacceptable manner. The information these combined skills could establish was then used to inform action. However, this perception should have diminished as practice has moved from within-child explanations and solutions to problems, towards assessment in

order to identify systemic and curricular methods to help young people in schools with a range of difficulties.

Experts might also be seen to be required in crisis situations. Crises are less likely to be perceived as occurring in the area of LD. Learning difficulties tend to be seen as being due to within-child factors, within-school factors and extraneous factors operating outside school. Learning support and curricular adaptations can be put in place and any subsequent alteration to these factors' effect on learning is not generally perceived as a crisis. Interventions can be implemented by teachers who, with varying degrees of confidence, are able to respond to a child's needs before drawing in other agencies. However, changes in factors that may affect children's behaviour can have dramatic and immediate effect. For example: marital break-up, bullying or abuse. School staff may feel less confident in making decisions about dealing with a child's disruptive behaviour and are more likely to call upon the psychologist to advise as a matter of urgency. Pressures to make decisions quickly may appear to drive action in the EBD field, to minimise the negative effects of the contributing factors, or to meet the needs of the system which is being disrupted by the child's behaviour.

How relevant is it to focus on single labels and classifications such as LD and EBD? Do they add anything to the process of seeking to clarify the educational needs of the child?

One example shows how complex the interplay of expectations can be: A pupil with a Record of Needs in a mainstream school was having temper tantrums in class. The psychologist was anxious that the learning support base be accessed for those times when she was coping least well, but the school saw her tantrums as examples of 'bad' behaviour that should not entitle her to such (LD) support. It took a case conference to look at the whole picture before these different perspectives could be resolved.

The Children (Scotland) Act (HMSO, 1995a) marks a significant stage in the development of legislation for the care of children (HMSO, 1995b). Centred on the needs of children and

their families, the Act sets out the duties and powers available to public authorities. The production of Children's Service Plans has become mandatory.

Developments arising from this directive are still being worked through by authorities and services and there is a project team within PDP 1997/98 focusing on some of these issues.

However, it already seems likely that educational services (including school staff and psychologists) will be much more involved in contributing information to assist the 'universal aspects of care and welfare of children.' (HMSO, 1995b).

The thrust of the Act places responsibility for meeting the needs of young people not on any particular department, but emphasises the need for interdepartmental working, shared responsibilities and collaborative assessment. Collaborative working can draw tensions however, as agencies work within different legislative and philosophical underpinnings, structures and accountabilities.

Initial examination of possible implications for practice in psychological services suggests that:

- ❖ schools and services will consult with young people over key decisions in their lives.
- ❖ multi professional working will become more of a feature in assessment processes
- ❖ there may need to be publication of plans for service provision.
- ❖ education departments may have a duty of care in relation to children in residential schools, and psychologists may have a role in this respect.

It therefore would seem to be important and timely to address what in general is meant by 'assessment' rather than how LD, EBD or psychological assessment may differ from each other. Clarification of the roles of participants in the assessment process is required. That is,

there should be a recognition of the different training and knowledge base of each participant, with roles being assigned depending on this and the needs of the case in hand.

The general questions might be:

- ❖ what is the purpose of the assessment?
- ❖ what range of options is available when decisions come to be made?
- ❖ what, therefore, should be the content of the assessment?
- ❖ what information is already available to address the relevant questions?
- ❖ what additional information is required to address the questions adequately and fully?

No single role within such an assessment process is predetermined. The psychologist's role, as well as those of the other participants, will be negotiated as the answers to these questions are agreed.

### **INFLUENCES ON PRACTICE IN A COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The influences on practice will have an overarching effect on perceptions and expectations of participants. These influences are dynamic and there will be variation between geographical areas as well as between professions. To understand the collaborative process, an analysis of the nature of these influences may be helpful.

The extent to which any worker will be able to participate fully in a collaborative process will in large part be determined by:

- ❖ their perception of their own role within the process.
- ❖ the negotiated expectations of each participant in the process.
- ❖ the range of influences upon their practice.

Successful collaboration will be a process within which each participant will accept the importance of the other's contribution and will accept that, on occasion, these contributions

may differ from their own. In other words, the purpose of collaborative assessment is not purely to reach a consensus; each party should be able to present and argue their view. However, given that any assessment process will have as its objective an outcome which promotes the best interests of the child, then it is likely that a way forward will be sought which overcomes and unifies differences in view.

An example will illustrate:

In one secondary school there was a strong commitment to maintaining youngsters within their local school, using individual packages if assessment showed that these were warranted. The psychologist was a part of the general planning and review process, with specific focused contributions as requested by the school (or at times the family).

What the school did not readily allow for was that it might not achieve success. When, on one occasion, the pupil gave up on the 'package' the school's conclusion was that no other solution would be effective but a residential placement. The school representation was sufficiently compelling at the Children's Panel that panel members issued an instruction to find a residential place. The psychologist felt it was right to offer a community-based option (involving in this instance a substantial small-group component), and persuaded the subsequent panel that this was an appropriate course of action.

The psychologist had been clear that, if the school came to the end of its resources in working effectively with this pupil, then there was a job for the multidisciplinary team to set up a case conference that went beyond in-school planners (in this instance drawing in the head teacher of the small-group resource). The school did not appear to see it this way. Thus, being clear about your own role may not be enough, if that understanding has not been negotiated with colleagues. This is where new tensions can arise, for the psychologist has various sets of colleagues. Colleagues at Authority level may agree a role for the psychologist that the school still does not accept. This role can be imposed, but at the

expense of team building. However, if negotiating the expectations of each participant in the collaborative process is to have meaning, then greening that role with the team may be a crucial task, and the very process may itself create a stronger team.

Professionals working in different contexts, with different levels of resourcing and with different levels of confidence in their own ability to meet the needs of young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, will make different demands of the educational psychologist.

The following case serves as an example:

A thirteen year old pupil was charged with a series of offences of a sexual nature. The Child Protection Case Conference called to look at the implications was handled in a particularly sensational way, with statistics being offered on the likelihood that the young person would reoffend. The reaction of the mainstream school was to decide they could not readmit the pupil.

The reaction of the local small-group resource was to be similarly fearful, ostensibly on behalf of other pupils. Recent shortfall in staff and changes in management also had a bearing on their reluctance to offer a small group place to the pupil, and any consideration of one-to-one tuition was fraught with its own questions of staff safety.

The psychologist was being asked to provide all manner of (predictive) information and there was a strong sense that contemplating working with this pupil was beyond the normal experience of either of these educational establishments.

The psychologist negotiated with the Director of Education that there were good reasons why the authority was not in a position to offer an appropriate placement at this particular time, and gained permission to approach a small-group resource in an adjacent authority. This was an establishment with some considerable experience, stable staffing and a sizeable team. The response was quite different. Staff were confident that they would have something to offer

the pupil, a confidence based at least in part on successful prior experience. They were eager to start and keen to build up his time with them.

- Of interest to the psychologist was the fact that very little predictive information had been requested. Initially staff wanted an adequate briefing but only so as to bring them on team. Staff and psychologist together would build up their assessment as the pupil settled with them and as they settled with the pupil. The placement has proved highly successful.

## **GENERAL INFLUENCES ON PRACTICE**

The psychologist working within a collaborative assessment process is therefore subject to a range of influences. These influences can be subdivided into those at a national level and those at a local level. Examining these influences may highlight consistency and efficiency of psychologists' professional practice across the country as well as difficulties and blocks to developing that professional practice.

There are a number of professional guidelines which direct psychologists' work and practice.

These include:

- ❖ British Psychological Society Code of Practice (1995)
- ❖ Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists Practice Recommendations (1996).
- ❖ Social Work (Scotland) Act (1968)
- ❖ Education (Scotland) Acts (1980, 1981, 1986).
- ❖ Children (Scotland) Act (1995)
- ❖ SOEID Circular 4/96 Assessment and Recording
- ❖ 5-14 Guidelines

These are powerful guides to professional practice and give parameters within which local differences could and do occur. They are also themselves liable to the process of change.

However, the psychologist may not simply have to be a passive reactor to these changes. There is scope for a Psychology Service to bring experience to bear, and in turn effect influence, upon policy makers.

For example, psychologists are guided by the British Psychological Society, but there are mechanisms in place which allow practitioners to determine or suggest revisions and additions to codes of practice and standards of professionalism.

A key area in the coming months will be the development of Children's Services Plans involving interagency collaboration and service agreements. Where psychologists are invited to participate in a working group there will be the opportunity to shape the process and link developments with existing relevant initiatives within education and beyond. However, across Psychological Services in Scotland there appears to be great variation in the extent to which services produce explicit statements about their own practice; be these in the form of practice guidelines or more formal policy statements.

## **LOCAL INFLUENCES ON PRACTICE**

At the local level, educational psychologists' practice is heavily influenced by authority policies. These policies are in turn led by statutory requirements and Scottish Office directives. The interface of Psychology Service and Education Service management will be important in terms of direct impact of authority policies on educational psychologists' practice. This practice will also be most closely affected by local Psychological Service practice guidelines and policy papers. It can be argued that with clearly developed Service guidelines in place which link to authority policies, psychologists can have increased confidence in their own role. This in turn will facilitate psychologists effectiveness in any collaborative assessment setting.

As a result of reorganisation, authorities are at differing stages and have different needs regarding policy development. Authorities are influenced by statutory, political and budgetary demands. These demands will have a variety of effects on an educational service, and thereby a psychological service, dependent on the size and location of the authority.

The most productive relationship will see a circle of influence operating as policies and practice are developed. Where an agreement, or even the process of drawing up an agreement, is imposed on practitioners, the process is likely to be a paper exercise only.

The writers identified instances where:

- ❖ the Psychological Service acts as a catalyst for authority policy development.
- ❖ the Education Service Management and Psychological Service are one and the same.
- ❖ the relative size of the authority (and Psychological Service) has a bearing on Service practice

It is unrealistic to expect agencies to work together collaboratively unless the pressures, constraints and objectives of each of the other parties involved are clearly acknowledged. Even where a joint working agreement has been outlined, there will be a need to regularly revisit that agreement as the pressures and influences upon each agency will continually change.

Completing this process in a number of contexts may highlight the fact that the role of the psychologist does not necessarily have to change between contexts.

In summary, collaborative assessment is influenced by:

- ❖ the context within which the psychologist is working.
- ❖ the expectations of user groups and collaborating agencies.
- ❖ the Service via practice guidelines and position papers and thereby its own practice.

- ❖ the local authority via policy papers and thereby resources.
- ❖ professional bodies.

Perhaps ultimately it is not the paper exercise itself but the extent of a sharing of ethos, of key values and objectives, that is the greatest facilitator of good collaborative practice. Here the stance of the authority may or may not facilitate. Where goals and values are shared, the authority may seem to take a back-seat role, but the very devolving of decision-making power to the local team is in itself a supportive act. Where key goals and values are not shared, no amount of policy and position papers at authority and service level, if these papers fail to make their underlying values explicit, will serve to create a climate of successful collaboration.

Successful collaborative assessment in any context can only be achieved where the complex interplay of influences on psychologists' practice is defined and accepted.

## **NEXT DEVELOPMENTS**

The task for this group was to develop the analysis of the psychologist's role in a collaborative assessment process within an EBD context. In the course of this analysis, a number of areas for development in assessment have been identified which were outwith the scope of this project but may be considered for the future:

- ❖ It is recognised that there is a requirement for shared values and objectives in professional practice across Psychological Services. These can be guided by psychological professional bodies such as ASPEP and the Scottish Division of Educational Psychology.
- ❖ It is recognised that educational psychologists have a role in influencing professional bodies. Indeed, educational psychologists as a whole have a

professional responsibility to take an active part in policy formation both at a local and national level.

- ❖ It is recognised that there is a danger of complacency or passivity of individual educational psychologists regarding their professional development. There may be a requirement of professional bodies to actively encourage and develop participation in this process by a wider group, if not all, educational psychologists.

Where do we go from here? At one level the four writers found themselves describing very different working contexts, with strong implications for the roles which they were able to adopt, and for expectations which others had of them. Yet on another level there was good agreement in the group concerning key issues involved when assessing in the EBD field. Listening to examples from one another's work helped to increase the group's understanding of the range of influences involved, and again and again it proved helpful to have to make contexts and pressures explicit, not only so that others could understand, but also to gain new insights into one's own practice.

This process should not be overlooked. It is integral to the question of assessment in the EBD field. The terminology tends to imply that it is the young person who 'has' the emotional or behavioural difficulty. Yet repeated examples explored by the writers suggested that it is in aspects of the context within which support is offered that the difficulties become fully defined and needs identified and met. The context is crucial. It can work for or against the pupil. By the same token it can work for or against the professional and the multidisciplinary process itself.

## ISSUES ARISING

The PDP initiative has offered four psychologists an opportunity to extend their dialogue in this crucial area and share their conclusions with a wider audience. With smaller Psychological Services and the danger of professional isolation, the need is strong for the establishment of a professional forum to extend this development. There have been more questions asked than answered, and a number of these are asked not for the first time:

- ❖ Is there a call for a national group and how can we articulate with ASPEP and other professional bodies?
- ❖ What mechanisms do we need in place to develop practice and ensure quality?
- ❖ What part can PDP play in ensuring maximal participation in this process?
- ❖ Who can take this forward?

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# **AFFECTIVE AND METACOGNITIVE ASPECTS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

*David Gavine, Elaine Nixon and John Arnaud (with Grethe Thomson)*

## **WIDENING THE FRAMEWORK OF ASSESSMENT**

The prevailing view of teaching and learning is that they are basically cognitive activities. Curricular material to be mastered has an inherent intellectual 'difficulty' and the learner has an inherent 'ability'. The assessment task is, therefore, to match these two in order to achieve optimum learning.

The concept of cognition has been expanded in the literature for a couple of decades to encompass what Flavell (1974) calls 'metacognition'. Other authors have used the terms 'learning strategies' or 'learning-to-learn' (Nisbet and Shuchsmith, 1986).

In so far as emotional factors are considered in the learning process, they are generally seen as having mainly nuisance value; they are things which get in the way of the essential cognitive/metacognitive processes. However, this view is certainly changing. The book 'Emotional Intelligence' by Daniel Goleman is a 'number one best seller'. The paper 'Effective Learning and Teaching' (Currie, Gavine and Reynolds, 1995) asserted that: 'Effective learning involves cognitive, metacognitive and affective components'. It seems reasonable to conclude that the definition of the teaching/learning situation should be widened to consider its emotional components so that it can mesh effectively with the emotional abilities and needs of learners.

Goleman's central thesis is that it is the structure and processes of the human brain as it has evolved over time, which places emotional responses at the heart of thinking. Our brains are not capable, computer-like, of calculating logical outcomes of all possible behavioural

responses. Our emotional responses reduce the range of options in order to give our cognitive tools a chance to operate. Hence, it is important that our emotional responses work in tandem with our cognitive ones and do not disrupt our cognitive processes by, for example, prematurely excluding some options. Thus Goleman establishes the importance of 'Emotional Intelligence'.

The willingness to perceive value in relatively distant educational goals and to forego instant gratification of desires has been identified by Goleman as the central component of what he calls 'Emotional Intelligence'. Goleman describes experiments showing that willingness to forego a marshmallow at age four predicted later educational achievement better than did IQ. Deferred gratification is a part of the 'Motivation' component of emotional intelligence. Other components are (with apologies to him if we fail to do justice to the complexity of the model):

- ❖ self-awareness
- ❖ managing one's own emotions
- ❖ empathy
- ❖ social skills

As far as the learner is concerned, Goleman' description of emotional intelligence is the state-of-the-art; but a framework for evaluating the educational environment which encompasses cognitive, metacognitive and emotional aspects is also required. For at least a hundred years, educationalists have been trying to devise a way of describing the educative process which subsumes both the characteristics of the learner and the characteristics of the learning environment in a way which describes the interaction between them without allowing one aspect or the other to dominate. For psychologists, however, a framework which successfully describes the environment is the more important as it relates much more closely to principles of intervention.

Feuerstein is the originator of a framework which describes the essential components of a 'Mediated Learning Environment' (MLE). Various workers since Feuerstein have tried to improve on the original. One recent attempt which is worthy of consideration is that of Hundeide (1991). This is basically a fusion of Feuerstein's MLE with the SPIN contact principles (PDP, 1996).

The proposal is that there are two systems of interaction, related respectively to the concepts of primary and secondary intersubjectivity (Trevarthen, 1979, 1984).

System (A) is one of basic emotional-expressive reciprocity which communicates important messages of confirmation, inclusion and trust. It is against this background that further messages are interpreted. For example, in a teaching/learning situation, a piece of feedback may be interpreted by a learner as helpful or reproachful depending on how the adult is perceived. The SPIN contact principles describe the environmental variables which set the emotional tone of the learning.

System (B) evolves from the first and is focused on the child's external environment. Its components are based on those remaining components of Feuerstein's MLE which are not fully encompassed in system (A). These can be summarised as follows.

- ❖ Intentionality - the adult has a purpose or intention which can be discerned  
-something in the environment which is the focus of attention
- ❖ Reciprocity - capturing the child's attention - engaging the child - tuning-in
- ❖ Direction of control - where does the balance of initiative lie - adult or child?
- ❖ Mediation of meaning - the adult provides meaning to the child about the area attended to - there is an affective aspect (related to value or quality) and a cognitive aspect (identifying and labelling)
- ❖ Transcendence - relating the object/event to other times and places - making generalisations

- ❖ Mediation of feelings of competence - providing corrective feedback and praise (Both of these, however, are problematic in Hundelid's view - even praise has disadvantages).
- ❖ Mediation of regulation of behaviour - related to the development of metacognition.

In summary, emotional or affective components of learning are receiving attention from psychologists and educationalists. Assessment of these components requires a framework which is sufficiently comprehensive to encompass both 'within-child' and environmental aspects.

Goleman convincingly describes the within-child aspect. Existing descriptions of the educational environment, such as Feuerstein's, do not do full justice to the emotional component. An example of a theoretical account which tries to do so is that of Hundelid.

## **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE:**

### **THE EMOTIONAL COMPONENT**

The purpose of frameworks such as those described above is to break down the essential continuity of the world into components which can, to some degree, be assessed or evaluated. And the purpose of so doing is to guide intervention in these areas in a way which will most effectively aid learning. However, the connection between assessment and intervention is not at all straightforward. There is a considerable amount of research literature on explorations of constructs such as self-efficacy and self-esteem and no shortage of recent instruments attempting to provide measures of them. However, there are grave concerns over the validity, let alone the usefulness, of these measures. Although becoming as fashionable as has been the measurement of intelligence, they may prove to be even more problematic.

One of the difficulties faced by Scottish local authority educational psychologists in the 1990's is the sheer variety of the environment in which they work; the range of settings, client and user groups, problem situations etc.. This leads to an enormous number of possible ways of, Mintervening. It may be worth devising a map to help educational psychologists to perceive the range of possibilities and how they relate to each other. Such a map might have four dimensions, along which any particular intervention could be rated.

## **DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Focus**

These would be the transactions which are the focus for psychologists' intervention. For example, psychologists could intervent in the interactions between:

- ❖ Education Authority and school
- ❖ School and teachers
- ❖ Teacher and class
- ❖ Teacher and pupil
- ❖ Class and pupil
- ❖ Class and task
- ❖ Pupil and task
- ❖ Interactions involving parents

### **2. Distance**

The distance is the level of generality at which the psychologist conducts business; the extent to which such transactions are distanced from their focus. For example:

- ❖ direct observation of interactions
- ❖ talk about the transactions (e.g. psychologist talks to teachers about their interactions with pupils)

- ❖ talk about the talk about the transactions (e.g. psychologist talks to head teacher about his/her interactions with teachers about their pupils).

### **3. Reference**

Assessment in practice generally involves a combination of norm-reference (making comparisons between learners on the same features) and self-reference (making comparisons within a learner on different features or occasions).

It should perhaps be emphasised that the term ‘norm-referenced’ is not synonymous with the use of standardised tests, since it encompasses a much wider notion. Simply asking a teacher for a child’s performance rate relative to the class is an example of a norm-referenced assessment. Asking how the performance has changed over the past term is an example of self-referenced assessment.

### **4. Domain**

The domain is the area of development under consideration, for example, social, emotional, language, play, academics (reading, number and so on). Perhaps this could be reconceptualized as transactions with parents, teachers, peers, self, toys, text, number etc.

This map shows how an enormous range of valid initiatives and interventions could be generated. Indeed, many have been! How do psychologists cope with this situation and create a sense of direction? Does there even need to be a direction?

The principle of reflexivity demands that we consider the emotional dimension in understanding how psychologists make decisions in their work; specifically in deciding which kinds of assessment/intervention activities will meet their needs. In the light of Goleman's thesis, it might seem a little naive to assume that such decisions are based on purely rational conclusions about which strategy will be of most benefit to the users of the service or the needs of the child.

It is not being argued that psychologists do not make decisions regarding intervention in the best interests of the child as they see it; merely that the relationship between cognitive and emotional intelligence demands that we accept that the majority of options are closed down by a basic emotional response. Indeed, it is essential that it should do so to preserve individuals' sanity. However, there is likely to be great variation in the emotional learning to which different psychologists have been subjected.

Arguably, considerable differences in their childhood, education, first careers, motivation to become a psychologist, as well as experience in the role of psychologist has all served to shape the affective component of their 'Psychological thinking'. So far, this has not been acknowledged in the training and continuing development of psychologists. Nor do psychologists acknowledge this influence on their practice. In this, as in the educational system in general, cognitive thinking dominates.

It may be that there are areas of enquiry here which could be profitably explored.

## **FROM EMOTION TO PRINCIPLES**

'Principles' can be described as our emotional responses turned into words. These words then help us to regulate our own behaviour in order to restrict the range of activities we undertake from the enormous range possible. The principles are partly shaped by the commonality of our experience and, to that extent, the principles themselves will be shared. However, it is possible that variation in our working contexts plus individual variation in other emotional learning will put a considerable constraint on our emotional responses and hence our shared strategies. The following observations are offered, therefore, as an extension to psychologists' thinking on the concept of assessment:

- ❖ Collaborative - The psychological assessment-intervention is often conducted alongside a person (or more than one person) who has ongoing involvement with the child.
- ❖ Naturalistic - It is carried out in a setting which, as far as possible, reflects the child's actual experience.
- ❖ Transactional - No simple cause-effect relationships in real-life situations; dynamic assessment for and of change is required.
- ❖ Solution focused - More time should be spent determining steps to a solution than analysing the source of a problem.
- ❖ Holistic - Try to see the whole child in the whole system.
- ❖ Layered - Start with an overview and do successively more detailed analyses only if necessary to achieve a reasonable outcome.
- ❖ Reflexive - The principles inherent in the psychologist's suggestions to users should also apply to the psychological intervention itself.

Some additional parameters in the search for effective, comprehensive assessment might be:

- ❖ Focus - The activities higher in the system, although necessary, comprise a small part of the psychologist's role. We require to work at a number of levels and to be involved in different ways at all stages.
- ❖ Distance - greater distance may seem more efficient, but may be ineffective in producing change where it matters.
- ❖ Reference - norm-referenced or self-referenced assessments are selected depending on the questions being asked.
- ❖ Domain - The main purpose of the educational psychologist should be to enhance the main business of the education system - the transmission of academic skills and values.

## **FROM PRINCIPLES TO STRATEGIES**

The selection of appropriate strategies is made easier by selecting established methods 'off-the-shelf' in conformity with the principles. Three strategies will be presented which, between them, provide psychologists with methods of working on the environmental variables (the Mediated Learning Environment referred to above) and in addressing the three components of learning.

The first two are now fairly widely known about by Scottish psychologists:

- ❖ SPIN - (PDP 1996, Simpson, Forsyth and Kennedy 1994).
- ❖ Solution Focused Approaches applied to problems of learning in schools (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995)

These are complementary strategies which differ mainly on the "Distance" dimension. In a "layered" approach, a solution focused approach might be the first strategy, followed by SPIN if necessary.

The third method is less well known.

- ❖ Attunement Strategy (Hastings, 1992).

Like SPIN, this method uses video-feedback on real classroom interaction but it aims to illuminate the self-regulation component of the Mediated Learning Environment. It is, therefore, related to the development of metacognitive skills and to motivation and self-efficacy in the affective domain.

## **STRATEGIES IN PRACTICE**

Within the limitations of the present project, and given the interests of a mixed group of participants, Attunement Strategy approaches were not explored other than to note their relevance and validity in terms of our 'map' of assessment. A brief description of the rationale and method is included as Appendix A to this report (Thomson, 1997).

Materials in the area of solution-focused work were produced and presented to the learning support staffs of two large secondary schools as a prelude to involving them in the collaborative, practical phase of the project. Due to exigencies of the school inservice year and

other timetabling problems it did not prove possible to follow this work through within the PDP time scale. However, the ground has been laid for this work and reports will be provided on this in due course elsewhere. Appendix B is an example of the sort of introductions that are involved in presenting to colleagues. One case study (Appendix C) is included as an illustration of the type of work described here.

We hope that this will help put in context for the reader some of the issues with respect to affective and metacognitive aspects of achievement in the young learner.

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## **APPENDIX A: ATTUNEMENT STRATEGY - A SUMMARY**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Attunement Strategy is a strategy which aims to motivate children to focus on their work and encourage them to be active and independent learners. With the teacher's help they learn to ask questions about the task, both before and after a task has been completed. It also challenges preconceived ideas about why a pupil is failing to learn.

Attunement Strategy, which was developed by Wim Van Wekhoven, (1996) and piloted by Nigel Hastings in this country (Hastings, 1992) is, in my opinion, particularly relevant for teachers working with pupils who are lacking in motivation in the classroom situation and who are therefore failing to learn. More often than not, these children also disrupt the teaching and learning of other pupils thereby adding to the level of frustration and stress of the class teacher.

A closer look at pupils with problems of motivation leads us to understand that these pupils have acquired a complex set of negative ideas about themselves as learners in the school situation with subsequent low self worth and low and unstable self esteem.

Recent research by Waschull and Kernis (1996) has clearly indicated that pupils with low and unstable self esteem tend to avoid what they perceive as difficult work in order to protect themselves from failure. In other words, they experience their self esteem as continuously 'on the line' and they often react by either being disruptive not attending to the task or becoming angry.

Attunement Strategy aims to help these unmotivated pupils who can easily be identified by their lack of on-task behaviour and output.

What characterised the pupils in the Waschull and Kernis study who had unstable self-esteem and a preference for easy tasks over more challenging ones was that they also tended to score low on measures of self esteem and self efficacy. That is, they tended to regard themselves as not being personally in control of their results, explaining good results in terms of luck, and failure as just another proof that they lacked ability.

It is this 'learned helplessness' that Attunement Strategy tackles by helping class teachers become more aware of these children's particular problem of low and unstable self esteem and finding practical ways of supporting them in the classroom. What makes Attunement Strategy different from most research on motivation and self esteem is that it suggests practical solutions which centre around making the pupil a more active participant in the learning process, encouraging him/her to develop metacognitive skills and reassessing his/her own learning style and ability; learning to assess the amount of effort expended and anticipating outcome as a function of effort, not simply as a matter of luck or ability.

## **METHOD**

Attunement Strategy, like SPIN (Simpson, Forsyth and Kennedy, 1994; PDP, 1996) makes use of video-feedback to help teachers focus on their teaching style, including basic interpersonal communication such as smiling, nodding and the giving of verbal encouragement. In addition, teachers are encouraged to change their teaching strategy from the traditional style of defining the task and setting the goals to an alternative one which centres around eliciting the pupils' view by asking questions such as:

- ❖ What do you see here?
- ❖ What is the task about?
- ❖ What do you think you have to do?
- ❖ Do you think this is difficult?

- ❖ How long do you think it will take you?
- ❖ Have you worked hard?
- ❖ Why did you succeed?
- ❖ Why do you think you managed to finish?
- ❖ Why do you think you made fewer mistakes this time?

Each video-recording, usually 10 to 15 minutes, is followed by a feedback session with the educational psychologist where the emphasis is on analysing positive instances where the teacher is eliciting the pupil's views and where the interaction with the pupil is positive and supportive.

This type of responsive teaching is characterised by the following:

- ❖ Affective support.
- ❖ Encouraging independence.
- ❖ Active involvement by the pupil.
- ❖ Developing metacognitive skills.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In using this approach in my own work I have observed the following:

Asking children what they are thinking and feeling improves their self-esteem and therefore their motivation and on-task behaviour.

- ❖ Teachers have responded very positively to the theory and practical application of Attunement Strategy.
- ❖ Teachers can help pupils with low expectation and low self esteem to change their view of themselves as learners.
- ❖ Increase in teachers' self-esteem.

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **A SIX-STAGE INTRODUCTION TO SOLUTION-FOCUSED THERAPY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The solution-focused approach is a flexible and creative way of thinking for working with pupils struggling with literacy. The emphasis is on opening up the possibilities of a different view, drawing attention to strengths and coping strategies and looking for solution patterns as a basis for rekindling hope and facilitating change. As such, it focuses on what works and a person's goals rather than just the past and its problems. Many pupils who have experienced difficulties in acquiring reading and writing skills have developed a theory about themselves as unsuccessful learners. However, it is true to say that they have been active learners since birth.

Presented below are six phases in a teacher-pupil interview which cover the main areas of focus in a solution-focused approach to spelling. Although certain key questions have been highlighted, the skill lies in developing these to explore ideas.

#### **PHASE ONE: FOCUSING ON SUCCESSFUL LEARNING**

Looking at exceptions (what might have worked in the past or what is working a little in the present) can introduce a doubt into a pupil's view of zero learning and provide evidence of competence which can then be built on. This focus on successful learning can begin with questions concerning interests and hobbies. Examples of the type of questions that might be asked are:

- ❖ How did you learn the skill?
- ❖ How did you know when you had learned the skill well?
- ❖ What told you that you were getting better at this?

- ❖ What does learning this tell you about yourself?

## **PHASE TWO: UNDERLINING PROGRESS MADE AND DEVELOPING**

### **FURTHER SKILLS**

Dialogue about interests and hobbies can lead to an exploration of pupils' rating of themselves in spelling and the skills they have already achieved to reach that point. For example:

- ❖ When did you make most progress in learning to spell?
- ❖ What were you doing at these times which was helpful to you?
- ❖ How did you know you were making progress?
- ❖ What helps most at the moment?
- ❖ On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no good at all and 10 is very good, where would you place yourself on the scale for spelling?
- ❖ What things can you already do that make you confident you are a \_ (state number rating)?

## **PHASE THREE: ENCOURAGING SELF AWARENESS**

The solution focused approach naturally leads to questions about knowing how something is achieved. The assumption is that if pupils are more aware of their own thinking processes then their ability to learn and remember will be improved. The following questions may be useful in helping a pupil to develop and utilise a form of self awareness:

- ❖ How exactly do you learn to spell and/or read a new word? Show me what you do.
- ❖ How do you try to learn to remember a word? What do you do? How do you help yourself?

## **PHASE FOUR : DEVISING A PROGRAMME**

Using the information gleaned from above, a programme can then be devised using the pupil as 'consultant'. The first preference is always to build on the solutions generated by the pupil, as this can help them to rediscover their own motivation. It is, however, useful to have considered beforehand what strategies could be suggested, and, in general, it seems useful for at least one 'new' element to be added to that which was used before. Several ideas can be discussed and the pupil then left to choose

## **PHASE FIVE : ESTABLISHING TARGETS AND 'MILESTONES'**

The questions raised in earlier phases elicit general goals. However, these can seem a long way off, and the following questions are aimed at helping pupils identify the next step they can take to move in their chosen direction.

- ❖ If you are a - (state number rating) now on the spelling scale, how would you know you had reached - (number rating plus one)?
- ❖ What would be the first sign that you are making progress in your spelling?
- ❖ What difference would improving your spelling make to your life?

## **PHASE SIX: PLANNING**

In this phase of the interview, the interviewer should summarise aspects of the meeting, usually focusing on strengths. A detailed summary of practical ideas should then be undertaken:

- ❖ Who is to do what, when, how often and even where?

Following these plans, arrangements should be made to meet with the pupil again to review the situation. The time between the interview and planning session and the review meeting will vary from case to case, but in general it seems wise to have a review meeting within a

short time span (a fortnight, say) if the situation is thought to be challenging. There are two general directions in a review meeting.

### **Direction One**

If things are going well, recommend a continuation with or without some new ideas.

Improvements can be explored and built upon by questions such as:

- ❖ How did you achieve this?
- ❖ Who else has noticed? What will they have noticed?
- ❖ What is the next step? What will the next sign of progress be?

If the pupil has managed to learn specific words:

- ❖ How are you remembering these words?
- ❖ How do you explain this?

If specific 'milestones' have been reached then new ones can be discussed.

### **Direction Two**

If no progress is being made, then new strategies are required. If a method is being used consistently and yet does not seem to be working, then the solution-focused perspective would suggest 'try something different'. Reconsider phases three, four and five (above). You may find it helpful to jot down the main points of discussion with a pupil under the 'phases' headings. This should be undertaken soon after the interview rather than during, so as not to break the flow of the discussion.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **USING SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACHES WITH YOUNG**

#### **PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS - A CASE STUDY**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

The following account describes one of the case studies undertaken during this run of the PDP and serves to highlight a number of the principles and techniques employed by solution focused workers such as Rhodes and Ajmal (1995).

##### **THE REFERRAL**

George was referred to the school educational psychologist by his guidance teacher early in the school session. He had just begun his S3 year at the school having transferred to it from another mainstream school in the locality. He had been known to psychological services since his primary school years. George had been extremely unhappy at his previous school and his attainments were relatively poor. He was known to have been the victim of bullying and had himself become involved in acts of aggression towards others. Following the transfer the receiving school noted that George's attendance was extremely poor. Investigation by the Education Welfare Officer suggested that his reluctance to attend might be related to learning difficulties which were not being adequately addressed. It was also evident at this stage that George was having great difficulty developing relationships with his peers. there was a feeling amongst a number of the teaching staff that mainstream schooling was not appropriate for him and that special schooling ought to be considered as an alternative.

## **THE FIRST METING WITH GEORGE**

### **Problem-Free Talk**

I was somewhat surprised when I met George. In contrast with his description from school staff and the Education welfare Officer as a young person of limited social skills and academic ability he presented as someone who appeared to be quite confident in adult company. Without a great deal of prompting George engaged in 'problem free talk' about his interests and his family. He told me that, although he did not spend much time in the company of other young people his age, he had a part-time job in town and spent a great deal of time with his older brother and with his sister. He also spoke of his interest in cooking and listed a number of dishes which he said he cooked with ease. He considered he could cook almost anything given the correct recipe! He told me that his brother was now at college in order to improve his education and that this was something he was keen to do also.

I fed back to him that he appeared to have a number of strengths in terms of skills and also that he appeared to be well-motivated and must also have a reasonable degree of self-discipline to keep up his part-time job.

### **Statement Of The Problem Pattern**

I then asked George why he thought I had been asked to see him to which he replied that he had been absent quite a lot recently. We talked a little about his perceptions of school, using a scaling question to compare his experience at his new school with the one from which he had transferred. He indicated that, on a scale where 10 was 'the best it could ever be at school' and 1 was 'the worst it could ever be at school', things were about a 2 by the time he left his previous school but now were an 8.

I asked him what had changed and he replied that he was now being bullied less and was learning more. He talked at some length about wanting to improve in reading and spelling and said that he had recently started to get extra help from one of the learning support

teachers. He also said that he had picked up 'a few tips' in Home Economics and that he did not now consider Maths to be as problematic as it had been previously.

When asked why his absences were so high if he enjoyed being at school so much more now, he gave various reasons, for example that he didn't always have the bus fares, that it was too far to walk and that, on other occasions, he had problems getting up on time.

### **Establishing Goals**

George agreed, that in order to make the improvements he would like in his school work, it would be important to attend school more regularly. As a first step he determined that he would get up on time and that this was easiest when he didn't allow extra 'snooze time' when his alarm went off in the mornings.

The meeting drew to an end at this point and an agreement was made that I would see him again a couple of weeks hence to discuss what changes had occurred. I also agreed to carry out some further assessment of his literacy skills in order to identify strengths which he might be encouraged to utilise in this area.

In the two weeks that followed George's guidance teacher made further contact with me to say that he had been involved in a couple of incidents in the playground where fights had arisen and that she was beginning to become quite concerned about his safety in school. In both cases it appeared that George had been provoked by others to fight, and in both cases he had ended up the worse for wear!

Following the latter of these incidents George had become quite distressed and had run from school to the nearby park before returning later in the day. She also told me that he was behaving in a regressive manner in her Social Education classes and the other youngsters in the class had been commenting on his 'strange' behaviour. An arrangement had already been made for me to meet with George's mother after our psychometric testing session and it was

decided that it might be helpful for the guidance teacher and George also to be present at this meeting to discuss these concerns and consider appropriate solutions.

## **SECOND MEETING WITH GEORGE**

I met with George as planned and carried out some norm-referenced testing which confirmed a significant delay in his literacy skills. He was extremely keen to discuss errors made and reflect on the strategies he adopted when reading and spelling. In relation to his absences he told me that his attendance pattern hadn't changed a great deal and he admitted that he had become involved in a couple of fights since we last met. George brushed these off as 'things that happen in schools', and again asserted that life in school was still greatly improved as compared with his time at his previous secondary.

## **FIRST JOINT REVIEW MEETING**

### **The Problem Pattern Revisited**

After a brief introduction to the meeting, where George's guidance teacher put forward her concerns about his progress in the school to date, his mother was invited to share her views on the matter. She described the situation which had arisen at George's previous school and said that, although she had been keen for a transfer to take place to another mainstream school, she had also thought for a long time that George might be better placed in a special school. This might provide him with a more protected social environment which he required as he had 'never been able to stand up for himself' with his peers.

She also said that she was aware that he had difficulty coping with a great deal of the work in school and she was keen for him to be supported with this. She talked at some length about her perception of the difficulties George was facing at his new school and her anger that he had again become somewhat of a 'victim' in his peer group. During this time George became

visibly upset, with tears beginning to fill his eyes. He said that he didn't want to go to another school.

I asked him to describe to his mother and guidance teacher the aspects of change he had noticed in coming to his new school and he duly did so, saying that he didn't really mind others making fun of him because it was better than it had been 'and anyway that's just the way life is'.

### **Exceptions to the Problem Pattern**

At this point the discussion was steered towards asking each participant in turn what school was like for George when these difficulties were not apparent. By focusing on the exceptions all three contributed to a description of school where George's strengths became more apparent. His guidance teacher acknowledged that there were aspects of the curriculum where he did appear to cope well and that he had begun to establish good relationships with learning support staff, who were seeking advice regarding appropriate teaching strategies to adopt. His mother added that, specific incidents apart, she had noticed a slight increase in George's confidence and willingness to attend school of late and spoke of his interest in cooking at home.

George, by this stage, was beginning to appear more relaxed in the meeting and said that, although he knew some pupils were making fun of him, he had made a number of friends at school and considered this to be a change for the better.

### **Establishing Goals**

Working with the more positive line of discussion which had been adopted each participant was then asked to say how they would know when George's school experience had improved in the smallest way. George remained concerned about his literacy skills and ability to cope with work in class and said he thought it helpful to continue with the extra help provided by learning support.

Furthermore his guidance teacher suggested that developing his interest in cooking might also be explored with the Home Economics department. His mother wanted there to be less involvement in aggressive incidents in school. It was agreed that this might be tackled in the short term by offering George a 'drop in' facility in the school support base during breaks and also by working on his ability to deal with/avoid such incidents through further sessions with myself. His guidance teacher restated her wish for George to attend school more regularly and his mother promised to support the school as far as possible with this.

From this meeting a number of things were put into place with George's co-operation. Two further sessions were carried out on an individual basis with George: one which served to discuss strategies he might adopt to avoid playground incidents, and another where future plans were discussed prior to a learning support review aiming to consider future options. The first session very much followed a solution focused approach. George was encouraged to consider situations where he, by his own actions, had previously prevented incidents escalating with others in the playground.

It became apparent during the session that he had already gone some way to developing skills in this area and had a number of strategies he could draw on should future incidents arise. Also, despite having been offered the drop in facility at breaks, he preferred to be with his friends at these times and had therefore made little use of it.

The second session (which took place approximately six months after initial involvement with George) provided an opportunity to spend some time discussing which aspects of school life had changed in his view since his transfer of school. Most apparent was George's increased self-confidence. He seemed very much more at ease with his peer group and spoke at great length about the extra Home Economics time which had been negotiated for him. George had been spending an extra four hours each week in Home Economics with a fifth year class and was now talking about his hope of becoming a chef. He told me at this point

that he wasn't sure whether he should aim to complete his fourth year at school (he was eligible to leave at Christmas) or whether to investigate college options. We used the remainder of the session to prepare a number of questions he might put to the next review, which would include the careers officer linked both with the school and the local colleges

## **SECOND JOINT REVIEW MEETING**

George attended the review on his own, neither of his parents having accepted the invitation to contribute. Present were: his guidance teacher, the principal teacher from learning support, the careers officer, educational psychologist and school doctor.

The meeting which ensued was a delight! School reports described a young person with a very easy manner with members of staff. His Home Economics teacher commented that she was in no doubt that he had aptitude in this area and that the older pupils in the class often sought George's advice and help. The guidance teacher confirmed this progress and also commended George on his improved attendance and on the reduction in playground incidents. Although a little overwhelmed George did manage to ask about possibilities for the future. It was suggested that, although unorthodox, an early college placement would be considered, beginning immediately after the summer break and he would remain enrolled at school until his sixteenth birthday the following winter.

## **A FINAL NOTE**

The case study outlined, in contrast to examples frequently given by 'therapists' in texts describing solution focused working, provides an illustration of the eclectic response we as educational psychologists often make in given situations. Our role in assessing young people with learning difficulties and/or social, emotional difficulties is often enhanced when a variety of approaches are combined. We are drawn upon to work at an individual level with

young people, but in many cases it appears that the success of individual approaches appears to be dependent on taking into account the whole school context.

Collaboration with school staff is also required in order to make maximum use of in-school support structures. Furthermore, we become involved with young people where a great deal of information has already been shared about their personal circumstances/difficulties, past and present. It is hoped that George's story helps to dispels any myth that we must adopt such approaches as if a young person's situation is 'a blank slate', but rather that we should be 'mindful' about previously held beliefs and expectations and make use of these with a degree of prudence.

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# **THE IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC READING DIFFICULTIES THROUGH ASSESSMENT OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

*Keith Wood, Douglas Fisher , Diana Fox*

## **INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

The 1981 Education (Scotland) Act lays a responsibility upon local authorities to identify and record children with Specific Learning Difficulties. Specific Learning Difficulties are not, however, defined either in the act or adequately elsewhere and this has led to relativity of assessment and recording practices.

This is a highly politicised and emotive area. On occasion the psychologist is involved in litigation in a situation where there is no clear definition and no clear assessment procedure and therefore may have difficulty in offering advice, or in justifying that advice. For the same reasons it becomes difficult for a local authority to formulate and defend policy in what is becoming an increasingly litigious situation.

Traditional assessment procedures have generally rested on discrepancy definitions between intelligence quotients (IQ) and reading ability measures, or upon discrepancies in sub-test scores within IQ tests. However, both the discrepancy model and the validity of the established intelligence tests which are used in this area have been extensively criticised.

Adams (1990) considered IQ to be a relatively poor predictor of reading ability (coming a poor third after basic letter recognition and phonological awareness) and the general validity of the traditional IQ test has been subjected to a barrage of criticism over the last thirty years. Moreover, opinions differ as to whether the time and energy spent identifying children with specific difficulties can be justified, or can serve any purpose, since research has shown that children of varying ability (as measured by intelligence tests) fail to learn to read for similar and identifiable reasons and respond to similar remediation strategies. Stanovich has clearly

identified an aetiology of 'dyslexic' type difficulties hypothesising the 'Matthew Effect' and subsequently arguing that the term 'Dyslexia' should be dispensed with by the academic community. Effectively, in being asked to assess children with a specific difficulty, the psychologist is faced with the impossible task of delineating a group who do not constitute a discrete population with a separate 'clinical profile' from other children with literacy problems. An impressive body of research over the last ten years has allowed us to come to a greater understanding of necessary precursors to literacy and consequently how 'bright' children fail to learn to read. As a result of this the focus of recent years has shifted to the prevention of reading difficulties through early intervention strategies aimed at developing literacy skills at the pre-school stage and at the early primary years.

There has also been renewed interest in Marie Clay's 'Reading Recovery' scheme, especially when bolstered with systematic phonological awareness programmes. The present writers would argue that such early intervention strategies are exemplary and serve as a model for future preventative practice. However, even given the universal adoption of early intervention strategies by local authorities the most optimistic advocates for early intervention strategies do not argue that all reading difficulties will be prevented by such means.

Psychologists will therefore be confronted with similar problems of identification and assessment well into the twenty first century when the credibility of discrepancy models based on IQ tests will be no less questionable. It will be necessary, in light of the above research, to formulate a policy towards the identification and assessment of reading difficulties (especially as to whether this should be the remit of the psychologist) and within this to determine whether a sub category of specific reading difficulty should also be identified. It may seem illogical in the light of the above to argue for the assessment of specific reading difficulties, and yet there would appear to be cogent reasons for so doing:

- ❖ The concept is enshrined in law and local authorities will continue to seek advice from psychological services as to its identification and assessment. Psychologists will still therefore require to be involved of whether they consider the concept to be valid.
- ❖ There is compelling research and anecdotal evidence that there are in fact implications in terms of qualitative remediation approaches as a result of the identification of specific difficulties.

In light of the above it is necessary to investigate some particular aspects of alternative assessment strategies for the identification of specific reading difficulties.

As a result of an extensive literature search, the authors feel that ‘conventional’ assessment procedures may be supplemented, or, perhaps, ultimately supplanted by, the development of appropriate listening comprehension assessments, (thus fuelling further the discrepancy definition debate).

There is now a considerable body of evidence which demonstrates that a discrepancy between listening comprehension skills and reading ability is more meaningful than the same with an IQ test (and of greater diagnostic utility to educationalists in the identification of appropriate helping efforts). In fact, one of the unlooked for ‘spin-offs’ of this project has been the increasing interest shown by educationalists in the development of this assessment device. However, the primary aim of this project was to identify such an assessment tool and begin the process of norming it on a Scottish population.

## **OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT**

The Project was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ A literature search - to identify an appropriate listening comprehension assessment tool.

- ❖ Consultation of Scottish Psychological Services - to identify current practices and guidelines in the identification of specific learning difficulties.
- ❖ The development of a listening comprehension assessment tool suitable for use with primary school children.
- ❖ Norming the assessment tool on a Scottish population. (It was not envisaged that this particular objective would be achieved during this cycle of PDP).

## **LITERATURE SEARCH**

Our initial expectation was that a literature search would soon unearth an appropriate 'ready made' assessment tool which we could then norm on a Scottish population. However, although there are many different forms of listening comprehension test in existence, many of these are suitable only for adults. Indeed, many had been developed for the assessment of adult ESL students, and most have disadvantages which rendered them inappropriate to our purpose.

Methods such as Cloze passages, question and answer techniques, free recall and any assessment technique that required the child to read the passage first were quickly rejected! Finally, it was decided to use a variation of an American tool, 'The Sentence Verification Technique' (SVT) called the 'Meaning Identification Technique' (MIT). This tool had the advantage that extensive evaluation in the United States had established its validity and reliability and it was readily transferable to Scottish subjects and materials. A full account of the MIT is given in a later section of this paper.

## CONSULTATION OF SCOTTISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Informal survey of twelve Psychologists working in one centre had indicated a disparity of practice which ran the whole gamut of professional and theoretical orientation to the assessment of specific reading difficulties.

Two of these psychologists adopted a completely traditional approach, 'diagnosing' Dyslexia through an IQ discrepancy model and discovering diagnostic significance in sub-scale discrepancies. At the other end of the scale there were psychologists who felt that 'dyslexia' was a less than useful term and that psychologists had no business involving themselves in this area which should really be left in the domain of the learning support teacher.

There were various positions in between these diametrically opposed views, with some psychologists adopting a curriculum-based discrepancy model and others applying pragmatic and ad hoc approaches. It was considered likely that this anarchic situation would apply in any service in which there were no clear guidelines on the assessment of specific reading difficulties.

A consultative instrument was sent to 27 Scottish Psychological Services. This carried two questions:

- ❖ Does your authority have any formal policy or guidelines with regard to the assessment of specific reading difficulties?
- ❖ Does your authority have any formal policy or guidelines with regard to specific learning difficulties?

There were 24 returns (89%). Of these:

- ❖ 21 Authorities replied 'No' to question (a) (87.5% of returns).
- ❖ 20 replied 'No' to question (b) (83.3% of returns).

It was not clear from returns however whether the three services who answered 'Yes' to both questions had actually produced written guidelines for the psychologist as to how specific

learning or reading difficulties should be assessed.

The consultative exercise demonstrated therefore that over 80% of Scottish Psychological Services who replied had developed no guidelines with regard to the assessment of specific reading and learning difficulties. It was felt that this reflected the difficulties faced by services in developing assessment measures in a highly emotive area where the object of assessment had been inadequately defined. It was also thought likely that both across and within these Authorities there would be little consistency of definition or assessment of specific reading difficulties by individual case psychologists.

## **DESIGNING A TEST**

In order to test the hypothesis that a discrepancy between listening comprehension skills and reading ability may assist in the identification of specific reading difficulties, the first priority was to find a suitable listening comprehension test. It soon became clear that there seemed to be a significant absence of any such assessment material, and therefore that a suitable form of this would require to be created.

Since the initial concept was to assess children at Primary 3 and Primary 7 stages, it was decided to base the comprehension passages on reading narrative texts used in previous years at Level A and Level D of the 5-14 English language curriculum assessments (HMSO, 1991). The description of these levels of attainment state that Level A should be attainable in the course of P1-P3 by almost all pupils, and that Level D should be attainable by most pupils in P7.

The next major issue was to establish a form of questioning based on the texts which would assess the child's ability to understand the passage. In 1986, Roger et. al. had conducted a study using Sentence Verification Technique (SVT) to test comprehension and this was the method initially pursued.

The SVT was designed to measure understanding by determining if readers or listeners remembered the meaning of something read or heard. In it, four types of test sentences based on a passage of text are used, namely: 'originals', 'paraphrases', 'meaning changes' and 'distractors'.

- ❖ 'Originals' are unchanged sentences from the passage.
- ❖ 'Paraphrases' change the wording but the meaning remains the same.
- ❖ 'Meaning change' sentences use most of the same words contained in the passage but have a different meaning.
- ❖ 'Distractor' sentences have different meaning and words from any contained in the passage but the subject matter remains the same.

An SVT test would consist of a passage of about eight to twelve sentences in length followed by an equal number of each of the sentence types. Readers or listeners who have understood the meaning of the passage should be able to classify the sentences correctly, according to whether they have the same meaning as the passage. Those whose comprehension is faulty would have difficulty.

Initially, theoretically, this assessment technique appeared to fulfil all the requirements, but in practice, when applied to the chosen passages, it proved cumbersome and difficult to develop. However, a newer form of SVT called Meaning Identification Technique (MIT) developed by Marchant, Roger and Green (1988) was investigated and this seemed to be even more appropriate both in practical terms and in terms of validity and reliability.

To construct a test using this technique, an appropriate passage of at least twelve sentences is required. Each of the twelve original sentences should then be paraphrased by replacing as many words as possible with synonyms, at the same time ensuring that the paraphrase sentence not only has the same meaning as the original but the meaning of the paraphrase fits

the meaning of the passage as a whole. Six of these paraphrases are then altered by substituting one or two words in each in order to change its meaning.

The research on this technique indicates that a test constructed using only these two item types, rather than the four used in SVT, improves its validity and reliability. This is achieved by eliminating surface cues to which an examinee could respond without actually having evaluated the meaning of the text. Whilst both sentence types have different wording from the original passage, only the paraphrase sentences have the same meaning. In other words, it is a construction that preserves the meaning, without using the precise words, of a message.

The complete test, then, consists of a passage of text followed by twelve sentences, six of which are 'paraphrase sentences' and six 'meaning change paraphrase sentences'. The examinee listens to the passage and then, as each sentence is read out by the examiner, indicates whether she/he thinks it has the same meaning as the original passage.

For the purposes of this project, and in order to achieve consistency in the norming procedure, it was decided to commit the passages to tape.

Three passages were identified; two at Level A and one at Level D, one of the former to be used as a practice passage with only two of each sentence types to follow.

The test procedure is to play the passage appropriate to the child's age then read out each sentence in turn, with the child responding either "same" or "different" depending on whether he/she considers that sentence to correspond with the meaning of the passage. The examiner records the child's response. During the preceding practice item the examiner may discuss the child's responses with her/him, if necessary, in order to clarify the instructions.

## **NORMING THE ASSESSMENT TOOL ON**

### **A SAMPLE SCOTTISH POPULATION**

Our overwhelming belief is that an assessment of a child's educational needs should wherever possible be curriculum based in order to maintain relevancy. What we need to know, how it is known and its relevance and usefulness must lie within the child's natural world at school. This is the basis to the authors' looking at listening and reading skills within the 5-14 curriculum and texts thought to be age appropriate reading and comprehension for the stages investigated.

Another influence to this approach is that diagnostic materials that are edging their way towards the assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties must tap into the language processing skills required to comprehend complex linguistic information spoken and written.

A way in which language comprehension can be examined is by assessing listening and reading tasks.

Comparison of a child's listening and reading attainments and skills may suggest the nature of the reasons why a pupil is meeting with difficulties. The definition of dyslexia would, on current reports, not be becoming 'tighter' and more defined but moving in the other direction to place it on the continuum of language difficulties. Dyslexia, in its many forms, is to be perceived as a language disorder not just a difficulty with literacy.

Before an MIT scale can be used as a comparator with reading levels it is necessary to ensure that the levels being assessed are age appropriate for the target population.

The English Language 5-14 National Guidelines indicate the levels most P3 and P7 pupils should have achieved:

Level A - should be attainable in the course of P1 to P3 by almost all pupils.

Level D - should be attainable by some pupils in P5 and P6 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P7 (our emphasis).

The guidelines give examples of the level to be attained. The authors however are attempting for the benefit of teachers and pupils to link closely the listening and reading skills via the text of available and appropriate books. By standardising the results on a Scottish sample it may allow in the future an operational definition to be given to the nature of a discrepancy or need.

## **Subjects**

The pupils involved in this survey will be 200 children at each of the P3 and P7 stage. The children will be randomly selected from a group of schools in East Central Scotland who meet the following criteria:

1. The P3 pupils will be in the age range 7 years 9 months to 8 years 3 months at the time of testing.
2. The P7 pupils will be in the age range 10 years 9 months to 11 years 3 months at the time of testing.
3. All pupils will have English as their first language.
4. None of the pupils will have been or be in receipt of learning support.
5. The P3 pupils will have attained Level A but not yet Level B as set out in the English Language 5-14 Guidelines.
6. The P7 pupils will have attained Level D but not yet Level E as set out in the English Language 5-14 Guidelines

Due to time and financial limitations the initial trial will however be restricted to 100 pupils at each age range in a smaller geographical area. They will be drawn from 25 different schools with each school supplying four pupils at P3 and P7.

This population size and geographical distribution still compares favourably with those found in the sample used in established tests, for example: 'The British Ability Spelling Scale' and 'The New Reading Analysis'.

The pupils will be identified with the assistance of a network of learning support advisers, support officers and teachers in East Central Scotland that has evolved through this project and without which it would have been impossible to proceed beyond a theoretical stage. Parental permission to take part in the study will be obtained and anonymity assured.

### **Null Hypothesis**

The Null Hypothesis is that the mean result for each age group, should the listening scales be age appropriate, will be 9 correct out of a 12 question task, that is, 75% correct. (As the result is obtained via one of two types of response - 'Same' and 'Different' - in the scale devised, it is necessary to take account of chance, hence the 9 out of 12, or 75%, setting. See Royers Greene & Sinatra, 1987). If a mean of 65% or less is obtained the test items selected are too difficult and if it rises beyond 85% they are too simple.

### **Procedure**

In summary, each child will be given a sample text and two practice questions, be they P3 or P7. This will be followed by the test passage and questions. Guidance is given by the examiner but the practice and test passages plus questions are kept uniform as they are presented via a pre-recorded audio tape.

Results will be tabulated under the headings 'Same' and 'Different' then an overall Raw Score and Percentage calculated. Recording by the examiner is kept to a minimum. For

example, the appropriate percentages are given in a matrix at the bottom of a child's test sheet. The examiner/teacher has only to mark the appropriate box.

The results obtained from this sample and future discussion will be the subject of further publication by the authors. At this stage the authors can envisage an MIT measure being given by voice generating computer and answers recorded via a 'Yes/No' or 'Same/Different' response on a touch sensitive screen. More sophisticated statistical analysis could also be incorporated into the programme for the analysis of both population and individual scores. In a diagnostic capacity one might predict that, as can be found with SVT and MIT not embedded in the curriculum, that:

1. Pupils who are thought to have a Specific Learning Difficulty will score higher on listening comprehension tests drawn from the curriculum than children with more generalised difficulties.
2. Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties would have a greater discrepancy between Listening Comprehension and Reading levels at higher levels of text difficulty, whereas in pupils with generalised learning difficulties the discrepancy will decrease.

For the norming procedure, it is proposed that fifty test packages will be produced so that fifty examiners will test up to eight children each. Each examiner will be asked to test up to four children in Primary 3 who have just achieved Level A in reading, and up to four children from Primary 7 who have just achieved Level D.

Testing should be completed by the end of May 1997.

Each submission will be scored by calculating the percentage of its correct responses, and then the average performance for all submissions will be computed in order to establish the norm listening comprehension for children whose reading level is at or around their chronological age.

## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

Results have been received so far from 21 schools, with most being able to find the required number of pupils fulfilling the criteria. 79 pupils at P3 and 80 at P7 have been tested. Raw score averages for each group have been 8.5 and 8.6 respectively, giving a mean percentage score of 71% for P3 and 72% for P7 pupils. These are extremely encouraging initial results.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **LISTENING COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT:**

#### **DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

The PDP Listening Comprehension Assessment is being developed as a means of assessing children's comprehension within a contextually bound setting. It used a technique developed in the United States call the "Meaning Identification Technique" (MIT). The purpose of the present exercise is to norm two tests on a Scottish population at P3 and P7 levels. We hope through this exercise to develop useful assessment tools that may be used by Scottish teachers to highlight discrepancies between a child's listening comprehension and reading accuracy skills. This knowledge will be useful in the identification of children with specific difficulties in reading and in planning appropriate interventions. We would like to thank you in advance for helping us with this procedure

#### **THE TAPE**

(1) On each side of the tape there are two passages, a practice passage and the test passage. (Side (1) is for P3 children who have reached reading level A but not level B. The passages on this side are "Flat Stanley" (sample) and "Mick's Mixed Diet".

Side (2) is for P7 children who have reached reading level D but not level E. The passages on this side are "Flat Stanley" (sample) and "The Jackdaw Tree".

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF**

#### **THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST**

Put the child at his/her ease then say:

“You are going to listen to a short passage and afterwards I will be asking you some questions so you will have to listen very carefully. “Do you understand”? Repeat the instructions if the child does not understand. Then say:

“The first passage is a warm up. Just to give you the idea. It only has four questions. Now listen carefully.”

Play the “Flat Stanley” passage. Now say:

“I am going to read you four sentences. Some of these will mean the same as those in the passage and some will mean something different. If you think the sentence that I read you means the same as in the passage say “same”. If you think that the sentence is different from the meaning of the passage say “different”. Do you understand?”

Explain to the child again if she/he does not understand.

Now read the practice sentences.

For the practice item only it is permissible to discuss the child’s responses with him/her.

## **FLAT STANLEY**

Stanley and Arthur were in the park. The day was sunny, but windy too and many other children were flying enormous kites.

Arthur wished he had a kite to fly so Stanley borrowed a big ball of string.

“You can fly me, Arthur” he said. “Come on”.

Stanley tied the string to himself and Arthur held the ball. Arthur ran across the grass holding the ball of string with Stanley on the end.

Up, up, UP! went Stanley, he was now a kite. Stanley flew high above the trees. He held his arms by his side and zoomed at the ground like a rocket and then flew up again towards the sun. Everyone in the park stood still to watch.

After a while Arthur got tired of running about holding the end of the string but Stanley went on showing off.

Adapted from ‘Flat Stanley’ by Jeff Brown

## **FLAT STANLEY PRACTICE SENTENCES**

1. The sun was shining but the wind was blowing and lots of kids had huge kites in the sky. (Same).
2. Stanley flew the kite which rose high in the sky (Different).
3. Stanley kept his arms close to his body and swooped down like a comet, then back up into the sky (Same)
4. All the people down below started running so that they could fly. (Different)

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION**

Now say:

“Good, that was a practice. Now we’re going to do the real thing. Listen carefully to the tape. This time I am going to read you twelve sentences after you have heard the passage. So listen very closely.”

Play the appropriate passage: either “Mick’s Mixed Diet” (Side 1) for children reading at level A or “The Jackdaw Tree” (Side 2) for children reading at level D. Then read the appropriate sentences.

Then say:

“Remember, I’m going to read 12 sentences. If you think that the sentence that I read you means the same as in the passage say “same”. If you think that the sentence is different from the meaning of the passage say “different”.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MARKING**

When the child says “same” or “different” in response to a test sentence, place a tick in the appropriate column. At the end of the test add up the number of ticks in boxes. For each column. The are correct answers. Then add up the total number of ticks in all the boxes.

We would like to thank you for helping us with this research project.

## **MICK'S MIXED DIET**

One day Uncle Mick weighed himself. He was very heavy. He weighed the same as 4 of me.

He said "I MUST go on a DIET!"

On the first day, Uncle Mick had one boiled egg, black coffee and no hot buttered toast. But he still felt hungry.

Later that morning when Uncle Mick thought no one was looking, he ate a bit of Auntie Kate's left-over toast, but I didn't tell.

For lunch, Uncle Mick had some cheese, a dry biscuit and some chopped up cabbage. He had no pudding. But he still felt hungry.

Later that afternoon when Uncle Mick thought no one was looking, I saw him lick ice cream from Auntie Kate's plate, but I didn't tell.

For tea Uncle Mick had steamed fish, green beans and no pudding. But he still felt hungry.

Later that night, when he thought no one was looking, I saw him eat the left-over pudding, but I didn't tell.

Uncle Mick went on like this week after week. Every Sunday he weighed himself.

Every Sunday, Auntie Kate wondered why he was taking so long to lose weight.

Bit by bit Uncle Mick did become thinner. His DIET was OVER. Now he weighs the same as 3 and a half of me.

Adapted from 'Dad's Diet' by Barbara Comber.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

C.A. \_\_\_\_\_

Male/Female

### MICK'S MIXED DIET

		Same	Different
1. Uncle Mick weighed a lot. (P)	1	_____	
2. I was four times heavier than Uncle Mick. (MC)	2		_____
3. "I just have to lose weight", said Uncle Mick. (P)	3	_____	
4. For breakfast on day one he ate eggs, toast and coffee with milk (MC)	4		_____
5. Later on when he thought no one could see, Auntie Kate nibbled toast that Uncle Mick hadn't eaten, but I said nothing. (MC).	5		_____
6. Uncle Mick didn't eat any dessert at lunch time. (P)	6	_____	
7. After lunch, when he thought he was alone, I noticed him eating some food that Auntie Kate had left, but I didn't say anything. (P)	7	_____	
8. Uncle Mick had had too much to eat. (MC)	8		_____
9. He continued this way for a couple of days. (MC)	9		_____
10 Uncle Mick stood on the scales once a week. (P)	10	_____	
11 Every time Uncle Mick weighed himself, Auntie Kate couldn't think why he was getting lighter. (MC)	11		_____
12 A little at a time he did lost weight. (P)	12	_____	
	No. of ticks	_____	No. of ticks
		_____	_____
		Total No. of ticks	
		_____	

#### For office use only

1	2	3	4
8.33%	16.66%	25%	33.33%
5	6	7	8
41.55%	50%	58.33%	66.66%
9	10	11	12
75%	83.33%	91.66%	100%

## THE JACKDAW TREE

It was known simply as the Jackdaw Tree.

It was old and crooked and had grown with a great twist through it as if some huge hand had been turning it into the ground, and over the years it had been nested in by hundreds and thousands of jackdaws. Pile upon pile, next upon nest, storey upon storey, until it was a solid platform of twigs.

When Robbie climbed it for the first time, it was the most exciting thing he'd ever done, and he could hardly move for the tremble running through him. It must have been like that for Hillary and Tensing on the roof of the world he'd thought and for the whole of that day, he'd sat high in the branches watching the life all around him.

The eggs, a pale, sort of forgotten shade of blue, were speckled with black and were laid in nests lined with rags and scraps of paper and bits of binder twine and wisps of sheep's wool that had been teased off on the hawthorn hedges that skirted the fields.

And when the young jackdaws were hatched, the sky all around was flecked like the eggs with scores of parent birds, fetching and carrying food to cram down the gaping beaks. Then last year, on the ground beneath the tree, hiding in at the very roots, Robbie had found the young bird. It had fallen from the nest, and its wing had been twisted.

Robbie had carried it home in his jersey and the old man had helped him feed it. At first, the bird had turned its head away from the bread soaked in milk and the boy had to prise its beak open and let the liquid trickle down the jackdaw's throat. It took only an instant for the bird to make up its mind that it was a taste to be enjoyed, and soon it was a non-stop job for Robbie and his grandfather to keep up with the jackdaw's cackling demands.

It grew quickly, beautifully black with a smoke-grey head that it cocked to the side when Robbie spoke to it.

Adapted from 'Robbie' by Emil Pachol

## The Jackdaw Tree

1. People just called it the Jackdaw Tree. (P) 1
2. It was ancient, bent and had developed into a huge coil as though it had been screwed into the ground by a giant hand, and during its life a great many jackdaws had built their nests on it. (P)2
3. Heap on heap, nest on nest, level on level had formed a compact wooden layer. (P) 3
4. Climbing the trees on the first occasion had been the most dangerous events of Robbie's life and he cried so much he could scarcely go on. (MC) 4
5. He imagined that Hillary and Tensing would have remained like statues on the world's highest peak, and all through the day he'd stayed at the top of the tree looking at everything going on round him. (MC)5
6. The nests, lined with pieces of old cloth, bits of paper and string and strips of wool combed from sheep by the prickly hedges surrounding the fields, contained eggs which were a light kind of faded colour of blue with dark flecks. (P) 6
7. Before the baby jackdaws were born the sky looked like rain as it was dotted all over with the older birds collecting and delivering food to stuff into the nests. (MC) 7
8. A year ago, Robbie discovered the baby jackdaw at the top of the tree, shielded by the leaves. (MC) 8
9. The bird's wing had been damaged as it fell from the tree. (P) 9
10. Robbie wrapped it in his sweater to carry it home and he and grandfather gave it some food. (P) 10
11. It didn't take long for the jackdaw to decide that this was somewhere he hated and before they knew it Robbie and the old man were given no rest in responding to the noisy demands of the bird. (MC) 11

12. In no time at all the bird became extremely frightened  
 and whenever Robbie talked to it, it turned its smoke coloured  
 head on one side to Listen. (MC)

12 \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Ticks      No. of Ticks

\_\_\_\_\_

Total No of Ticks

\_\_\_\_\_

For office use only

1	2	3	4
8.33%	16.66%	25%	33.33%
5	6	7	8
41.55%	50%	58.33%	66.66%
9	10	11	12
75%	83.33%	91.66%	100%

## APPENDIX

### 1996/97 PDP NOMINEES

The educational psychologists nominated by their local authorities and services to participate in the 1996/97 cycle of the Professional Development Initiative were listed below. Any enquiries regarding the papers in this volume should be addressed to them directly.

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