Developing a competency framework for the initial training of educational psychologists working with young people aged 16-25

Cathy Atkinson
University of Manchester

11.45am – 12.45pm, 6th November 2014
The West Midlands Continuing Professional Development Group
16-25 years – sharing practice
1. Successful bid made to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) for a Collaborative Teaching Development Grant by Sandra Dunsmuir (UCL), Sarah Wright (Southampton) and Cathy Atkinson (Manchester).

2. Project running from June 2013 to December 2014

3. Project title: ‘Developing objective structured professional assessment and feedback protocols for professional training of practitioner psychologists’
Project outline

• Developing a competency framework for the initial training of educational psychologists working with young people aged 16-25

• Using Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) from medical sciences as a model for assessing practice competence – developed as Objective Structured Professional Assessments (OSPAs)

• Providing students with video and audio feedback
Context for research

- New Code of Practice (Department for Education (DfE), 2014)
- Four outcomes (Preparing for Adulthood, 2013)
- Importance of young people’s involvement in decisions about their future (Carter et al, 2013) and EP interest in ‘Voice of the Child’
- Mental Capacity Act (2005) and guidance (TSO, 2005)
Practice perspectives

• Internationally educational psychology practice predominantly within the sphere of 0-19 provision (MacKay, 2009)
• Some precedent given by the development of Post School Psychological Services (PSPS) in Scotland (MacKay & Hellier, 2009)
• Need for EPSs to connect with adult services and identify implications for training, staffing and service delivery (MacKay & Hellier, 2009)
• Growing interest in post-16 provision amongst UK-based EPs (e.g. Arnold & Baker, 2012; Bradley, 2012; Craig, 2009; Mallinon, 2009; Robinson, 2010)
1. To consult EPs with expertise in the area to identify new knowledge and skills.
2. To develop the 16-25 curriculum for EP training and define relevant professional competences
How did we do this?

The Delphi Method

• Named after the ancient Greek oracle at Delphi from which prophecies were given. An oracle refers to a statement from someone of unquestioned wisdom and knowledge or of infallible authority.
• Developed by Olaf Helmer and associates at the Rand Corporation in the early 1950s working on defence research. Delphi techniques developed to gain group consensus from military experts on a very sensitive problem.
• Delphi procedure a rapid and efficient way to cream the tops of the heads of a group of knowledgeable people. Well-designed and properly managed Delphi can be a highly motivating experience for respondents (Dalkey, 1972)
• Group communication among geographically dispersed experts
• Completion of a series of written questionnaires, anonymously answered
• Summarised group responses, provided alongside individual responses
• Followed by a new questionnaire and the chance to change views and adjust responses
• Process ends when consensus is achieved
How did we identify our experts?

• Volunteer participant EPs with expertise in working with 16-25 year olds were sought via a posting on EPNET.

• All of the self-selecting sample (n=28) were invited to participate in the research by responding to an initial questionnaire delivered by Opinio.

• A high proportions of these (n = 24) returned the online survey.
Delphi poll, first round:

1. What aspects of the **Context** in which young people aged 16-25 live, learn and work should be included in the training curriculum for educational psychologists?

2. What aspects of **Legislation and Policy** should be included?

3. What aspects of **Assessment** should be included?

4. What aspects of **Interventions and Outcomes** should be included?

5. What aspects of **Development** should be included?

6. What aspects of **Transition** should be included?
Section 2 – Legislation and policy

2. Legislation and policy
   a) What aspects of legislation, policy and good practice guidelines should be included in the training curriculum for educational psychologists working with 16-25 year olds?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Extremely Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mental Capacity Act (2005)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Disabled Students Allowances (DSA).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

b) Any other comments about ‘Legislation and policy’?
### Section 2 - Legislation and policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Response</th>
<th>Collated Group Response % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mental Capacity Act (2005)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Autism Act (2009) and Autism Strategy (2010)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Disabled Students Allowances (DSA)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 2 - Legislation and policy – qualitative responses (Content analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Data</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. → <strong>Equality Act</strong></td>
<td>Equalities Act (2010)¶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Equality Act (2010)¶</td>
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<td>Equality Act (2010)¶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equality Act including guidance document for FE ¶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Children and Families Bill 2013 (single plan) ¶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Children &amp; families Bill ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EPs need to be prepared for contributing towards the single EHC plan,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>being informed by Pathfinders etc. ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing for adulthood (PfA) — think this links to C &amp; F Bill ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAF Act ¶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. → <strong>Children and Families Bill</strong></td>
<td>Legislation relating to disability in the workplace ¶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Policy documents regarding employment and disability ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation around employment ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research docs re employment e.g. UK Commission for Employment and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills Project, 2008 ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. → <strong>Employment and disability legislation</strong></td>
<td>Practice guidelines around working therapeutically with adults —</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need that be mental health? Could it fit under (5) if the emphasis is</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guidelines? ¶</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I wonder if you make this legislation you could also put the Ofsted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and FE here and the financial regulations as presumably that is also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>legislative? ¶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. → <strong>Legislation and practice guidance about mental health</strong></td>
<td>legislation around mental health ¶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. → <strong>Consent and decision making</strong></td>
<td>Good practice guidelines around consent and decision making bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ability of young adult to engage in this in mind ¶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent ¶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the legal framework/s + policy provide the backdrop for the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding of and knowledge of Rights, Psychological Practice and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>strategy/ies and of course the custom and practice. This underpins</td>
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</table>
Each participant received:

- Quantitative group results – all collated responses under the six categories, and descriptive data summarising the overall importance ratings associated with each one.
- A summary of their own responses to highlight their individual position in relation to collated group responses.
- All qualitative comments.
All 24 participants were then asked to respond to this new information in a second round of Delphi polling.

An appropriate level of consensus was achieved after two rounds (level varies according to context, but should achieve 70-80% according to Hasson, Keeney & McKenna, 2000).

After the second round of Delphi polling there was over 95% agreement on items that were seen as essential in a new training curriculum and those that were perceived as already being covered in existing curricula.
Who were the Delphi poll participants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary job status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority EP - main grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority EP – senior practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority EP - senior</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority EP - principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP in private practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University tutor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delphi poll participants: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delphi poll participants: Number of years practicing as an educational psychologist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years practicing as an educational psychologist</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Legislation and Policy

- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Disabled Students Allowances (DSA)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Families Bill; EHC plans; tribunals
- Disability Legislation (e.g., Carers & Disabled Children Act, 2000)
- Children & Leaving Care Act (2000)
- Mental Health Act
- Consent and decision making - good practice guidance
- Guidance on safeguarding and sexual exploitation
- Rose Review 2009; Valuing People 2010

Legend:
1. Essential in new training curricula for EPs working with YP aged 16-25 years
2. Should be captured in existing 0-19 curricula but will need extension
3. Not relevant within the existing role of an EP, or the new extended role
1. Context

- Curriculum in FE
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of key professionals
- Funding mechanisms
- Employment: preparation and skills
- Multi-agency working
- Access to post-16 services (LA and voluntary sector)
- Commissioning services/LA provision
- FE and HE priorities, pressures and curriculum
- Working with organisations
- Alternatives to FE/NEET
- Families: culture, interdependence and impact
- Health and social care
- Criminal justice system

- □ 1 Essential in new training curricula for EPs working with YP aged 16-25 years
- □ 2 Should be captured in existing 0-19 curricula but will need extension
- □ 3 Not relevant within the existing role of an EP, or the new extended role
3. Assessment

- Psychometric assessment (specialised instruments)
- Functional assessment
- Assessment focus (dyslexia)
- Specific/general learning difficulties (dyscalculia, ASC, dyspraxia, PMLD, CLLD)
- Mental health
- Adaptive behaviour assessments
- Dynamic assessment
- Assessment purpose and educational progress
- Client voice/young person's perspective
- Consultation and observation
- Assessing resilience, vulnerability and risk
- Assessing access to provision

Legend:
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4. Intervention and Outcomes

- Study skills
- Therapeutic interventions e.g. CBT
- Life skill development
- Person centred planning
- Coaching
- Goal based outcome measurement
- Use of technology to support learning and independence
- Life skill development
- Behaviour, social and emotional (including motivation)
- Basic skills (reading and numeracy)
- Systemic interventions and strategic planning

Legend:
- 1 Essential in new training curricula for EPs working with YP aged 16-25 years
- 2 Should be captured in existing 0-19 curricula but will need extension
- 3 Not relevant within the existing role of an EP, or the new extended role
5. Development

- Neurological development
- Sexuality
- Mental health
- Drug and alcohol use
- Developing independence
- Cognitive and neuropsychological development
- Theories of adult learning
- Parenting skills
- Social and emotional development
- Vocational skills

Legend:
1. Essential in new training curricula for EPs working with YP aged 16-25 years
2. Should be captured in existing 0-19 curricula but will need extension
3. Not relevant within the existing role of an EP, or the new extended role
6. Transition

- Transition to FE
- Transition to employment
- Transition to independent/community living
- Transition to HE
- Transition to other provisions
- Transition to parenthood
- Transition to adulthood
- Professional roles and responsibilities at transition
- Early identification of those at risk of poor transition or atypical transition

- □ 1 Essential in new training curricula for EPs working with YP aged 16-25 years
- □ 2 Should be captured in existing 0-19 curricula but will need extension
- □ 3 Not relevant within the existing role of an EP, or the new extended role
Expert group who met at UCL on 15th November 2013

Eight experts

• Four independent EPs
• Two senior EPs
• Two maingrade EPs
• (Two EPs also with University tutor roles)
Consensus!

- New knowledge required for working with 16-25 year olds
- Existing knowledge that needs extension to work with 16-25 year olds
- Identification of content considered not relevant within the EP role, current or new

....and now the curriculum
To find out more detail, go to https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ospa-project/competencyframework.html

OSPA Project
Objective Structured Professional Assessments

A collaboration between University College London, Southampton University
and Manchester University

Working with Young People Aged 16-25 - Competency Framework

Professional competence and fitness to practice

Kaslow et al. (2004) proposed that competencies consist of discrete knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Given the reciprocal relationship between professional competence in the workforce and initial training curricula, there is a need to ensure that definition of competence in undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders (practicing educational psychologists, service managers, university tutors), deriving both foundational and functional competencies (Rodolfa et al., 2005). Foundational competencies are necessary to perform the core functions of psychological practice, such as application of ethical frameworks, knowledge of scientific principles and awareness of cultural diversity issues. Functional competencies can be observed in a psychologist’s professional performance in terms of sets of behaviours.

The curriculum for training EPs to work with 16-25 year olds has been devised to develop functional competencies and contains three elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New knowledge required for working with 16-25 year olds</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Process skills required to deliver psychological services in relation to 16-25 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Existing knowledge that needs extension to work with 16-25 year olds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum competencies

For each of the curriculum competencies, think about:
1. What you already know
2. What new knowledge you might need to acquire
3. How you might go about acquiring this information
Next steps

• Competency profiling
• Professional development priorities
• Resources
• Development of existing expertise
• Transferrable skills
• Discussions in services