

## **Educational Psychology Practice and Training: the legacy of Burt's appointment with the London County Council?**

**Rodney Maliphant, Tony Cline and Norah Frederickson**

### **Abstract**

This paper reviews ways in which Cyril Burt's thinking and planning during his pioneering period as the world's first educational psychologist in a public service foreshadowed and influenced later developments in the work of the profession. It is necessary to recognise significant continuities and discontinuities in practice and training over the last century. Our analysis focuses on educational psychologists' work in identifying and responding to individual needs and talents, their contribution to multi-disciplinary teams, their role as a scientist-practitioner, and the preparation and training of new members of the profession. A balanced view of the legacy of Burt's appointment with the London County Council should take account of his influence in each of these areas.

### **Introduction**

The birth of the profession of educational or school psychology in this country is usually taken to be marked by Cyril Burt's unique appointment as psychologist to the London County Council's (LCC) Education Authority in 1913 at the age of 30. This new but part-time appointment was initially set up for a trial period of 3 years although Burt held the post for 19 years before succeeding Spearman as head of the Department of Psychology at University College London in 1932 (Hearnshaw, 1979). In this paper we will examine the roots of key aspects of educational psychologists' practice and training in Burt's thinking and planning during his pioneering period at the LCC. Our premise is that 'knowing where we have been can help us to know more clearly where we should be going'. The paper adopts a 'narrative style' with a historical emphasis on professional practice and professional development. It is also deliberately pitched at a macro- rather than a micro- level to identify broader and fundamental issues

confronting the profession in this country as it considers strategies and policies to enable educational psychologists and their services to help meet more effectively the expanding needs now persistently surfacing within this country's education and children's services.

In seeking to evaluate Burt's legacy from this early period of his career our focus will be on the exploration of continuities and discontinuities in professional practice and training over the last century, and on the influence that Burt's early practices and publications had in shaping subsequent developments in EP practice and training. We first examine the area of practice that provided the rationale for Burt's appointment and today comprises the statutory element of the educational psychologist's work: the assessment of special educational needs. We then consider the contribution of educational psychologists to multi-disciplinary teams, from early child guidance clinic work to current involvement with local authority services for looked after children and young offenders. The essential nature of the educational psychologist's role is considered next, in the context of Burt's clear vision of the educational psychologist as scientist-practitioner. The final area to be explored in detail is the area of EP training. Here at least a tangible legacy can be traced in the meeting minutes of the UCL initial training programme, chaired by Burt in the 1940s, through to the three authors of this paper, whose involvement with the programme spans the period from 1963 to the present day. In each of these areas there are interesting parallels between aspects of Burt's early work and current EP practice, parallels we anticipate many readers will find surprising. In concluding this paper we consider some of the reasons for the perceived discontinuities in EP practice over the last 100 years and suggest that the time has come for the profession to re-own this part of its heritage.

### **Identifying and responding to individual needs and talents**

The stimulus that led the LCC to appoint a psychologist in 1913 was the need to arrange the examination of pupils in elementary schools nominated for admission to schools for the 'mentally deficient'. Burt's biographer, Leslie Hearnshaw, reports: "It was suspected that the medical officers hitherto responsible for this examination had been sending many pupils to special

schools who were retarded rather than mentally deficient, and it was hoped that expensive mistakes could be avoided by means of psychological testing. So after some debate the Council finally agreed to appoint a psychologist rather than an additional medical officer.” (Hearnshaw, 1979, pp. 33-34) It is reported that he was left to draw up his own plan of work. When this was finally approved by the Council, it had three parts:

1. “To carry out periodically, with the assistance of the teachers, psychological surveys of the children in the Council's schools;
2. To examine and report
  - on individual cases of educational subnormality (chiefly in connection with certification, and training of mental defectives)
  - on gifted children (chiefly in connection with borderline cases for junior county scholarships)
  - on delinquent children (chiefly in connection with juvenile offenders appearing before the courts)
3. To study and report on the psychological aspects of any specific educational problems that might from time to time arise (e.g. the methods adopted in the Council's examinations for entrance to ‘secondary schools’, i.e. what are now called ‘grammar’ schools.” (Valentine, 1965, p.15)

Burt fulfilled this brief with impressive energy and creativity. Reporting on his first sixteen months in the post he wrote: “During the past year the psychologist has examined, personally or with the help of teachers, rather over 2,000 children in the Council’s schools. These children comprise in round figures, (1) about 400 subnormal children, (2) about 200 certified mental defectives, (3) about 1,400 normal children.” (Burt, 1914, Letter to CI, quoted by Hearnshaw, 1979, p. 35) His plan had been to spend two days a week of his half-time work with the LCC testing children recommended for special schools and classes. The third day/half-day was to be spent on “test construction, standardisation and administrative work” (Hearnshaw, 1979, p. 34). It would appear that, if he took no holidays over a period of 16 months, he and the teachers who helped him must have assessed more than 15 children a day. The sources we checked did not describe the typical length or contents of his reports on these children

In a talk to the Association of Educational Psychologists 50 years later on the occasion of his appointment as the Patron of the Association at the age of 81 Burt gave an account of his methods from memory which is hard to reconcile with the numbers given in that first report: "Well, from all this, you'll readily understand that during my first few years with the Council most of my working days were occupied with these individual case studies. Whatever the problem might be, instead of calling each child up to the office, I found it, I always found it, far more effective to study him, as it were, in situ, and that of course meant visiting him in the school, calling at his home, and watching him with his play-fellows larking in the streets." (Burt, 1964, reported in Rushton, 2002, p.565.) This is, of course, only one of many occasions when his recollections and analysis as an ailing older man were called into question. However, it is salutary to recognise that the psychologist most closely associated with early efforts to identify an EP's contribution in psychometric terms was also an ardent advocate of the value of interaction and observation outside the interview room. In an unpublished memorandum he advised "every educational psychologist... to start by actually living with his cases and their families" (Hearnshaw, 1979, p. 39).

There was in fact no blueprint for how Burt should work. The Council may have expected an emphasis on work that would support the "certification and training of mental defectives" and the examination of gifted children "chiefly in connection with borderline cases for junior county scholarships". In the event Burt acted on a much wider interpretation of how EPs might enhance the education of these groups. From the outset it was clear that his work on individual assessment was to be complemented by work on developing the tools for the job and by studies designed to put individual casework in context and to improve that context. He took an interest in curriculum development alongside his priority concern to develop psychometric instruments. This broader interpretation of a psychologist's value was evident from a very early stage. For example, in a letter to the Chief Inspector in 1915 he proposed that in the next year he would "begin systematically working through one or two districts in the county, visiting every school both ordinary and special. My chief

object will be the examination of mentally defective candidates; but I propose, if possible, to include in my survey the following cognate problems,

1. The distribution of backward children;
2. The standardisation of scholastic and non-scholastic tests;
3. The determination of average and extreme attainments.”

(Burt, 1915, quoted by Wooldridge, 1994, p. 84)

By April 1918 he was able to produce a report for the LCC on “Provision for Backward Children”. He carefully explained his working definition of backwardness - “all those who, in the middle of their school career, would be unable to do the work even of the class below that which is considered normal for their age”. It is not now possible to evaluate how closely his survey methods approximated to the gradual development of a comprehensive sample that he had proposed to the Chief Inspector, but he certainly covered all the Council’s electoral divisions, providing early evidence of the great variation between them that has changed little in a century. The incidence of “backwardness” varied from under 1% in Dulwich, Lewisham and Hampstead to over 20% in Lambeth and elsewhere. This is one of many instances of a preoccupation with the impact of poverty and poor social conditions which seems to have had much more influence on Burt’s recommendations to the Council for action at this stage of his career than any controversial views on heredity. His recommendations in this report covered not only topics such as curriculum and teaching methods, class size and support for school attendance but also action to ameliorate the social conditions affecting the children’s learning. “The active co-operation of the Children’s Care (School) Committees should therefore be secured to influence parents and others to obtain adequate nourishment, fresh air, booting, clothing, and medical treatment for the children... provide not only meals but even sleeping quarters in necessitous cases... play centres, happy evenings and vacation playgrounds” (LCC, 1923, Section 8). The spirit of these recommendations is in accord with the well-intentioned university settlements in slum areas that were a feature of philanthropic activity in that period. Burt is said to have lived in one of these in Liverpool when he had a post as lecturer there and then in another in East London after his move to the metropolis

(Valentine, 1965; Hearnshaw, 1979). Those responsible for later EPS reports for local authority committees might envy Burt the scope of what he was encouraged to cover in such a report. But then few would find that their internal reports are reprinted five years later, as this one was.

Burt's individual casework and extensive surveys laid the foundation for major texts in other fields besides special educational needs, culminating in publications such as *The Young Delinquent* (1925) and, much later, *The Gifted Child* (1975). Burt was the first of many creative EPs who appreciated the opportunity provided by participation in casework to investigate how individual assessment and intervention might be conducted more effectively and productively. Later local authority practitioners who exemplify a range of different approaches include Tom Ravenette developing applications of Personal Construct Psychology to assessment and intervention in the unpromising setting of a Children's Service reception centre (Ravenette, 1980), Dave Tweddle working with a gifted special school head teacher on applications of behavioural psychology to the prevention of classroom failure (Ainscow and Tweddle, 1979), and Marjorie Boxall developing the nurture group strategy in Inner London primary schools (Boxall, 1976). None of these practitioners would have named Burt as a significant influence on their work, but such imaginative responses to a local authority brief for identifying and responding to individual children's needs and talents was in line with the precedent Burt established, refusing to be trammelled by narrow expectation in identifying what psychology can contribute.

### **The contribution of educational psychologists to multi-disciplinary teams**

In his work for children with learning difficulties and exceptional talents Burt worked closely with and through teachers. The first major book arising from his LCC work was *Mental and Scholastic Tests* (1921) designed for use by teachers. In his work for children who presented with difficult or delinquent behaviour he saw the need for a broader professional team. The second major book that emerged from his work in London, *The Young Delinquent* (1925), gave as much attention to "environmental conditions" and "physical conditions" as to intellectual and temperamental conditions. The "psychological clinics" that

he advocated for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency were to include not only two psychologists but also “one or more social workers trained in the psychological investigation of social problems, capable of making systematic case-reports, familiar with the industrial life of the district and with the problems of the working classes” (Burt, 1925, Appendix 2). These clinics were not to be concerned with diagnosis alone: “It cannot be too strongly emphasised that merely to apply a few tests of intelligence, and to tag the child with some learned label, is inadequate. A one-man study, with a hurried report after a one-hour interview, can be of little value. To deal with the child from a single aspect alone may be quite as fruitless as to leave him to the shrewd guesses of the magistrate who has seen him for ten minutes in the court-room. After each case has been examined, a round-table conference should be held, in which all the various experts concerned - medical, legal, psychological, educational and social - will take their share and offer their advice: and it will be from these joint discussions that the most profitable results will arise.” (Burt, 1925, 9. 621)

It is not surprising then that Burt took an interest in the development of Child Guidance Clinic teams in America, and played a leading role in the establishment of similar clinical teams at this time in the United Kingdom, acting as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the influential Child Guidance Council from 1926. As is evident in his description of a “Psychological Clinic” above, his idea for a multi-disciplinary clinic had a psychologist rather than a doctor as the senior staff member (Sampson, 1980). But he turned down an invitation to act as Director of one of the first clinics, and the appointment of a Medical Director seems to have led eventually to a division of labour that narrowed the scope of the psychologist’s work in the clinics for many years (Keir, 1952). Even so key features of the first child guidance clinics are recognisable in many CAMHS clinics almost a century later - multidisciplinary centres in which a team dedicated to psycho-social assessment and intervention are co-located in a community-based building. The very first operated in four large rooms on the second floor of a secondary school with two evening sessions a week and two afternoon sessions. Reports on school and home conditions were supplied by School Care Committee Visitors (Sampson,

1980), precursors in London of the professional grouping that later became Education Welfare Officers. With some variations in working practices the number of clinics nationally expanded slowly through to the 1970's. However, the aspirations of the clinics became increasingly undermined by quarrels about management, serious shortfalls in staff training, a lack of evidence for effectiveness and a mismatch with the expectations of referring agencies (DES, 1968; Tizard, 1973; Sampson, 1975; Cline, 1980).

The slow withdrawal of educational psychologists from a substantial commitment to these clinics and their successors is not well documented. It appears to have been accelerated during a period when Educational Psychology Service time had an increasingly tight focus on the school as its primary client. Recent surveys have charted an interest among other statutory agencies such as Social Services and Health in the development of "a formalised structure for enabling joint assessments, planning, provision and training with educational psychology services" (Kelly and Gray, 2000, p. 7) and have made a case for educational psychologists developing "a broader role extending across all services for children and where there may be a somewhat reduced emphasis on services to schools" (Farrell et al., 2006, p. 103).

Such demands are not new. Even when expansion was inhibited by the limited availability of trained psychologists, innovations to meet the demand for new kinds of service were still attempted. For example, in the 1950s, a new post - reputedly the first of its kind - was established in a large Local Education Authority (LEA), Devon. Half of a psychologist's time was paid for by the local Children's Department (now part of Social Services) to enable child care staff to have regular, full time access to a psychologist for half a week every week to give more direct help to both staff and the children placed in the care of their Local Authority (LA). This appointment was made at a time when the LA employed only 3 educational psychologists. Similar posts became more common subsequently, and the commissioning of psychologists' time by other services and agencies is now an essential element of the way EPS staff resources are allocated. The clarity about distinctive professional perspectives and contributions that Burt took for granted has often been lost in the



intervening period. However this is now seen to be of crucial importance across multi-agency teams (Hymans, 2006) and in specific ventures such as work with Youth Offending Teams (Ryrie, 2006).

### **The Educational Psychologist as Scientist-Practitioner**

Perhaps the area in which Burt's thinking impresses as most strikingly contemporary is in his conceptualisation of the essential nature of the EP role: *'...the work of the educational psychologist is essentially that of a scientific investigator; in a word it is research. .... whether we were dealing with individual cases or with general surveys...'* (Burt, 1964, reported in Rushton, 2002, p.566). The more detailed description he provides of his approach to individual case work clarifies that this work indeed is also included: *'....all my work in the Council's Schools was of the nature of research. Even the individual cases, just because they were "cases"—problem pupils referred to the psychologist for special inquiry—had each to form the subject of a small intensive investigation.'* (Burt, 1964, reported in Rushton, 2002, p.565). This description of practice sits very comfortably with modern conceptualisations of the educational psychologist as a scientist-practitioner (Miller & Frederickson, 2006) applying hypothesis-testing based problem solving frameworks (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008).

Once again, notwithstanding striking parallels, it is not apparent that current practice has been influenced in any explicit way by Burt's pioneering work. Miller and Frederickson (2006) describe shifts in emphasis within EP practice from the mid 1970s to mid 1990s in which the spotlight shifts from psychometric testing to behavioural approaches, before broadening systemically. Miller's description of his early experience in a service dominated by psychometric testing graphically illustrates the absence of a hypothesis-testing based problem solving approach. *'....there was a requirement that all students referred to the Service, for whatever presenting problem, should undergo an IQ assessment. Further, any such student found to have an IQ of 70 or less should be recommended for an ESN(M) school placement, whatever the other circumstances. Conversely, any student scoring a point or two above this cut-off figure could or should not be admitted, however strong the requests or*

demands from other quarters' (Miller & Frederickson, 2006, p108). It is not surprising that criticism of such practice mounted through the decade (e.g. Burden 1973; Maliphant, 1974; Gillham 1978).

In contrast to psychometric approaches, behavioural approaches, with their emphasis on assessment for intervention, offered a more direct opportunity to make a difference. In addition they could be given away to teachers and parents, both on an individual basis and in training courses, so potentially maximising their impact. However, despite many successes with individual children, teachers and schools, there was no mass uptake of such interventions across the education system and no marked decrease in referrals to educational psychology services. Miller's (1996) in depth analysis of successful behavioural interventions highlighted the importance of considering in addition a range of systemic school factors and home-school interactions, alongside within-person factors such as the cognitive attributions and emotional responses of those involved.

The need for a broadly based approach was also being advocated in relation to EP assessment practice. Frederickson, Webster and Wright (1991) criticised a lack of attention to social, cognitive and ecological psychology, and argued that, "*...psychological assessment should involve a creative investigation of a broad range of hypotheses that builds on research from all areas of psychology*", (p.28). Hypotheses about what is influencing a problematic situation and about what can be done to manage it more effectively should both be considered. These proposals were presented as a change of direction in EP assessment practice. Despite the fact that all three authors of this 1991 paper trained as educational psychologists at UCL no explicit links were made to the tenets that guided the practice of the UK's first educational psychologist, who established their training programme (as will be discussed in the next section) and whose portrait they would have passed each day at university during their professional training. Nonetheless it is likely that the strong scientist-practitioner emphasis of the UCL programme does represent a direct legacy of its founder and it may be responsible for Frederickson et al.'s (1991) identification of the distinctive

contribution of the EP as being that the hypotheses which drive their work are drawn from psychological theory and research.

The importance of research in EP practice has not enjoyed consistent recognition. Government reviews of the EP role in England have varied greatly in the emphasis afforded it. The first such review, the Summerfield report, did recognise the educational psychologist as a consumer of psychological research applicable to education, '*The particular contribution of psychologists in education services derives from their specialized study of psychological science and its application to education and to other aspects of human development. It should be the main criterion in determining their work*' (DES, 1968, p.xi).

However this did not extend to describing the educational psychologists as producers of research: 'the scientific research role of the educational psychologist so strongly advocated and practices by Burt received little mention' (Dessent, 1978, p.31).

Across the intervening 32 years between government reports on the work of educational psychologists, the picture that emerges from various surveys is of very little research being conducted by educational psychology practitioners (Webster & Beveridge, 1997; Wedell & Lambourne, 1980). Indeed one well known advocate of the scientist-practitioner model of educational psychology practice provocatively entitled an article on the subject 'Are educational psychologists serious about research?' (Lindsay, 1998). It is perhaps not surprising that the government reports on the work of educational psychologists failed to identify any involvement of educational psychologists in conducting research and produced a description of the role of educational psychologists in which less prominence even was given to the application of psychology (DfEE, 2000).

By contrast a review of the work of educational psychologists conducted in Scotland around the same time identified research as one of five core functions (the others being consultation, assessment, intervention and training), implemented across three levels of practice: child and family, school or establishment, education authority/council (Scottish Executive, 2002). The next

review to be published in England (only 6 years after the 2000 report) was more congruent with the Scottish report and identified engagement in research as one of a small number of areas (along with group and individual therapy, staff training and systems work with organisations) in which expansion and development was recommended (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires, & O'Connor, 2006). What is more, the report identified a diminution in previously identified barriers, such as lack of time and prioritisation by employers. It was proposed that the necessary time would be released by some reduction of EP involvement in statutory work, while a new focus on commissioning evidence based services to deliver value for money in schools and LAs had led to a greater level of priority being given to EPs' research role. One striking example of this trend was the creation in Buckinghamshire in 2011 of a senior educational psychologist (research) post the task outline for which is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Task outline SEP (Research), Buckinghamshire County Council**

<b>SEP Research Role</b>	
<b>Tasks Outline:</b>	
(a)	To work with the Divisional Director, Commissioning & Business Improvement and SLT to implement agreed research projects
(b)	To conduct literature reviews of projects/initiatives being considered by Children's Services to identify the evidence base for these proposed projects/research.
(c)	To produce succinct, straight forward summaries of literatures reviews conducted and the evidence base available for business case presentations to County Council officers and Members as required.
(d)	To support senior officers as required in presenting the evidence base for projects and initiatives.
(e)	To provide advice on appropriate evaluative data gathering and measures available, in line with budget/resources available, to maximize quality of evaluation and minimizing cost-including time cost.
(f)	To support/develop Evaluative frameworks for new projects/initiatives agreed within Children's Services as required. This will include facilitating the gathering of appropriate baseline data, pre/post data, data inputting, data evaluation via appropriate statistical programs such as SPSS.
(g)	To support/adapt evaluation of existing projects/initiatives, maximizing quality and minimizing cost.
(h)	To develop an ethics framework with the Divisional Director and Principal Educational psychologist to approve research requests within Children's Services.

However such developments bring with them other challenges, such as the management of expectations. It has long been recognised that the link between research and practice is not straightforward. More broadly within psychology something of a gulf between scientist and practitioner, theory and practice, experimental psychology and applied psychology, was particularly evident during the first half of the last century as psychology developed as a discipline. The use of a common language and sometimes premature popularisation of the subject added further hazards to understanding both its strengths and its limitations. Since then there has been a marked and exciting rapprochement between researcher and practitioner, particularly in child psychology. This has been very productive as exemplified in distinguished work by a number of psychologists, notably Bryant, Frith and Morton. However, as the long established disciplines such as medicine and engineering have demonstrated, an increasing awareness of the complexity and multiplicity of interacting factors involved in determining 'cause' and 'effect' continue to present a constant challenge to all scientific and evidence based enterprises (see Morton and Frith, 1995). We can predict that this factor will also provide a continuing source of irritation and frustration to education's administrators as well as politicians looking for clear cut evidence on which to base hopefully their cost effective decisions.

Within educational psychology the relationship between research and practice has often not been clear, close or convincing (Sigston, 1993; Phillips, 1999). In the UK, as in the US, the potential of the evidence based practice movement to address this problematic relationship has increasingly been identified (Frederickson, 2002; Fox, 2011). Defined by the American Psychological Association as "the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences" (APA, 2006, p. 273), the emphasis is on integrating professional expertise with best available external evidence from systematic research. What counts as best available evidence will depend on the question to be addressed. While much controversy has been caused by the use of classic evidence hierarchies, which privilege findings from randomised controlled trials, such hierarchies only apply to efficacy (does it work?) questions. Given the range of questions of relevance

in practice, typologies, where appropriateness of study type for answering particular types of questions is assessed, are preferred to hierarchies (Pettigrew & Roberts, 2003). For example, if the issue of concern is about reasons for dropping out of an intervention programme then a qualitative approach, perhaps involving detailed interviews with those involved, is likely to be rated highly.

While it should be expected that educational psychologists will recommend evidence-supported approaches, the collection of practice-based evidence on individual response is also required. For example, even the best available intervention does not work for up to one third of children and adolescents and some deteriorate in response to intervention (Carr, 2000). In addition a theoretical understanding of the mechanisms underlying change is important if psychologists are to appropriately judge the applicability of an approach and use feedback and other data to tailor it to the needs of diverse clients and practice settings (Hughes, 2000). Given the complexity of these requirements it is not surprising that the establishment of doctoral level training in the UK has been regarded as a crucial means of developing the research skills required to support the development of evidenced based practice (Lindsay, 1998; Farrell, 2010; Frederickson, 2002).

### **Training in Educational Psychology**

Burt has a unique place in British educational psychology training as well as educational psychology practice. He established the first UK training programme in educational psychology, although there is disagreement among published sources as to when and where this occurred. According to the Summerfield Report (DES, 1968), the first one year programme of professional training in educational psychology was a post-graduate diploma programme established at UCL in 1946. However this was disputed by Burt himself who reported that the UCL diploma had been established in the early 1930s, and had in fact been preceded by a masters programme at the London Day Training Centre (the precursor of the Institute of Education) in 1923 (Burt, 1969), where Burt held a part-time post (Aldrich, 2002) and Chair in Educational Psychology at the University of London. In 1932 when Charles Spearman retired as Head of

the Department of Psychology at UCL, Burt was named his successor and relocated there, giving up his half time role with the LCC.

While 60 years elapsed before the length of training in educational psychology was extended, the number of training centres and graduates produced each year increased substantially during this period. Only four training centres for educational psychologists existed in England and Wales in the early 1950s and three of these were located in London. The total annual output of trained educational psychologists from these four centres was around 16-20 in the early 1950s rising to 23 in 1965 when the government set up a committee of enquiry about the training and work of educational psychologists. It published its report in 1968 as the Summerfield Report (DES, 1968). Although it was never accorded any formal or statutory powers by government, this report resulted in a significant increase in training centres and an eventual improvement in staffing levels within LAs. There are now 12 training centres in England plus one in Wales, one in Northern Ireland and two in Scotland. The annual output of educational psychologists from these University based training centres in England has been maintained at around 120 following the institution nationally of 3 year doctoral level professional training programmes in 2006.

The profession has long been able to recruit trainees from a highly selected pool of able and strongly motivated applicants – a valuable resource. Back in 1953 the first author of this paper was one of these trainees, and recalls a surprising level of involvement by Burt for a head of department, which included sitting on the EP trainee selection panel. Recollections of training then point to some entertaining and illuminating differences. “We ... had to produce our own remedial apparatus, specifically designed to suit the various children we were helping – little was commercially available at the time. On Tuesday evenings I used to see some illiterate adolescent van boys (associated with the Telfer Pie Co., as I recall)..... On Saturday mornings, I used to see a schizophrenic 16-year old and a variety of other children, some from privileged backgrounds, who were failing to make progress in school..... During the vacations, we spent a week working in a hospital for severely handicapped children.....” (Maliphant, 1998, p23). However key continuities are also apparent: “The emphasis on

assessment techniques and practical work, particularly remedial work in reading, was considerable, but usually linked to some sort of hypothesis testing or problem solving approach” (Maliphant, 1998, p23).

Today the importance of training EPs in interventions continues to be recognised, although the focus is on interventions such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy skills (Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011) or Video Interaction Guidance (Kennedy, Landor & Todd, 2011), rather than remedial literacy programmes. The emphasis on remedial teaching in the 1950s-60s was not unique to UCL. In commenting on the Summerfield Report Burt noted that the need to undertake remedial education, and supervise teachers in doing so, was one reason why he considered that “a short spell of experience as a teacher may prove a considerable asset” (Burt, 1969, p.5) to an intending trainee EP. He did however qualify this view, “nevertheless, I would not for a moment erect previous teaching experience into an indispensable qualification” (Burt, 1969, p.5), supporting a key recommendation of the Summerfield report that teaching experience be removed as a prerequisite for EP training. However this recommendation was not implemented, the profession was divided on the question in 1969, and remained so until the implementation of doctoral training in 2006, when qualified teaching experience ceased to be required (Frederickson, Malcolm, & Osborne, 1999). Beyond the debate about the preparation such experience provided, the promotion opportunities it afforded EPs were also a consideration (Currie, 1969). Ironically, by 2006 Directors of Education had been replaced by Directors of Children’s Services who were as likely to have a qualification in social work as teaching, and qualified teaching experience is no longer required even to become a head teacher! In a foreshadowing of the current focus on competencies, Burt (1969) had argued instead for a specification of the characteristics which trainees should possess.

### **Concluding Discussion**

In conclusion we can see that in many areas of practice there has been a surprising degree of continuity, despite perceptions of discontinuity. While work focused on the assessment of children who have SEN continues to represent a major focus and is arguably a key driver for EP receipt of public service funding



for employment and training, it has never been the only focus. Assessment, of any kind, however necessary, is in any case just the beginning stage of any investigation as the profession has long emphasised.

To what can we ascribe these impressions of discontinuity? One possibility is that some of the most impassioned and persuasive writing is produced by each emerging generation of professional leaders who, adolescent-like, stereotype the previous generation with the attributed practices from which they are attempting to break free. Burt commented on criticisms of this kind levelled at educational psychologists' use of psychometric tests: "*.... in recent years, educational psychologists have come under heavy fire from a number of younger writers, like Dr. Stott, and Dr. Campbell, and Dr. McLeish, for our "naïve reliance," as they call it, our naive reliance on tests. 'The Educational Authorities of those days,' said Dr. Stott, 'were only too glad to hand on their headaches to a pseudo-scientist and meekly accept the findings of a pseudo-test.'..... I find it difficult to avoid the conclusion that these younger critics glean their notions of what went on in those early days from each other rather than from the contemporary reports.*" (Burt, 1964, reported in Rushton 1992, p.563). Almost 50 years later Morris reports similar contemporary misunderstanding of practice in the 1970s, *'In my current role in the initial training of EPs at the University of Birmingham, I find myself surprised and, indeed, sometimes irritated to read the accounts of contemporary trainees who, while acknowledging the vision of the 'Reconstructing Movement', position my generation, and indeed even EPs of the recent past, as blinkered determinists, focusing exclusively on 'within child factors', wedded to their psychometric tests, to the exclusion of virtually all else.'* (Morris, 2013, p.74).

However, reluctance by the profession of educational psychology in modern times to trace a legacy to Burt cannot but have been influenced by the scandal created by the allegations of research fraud that erupted in the late 1970s, some years after his death (Hernshaw, 1979). It certainly is in contrast to his installation as patron of the AEP in the mid 1960s. Subsequent investigations have overturned most of the more dramatic allegations made against Burt, such as the invention of non-existent research assistants (Fletcher, 1991; Joynson,

1989; Macintosh, 1995). In 1992 the British Psychological Society rescinded its 1980 condemnation of Burt's work, adopting instead an agnostic position. The current consensus is that, even if proof of fraud is inconclusive, many of his post-retirement publications, in a journal of which he was editor, conspicuously failed to meet appropriate standards of care, accuracy and presentation. But neither this nor his now controversial influence on the national reliance on psychometry in the secondary school selection system (Wooldridge, 1994) should prevent us from recognising the innovative significance of the early work as an educational psychologist that is featured in this paper.

Both the broad continuities that have been identified in some areas and the discontinuity that can be discerned in others can generally be mapped onto the socio-political landscape of the time. Frederickson (2013) has mapped the effects of political and economic driving and restraining forces on historical continuities and changes in EP training. Similar factors have shaped the growth of the profession and the character of professional practice over the years. When Burt left the LCC in 1932 his post was frozen and no further appointment was made until 1948 (Keir, 1952). This was in spite of Burt's success being formally and enthusiastically endorsed by its Chief Education Officer, Sir Robert Blair (viz. London County Council's (LCC) 1916 Report on LCC schools). Hearnshaw (1979, p.36) states that Burt did put in several requests for paid assistants during his long tenure of the post but they were never granted. Reasons for this are not known. It has been suggested that the lack of development in establishing something approaching an explicitly psychological support service for schools at this time may have been due to some members of London's school inspectorate already having 'possessed some training in psychology' (Hearnshaw (1979, p34). Further exploration does confirm that Dr C W Kimmins, appointed London's first Chief Inspector of Schools in 1904, and Inspector Dr P. B. Ballard, appointed in 1906, amongst others, did possess rather more substantive knowledge of psychology in this early part of the twentieth century than perhaps Hearnshaw's brief statement might convey. By contrast Woolridge (1994) identifies the economic depression, which substantially halted the expansion of special schools between the world wars, as a significant influence. No evidence supporting or opposing this view has

been traced. It should also be noted that the growth of Guild Guidance Clinics began in this period (though with some charitable support) and that the first educational psychologist outside London was appointed in 1931 in Leicester (Dessent, 1978).

Turning to the present, with the UK in the grip of the worst economic recession since the 1930s, what sort of educational psychology service does central and local government wish to develop in these straitened times? How does that match up with services that psychologists are trying to develop? In fact the answer to the first of these questions is probably more positive now than it has been at any point in the last 100 years. After accepting the recommendations of the Roberts Review of EP training (Department for Education, 2011), central and local government are working together to provide funding for doctoral training on a three cohort basis. The review recognises a broad conceptualisation of the EP role, in particular encompassing early intervention. Nationally, a number of LA EP services are expanding in response to the success of traded services initiatives. Meanwhile the draft illustrative special educational needs regulations and the indicative draft Code of Practice associated with the Children and Families Act (2014) outline a continuing role for educational psychologists in special needs assessment and planning.

What of the second question, concerning the match with what psychology services are seeking to develop? The breadth will certainly be welcomed as a positive feature. As we have seen, over the past 100 years EPs have proved very successful in maintaining the vision of a broad role, able to address the psychological needs of the whole child in context. This has involved adaptability in the range of contexts EPs have inhabited, but also assertiveness in defying narrow role definitions others have sought to impose, successively: psychiatrists, medical officers, education advisors and education officers. This important balance is also apparent in work with schools purchasing traded services – the EP's time can be bought, but what the school needs to help a child is a matter for consultation, and what a child needs is a matter of professional judgement. A final view from Burt, which the profession can perhaps own: "When all is said

and done, educational psychology should plainly be the creation of educational psychologists” (Burt, 1969, p.11).

## References

- Ainscow, M. and Tweddle, D.A. (1979). *Preventing Classroom Failure*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Aldrich, R (2002) *The Institute of Education, 1902-2003 A centenary history*. London: Institute of Education.
- APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice. (2006). Evidence-based practice in psychology. *American Psychologist*, 61, 271–285.
- Ballard, P. B. (1913). *Oblivescence and reminiscence*. *British Journal of Psychology*, 1, 1–82.
- Ballard, P. B. (1938), *Principles of Classroom Teaching*. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 8: 96–99.
- Blakemore, S.J., & Frith, U. (2005). *The Learning Brain: Lessons for Education*. Oxford:Blackwell.
- Boxall, M. (1976). *The Nurture Group in the Primary School*. London: Inner London Education Authority.
- Burden, R.L. (1973) If we throw the tests out of the window what is there left to do? *Journal of the Association of Educational Psychologists*, 3(5) 6-9
- Burt, C. (1969). Psychologists in the education services. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 22, 1–11.
- Carr, A. (2000) (ed.) *What Works with Children and Adolescents? A Critical Review of Psychological Interventions with Children, Adolescents and their Families*. London: Routledge.
- Cline, T. 1980. More help for schools - a critical look at child guidance. *Therapeutic Education*, vol. 8, 3 - 11.
- Currie, J.M. (1969). Psychologists in the education services: teaching experience. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 22, 89–91.
- Department for Education (DfE) (2011). *Developing sustainable arrangements for the initial training of educational psychologists*. Retrieved 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 from [www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/sen/a00200017/review-of-educational-psychologist-training](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/sen/a00200017/review-of-educational-psychologist-training)
- Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (2000). *Educational Psychology Services (England): Current role, good practice and future directions. The Report of the Working Group*. London: HMSO.

- Department for Education and Science (DES) (1968) *Psychologists in Education Services*. (The Summerfield report). London: HMSO
- Department of Health & Social Security (1973) Circular on Child Guidance. HMSO: London.
- Department for Education and Science (DfES) (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. London; HMSO
- Department for Education and Science (DfES) (2006). *A Review of the Functions and Contribution of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales in the Light of Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. Nottingham: DfES: Publications.
- Dessent, T (1978). The historical development of school psychological services. In W.E.C. Gillhan (Ed.) *Reconstructing educational psychology*. London: Croom Helm (pp. 24-33).
- Dessent, T (1994) *Educational psychology: What future?* *Educational and Child Psychology*, 11(3), 50-54.
- Farrell, P. (2010). School psychology: Learning lessons from history and moving forward. *School Psychology International*, 31(6) 581–598
- Farrell, P., Woods, K., Lewis, S., Rooney, S., Squires, G., and O'Connor, M. (2006) *A Review of the Functions and Contributions of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales in light of "Every child matters : Change for Children"*. Nottingham: DFES Publications
- Fletcher, R. (1991). *Science, ideology and the media: the Cyril Burt scandal*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Fox, M (2011). Practice-based evidence – overcoming insecure attachments. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 27(4), 325-335.
- Frederickson, N. (2002) Evidence Based Practice and Educational Psychology. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 19(3) 96-111.
- Frederickson, N. (2013). The Move to Doctoral Training: A Study in Systems Change. In C. Arnold & J. Hardy (Eds.) *British Educational Psychology: the First Hundred Years*. Oxford: BPS Blackwell (pp.115-127).
- Frederickson, N., & Cline, T. (2002). *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity: A Textbook*. Buckingham: OU Press.

- Frederickson, N., Malcolm & Osborne, L.A. (1999) Teaching or other relevant experience with children. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 15(3) 146-156.
- Frederickson, N., Webster, A. and Wright, A.K. (1991) 'Psychological assessment: a change of emphasis.' *Educational Psychology in Practice*. 7 (1) 20-29.
- Gillham, W.E.C. (1978). The failure of psychometrics. In W.E.C. Gillham (Ed.) *Reconstructing educational psychology*. London: Croom Helm (pp. 82-96).
- Hearnshaw, L. (1979). Cyril Burt: psychologist. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hughes. J. N. (2000). The essential role of theory in the science of treating children: Beyond empirically supported treatments. *Journal of School Psychology*, 38, 301–330.
- Joynson, R. B. (1989). The Burt affair. London: Routledge.
- Keir, G. (1952) Symposium on psychologists and psychiatrists in the Child Guidance Service. 111. A history of Child Guidance. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 22 (1), 5-29.
- Kelly, B., Woolfson, L., & Boyle, J. (Eds) *Frameworks for practice in educational psychology: A textbook for trainees and practitioners*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Kennedy, H., Landor, M., and Todd, L (Eds.) (2011). *Video Interaction Guidance: a relationship-based intervention to promote attunement, empathy and well-being*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Kimmins, C.W. (1916) *The interests of London children of different ages in air raids* *Journal of Experimental Pedagogy*, 3, pp. 225-236
- Kimmins. C.W (1922) *Organisation for Visual Instruction* *Nature* 109, 617-618
- Kimmins, C.W. (1926) *The Child's Attitudes to Life* London : Methuen
- Kimmins C W (1929) *Aspects of Psychology in Education*. *Nature*, Volume 124, Issue 3127, pp. 516-518
- Lindsay, G. (1998). Are educational psychologists serious about research? *Educational and Child Psychology*, 15(3), 74-85.
- London County Council (LCC) (1916) *Report on Education*. London: County Hall

- Macintosh, N.J. (1995). (Ed). *Cyril Burt: Fraud or Framed?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maliphant, R (1974) *Educational psychology: Testing testing? (Or will it be fine tomorrow?)*. Bulletin of the British Psychological Society, 27,441-446.
- Maliphant, R. (1994) *School psychology: Restructuring training and expanding professional practice*. The Psychologist, 7(6), 263-267.
- Maliphant R (1997) *Tomorrow will also be history*. Educational Psychology in Practice Vol 13(2), July 1997, p.101-110.
- Maliphant, R. (1998). Educational psychology training: history and lessons from history. *Educational and Child Psychology*, Special Edition: 50 years of professional training in educational psychology, 17-26.
- Miller, A. (1996). *Pupil behaviour and teacher culture*. London: Cassell.
- Miller, A., & Frederickson, N. (2006). Generalisable findings and idiographic problems: Struggles and successes for educational psychologists as scientist-practitioners. In D. Lane & S. Corrie, (eds) *The Modern Scientist-Practitioner: Practical Approaches to Guide how Professional Psychologists Think*. London: Routledge (pp.103-118).
- Miller, G. A. (1969). *The presidential address*. American Psychologist, 24, 1063-1075.
- Morris, S. (2013). Memories of practice in the 1970s: Was this indeed the optimal time to work as an educational psychologist. In C. Arnold & J. Hardy (Eds.) *British Educational Psychology: the First Hundred Years*. Oxford: BPS Blackwell (pp.74-75).
- Morton, J. (2004). *Understanding Developmental Disorders: A Causal Modelling Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Morton, J., & Frith, U. (1995) Causal modelling: a structural approach to developmental psychopathology. In Cilchette, D., & Cohen, D. J. (Eds) *Manual of Developmental Psychopathology*, 1, pp. 357-390.
- Norwich, B. (2000). *Education and Psychology in Interaction*. London: Routledge.
- Petticrew, M. & Roberts, H. (2003). Evidence, hierarchies and typologies: Horses for Courses. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57, 527-529.



- Phillips, B.N. (1999) Strengthening the links between science and practice: reading applying and evaluating research in school psychology, in C.R. Reynolds and T.B. Gutkin (eds) *The Handbook of School Psychology*, 3rd ed. New York: Wiley.
- Ravenette, A.T. (1980). The exploration of consciousness: personal construct intervention with children. In Landfield, A.W. and Leitner, I.M. (Eds) *Personal Construct Psychology: Psychotherapy and Personality*. London: Wiley.
- Rawlings, G (1937) Report to the Education Committee of the City of Bradford. London : Central Association of Mental Welfare
- Rushton, J.P. (2002). New evidence on Sir Cyril Burt: His 1964 speech to the Association of Educational Psychologists. *Intelligence*, 30, 555-567.
- Sampson, O (1980) (edited by P.D. Pumfrey) *Child guidance: Its history, provenance and future*. Monograph, DECP Occasional papers, 3(3), 1-114.
- Scottish Executive (2002). *Review of provision of educational psychology services in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Education Department.
- Seligman, M. E. (1998). *The presidential address*. *American Psychologist*, 54, 559-562.
- Sigston, A. (1993) Research and practice – worlds apart? In A. Sigston, P. Curran, A. Labram and S. Wolfendale (eds) *Psychology in Practice with Young People, Families and Schools*, London: David Fulton.
- Squires, G., & Dunsmuir, S. (2011). Embedding Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training in practice: Facilitators and barriers for trainee educational psychologists (TEPs). *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 27(2), 117-132.
- Tizard, J. (1973). Maladjusted children and the child guidance service. *London Educational Review*, 2, (2), 22-37.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1948). *School Psychologists*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Valentine, C. (1965). Cyril Burt: a biographical sketch and appreciation. In Banks, C. and Broadhurst, P.L. (Eds) *Studies in Psychology presented to Cyril Burt*. London: University of London Press.
- Wall, W.D. (ed.) (1956) *Psychological services for schools*. New York: New York University Press (for UNESCO).

- Webster, A. & Beveridge, M. (1997) The role of educational psychologists in educational research: Some implications for professional training. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 13, 155-164.
- Wedell, K. & Lambourne, R. (1980) Psychological Services for Children in England and Wales. *Occasional Papers of the Division of Educational and Child Psychology*, 4, numbers 1 and 2. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.
- Wooldridge, A. (1994) *Measuring the Mind: Education and Psychology in England c.1860-1990*. Cambridge University Press