

Changing Practice and an Emerging Social Pedagogue Paradigm in England: The Role of the Personal Adviser.

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European social work is culturally determined. For British social work, cultural determinism resulted in too narrow a focus, on stigmatising statutory fieldwork. In contrast, European boundaries of 'social work' are defined more broadly and encompass a wider range of roles. At a time when British social work is undergoing organisational change, a closer look at European traditions of social work can inform the future directions of British practice. A traditional European social work model, the social pedagogue, will soon be introduced into England as the new professional role of 'Personal Adviser' for young people 13 to 19 within the Connexions Service. The social pedagogue and the Personal Adviser share beliefs in human development, life long learning, and working towards developing a person's inherent potential. Just as social pedagogy developed in the nineteenth century as a response to materialism and industrialisation, the Personal Adviser role adapts the concept of social pedagogy to the context of the post modern decline of Western industrialisation. Rather than perceiving this new role as a threat, steps should be taken to develop systems for joint qualifications and transferability of awards to enable social work practitioners to undertake dual roles as social workers and Personal Advisers, and thus broaden the definition of 'social work' in Britain.

Introduction: models of European social work and forthcoming changes in British social work

Similarities and some important differences define the roles and organisational structures of European social workers. Because social work is a culturally specific activity, each country organises its social work functions somewhat differently. A range of social policies, different administrative and legal structures, historical traditions of welfare, user demands, and professional influences shape the nature of European social work practice. We can view social work's broad base as a strength, enabling appropriate responses to new social problems, or alternatively as a weakness, preventing social workers from acquiring a recognised body of knowledge and skills. Despite considerable diversity of roles and functions, international and European associations of social work education acknowledge common aims and ideals for social work. On a trans-national basis, social work students study theory and practice, human development, society, and social organisation applied to particular societal and political contexts (Warchawiak, 1980).

British social work is about to undergo organisational changes. The Department of Health

will introduce a new social work qualification (DOH, 2000). New regulatory bodies (the General Social Care Council and TOPSS, the Training Organisation for Social Care) will replace CCETSW in 2001. Because of these changes, British social work could benefit from looking more closely at European contributions. This paper argues that a version of a traditional European social work model, the social pedagogue, will soon be introduced into England. This is the professional role of the 'Personal Adviser'. Rather than regarding this new role as a threat to British social work-, we should welcome the Personal Adviser as a particular approach to social work based on European traditions. We could take steps to develop joint qualifications or transferability of awards for practitioners to assume dual roles as a social worker and Personal Adviser.

The diminishing scope of British social work

British social work is accustomed to searching for an appropriate definition of its role (Butrym, 1976). The Seebohm Report (1968) suggested a community role for the generic social worker within unified social service departments, but this proved unworkable because demands for specific expertise clashed with increased rationing of

resources. The Barclay Report (1982) identified two major roles for professional social workers: counselling (previously known as casework) and social care planning (the service brokerage and resource finding undertaken by social workers with and for service users). The 1980s emphasised community social work undertaken in 'patch' teams (Hadley & McGrath, 1984.)

Arguably, despite some similarities between mainland Europe, British social work defined its role too narrowly, in contrast to Europe's broader scope. At first dominated by American traditions of psycho social casework, in later years British social work embraced an array of eclectic theories. Nevertheless, fieldwork, particularly in child and family work, continued to dominate. Curricula became narrower. Thirty years ago, a student could take a course that resulted in a joint youth and community work and social work qualification. That is no longer possible, although there are some joint qualifications available in learning disability nursing and social work.

Counselling developed a separate role with its own curriculum and qualification. Careers guidance officers operate separately from social workers, with particular areas of expertise and their own professional award. Education welfare officers are not required to have a social work qualification; nationally, they have no alternative competing qualification, although a regional East Midlands consortium of employers has designated a 60 credit level two university award (Nottingham Trent University, 1995) as an in-service qualification. The probation services in England severed their link with a social work qualification and developed a separate curriculum and qualification.

Attempts to colonise social care as a professional area of practice ended in failure. In 1975 CCETSW introduced the Certificate in Social Service (CSS) scheme as a part time course for residential and day care workers (CCETSW, 1977). The scheme provided a separate qualification for residential and day care workers, rather than a professional social work (e.g. fieldwork) qualification. In 1988, under pressure from employers, CCETSW recognised CSS as a professional social work qualification. This decision drew CSS qualified workers away from social care into fieldwork posts, and defeated CSS's original intent. The CSS scheme ended in the 1990s soon after the Diploma in Social Work was introduced as a qualification in social work.

Now, the Training Organisations for Social Care (TOPSS), recently founded in each of the countries of the United Kingdom, recognise social care as the broad domain of intervention, and regard professional social work as part of social care. Some academics fear the disintegration of British social work as a profession. The scope of British social work seems to be limited to statutory social work (casework) in childcare, and some mental health intervention. Social work practice is characteristically quasi-legal and procedurally based, rather than insightful and drawing on high levels of individual skill.

The introduction of personal advisers and the Connexions Service

The post war welfare state was founded on a social welfare vision of universal services, but after fifty years, the stigma of receiving help from 'the welfare' has not diminished. Crisis interventions rather than preventive services are too frequent an occurrence. Service delivery patterns perpetuate social exclusion. The government emphasis on 'joined up services' as a way of dealing with social exclusion will lead to more amalgamation of agencies and more collaborative working. Ironically, this trend may result in the fragmentation of social services departments, the largest employers of social workers. Threats to social work apparently loom with the anticipated (and in some instances actual) break-up of local social services departments. Adult services are merging with health; and childcare services are merging with education.

Instead of social welfare as its driving force for social policy, the present government uses education as its main tool for reducing social exclusion and bringing about change. They attribute significant causes of social exclusion to low educational attainment, subsequent skills shortages, and unemployment. They promote methods of expanding participation in education and training through programmes like Welfare to Work, increased funding for further education, improving access to higher education, modern apprenticeships, vocational qualifications, and the university for industry. Policies seek to raise literacy and numeracy levels within schools. Organisations are expected to become 'learning organisations'. 'Lifelong learning' is now a popular slogan.

The government underpins its emphasis on education with a belief in each individual's capacity to learn and develop. This belief prompted the government's decision to introduce the Connexions Service, a programme whose goal is to emphasise the attainment of skills and qualifications, and Personal Advisers, whose role is to tackle social exclusion by preventing young people from dropping out of education and employment training. When we examine the aims of the new service and the roles of Personal Advisers, the consonance with social pedagogy is evident.

Connexions will provide a universal, comprehensive, non-stigmatising approach to guiding and supporting the transition of all young people to adulthood and working life (Connexions Strategy Document, 2000, Chapter Six). The new service will end the perceived fragmentation of services (p. 3) for young people. Its 'integrated support' (p.5) will involve advocacy and co-ordination of services and information. Networks of Personal Advisers linking with specialist support services will deliver the service. The aim is to "enable all young people aged 13 to 19 to participate effectively in appropriate learning, whether in school, further education college, training provider, or other community setting" (p.1); and to raise their aspirations "so that they reach their full potential" (p.1). Personal Advisers will deal with problems that young people experience by "removing any wider barriers to effective engagement in learning" (p.1). They will provide "high quality" support and guidance, and "broker access for young people to a range of more specialist services" (p.1).

The eight key principles (p.2) of the service are:

- raising aspirations;
- meeting individual need and overcoming barriers to learning;
- taking account of young people's views;
- inclusion;
- partnerships of agencies and communities;
- community involvement and neighbourhood renewal through brokering access to local welfare, health, arts, sport, and guidance networks;
- extending opportunity and equality of opportunity;
- evidence based practice to ensure new interventions are based on research and 'what works'.

Connexion's targets (p.3) comprise general

educational goals of reducing truancy, preventing school exclusions, increasing attainment of educational qualifications, and improving participation in employment. Significantly, Connexions' targets also strive for better outcomes for care leavers, and reductions in illegal drug use, youth offending, and teenage pregnancies, and these goals suggest an overlap with the work of childcare social workers and youth offending teams.

The Connexions Service is located within the Department for Education and Employment but the service has its roots in the Social Exclusion Unit. This origin ensures cross-departmental support. Connexions partnerships will be formed at local Learning and Skills Council areas, with local management committees at local authority level or in groupings of local authorities. Connexions Service National Unit (CSNU) is the cross-departmental national unit to which local service providers will relate (pp.1-2). The government has allocated £177 million of extra new funding for the new service, scheduled to start in April 2001 (Connexions Press Release, 23 October 2000). Pilot programmes, configured on careers companies' partnerships in sixteen areas of England, have begun.

Qualifications and training for Personal Advisers

The Personal Adviser role is viewed both as a new profession and as a new role for specialist workers (e.g. existing professionals). It is not yet clear how the balance between generic advice giving and specialist complex support will be determined. If the Personal Adviser role is to succeed, existing agencies' cultures need to change; professionals' skill levels need to be raised; and a recruitment drive needs to attract workers from existing public, private, voluntary, and community sector organisations and build on best practice (Connexions Strategy Document, Chapter Six, p.11). Recruitment is the most burning issue. Much will depend on the salary scales offered, and the extent to which experienced workers from other professional roles will be able to retain their existing specialisms and identities within the Personal Adviser role. The opportunity for dual qualifications should be explored.

DFEE will contract with a training provider rather than directly with universities to run a major

training programme. Opportunities may arise for universities to form teaching and learning partnerships with the training provider and local service providers. The contract for designing the training programme rests with INCLUDE, a charity staffed by a range of professionals mainly from teaching and educational psychology. DFEE has established an academic reference group with university members to give response and suggestions to DFEE and INCLUDE about the training design. The full training programme is not yet agreed or designed.

The Foundation qualification, required for all entrants to the role, is a 60 credit Level Two award, the Diploma for Personal Advisers, (accredited by the Nottingham Trent University) to be offered as an in-service course over the first six months of appointment as a Personal Adviser (Nottingham Trent University/INCLUDE Validation Document, 2000). This programme will serve as a conversion course for existing professionals, and a beginning qualification for people without an existing professional qualification. Beginning in November 2000, the Diploma was delivered in (approximately) twelve pilot centres in England, each with a cohort of twenty Personal Advisers. The roll-out programme for Diploma Training is due to start in April 2001. Later, extension programmes (yet to be designed) will enable Personal Advisers who lack a pre-existing professional award to build on the Foundation qualification and become 'qualified'. Access courses will be designed for appointees who may enter the service as 'apprentices' without the prior skills and knowledge to study at higher education level. A management programme will be designed for Personal Advisers' line managers (Connexions Strategy Document, Chapter Six: pp. 11-13).

The content of the Foundation Diploma is not unlike parts of the British social work curricula. The five modules are:

- Module One: Managing Referrals, Assessments, and Engaging with Young People (10 credits);
- Module Two: Working to Secure Change with Young People, their Parents and Carers, and Practitioners in Mainstream Learning Environments (10 credits);
- Module Three: Securing an Optimal Response from All Agencies and the Community in Supporting a Young Person through Change (10 credits);
- Module Four: Evidence-based Practice, Record

- keeping and Communication (10 credits);
- Module Five: Improving Service Delivery to Young People through Reflective Practice in Context (20 credits).

The Personal Adviser and the Social Pedagogue.

Despite certain resemblances, the Personal Adviser role is intended to be different from current British social work models. The Personal Adviser role will not duplicate the roles of education welfare officers, careers advisers, youth and community workers, and youth offending teams, yet it will draw on certain aspects of their functions. It is not a role for teachers, although its primary task is to promote education and training. We need to look beyond the United Kingdom to find an appropriate conceptual model. The most appropriate link is with the European social pedagogue role, the *Sozialpedagoge*, which up to now has been largely unknown in the United Kingdom.

Kornbeck (2000) remarks that describing the social pedagogue role is easier than defining the role, a view that echoes Lorenz' efforts to explain social pedagogy (Lorenz, 1991, 2000). Historically, Europe developed two distinct traditions of professional social work: social casework that emphasises psychoanalytic ideas (Imported from the USA and prevalent in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Greece and the Scandinavian countries); and social pedagogy (prevalent in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands). The social pedagogue (Cannan, Berry, & Lyons, 1992; Payne, 1991) draws on ideas of social reform, renewing society through the skill of developing a person's inherent potential. The Personal Adviser also adopts this approach. Kornbeck argues that social pedagogy seldom targets individuals, but addresses groups of users. The Personal Adviser will practice with a group that comprises all young people 13-19, but will undertake casework and case management rather than group work. It is hoped that Personal Advisers will not become analogous to care managers in adult care, who undertake relatively little direct ongoing intervention with service users beyond the assessment stage. The social pedagogue uses preventive, developmental, and educative forms of intervention with communities of users (not just children), and delivers ideas of developmental support through more informal

means than classroom education. (In France the *animateur* practises a related form of intervention by promoting access to leisure, cultural activities, and education.) Social pedagogy promotes well-being through broadly based educational strategies. The social pedagogue prevents social problems by empowering people with knowledge and skills to manage their lives. Cannan et al. remark that social pedagogy is related to Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (1972), a popular education movement with origins in South America.

Theoretical concepts underpinning Social Pedagogy and the Personal Adviser Role

The social pedagogue and the Personal Adviser share a belief in human potential and capability, not just of an elite, but of all individuals. They are both rooted in humanistic values. Their belief in human potential links conceptually with Erikson's epigenetic theory of development (1986), Rogers' person centred approach to counselling (1961), Maslow's self actualising person (1987), and Jung's process of individuation (1969). Instead of choosing between a psycho-social casework approach (Hollis, 1972) where the change process problematises the individual (a common critique of the psycho-social tradition), or a systems approach (Pincus & Minahan, 1973) that may ignore the individual's particular needs by over-focusing on changing agency and legal policies and practices (a common critique of the systems approach), the social pedagogue/Personal Adviser focuses on the individual in context and seeks to facilitate learning. This focus is consonant with the ecological approach to human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in which the locus of helping activity is the individual, but intervention also addresses the individual's organisational contexts.

The social pedagogue/Personal Adviser's ideology centres on life long learning'. S/he will use education as the main driver for change. Social pedagogy draws on theories of education, psychology, and philosophy, rather than sociology, social policy, and law (Kornbeck, 2000). By drawing on these conceptual links, social pedagogy may avoid the stigmatisation that continues to mark British social services provision.

Social pedagogy's particular approach developed in Germany in the later part of the nineteenth century. During this period, reactions to the perceived over-

mechanisation and industrialisation of European society led to the founding of new philosophical movements that accord with some of the ideals associated with the practice of social pedagogy. These philosophical movements emphasised human potential within a secular but spiritual conceptual framework rather than within an overtly religious belief system. Three philosophies (theosophy, anthroposophy, and ethical culture, Cross, 1958) resonate with the ideals that shaped the social pedagogue and the Personal Adviser role. The first of these, theosophy, combines pantheism, magic, and rationalism, believes in the transmigration of souls and the brotherhood of humankind regardless of race and creed, and promotes universal toleration of all religions as well as atheism. Founded in New York in 1875, theosophy subsequently established its headquarters in India. Theosophy spread to Europe where it attracted followers especially in Germany.

Rudolf Steiner, who involved himself in theosophy but rejected its mainly Eastern associations, founded anthroposophy, a belief system developed from neo-Indian theosophy, in 1913. Steiner aimed to develop people's spiritual dimension and put them in touch with the cultural world from which materialism had estranged them. He believed in the nobility of the human spirit and a doctrine of immortality but omitted a place in his system for a belief in God. He established anthroposophy's headquarters near Basle in Switzerland. Anthroposophy became popular in Germany, England, and the United States. The international Rudolf Steiner Schools and Camphill Village Trusts are based on his philosophy.

The third philosophy, the Society of Ethical Culture, established in 1876, gained popularity mainly in the USA. Ethical culture promotes three assumptions: sexual purity, continued intellectual development, and devoting personal income (beyond that required for basic needs) to improving poor people's lives.

The nineteenth century and early twentieth century's reactions to the modern industrial state triggered these philosophical reactions against industrialisation, alongside which we see a logical place for the social pedagogue's emphasis on developing cultural means to support individual development. The late twentieth century experienced the decline of the modern industrial state in the West. The post World War Two model of social welfare that sprang up as a response to industrialisation now lacks coherence.

The social welfare approach has not avoided stigmatising service users. Lorenz (2000) argues that although social pedagogy can fall into the trap of pathologising the individual by over-emphasising particular directions for individuals' adjustment to society, pedagogy can organise successful socialisation by promoting the selfhood of individuals to transforming social conditions (Lorenz, 2000: p. 3). Social pedagogy is concerned with "harnessing of the creative social potential inherent in individuals" (Lorenz, 2000: p. 3). In the post modern era of fragmenting systems, social pedagogy (practised through the roles of Personal Advisers, and through other new roles) may provide a conceptual base for new forms of practice in social welfare. First we need to recognise social pedagogy's development in the United Kingdom, and begin to redraw the boundaries of British social work towards a broader European framework.

The broader scope of European social work: the Netherlands' organisation of social work education

Wide scale governmental support for the new role of Personal Advisers in England suggests that traditional British social work occupies an increasingly narrow domain. Rather than accepting the inevitability of shrinkage, British social work could reconfigure its identity to encompass a broader range of occupational roles. This reconfiguration would be consonant with European concepts of 'social work'. When we look at European categories of social work we see a wider definition. The broader range of occupational roles that Europe considers 'social work' can be illustrated by examining social work education in the Netherlands (Cornelissen, 1990), where different occupational roles and courses are grouped together as 'social work'. At the beginning of the 1990s, social work education in the Netherlands comprised thirteen different types of courses, each with their own history, and leading to different certificates and different kinds of employment. Over twenty Hogeschools (comparable to polytechnics) offered these four year courses. The courses were combined during the 1990s into five broad categories:

1. *field social work*, defined as the 'general social work profession' helping individuals or groups in need (resembling the core work of British social workers);

2. *cultural and community work*, defined as 'cultural work' in neighbourhoods, communities, settlement houses, and adult education; community organisation and development; and 'creative educational work', using creative techniques including sports and craft work. (This is social pedagogy, with some resemblance to aspects of British community work, and some aspects of British occupational therapy.);
3. *social care*, defined as work in residential and day care organisations with children, people with learning disabilities, and people with mental health problems, including creative techniques in residential settings (resembling British social care, except for the emphasis on creative techniques); and work with children and young people in childcare facilities, kindergartens, and children's homes (resembling British nursery nurse training and some aspects of British youth and community work);
4. *personnel and careers guidance*, defined as personnel management and policy in profit-making and non-profit organisations and trade unions, job counselling and employment mediation (areas that lie entirely outside British social work), careers and employment advice and guidance (resembling the work of careers guidance officers), and welfare policy (usually taken as a theoretical policy degree in the United Kingdom.);
5. *therapeutic work*: through creative therapies in dance, art, music, and drama (resembling therapies whose qualifications and employment opportunities in the United Kingdom are generally health related).

We can see a range of occupational roles implied in this framework that are recognisable within British health and social care services, although most of the roles lie outside the regulatory system of traditional British social work. The challenge is to draw the categories together within a broad conceptual framework without offending or destroying distinct areas of expertise and hard won professional identities.

Recognising qualifications across professional boundaries and across national borders

Despite growing fragmentation of what is acknowledged as 'social work' practice, the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) retained a wide vision of social work in the way it devised the subject category of 'Applied Social Work' to include in its remit, inter alia, careers guidance and youth and community work as well as field social work. The recent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarking statement for honours degrees in social work (QAA, 2000) acknowledges the validity of European traditions of social work by recognising honours degrees that do not lead to a professional qualification in social work, as well as honours degrees shaped by professional competence requirements and resulting in a professional qualification. The degrees that draw on broader theoretical traditions provide a means of recapturing a wider identity of 'social work' within the United Kingdom.

It is time to re-claim this broad identity for social work in the United Kingdom, but in such a way that we do not subvert the need for particular specialist roles working in different settings. If we look at how England recognises international social work qualifications, we can draw lessons for recognising qualifications and roles that are currently regarded as separate from 'social work' but that contain similarities. The Personal Adviser role, based on the model of the social pedagogue, might well be considered as a social work role if the boundary of social work roles in the United Kingdom was drawn more widely, and if we had a system for verifying cognate awards within a broad 'social work' framework.

Establishing international recognition of social work qualifications has clear advantages for European social work and the social work profession in Britain. The Single European Act removed barriers to freedom of movement for people between member states. Employment in Britain of social workers who qualified in another country is becoming more frequent because of the shortage of sufficient qualified social workers. British social workers also have the opportunity to practice in other European community states, provided their qualification meets the European Community's Council 1989 Directive on Higher Education Diplomas' requirement for a three year period of education and training for professional qualification.

We need an efficient and fair system for international recognition of social work qualifications. In 1990, a United Kingdom system of verification replaced direct recognition of non-

British qualifications. CCETSW, by agreement with employers, verifies social work qualifications gained outside the United Kingdom to establish whether the qualification is a recognised social work qualification in the country where it was obtained. Verification does not imply that the qualification is the equivalent of a UK qualification. British employers make the final decision whether an individual possesses the appropriate qualification and experience for a particular social work post.

CCETSW (1991) suggested that employers should consider workers' ability to communicate effectively in English (or Welsh, in Wales), and their knowledge of relevant law, service delivery systems, and equal opportunities policies and practice. Whilst working in East Anglia in the 1990s, I set up a system of verification for Cambridgeshire Social Services. At the time there was no national verification system. Unfortunately, there is still no national verification system, and apparently no standardised quality assurance process to ensure equity of judgements. With the demise of CCETSW in 2001, the future responsibility for verification is unclear. The process of accrediting prior experience and learning (APEL) provides an efficient and relatively inexpensive way of demonstrating professional comparability both for the employer and the worker. After a period in practice, the worker can compile a portfolio of evidence based on certificated, non-certificated, and experiential learning, for assessment of professional comparability and competence. The same technique could be adapted to enable social workers to become qualified Personal Advisers/ social pedagogues, and Personal Advisers/social pedagogues to transfer into social work. We may be able to consider the Personal Adviser training as continuing professional development that will lead to dual qualifications as a social worker and a Personal Adviser/social pedagogue.

Conclusions

Because British social work primarily practises statutory interventions, it has become a stigmatising activity. Social workers in Britain usually direct their attempts to provide developmental activities towards people already identified with social problems. Social pedagogy, practised through the new role of the Personal Adviser, may become an effective model of intervention in Britain if Personal Advisers can interact with young people

before problems escalate. Personal Advisers should be able to offer non-stigmatising access to assessment processes and services through inter-agency partnerships. The challenge for British social work is to establish broader European definitions of roles and scope of practice. The introduction of the Personal Adviser as a variant of the social pedagogue role could provide opportunities to rethink the conceptual boundaries of British social work. Universities that offer social work courses could explore these conceptual boundaries. At a time when practice is changing rapidly, social work education's international links, commitment to research, and conceptual foundations for practice should enable it to lead in developing a more broadly based definition of social work for the twenty-first century.

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