Submission to
the Ministry of Education

for the Special Educational Needs Review

Prepared

by the

New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

19 June 2015

About the New Zealand Psychological Society

The New Zealand Psychological Society is the largest professional association for psychologists in New Zealand. It has over 1000 members who apply psychology in a wide range of practical and academic contexts to health, education, young people's services, organisations and corrections. Our collective aim is to improve individual and community wellbeing by disseminating and advancing the rigorous practice of psychology.

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Executive Summary

He iti tangata e tupu; he iti toki e iti tonu iho

A small person may grow but a small adze remains small forever - a person is more valuable than property. They are increasingly precious as they have the capacity to develop.[1]

The New Zealand Psychological Society/*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa* welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Special Educational Needs Review and subsequent update. We have over 1000 members who are at the forefront of research and innovation in designing systems of support and delivering services for young people at the margins of our society, their whānau, educators and support agencies.

We understand the focus of this update for children and young people with special education needs is to:

- Synchronise and coordinate pathways, removing barriers so needs are met, including transitions to different educational provision
- Improve access to services and decision-making about assistance
- Reduce waiting times for services
- Consider a single point of contact and coordination of service
- Ensure appropriate assessment of progress and achievement
- Coordinate the education, health and welfare systems[2]

Conclusion

We agree that it is worth taking time to ensure wide engagement with all groupings when devising complex systems of support for diverse learners.

We are mindful of our history of previous attempts to introduce devolved, contestable services with the former Special Education Service (SES) and the return of these services to the Ministry of Education because of concerns about fragmentation, accountability, inequalities of resourcing, duplication and the difficulties associated with the casualisation of staff. An early evaluation of similar attempts at devolved funding within a common assessment framework overseas has indicated similar concerns. They noted that a

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[1] Mead, H. M., & Grove, N. (2003). Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tīpuna: The Sayings of the Ancestors. Wellington: Victoria University Press, p429
[2] Adapted from Ministry of Education. (2015). *Update proposed for Special Education*. Retrieved from
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/MinistryBulletinSchoolLeaders/Issue27/UpdateSpecialEducation.aspx

'substantial investment' was required to make local teams work for children identified with special educational needs.

Psychologists have a unique role in not only in bringing technical skills, knowledge and supervising others but helping others to frame problems and enable change, for example using Situational Analysis Problem-solving Frameworks, Narrative Approaches, Solution Focused Approaches, Psycho-Social models, Functional Behavior Approaches and Consultative Approaches. Using our skills, we are often viewed as the 'bridge' and key facilitator working across the community, the different sectors of Health, Social Work and Education and with the different age groupings of children.

We suggest there should be equal attention to promoting the three components to design an inclusive system for children: (i) Attitudes/Values (ii) Resources/Funding (iii) Expertise/Skills.

Recommendations

Attitudes/Values

- Avoid categorical system that applies unhelpful labels to children unless there is a sound evidential basis that will inform an intervention and make a difference to the outcome.
- Psychologists should contribute their skills and expertise to help create successful learning environments for all young people not just those identified with special educational needs. There is no special pedagogy for special education.
- Uphold the general aspiration that all children should remain within their community in well-resourced mainstream schools regardless of their individual needs.
- Continue with a universal curriculum design that can accommodate a diverse range of learners.
- Avoid static assessments that focus on identification and diagnosis. Promote more formative forms of assessment that can lead directly to practical interventions such as dynamic, curriculum-based and narrative assessment.
- Maintain a diversity of practice within and outside professional groups as this often generates unique outcomes. Extreme forms of consistency may limit possible interventions.
- Collaboration is generally desirable but it will require additional resources and/or structural changes to release professionals. It may not always be the best way to achieve good outcomes for all children at all times.
- 'Train against demand' to equip those locally in schools and the community to meet the needs of diverse learners sharing skills and expertise and potentially reducing the need for waiting lists.
- Avoid short term political timeframes with this review to ensure everyone has time to participate and maximise the chance of successful implementation.
- Acknowledge *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and seek power sharing arrangements when reviewing special educational needs. This includes drawing from a wide, culturally appropriate evidence base.

- Provide services for clients in culturally responsive ways
- Seek a wider government/community focus to consider explicitly all the factors that impact on inclusion and caring for our young people, such as poverty and inequality.

Resources/Funding

- Boost the role of the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo) using The Investing in Educational Success (IES) or the Joint Initiative so the SENCo can be released as the consistent point of contact for students identified with needs and to initiate professional development within the school.
- Use Investing in Educational Success (IES) or the 'Joined Up' initiative to fund an increase in the Special Education Grant (SEG). Ensure transparency, publishing how these funds are allocated for children with special education needs. Strengthen ERO and other auditing mechanisms for evaluation of the use of these funds.
- Ring fence funds for groups that are more heterogeneous and that may have less powerful supporters e.g. students that are viewed as severely challenging
- Evaluate the potential effectiveness of new programmes on the basis of comprehensive advice that is cultural informed (practitioner, whānau, research) so we do not default to narrow evidence bases.
- Avoid the proliferation of untrained, teacher aides which may be of limited value in certain situations, potentially 'disable' students further and contain many hidden costs of monitoring and management to ensure effectiveness.
- Prioritise funding for early childhood education and community based activities where there is likely to be more opportunities for effective change.
- Design systems that give value to the quality of activity rather than the completion of narrow targets avoiding the 'cherry –picking' of easy but less meaningful work.
- Adopt a high trust model for professional staff that are already closely monitored and audited by their professional groups.
- Avoid contestable funding mechanisms as the competitive market is not a good fit for social systems, with profits being taken out of the system and the risk of losing social capital.

Expertise/Skills

- Continue with preventative initiatives such as those under Positive Behaviour for Learning but reduce the adoption of off the shelf packages to develop more sustainable local initiatives that embrace the cultural diversity of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- Extend initial teacher training and education in the community so teachers feel equipped to work with a diverse range of learners traditionally identified with special needs.
- Release psychologists to provide professional development opportunities to upskill teachers and other educators.

- Utilise psychologists further by commissioning applied research with practitioners to provide information that goes beyond demonstration studies and a narrow evidence base, for example the implementation and development of Teacher Support Teams.
- Adopt preventative, ecological and systemic processes to address the barriers to creating inclusive environments for diverse learners.

Educational psychologists, psychologists working in education and the community seek to be part of a solution for creating and maintaining systems that educate all young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Introduction

The New Zealand Psychological Society welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Special Educational Needs Review and subsequent update.

Our members are at the forefront of research and innovation in designing systems of support for young people at the margins of our society, their whānau, educators and support agencies.

A significant number of psychologists are employed by the Ministry of Education. All have a minimum of 6 years training to Masters level and the majority have additional qualifications and experience. Educational psychologists and psychologists who work in education are integral to the identification, assessment and ongoing support of children with special needs throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand working across the education, social services and health sectors. They contribute or lead major Ministry initiatives at an organisational level, parenting groups, teacher training as well individual community and class room interventions providing intensive wrap around services for children identified with severe behaviour or significant learning difficulties.

We understand the focus of this update for children and young people with special education needs is to:

- Synchronise and coordinate pathways, removing barriers so needs are met, including transitions to different educational provision
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- Ensure appropriate assessment of progress and achievement
- Coordinate the education, health and welfare systems[3]

We note that providing for diverse learners is a huge undertaking with an increasing population growth of the 0-4 year age group by 11% (2001 and 2013) and school roll increases by 3.1%. There has been an average 3.1% increase in those students considered to have high or very high needs on the Ongoing Reviewable Scheme (ORS) since 2010. Although, the majority of children with special education needs attend their local school, approximately 2,500 students attend day special schools and 350 attending residential special schools, regional health schools and vision or deaf education centres. It is a considerable achievement that when parents are surveyed 76% of were satisfied with the overall quality of service delivery (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Psychologists are committed to regular review of systems and practice. However given this relatively high satisfaction from parents we would be cautious about rushing into any hasty

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[3] Adapted from Ministry of Education. (2015). *Update proposed for Special Education*. Retrieved from
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/MinistryBulletinSchoolLeaders/Issue27/UpdateSpecialEducation.aspx

changes. We are pleased that stakeholder's views have been sought but concerned about the short timescale for this consultation. We are mindful of evidence-based research that suggests collaborative, joined-up working is more likely to be effective if developed 'bottom up' rather than imposed in a managerial and rushed manner (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015; Carey, Crammond & Riley 2014; Keast 2011).

We consider the questions raised by the Special Needs Update broadly within the context of the Dynamic Triangle of Inclusive Education (Jordan, and Goodey 2002, Newham Educational Psychology Service, 1998)

(i) Attitudes/Values
(ii) Resources/Funding
(iii) Expertise/Skills

All 3 elements are seen as necessary to create a successful inclusive system i.e. a community and school may have the resources but if they were not welcoming to students with diverse needs or they were well-intentioned and they lacked the expertise then this would be wasted funding.

Attitudes/Values

Aspirations

He iti tangata e tupu; he iti toki e iti tonu iho

A small person may grow but a small adze remains small forever - a person is more valuable than property and increasingly precious as they have the capacity to develop (Mead and Grove, 2003, p429)

Special Education 2000 implemented by the government in 1996 had high aspirations to produce "a world class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all students" (Massey University College of Education, 1999, p5).

The metaphors that we use to understand and frame diverse learners shape our thinking and actions. Special Education 2000 conceptualised children and young people separated into a pyramid of needs. At the top were 3% that required high levels of resourcing, then underneath a 4-6% resourced at a moderate level within grants allocated to schools and the remainder with early intervention (Massey University College of Education 1999 p7). One consequence of this policy to move away from categorising children and focus on need, was to inadvertently create a 'super category' of special educational needs. Children are referred to as being an 'ORS'[4] student" and in terms of being at the top or the bottom of a funding pyramid).

McMenamin (2009) has argued that the implementation of the ORS scheme resulted in the unintended increase in day-special school enrolment. As the Ministry of Education tightened entry requirements it resulted in an increased solidarity of the day-special school

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[4] ORS = Ongoing Resourcing Scheme

communities with evolving lobby groups. Likewise Macartney (2014) has suggested that 'The Success for All' policy (Ministry of Education, 2014) has protected and indeed increased the provision of segregated special education. Under this policy, special units, classrooms and schools and special education enrolments have continued to increase.

The current political context has not made it easy for clear policy to be articulated for diverse learners with some initiatives being less aligned with the inclusive ideal e.g. National curriculum design, high stakes assessment, and increased market-based competition between schools with delegated funding.

Hodkinson (2012) notes the 'illusionary nature of inclusion' within such political climates. In practice young people who do not meet normative expectations in this climate are increasingly excluded.

> 'We have always been very inclusive . . . three years ago we went for full inclusive pilot where we put all of the children in mainstream classes with support and operated that for a year to see how it went and we got some really good things. Some of the children really flourished and some didn't so that was a big one and as a result of that we amended, we re-opened the unit and we had the children back in here but with a better understanding of what they could cope with and as well it made us think this is not working and that was an important thing about inclusion (Hodkinson, 2012 p7).

Kearney has identified a number of ways in which children with needs are excluded from schooling in New Zealand:

> This study revealed that disabled students are being excluded from and within school in New Zealand in a number of ways. These include being denied enrolment and/or fulltime attendance at school; being denied access to, and participation within the curriculum; being bullied; inappropriate teacher and/or principal beliefs and practices in relation to funding; a lack of caring, valuing and responsibility by school staff; limited teacher knowledge and understanding; poor relationships between parents and school staff; and exclusionary beliefs and practices in relation to teacher aides (Kearney 2009 pii)

This has real implications for the work of an educational psychologist attempting to uphold the values of equity and inclusion. For example, a psychologist working with a team to help teachers meet a child's needs will face enormous obstacles if some teachers do not accept a child as a member of their community. In such circumstances even high levels of additional funding is unlikely to ensure successful interventions.

As Brown notes

> Schools must become intentionally inviting for the full range of the student population, not just the proficient and successful. The failing 20% has neither of these qualities, only the potential for them. It is the role of schools to provide for them. Schools cannot do so while some remain unready, unwilling or just uncertain about how to become sensitive to the needs of all students and determined to ensure success for them all. (Brown 2010 p16)

Our Psychologist's Code of Ethic, Principle 4 requires us to recognise unjust societal norms and behaviours that disempower people and to advocate for changes in structures and policies (Code of Ethics Review Group, 2012).

Diagnosis and Categorical Systems

Psychologists have been increasingly vocal nationally about the limitations and dangers of diagnostic and categorical systems especially with the recent revision of DSM 5 (The New Zealand Psychological Society, 2014; Division of Clinical Psychology, 2013). Diagnosing, and categorising groups can be viewed as a method of managing and controlling groups that are deemed to be unacceptable (Slee, 2014).

It is no coincidence that those who are members of marginalised groups with less influence e.g. socio-economic status, culture, ethnicity are often viewed as different to the accepted norms, and so they are over-represented in our special needs populations (Macfarlane, Macfarlane & Gillon, 2014). It is within this context that teachers are easily persuaded that a widening group of young people require specialist intervention with an increase in the number of students verified as having high of very high needs, from 2% to 3%. Part of this increase might be seen as artefact of dominant values that have been endorsed and the nature of the systems we have created.

> There is no special pedagogy for special education with all its labelled disabilities (Lewis and Norwich (2000). Categories are often devised or promulgated for funding purposes. As Rapoport indicates "I'll call a kid a zebra if it will get him the educational services I think he needs."(cited in Liu, King & Bearman 2010, p10).

Calls here have been for educational psychologists to stop labelling children unless there is a sound evidential basis e.g. vision and hearing (Brown, 2010). A review of children with challenging behaviour and developmental disabilities found:

> A child's primary or secondary diagnosis did not moderate outcomes; that is, the child's "syndrome" (and the cluster of behaviours associated with that syndrome) is of less significance to the success of an intervention than the nature of the challenging behaviour (Meyer and Evans, 2006, p2).

This means that resources are often directed to groups which do not merit them and distract us from the focus on differentiated learning.

Coleman makes the point very forcefully:

> One very visible artefact of the policy is the day-to-day emphasis on funding which instead of being 'enabling' often functions more like a dowry, rather than an emphasis on the specific instructional accomplishments and needs of the child. Similarly the 'currency' used in negotiating the enrolment of children with special needs in mainstream schools rather too often has become 'teacher aide hours', rather than a discussion of their individual needs. (Coleman 2010, p3)

Quite often, policy makers attempt to remedy faulty category systems by additional funding arrangements such as the Language and Learning Initiative (Ministry of Education, 2015a) and prior to this, adding a "mixed moderate needs" category to the ORS criteria to accommodate the needs of pupils within the autistic spectrum. It would be more sensible to revise the logic of the original funding mechanism. The Ministry of Education (2015b) current website on Inclusive Education seems to be all things to all people. It offers guidance on 'Developing an inclusive classroom culture' and 'Making the curriculum accessible to all'.

At the same time it offers advice on many contested psychological constructs e.g. Dyslexia (Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014) and ADHD (Frances, 2014; Whitaker, 2014).

Assessment and Testing

Assessment has been closely linked to the process of diagnosis and labelling of children

> *Traditionally, assessment for disabled students and their families has been about determining who the Other is, with a focus on diagnosis and/ or specifying deficits. Once the Other had been named, this traditional approach to assessment went on to set out what should be done with the Other, with a focus on prescribing the appropriate treatment including: what can be learned and how it must be taught, who should do the teaching, how often, where it would best be done and how it would be known if performance had improved ((Brantlinger, 2000; Graham, 2008; Macartney, 2009; Morton, in press; Valle & Connor, 2011; cited in Morton 2012 p122)*

Such assessments lead teachers to have low expectancies of some special needs children that can further limit young people's progress.

> *Assessment can become an obstacle to inclusive education when testing reinforces low expectations on the child's learning and when it does not contribute to the qualitative understanding of how a child can be supported. A static 'testing' practice, when it is merely oriented at determining actual level of functioning (rather than potential), can become an obstacle to inclusion when the teacher or school conditionally links 'inclusion' to test results, by setting a minimum condition (LeBeer 2011 p87).*

Educational psychologists have become very aware of the shortcomings of a static assessment (Stobart, 2008). Some forms of curriculum based assessment provide more quantitative rather than qualitative information on the student's current functioning (Lidz, 1997). Dynamic assessment can explore the 'learning potential' of a student using an `assess-intervene-assess' method (Elliott, Grigorenko & Resing, 2010; Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein, Mentis & Skuy, 2009).

Mitchell (2010)states that *'high stakes' assessments can have the effects of jeopardising inclusive education, a risk that can be exacerbated by the effects of international comparative studies of educational standards (p109).* Florian et al (2014) similarly notes this drive towards international comparators as part of national economies bench marking their economies. She argues we need much better data about what makes effective schools.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We are fortunate in Aotearoa/New Zealand with Te Tiriti o Waitangi to have a model of power sharing with the first peoples of this land that might help us navigate some of the conceptual difficulties of inclusion.

However, a Treaty is not enough if unequal power relations remain between Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā (people of European descent) where relative health, life expectancy, rates of imprisonment, unemployment data, school non-completions and low tertiary education participation, poverty and family income are maintained within current structures.

The rhetoric of power sharing begs the question "who is including who?" Macfarlane, Macfarlane and Gillon (2014), note that Māori initiatives are often seen as an add-on to Pākehā initiatives. Maori thinking is often absent in special education theory and policy. One Māori approach to devise special needs policy would be to apply mātauranga (cultural knowledge) to a problem and then use culturally grounded tikanga (policy) and kawa (practice) to test the application of this mātauranga. This expertise in tikanga and kawa resides and endures within the Māori communities often with kuia/kaumātua (elders).

The risk of not fully consulting our Treaty partners is that policies and practices are potentially 'colour blind'. Macfarlane et al (2014) give an example of the cultural mismatch of the Incredible Years parenting programme. Those consulted about this programme requested *'culturally competent facilitators and leaders, culturally appropriate language, tools and resources, culturally congruent activities, culturally inclusive venues, culturally grounded protocols, and culturally responsive ways of engaging and communicating' (p265).*

More radically there are challenges to the very assumptions about the purpose of education. Communitarianism, compassion, belonging and co-dependence would be favoured above the ethic of competitive individualism.

Royal (2005) proposes that education is less about the acquisition of narrow school based knowledge and more about the growth of mana.

> *The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of mana in the individual and in his/her community. The 'fullness' of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person's life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill was widely celebrated – but finally in their 'spiritual authority', their intuitive and wisdom filled knowledge and insight of knowing what, when, how and why to do something" (Royal, 2005 p70).*

Within a Māori context, there is no binary of special education vs. normal education. These children not only belong to the community regardless of need but these needs are likely to be met well beyond the school gates (Macfarlane et al 2014).

Tangata akona ki te kāinga, tūngia ki te marae, tau ana[5].

Berryman (2014) stresses the need for collaboration within communities:

> *…the importance of a team approach in which parents, cultural experts, and professionals collaborated to both define the needs of children and families and then address those needs. This approach was most effective when the expertise of family members informed and guided the professionals involved, as well as was being extended by those professionals. Practices that follow these guidelines have been termed 'culturally responsive,' meaning that family members have been able to bring who they are or their cultural experiences and knowledge into any planned intervention (Berryman 2014).*

In this way educationalists are viewed as cultural and relational specialists. They have a complex set of skills that enable them to coordinate with a variety of services, collaborate,

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[5] We must invest the time and effort teaching a young people at home, so they will stand with confidence on the marae (Mead and Grove, 2003, p359)

focus on the potential of the young person, get to know families in a reciprocal way, respectful of the knowledge held by the family and remain responsive to the family.

We would argue that all whānau and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand would benefit support structures that operate in this way.

Curriculum

The mainstream curriculum should be designed to accommodate the diversity of learners within our community. A review of the national and international literature and a study of a small cohort of schools has been critical of how well our schools made links between the curriculum and how children succeeded educationally (McMenamin, Millar, Morton, Mutch, Nuttall & Tyler-Merrick, 2004). There has been a tendency to focus on structures, resourcing and processes.

There have been some promising developments to integrate the assessment practices and the curriculum. The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Students with Special Education Needs recognises that there may be a cohort of children that will spend most of their time at school within Level 1 of the curriculum (Morton, McMenamin, Moore, & Molloy, 2012; Margrain & Clements 2007). Narrative assessment with a successful application in Early Childhood Education has also been introduced. These Learning Stories for children with special needs capture successful learning to enable the design of new teaching that would be unlikely to be generated by traditional assessment methods (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Teachers need to be equipped in their initial training so that, with the help of their colleagues they can adapt the curriculum in this manner to meet the needs of different learners.

> *Though it is often argued that lack of knowledge on the part of mainstream classroom teachers, attributed to lack of training, is one of the main barriers to inclusion, careful consideration of the evidence on teaching practice and pedagogy in special education suggests that teachers do not lack knowledge of effective teaching strategies. What they may not know is that the label-treatment interaction or prescriptive-teaching approach to individual differences in learning has not shown that interventions are differentially effective with different kinds of learners. Meta-analyses of "what works" in special education show that the teaching strategies used in mainstream education can be adapted to assist students identified as having SEN in learning. (Florian 2006 p26)*

In their critique of the NZ Draft Curriculum, Carroll-Lind, Bevan-Brown and Kearney (2007) proposed changes to design a curriculum for diverse learners:

> *The curriculum should clearly show teachers that they can and have to make adaptations in order to provide for students with diverse needs. The increased emphasis on social skills and social development suggests that teachers will feel affirmed in making social skills a focus area in IEP planning. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on promoting excellence and may go some way towards reducing underachievement amongst children with diverse needs. All children can learn, but not always on the same day or in the same way (Switlick, in Bradley et al., 1997). This understanding must be reflected in the curriculum document (p20).*

Resources/Funding

We sense that one of the drivers for changing the current arrangements for Special Educational Needs is the perceived increasing cost and a desire to shift to a market based funding model. These intentions appear more explicit in the introduction of Social Impact Bonds (Dann, 2015) and the Productivity Commissions review of social services (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015).

> F4.7 Government agencies have overlooked their potential to shape and manage the market for social services contracts. Consequently, the market is not performing as well as it could. (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015 p81).

> F5.3   Delegation of responsibility for social services to semi-autonomous government entities can improve on top-down control where such entities have better information, capability and incentives to make and implement decisions that maximise social returns (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015 p98).

> R9.1 The Investment Approach could usefully be applied more widely. Future welfare liability–its underlying proxy for social return–should be further refined to better reflect the wider costs and benefits of interventions (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015 p191).

Contestability

We have considerable concerns about how contestable services might impact on the delivery of services for special needs, particularly that the competitive environment could reduce the desired collaboration. Discussing such changes within community social services, Neilson, Sedgwick & Grey (2015) argue:

> One of the major findings of this research is that government funding and contracting processes are eroding the special characteristics, strengths, and infrastructures of the community and voluntary sector. Government funding practices have led to increased vulnerability due to underfunding; competitive processes have impacted on collaboration between organisations undermining the very networks needed to meet complex social needs; and, the standardisation of services and risk aversion in government policies have cut across innovative social service provision at the community level (p9).

We already have a history of trialling such contestable services with the former Special Education Service (SES).

> The SES was modelled on agency theory. A contract was drawn up between the Minister and the SES whereby the latter would provide certain services to learning institutions on behalf of the crown. Outputs were to be measured and reviewed and form the basis of the yearly rounds of negotiations. In the 80/20 split, the 80 per cent was to go to the SES-acknowledged expertise and specialist skills. The remaining 20 per cent was contestable. The SES was on notice from day one. All funding was to be contestable two years down the track. If the SES performed, then the 80/20 formula model would be continued; if they didn't then private sector providers would be engaged. Long term it was thought that all special education services would be contracted out in the market place and would be contestable (Brown 2014 p59).

O'Brien and Ryba (2005) note that the local management groups were not established as planned.

The chase continued for policy that could identify acceptable ways of resourcing special education. A new body called the Special Education Policy Implementation Team (SEPIT) sought reaction to a focus paper that asked for responses to the extent that students should be resourced through schools and who should be funded through the SES (Wyatt, 1997). In reporting, this body suggested that decision-making about the use of special education resourcing and funding be devolved to Local Special Education Resource Management Groups. These would function under a National Special Education Advisory Committee with a national contract held with SES. The outcome was that a National Advisory Committee was set up, although the local management groups were not established. Starting in 1995, advancing special education policy became the responsibility of the advisory group. This paved the way for what became known as Special Education 2000 (Ministry of Education, 1996). Five years were allocated to restructure the system in order to achieve the key objectives described earlier in this chapter (p27).

Wylie (2000) review of Special Education 2000 found that the contestability between the fund holders working with students with ongoing high and very high needs created fragmentation, gaps in accountability, and inequalities of resourcing and opportunity for students with special needs. Funding became less predictable, led to casualisation of employment of teachers and specialist staff. There was a reduction in the professional development and duplication and reinvention of activities for individual schools. As a result the Special Education Service (SES) was brought under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education.

Why would professionals want to help to build capacity within a market economy? One of the unintended consequences may be the slick marketing of education packages that have weak, long term effects on the communities we serve. We might return to the days where psychologists produce a product or a 'report' rather than engage in the more expensive and messy activity of helping to create change (Brown, 2010).

What would prevent professionals from 'cherry-picking' the easier and less demanding work? Different types of work bring different demands, for example, it might be expected that someone working in a severe behaviour team might experience more conflict and unhappy people within the school and community than those with a speech and language or visual difficultly. We will need systems that value the different quality of work rather than focus on the narrow targets of reducing waiting lists.

Unless there is clarity about the nature and demands of the work, the allocation of resources and measures that are used will be meaningless e.g. in the short term speech and language therapy cases may be closed more quickly and appear to be effective than severe behaviour cases. For older students viewed as having challenging behaviour within complex social situations that extend beyond school the likelihood of success is probably less. However, even a small number of successes might have considerable impact in the long term for the young person and our communities. For example, Multi-systemic therapy for young people 12-17 years has estimated a cost benefit ration 2.5:1; reductions in re-arrest 24-70%; reductions in out of home placements 47-64%, improvements in family functioning; and decreased mental health problems for serious juvenile offenders. The effectiveness of these programmes depends on low caseloads, highly trained and accessible staffing (Brodie, 2012).

A market economy with increasing rationing of resources might make the system more prone to the influence of lobby groups. Potentially more fragmented and less holistic service provision might favour single interest groups such as Dyslexia or Autistic Spectrum Disorder lobbies compared to less co-ordinated and homogenous groups such as those identified with challenging behaviour.

School principals or even the managers of clusters of schools are likely to be under increasing pressure to fund reactive services, responding to crisis. This might detract from preventative activities, especially in early childhood which in the long term might result in more effective interventions. A number of research reports in Aotearoa/New Zealand have recognise the significance of intervention in early childhood (Meyer and Evans, 2006; Inter-Agency Working Group, 2007).

In such a global market there will be the expectation for services to compete against large scale multi-national providers who have the economy of scale but may operate with temporary profit seeking motives and lack the understanding of the local community (De Bond, 2015).

Finally, a small scale investigation in the UK that adopted a common assessment framework contracting in different professionals has indicated that there was potential duplication, increased paperwork, variable and higher unit costs of different professionals (Holmes, 2010). Those in the unenviable position of commissioning services will need to make informed choices about whether a more experienced and highly trained professional will provide a more efficient and effective service in the long term than someone employed for a longer period but with less formal training and experience. They indicated that a 'substantial investment' was required to make these local teams work.

Devolved/Delegated Funding

Brown (2010) is one of many who have raised concerns about current funding arrangements.

> The decision to establish a weighted demographic basis for schools through the Special Education Grant (SEG) has proven to be effective in New Zealand but the targeted ORRS approach retains all the problems of capping funding for an entirely predictable, expanding demand (p14).

Likewise some of the limitations of contracting services with the desire to reduce risk are considered in the Productivity Commissions report.

> F4.9 Problems with contracting out are often symptoms of deeper causes such as the desire to exert top-down control to limit political risk. Letting go of central control will require agreed measures of the value created by social services, and a willingness to explore different institutional designs and approaches to commissioning (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015 p81).

> F5.1 Top down control has significant limitations. Expanded use of other architectures may achieve substantial improvements in the performance of social services (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015 p93).

In Nottinghamshire, England, SEN services were locally devolved with:

1. age weighted pupil unit: this includes an element for special needs
2. additional funding for predictable special educational needs: this is based on incidence of social disadvantage as a 'proxy' indicator (approximately 9m is distributed this way);
3. additional funding for unpredictable special needs: these resources are centrally retained (*(Cade & Caffyn, 1995,* p7).

Clusters of schools were able to determine the area's local priorities. Mainstream Support Groups (MSGs) allocated the available resources (support teacher time, classroom assistant hours) to families of schools rather than individual schools. Allocations were made for one year and the schools decide as a group how they should best be used. They were able to use funding to release area teaching staff to plan joint teacher initiatives such as paired spelling and curriculum differentiation (Cade & Caffyn, 1994; Gray & Dessent, 1993).

These arrangements present considerable challenges if they are to be applied to Aotearoa/New Zealand as we do not have an established tier of local government. The Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour service have previously been managed via cluster groups. However the Education Review Office (ERO, 2009) questioned the level of accountability of those structures. They found variability in the local governance, management and delivery of the RTLB service and a lack of alignment with national special education provision.

Accountability

We do not favour devolving funding to schools or clusters without strong, local systems of accountability.

The Education Review Office (ERO 2005) reported that schools tended to use their SEG grant to fund other initiatives such as literacy development rather than to support students with identified special educational needs.

Coleman (2010) cites research that estimates that up to one half of the costs associated with educating a child with special education needs is taken up with the identification processes. It is consistent with our experience that psychologists and other special education support staff spend a considerable amount of time on applications and processes associated with funding and the monitoring of such funding such as the moderation of teacher aide support compared to other activities such as assessment and intervention. We favour local, simple, transparent accountability systems.

Despite many years of interventions aimed at supporting children who are marginalised such as those in poverty, large, cumbersome national initiatives have lacked the finesse and targeted action that are required to address very specific local needs (Brundrett, 2014). In addition, we are mindful of accounts from overseas that report rushed, 'top down' attempts to reform special educational systems have resulted in increasing the complexity and confusion for those who are trying to navigate these systems (Harris, 2015).

We are cautious about the proliferation of untrained, teacher aide support and the hidden cost of control and support mechanisms to maximise their effectiveness. There is growing

body of evidence that such support is of limited value without the appropriate classroom management and may potentially further 'disable' students (Bassett, Brown, Martin, Russell & Webster 2012; Stevens, 2010).

> Access is not in and of itself a measure of inclusion. Students with disabilities are frequently marginalised in the crowd; they become an absent presence. They sit like a guilty conscience with their teacher aide at the side of the room. Assigning a minder does not guarantee an inclusive experience or education. The congregation of students with disabilities in annexes in the school is governed more by administrative than educational logic. Elaborately constructed and zealously applied schedules of resources for students with disabilities are not a measure of an inclusive educational experience. Inclusive education is contingent on culture. Changing culture is far more complex than a rearrangement of people, location and resources (*Macfarlane, Macfarlane & Gillon, 2014,* p276)

Organisational psychologists have written extensively about the predictable problems associated with poor systems analysis in public service (Seddon, 2008). A focus on narrow targets can result in 'tick box' completion of outcomes rather than the application of professional expertise to provide enduring solutions. If we 'train against demand' those in schools, other education settings and the community will be equipped to meet the needs of clients without becoming dependent on external experts.

Expertise/Skills

Understandably there has been an increasing reaction against traditional forms of psychological assessment and paternalistic forms of support that might be seen to maintain structures that potentially further disable young people and children. There has been a strong call to listen to the voice of those in receipt of our services (Biklen, 2000; Bourke & Loveridge, 2014; Todd, Hobbs & Taylor, 2000).

However, Mitchell (2010) in a review of the literature on national and international trends in the education of students with special educational needs (SWSEN) discusses the ongoing contribution of psychologists in education.

> *In many countries, educational psychologists are considered to play a vital role, not only in the education of SWSEN, but also in education more generally and in community contexts (p187).*

> *The roles of educational psychologists are going beyond the assessment and classification of SWSEN to incorporate broader pedagogical and systems-related activities, not only with such students, but also in education more generally and in community contexts (p206).*

If psychologists were involved in helping to improve the learning of all students, not just those identified with special educational needs then there may be less stigma and unintentional labelling of students, for example, in is not uncommon to hear parents/teachers referring to students who are 'under the psychologist.'

There will always be a need for professionals to work with individual students at a casework level. However, this work can be reduced to a minimum when systemic interventions produce effective teaching, learning and behaviour management for all students (Dessent, 1992; Boyle and Laughlan 2009). This will involve professionals who are trained and can

apply educational psychology using skilled consultative methods. Brown (2010) refers to this as the capacity to working locally at *'a point of sophistication' (p15).*

Slee (2014) similarly refers to the need for professionals who can read the context; recognise the complex nature of power; listen to families; provide a universal design for curriculum and pedagogy; are adaptable and creative; who identify the flexible deployments of expertise; who can network and problem solve. We would argue that educational psychologists are one of the professionals who can offer this expertise.

Systemic Initiatives

The Ministry of Education has and continues to have an impressive array of systemic initiatives to promote inclusion. For example, there has been the Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education (EEPiSE) project (until June 2006) which promoted the Index of Inclusion (Dharan, 2006) and the Cultural Self Review (Bevan-Brown, 2003). More recently there has been the Inclusive Education Taskforce to support schools to build their capability and confidence in identifying students with special education. This offers an Aotearoa/New Zealand Self review tool similar to the Index of Inclusion which take schools through the cycle of Planning and preparation; Collecting data; Next step planning; Taking action, Reviewing and improving (IECB, 2013).Online and paper surveys are available for school staff; for parents, whānau and caregivers; students and school management. The New Zealand Council for Education and Research (NZCER) offer a confidential analysis of the data collected within each school.

The intention is to support schools to reduce barriers to learning and participation and build capacity for students with diverse needs. As with previous projects this initiative is with a small number of self-selected schools. This is not a quick fix. There are challenges to facilitating schools/communities make the necessary changes in a climate of high stakes testing and funding arrangements that make being publicly identified with special needs students problematic. Current, popular definitions of 'excellence' are related to exam and National Curriculum targets.

The Ministry's Positive Behaviour for Learning Initiative also aims to strengthen relationships, create more positive home and school environments, remove barriers to engagement and improve students' chances to achieve at school and beyond.

There are a range of initiatives from whole-school, targeted group programmes and individual student support services.

• Intensive Wraparound Service
• Behaviour Crisis Response Service
• Incredible Years Parent programme
• Incredible Years Teacher programme
• Check & Connect programme
• Te Mana Tikitiki
• School-Wide framework

- Restorative Practice
- Huakina Mai
- Wellbeing@School toolkit
- MY FRIENDS Youth programme
- PB4LOnline website

School-Wide and Restorative Practice that operates across all levels of support (Ministry of Education, 2013, p6)

We welcome this attempt to move beyond individual students and attempt to change practices within schools but we wonder to what extent that these are off the shelf packages lifted from overseas contexts for expediency and cost rather than the more sustainable locally derived initiatives that are culturally embedded in our country. We are not clear how these packages are part of a coherent whole, how they intersect on common goals. Many are at the early stages of development and evaluation. The School Wide Positive Behaviour Support has had initial promising accounts in a pilot study within primary schools (Savage Lewis, & Colless 2011). However, this approach seems superficial in its consideration of culture. The pilot study research design also meant the results could be attributed to uncontrolled variables. Equally, similar results might have been obtained with smaller less intrusive intervention/s.

Watkins and Wagner (2000) give a good account of how behavioural packages were quickly adopted in the UK despite the lack of good evidence.

> *In summary, studies of Assertive Discipline show consistent evidence of effects on teachers' perceptions of various aspects of discipline, including reduced problem behaviors. However the evidence suggests only a small effect on teacher behaviour itself. Evidence for effects on student behaviour and attitudes is not supportive of Assertive Discipline training; that is, more studies found no effects, or mixed and negative effects, than found that Assertive Discipline training resulted in improved student behaviour and attitudes. (Emmer and Aussiker cited in Watkins and Wagner, 2000)*

We have seen many overseas interventions come and go in Aotearoa/New Zealand with little long term structural changes e.g. Assertive Discipline (Canter & Canter, 1992; Maines & Robinson, 1995). Swinson & Melling, 1995) and Gary LaVigna's Applied Behavioural Analysis (LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986). We wonder why the current packages will be any different?

> *"Whenever there is the development of a professional product, it is tempting to want to introduce the product rather than the principles, as happened to ill-effect in New Zealand when the products developed by LaVigna predominantly for adult residential settings in California (LaVigna, Willis, Shaull, Abedi, & Sweitzer, 1994) were attempted in school special educational settings in this country. There were very negative consequences of having "a single preferred model for service delivery, based on an Applied Behavioural Analysis model, often referred to as the LaVigna model" (p. 55), which was "widely criticised as unrealistic and inflexible" (p. 58) (Wiley, 2000 cited in Meyer and Evans (2006, p 11) .*

Joined Up

As part of the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 we have seen the implementation of the Children's Action Plan (National Children's Directorate, 2012) which has explicitly sought to join up health, social services and education practices for children devising a common set of 'competencies' and moving towards a common assessment framework.

This is not without tensions.

> *In determining assessment policies, it is important to recognise and resolve as far as possible the tensions between measuring the health of the education system and protecting the interests of students with special educational needs. In other words, educational policy-makers should optimise both the needs of the system and those of its students in determining assessment policies (Mitchell 2010 p109).*

Evidence from overseas that has examined collaborative and joined up initiatives e.g. UK and Australia has noted the need to go beyond considering the values of the children's workers to also address structural barriers to collaboration (Daly, 2004; National Children's Bureau and NHS Confederation, 2013; Carey, Crammond & Riley, 2014) e.g. budgets, funding mechanisms, competitive tendering etc.

Psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand and overseas are well placed to facilitate collaboration. Perhaps as a result of our training and knowledge of groups/facilitation, we are often viewed as the 'bridge' between the different groups working with a young person and many psychologists' lead multi-professional teams (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires, & O'Connor, 2006).

Although collaboration is generally desirable we might want to be cautious in assuming this is always the best way to achieve good outcomes for all children at all times.

Eppel (2013) cites a New Zealand review of research that found,

> *…collaboration can improve services and offer benefits for organisations, including better processes, improved relationships, greater capacity to respond to local needs and more efficient use of resources, but little clear evidence, either in New Zealand or internationally, that collaboration improves outcomes - mainly because of the lack of effective evaluation of collaborative initiatives; collaboration is time and resource-intensive, and there are limitations to what it can achieve. Therefore it was concluded, organisations needed to make decisions about when collaboration is appropriate and consider the necessary trade-offs in devoting time and resource to joint working. Moreover there was no single approach to developing collaboration that worked in all cases - different models will be needed to achieve specific objectives, and different approaches will be needed at various stages of the collaborative process (p42).*

We appreciate that collaborative, purpose-driven leadership begins with modelling from the top but it cannot be controlled directly by the top. A space must be created for bottom-up, adaptive leadership processes that might actively challenge administrative leadership. Leadership is not the preserve of the formally appointed 'leaders'; it must be seen as something that has to be created by all who work within the public sector in partnership with its citizens and other agencies.

We are not clear how the $359 million dollar, 'Investing in Educational Success' programme (IES) relates to the development of special educational needs. We understand that to date many high decile schools have benefitted disproportionately (NZEI 2015a) and not all schools have pursued the original design of IES (Jackman, 2015). There are signs that the more collaborative and locally designed alternative, the 'Joined Up Initiative' seems to have more buy in from schools (NZEI 2015b). We would like to see IES/Joined Up Initiative

funding used to boost the role of the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo). In this way the SENCo might be released as a more consistent point of contact for students identified with needs and enabled to initiate professional development within the school.

Again we would like to see 'Investing in Educational Success' (IES) or the 'Joined Up' initiative to fund an increase in the Special Education Grant (SEG). However, we hope there would be transparency with publication on how these funds are allocated for children with special education needs. The Education Review Office (ERO) might be able to assist with the evaluation of the use of these funds.

The Role of Psychologists

Framing Problems

One of the defining characteristics of psychologists is that they not only use of intuitive, common sense techniques, such as counselling and stress management and other basic, prescribed psychological activities used by other professionals e.g. behaviour management but they draw from a wide theoretical base which sets them apart from other practitioners (Management Advisory Service 1989 p6).

It is these different frameworks that are applied to problematic situations that help frame understandings to offer the potential for change. Some selected examples include Problem Analysis (Robinson, 1987), Situational Analysis (Annan 2005); Problem-solving Frameworks (Kelly 2006); Narrative Approaches (Annan, Priestley & Phillipson, 2006); Solution Focused Approaches (Stobie, Boyle, & Woolfson 2005; Young & Holdorf, 2003), Psycho-Social models (Miller and Leyden, 1999) Functional Behavior Approaches (Scott, Nelson, & Zabala, 2003) and Consultative Approaches (Wagner, 1995).

Contemporary educational psychology gives value to the application of systemic and ecological frameworks. Annan and Priestley (2012) outline the features of school psychology as locating problems and solutions within a dynamic interaction; where these situations viewed as fluid; with a focus on relationships and multi-systemic approaches; a value on inclusion and diversity; and a focus on positive psychology and strengths.

It should be noted that not all of these frameworks assume linear causality where the analysis of the problem will lead to the solution. Some recognise there are many paths to solutions or resolving/managing difficulties which may not relate to the presented problem. Furthermore there is a need to consider the interaction of factors that extend well beyond the school gates. Children are viewed as living and developing in complex ecologies.

> *Much of this work draws on the influential model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) which suggests that rather than focusing on single 'presenting problems', we should consider an 'ecological systems theory' that sees the child as interacting with a series of 'systems', which together form an 'ecology' that shapes outcomes (Save the Children 2013a, 2). These 'systems' include the family, the school, the neighbourhood, the wider social and cultural context in which these are located...it is wrong to make simplistic assumptions that the school is the sole or main reason why particular children do well or that family background is the single cause of educational success since each may have a stronger or*

weaker influence but this will be moderated by a host of other factors that affect the child in question (Brundrett 2014, p1).

Any government programme that is serious about equity and inclusion will need to consider matters of poverty and inequality. Research has indicated that poor children as young as seven are on course for a life of failure. It is estimated that 80% of the difference in how well children do in school can be attributed to what happens 'outside the school gates (Save the Children, 2013).

Educational psychologists can assist the government with such systemic analysis and the development of inclusive practices (Annan and Priestley 2012). Educational psychologists practice with individual children and with the primary care-givers but to ensure meaningful long-term change and effective change we need to work with the institutions or organisation of which the child is a part (Stoker, 1992).

One example is a structured, collaborative way for psychologists to share expertise in Teacher Support Teams (Woodward, 2015). Coleman (2011) notes 'Staff Sharing" groups have a history being developed and applied by psychologists in Auckland schools (Gill & Monsen, 1995). Stringer Stow, Hibbert, Powell, & Louw (1992) provide an account of teacher consultation groups used in UK schools.

More recently, Norwich and Daniels (2013) evaluate the use of six, Teacher Support Teams (TST) in eight, UK schools. These groups involved:

> *1. Clear specifications of the kinds of teaching problems which could be referred to the teams by the teachers.*
> *2. The responsibility for a request for referral being with the class teachers, not the head teacher or TST teachers.*
> *3. The core team to include appropriately prepared class teachers, whether elected or appointed and not to include head teachers. School-based special needs teachers could be part of the core team or attend on request. Outside support personnel and parents could attend on request.*
> *4. Identifying one teacher to co-ordinate the work of the team.*
> *5. Specifying clear procedures for referral, the conduct of meetings, the analysis of the problems and the design of interventions, implementation, records and follow-up of interventions. (p150)*

These groups were highly valued by teachers when surveyed and 95% reported that the strategies devised were workable for the initial concern and 78% used them in similar situations with other children. Norwich and Daniels (2013) reported that keys to the success for these groups are (i) right kind of values (ii) commitment of time and staffing (lunchtime, after school or end of day) (iii) working with a wide range of concerns around pupil learning and behaviour (iv) offering a significant source of encouragement (v) a structured follow-up to extend systematic and new learning.

Research and Evaluation

Educational psychologists are trained to question evidence, to be rigorous and systematic. We are often the professionals that schools turn to when asking about unknown educational packages e.g. Brain Gym, Irlen lenses, kinaesthetic learning, self-esteem interventions etc.

A major feature of educational psychology is its contribution to teaching by way of research and research interpretation. Effective practices have been identified many times (e. g. Timperley & Parr, 2009) and the efficacy of a wide range of interventions have been documented recently (Hattie, 2002, 2009) but who are the intermediaries (in Dewey's term) to support the schools in Implementing them? The extent to which so called "therapies" or the fads of each generation of new ideas are applied in education was noted by Dewey (cited in Shulman, 1998) who expressed his concern that teachers in his own day were "far too susceptible to passing fads and lofty rhetoric" (Brown 2010 p. 14).

Educational psychologists are well placed to carry out applied research that will track the effectiveness of special needs initiatives in a systematic way, for example the outcomes for children with ORS finding or children in receipt of the Severe Behaviour initiative (Coleman 2011). We are encouraged by the practical, applied research that is being generated in response to local need by those training to become educational or child psychologists. However, we would like to see more opportunities for psychologists practicing in the field working jointly with New Zealand Universities to generate innovative practices for diverse learners and their communities.

The New Zealand Productivity Commission (2015) notes

F4.5 Government agencies often do not subject their social service programmes to rigorous and transparent evaluation and learn from previous experience.

The Ministry of Education has a history of seeking evidence that extends beyond academic research which tends to privilege Western models of practice but also consider practitioner skill and whānau voice (Bourke, Holden & Curzon 2005). However, even with practitioner evidence there may be limited cultural competence and western clinical practice might be more highly valued. Although whānau's views could be included it may not require genuine participation and the application of whakawhānaungatanga. Macfarlane and Macfarlane (2013) argue that special needs evidence should be considered through Māori world view perspectives and include the Treaty principles of partnership, protection and participation.

The Advisory Group on Conduct Problems (2011) review the effective programmes for 8 to 12 year old children that are viewed as challenging. They conclude that psychologists may deliver a direct service to clients but also provide significant supervision and oversight for programmes delivered by other professionals trained in teaching, general practice, nursing, social work and allied disciplines. This supervision was required to ensure: i) adequate assessment of the young person's behavioural problems and strengths; ii) oversight of the programme delivery and staff training; iii) clinical follow up of children and families referred to these services and iv) programme evaluation (p34).

Again they emphasise the need for locally devised and culturally appropriate programmes:

A critical issue in the development and implementation of the programmes described above is the development of adequate evaluations of the effectiveness of these programmes in a New Zealand context. There are three reasons why thorough evaluation in a New Zealand context is required. The first reason is to address frequently expressed concerns that programmes developed outside of New Zealand may not be effective in a New Zealand context and may fail to address the needs of specific populations such as Maori (p37).

Conclusion

The floundering of education in deficit structures is due more to a lack of social and political leadership, direction and will than a lack in capability to create systemic change...Even though this assignment task is focused on implementing an inclusive education system, the major challenge isn't about how to transform education. A small group of disabled people, whānau, researchers and educationalists could nut out a good process for transforming, monitoring and improving education in a jiffy. This work has and is being done locally and internationally. We know what needs doing and how (Inclusion International, 2009; MacArthur, 2009). Meaningful change takes engagement with the key legal, policy, research documents, people and directions. There are quite a lot of people in New Zealand and internationally who do this work well (Macartney 2014 p173).

The New Zealand Psychological Society/*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa* agrees that it is worth taking time to ensure wide engagement with all groupings in the complex systems of support for diverse learners. We are mindful of our history of previous attempts to introduce devolved, contestable services with the former Special Education Service (SES) and the return of these services to the Ministry of Education because of concerns about fragmentation, accountability, inequalities of resourcing, duplication and the difficulties associated with the casualisation of staff. An early evaluation of similar attempts at devolved funding within a common assessment framework overseas has indicated some similar concerns (Holmes, McDermid, Padley,& Soper, 2010). They noted that a 'substantial investment' was required to make local teams work for children identified with special educational needs.

Psychologists have a unique role in not only bringing technical skills and knowledge and supervising others but helping others to frame problems and enable change, for example using Situational Analysis Problem-solving Frameworks, Narrative Approaches, Solution Focused Approaches, Psycho-Social models, Functional Behavior Approaches and Consultative Approaches. Using our skills, we are often viewed as the 'bridge' and key facilitator working across the community, the different sectors of Health, Social Work and Education and with the different age groupings of children.

We suggest there should be equal attention to promoting the three components to design an inclusive system for children: (i) Attitudes/Values (ii) Resources/Funding (iii) Expertise/Skills.

Recommendations

Attitudes/Values

- Avoid a categorical system that applies unhelpful labels to children unless there is a sound evidential basis that will inform an intervention and make a difference to the outcome.
- Psychologists should contribute their skills and expertise to help create successful learning environments for all young people not just those identified with special educational needs. There is no special pedagogy for special education.

- Uphold the general aspiration that all children should remain within their community in well-resourced mainstream schools regardless of their individual needs
- Continue with a universal curriculum design that can accommodate a diverse range of learners.
- Avoid static assessments that focus on identification and diagnosis. Promote more formative forms of assessment that can lead directly to practical interventions such as dynamic, curriculum-based and narrative assessment
- Maintain a diversity of practice within and outside professional groups as this often generates unique outcomes. Extreme forms of consistency may limit possible interventions.
- Collaboration is generally desirable but it will require additional resources and/or structural changes to release professionals. It may not always be the best way to achieve good outcomes for all children at all times.
- 'Train against demand' to equip those locally in schools and the community to meet the needs of diverse learners and reduce waiting lists rather than defer to experts.
- Avoid short term political timeframes with this review to ensure everyone has time to participate and maximise the chance of successful implementation
- Acknowledge *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and seek power sharing arrangements when reviewing special educational needs. This includes drawing from a wide, culturally appropriate evidence base.
- Provide services for clients in culturally responsive ways.
- Seek a wider government/community focus to consider explicitly all the factors that impact on inclusion and caring for our young people, such as poverty and inequality.

Resources/Funding

- Evaluate the potential effectiveness of new programmes on the basis of comprehensive advice that is cultural informed (practitioner, whānau, research) so we do not default uncritically to narrow evidence bases.
- Boost the role of the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo) using 'The Investing in Educational Success' (IES) or the 'Joined Up' initiative so the SENCo can be released as the consistent point of contact for students identified with needs and to initiate professional development within the school.
- Use Investing in Educational Success (IES) or the 'Joined Up' initiative to fund an increase in the Special Education Grant (SEG). Ensure transparency, publishing how these funds are allocated for children with special education needs. The Education Review Office (ERO) and other auditing mechanisms might assist with the evaluation of these funds.
- Ring fence funds for groups that are more heterogeneous and that may have less powerful supporters e.g. students that are viewed as severely challenging
- Avoid the proliferation of untrained, teacher aides which may be of limited value in certain situations, potentially 'disable' students further and contain many hidden costs of monitoring and management to ensure effectiveness.
- Prioritise funding for early childhood education and community based activities where there is likely to be more opportunities for effective change

- Design systems that give value to the quality of activity rather than narrow targets completion to avoid the 'cherry –picking' of easy but low quality, meaningful work.
- Adopt a high trust model for professional staff that are already closely monitored and audited by their professional groups.
- Avoid contestable funding mechanisms as the competitive market is not a good fit for social systems, with profits being taken out of the system and the risk of losing social capital.

Expertise/Skills

- Continue with preventative initiatives such as those under Positive Behaviour for Learning but reduce the adoption of off the shelf packages to develop more sustainable local initiatives that embrace the cultural diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Extend initial teacher training and education in the community so teachers feel equipped to work with a diverse range of learners traditionally identified with special needs.
- Release psychologists to provide professional development opportunities to upskill teachers and other educators.
- Utilise psychologists further by commissioning applied research with practitioners to provide information that goes beyond demonstration studies and a narrow evidence base, for example the implementation and development of Teacher Support Teams.
- Adopt preventative, ecological and systemic processes to address the barriers to creating inclusive environments for diverse learners.

Educational psychologists, psychologists working in education and the community seek to be part of a solution for creating and maintaining systems that educate all young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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