
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

9 February 1984

Dear Stephen,

In the haste to establish a Board of the Division of Professional Affairs to represent and reflect the professional interests of psychologists working in educational contexts following the recent APS restructure, the title "Educational and Developmental" was adopted. This title was a compromise between two rival proposals, tentatively titled "Board of Educational and Child Psychologists" and the simpler "Board of Educational Psychologists". The BEDP emerged as the synthesis of the two, and is now off and running. Perhaps some early reflection on the adequacy of our title is required, however.

APS tradition appears to favour the definition of groups of psychologists according to either their occupational contexts ("scientific", "professional", "forensic", "educational") or their methods of service delivery ("clinical", "community", "counselling"). Thus we accept that *educational* psychologists can practice *counselling* in a *clinical* context while also maintaining an interest in *neuropsychology*. Hence educational psychologists get upset when clinical psychologists appear to practice professional exclusivity by pushing separate claims for health rebates. We all use WISC-R's, don't we?

In order to resolve such blurred boundaries between DPA Boards and to present a coherent professional identity to the consumers of our services, I wish to make the suggestion that the name of our Board be altered from the BEDP to the "Board of Child and Adolescent Psychologists". It is my contention that such a change would achieve: (a) a stronger reflection and definition of the specific client group with whom we work, both directly and indirectly, in a variety of institutional and other contexts, using a variety of professional techniques; and (b) a sense of continuity between academic child and adolescent psychology and the various strands of professional training and practice. Specifically, we would possibly gain a shared recognition of the areas of mutual concern between clinical child psychologists and educational psychologists, as presently defined. Such a name change will reflect not *where* or *how* we work, but rather with *whom*.

Yours, etc.

Christopher Szaday

N.B. The opinion expressed above is not necessarily a reflection of the views of the present BEDP Committee, on which the author holds the position of Secretary.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Stephen Meredith

BEDP MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION CONTENT PREFERENCES

This report provides two categories of information about members:

- (1) a profile of current membership by State and occupation;
- (2) members' preferences for the content of the Board's proposed publication.

The purpose of obtaining this information was to provide some indications of the directions to be taken by the proposed BEDP publication.

Members' State of residence was obtained from the Board's mailing list. Occupation information and content preferences were obtained from a questionnaire mailed with a stamped and addressed envelope to all current members late in October 1983. By mid-January 1984, 71 of the 129 questionnaires, or 55%, had been returned.

1. PROFILE OF MEMBERSHIP DATA

(a) State.

The number and percentage of members residing in each state is given in Table 1.

State	Number	Percentage
Victoria	75	58.1
New South Wales	25	19.4
Tasmania	11	8.5
Queensland	6	4.7
Western Australia	6	4.7
South Australia	3	2.3
Northern Territory	3	2.3
Total	129	100.0

Table 1: State residence of BEDP members.

(b) Occupation

Information provided against the heading "Nature/Place of Employment" by the 71 members who returned their questionnaires enabled each respondent to be placed in one of six occupational categories, as shown in Table 2. (Where a respondent listed two or more types of employment, e.g. part-time lecturing, part-time private practice, each occupation was given equal fractional weighting.) Table 2 shows the number of respondents employed in each of the six occupational categories by State.

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	STATE							Total	%
	Vic	NSW	Tas	Qld.	WA	SA	NT		
School Counselling/ Guidance	23.7	5	0	0	3	0	1	32.7	46.1
Counselling (Non School)	0.7	0	0	1	0	0	0	1.7	2.4
Clinical Psychology	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	6	8.5
Private Practice	1.8	2	0	1	1	0	0	5.8	8.2
School Teaching	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	6	8.5
Tertiary Teaching	9.8	6	2	0	1	0	0	18.8	26.5
Total	40	16	2	5	6	0	2	71	71

Table 2: Occupation of BEDP members by State residence.

DISCUSSION

The most striking points to be drawn from the data presented above are;

- More than half the current BEDP members live in Victoria. Other states are not well represented in comparison.
- Almost half the respondents work in school counselling/educational guidance.
- Almost three-quarters of the respondents work in applied settings.
- A substantial minority of respondents, just over a quarter, work in tertiary institutions.

2. PUBLICATION CONTENT PREFERENCES DATA

Members were asked to rank 10 suggested types of content for the proposed publication in order of preference. Mean ranks, in order, are given in Table 3. (Where one or more items were not ranked by a respondent, they were each given an equal rank at the midpoint of the remaining numbers up to 10.)

Content	Mean Rank
Issues in Professional Practice	3.37
Reports of Research Activities of Members	3.94
Details of Conferences, Workshops, Courses, etc.	4.00
Advances in Psychological Assessment	4.07
Book Reviews	5.54
Reprints from other appropriate publications	5.76
BEDP Committee Reports	5.96
Reports from BEDP Sections	6.18
Membership Information	7.06
Social News	8.69

Table 3: Mean rank given by BEDP members (n=71) for 10 suggested types of publication content.

Other possible types of content suggested by members in addition to those listed on the questionnaire were:

- original research reports
- abstracts from postgraduate theses
- descriptions of casework and curricula, particularly special education.
- networking — i.e. getting people together to discuss new issues as a "task force" or "think tank"
- "New Age" material.

DISCUSSION

Members' preferences indicate a clear bias toward a publication that promotes professional development through research reports, discussion of professional issues, reviews of books and assessment techniques, and information about activities that will promote professional development. However, there is also a clearly expressed wish for use of the publication as a vehicle for communication about activities of the Board and its members.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BEDP PUBLICATION

At present, most members of the Board of Educational and Developmental Psychologists are engaged in the practical application of psychology in schools and other applied settings. A substantial minority are engaged in academic work. Although most members reside in Victoria, a similar distribution of occupations is found throughout the membership.

In view of the professional involvement of most members in the practice of psychology, it is not surprising that preferences for content of the BEDP publication include not only research articles but also information of more direct use for the professional development of practitioners. Most of the other types of content suggested by members are also of this nature.

On the basis of this information, it is intended that the publication will include not only the news about activities of the Board and its members that would be found in a newsletter. It is intended that the publication will also have a heavy emphasis on good quality articles of direct interest to practitioners, and reports of empirical studies. At this stage, it is intended that, where copy is available, the publication will include the types of content suggested in the questionnaire — research reports, reports on issues in professional practice, reviews of books and materials, notices of professional development activities — and some of the additional types of content suggested by respondents.