An Action Research Study to Select an Effective Model to Evaluate Consultation within Two Educational Psychology Services

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

2016

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School of Education
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Abstract

Background: This research was conducted within two Welsh bordering Local Authorities (LAs) across two Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) that changed their service delivery model to consultation following joint training. The Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) sought to evaluate the EPSs and the services they deliver, but previous methods, including sending questionnaires to head teachers and parents, were not considered robust enough or to have sufficient depth. The PEP therefore commissioned this piece of research to source a clear and useful measure to evaluate consultation.

Participants: Across the two LAs, the PEP, ten generic Educational Psychologists (EPs) and one Senior Educational Psychologist (SEP) participated in the study.

Methods: This study used the Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model of Action Research (AR). A literature review was initially conducted to identify potential evaluation models. Thereafter, within the AR phases, different data were collected and analysed with stakeholders to ascertain EPs’ use of evaluation models and their preferences and perspectives as practitioners. Data collection incorporated both focus groups and questionnaires, which generated quantitative and qualitative data which were analysed through a variety of methods, including content analysis, thematic analysis and questionnaire analysis software.

Findings: Within the AR design, data gathered during the earlier phases of the research were used to guide next steps in the research process. This led to the identification of two preferred models: The Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action (COMOIRA) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI). These were then piloted across the EPSs and each EP completed a post-pilot questionnaire. In the final phase of the research two focus groups were held to consider the usefulness of the COMOIRA and AI models as service evaluation tools. The data generated a number of themes relating to accountability, applying psychology, change, evaluation and strengths; and raised issues relating to future implications.

Conclusion: The AR design of the research facilitated a collaborative approach for shared decision making around the development of an EPS evaluation framework. The study identified positive and valuable aspects with regards to both the COMOIRA and AI models when these were implemented to evaluate consultation. Both models have the potential to assess aspects of the consultation process and could conceivably contribute towards providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users. Additionally, professional practice models could be used to evaluate wider aspects of EP practice and be of broader benefit to EPSs.
Declaration

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Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my husband Craig. You have supported me every step of the way over the past 6 years. Your constant words of encouragement and “you can do it” attitude have kept me going. Thank you to my lovely boys, Henry, now 15 years and Tom, now 10 years. You have offered me lots of well needed distractions along the way and kept me laughing.

Thank you to my wonderful parents. For everything you have done and continue to do for me. I am so lucky to have you.

Thanks to my lovely friend Lou for your patience and guidance in the final stages of this process.

Also, I would like to thank the EPs who have taken part in this study. Without your involvement I couldn’t have completed this thesis.

I would especially like to thank Cathy Atkinson who has supervised me throughout this thesis and has provided me with lots of support and guidance for which I am very grateful.
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<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
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<td>AR</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
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<td>AT</td>
<td>Activity Theory</td>
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<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Content Analysis</td>
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<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td>Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continued Professional Development</td>
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<td>CYP</td>
<td>Children and Young People</td>
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<td>Person Centred Planning</td>
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<td>SEF</td>
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<td>Target Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>UCL</td>
<td>University College of London</td>
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<td>WAG</td>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
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**Chapter One: Introduction**

1.1 Outline of Chapter

The changing political climate has resulted in a number of significant socio-legislative changes (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Gersch, 2009). Furthermore, these changes have occurred alongside the Government’s agenda to improve the quality of public services. A key element to this agenda was that services should be delivered on the basis of evidence-based practice (Clegg, 2005; MacKay, 2002). In addition, there has been increasing pressure on Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) to be accountable for the services they provide and to demonstrate their unique contribution.

The focus of this piece of research was to establish an evaluation tool which would collect relevant information on the impact of service delivery within two Welsh Local Authorities (LAs). It focused on finding a method that would facilitate a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs), to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA.

This chapter considers the rationale for the study and outlines both the national and local context for the research. Following on from the rationale, further information outlining the structure of the study and the remaining chapters will be provided.

The author will refer to herself as ‘the researcher’ throughout the study. This terminology reflects the researcher’s axiological position (see Section 4.4.6) and acknowledges her participation in the research process. Despite her involvement in the AR process the researcher tried to maintain the stance of ‘researcher’ within this context. This involved maintaining neutrality and reflexivity in relation to her contribution and how this could potentially impact upon the other participants and the wider research process.

1.2 Rationale

1.2.1 National context

The changing educational climate driven by the previous Coalition Government had a significant impact on some EPSs. The size of their services was reduced and posts disappeared due to the reduction in budgets. Discussions took place about the future of
EPSs on a national and local level following the publication of the ‘SEN Green Paper’ (Department for Education (DfE), 2011) and the ‘School Funding Reform: next steps towards a fairer system’ (DfE, 2011). These led to decisions being made about the trading of EPSs and the streamlining of their work (Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP, 2011).

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG, 2008) launched the ‘School Effectiveness Framework’ (SEF), a key policy for educational reform. WAG planned to implement this through improving the quality of teaching and leadership. The SEF (WAG, 2008) was founded on a set of principles and expected activities. A key element to the SEF framework was the focus on improving the quality of public services with an emphasis on the effective use and analysis of data. Hence, data should be collected in a systematic manner with a clear focus upon outcomes which can then be used to inform judgements about the effectiveness of services. These national reforms led to LAs exploring potential ways to collect information to validate and evaluate their services (Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai & Monsen, 2009).

1.2.2 Local context
This research was conducted within two Welsh bordering LAs. The two EPSs involved in the research had recently gone through the process of merging and have one PEP who manages both services. Across the two LAs there are eleven generic EPs and two SEPs. In September 2014 the two EPSs changed their service delivery model following joint training from Patsy Wagner, an EP with a longstanding specialism in consultation (Wagner, 1995; 2000). All the EPs’ now offer consultation as a service delivery model. Each EP has a patch of schools which are allocated individual sessions on an annual basis and group consultation is also delivered to all primary schools.

The PEP has, in recent years, been searching for effective ways to evaluate the EPSs and the services they deliver. Evaluation methods which have already been trialled have included sending questionnaires to head teachers which used rating scales to measure the level of satisfaction. Additionally, a questionnaire survey was carried out in 2010 to gather parental views on EP practice. The PEP was dissatisfied with these methods of information gathering as they were not considered to be robust enough or in sufficient depth. Furthermore, the evaluation methods were not developed systematically; they did
not focus on consultation nor gather feedback from the EPs working within the services. In order to determine a clear and useful measure to evaluate consultation meaningfully, the PEP prioritised the development of a theoretically sound, systemically developed and evidence-based evaluation tool. It was subsequently agreed that the author, having the dual role of being an EP within one of the EPSs and a doctoral student completing a research degree, was best placed to research and investigate this area.

This study has particular pertinence when considering a piece of research commissioned by the DfES which suggested that the quality of most Special Educational Needs (SEN) Services evaluation was poor (Gray, 2001). In addition, the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP) (Hampshire Educational Psychology Service, 2010) demonstrated that some EPSs were struggling to find an adequate evaluation instrument to measure the impact of what they do. This research highlighted the need for an effective evaluation tool within EPSs and this study hopes to contribute to this area of research.

1.3 The evaluation of EP practice
The issue of how to measure impact for a client group with whom EPs do not work directly has been greatly debated (Cherry, 1998; Dowling & Leibowitz, 1994; Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Sharp, Frederickson & Laws, 2000; Turner, Randall & Mohammed, 2010). There have been many problems associated with what is measurable, whether what is measured correlates with the actual outcomes and the real value added by the EPs’ involvement (Cherry, 1998; Turner et al., 2010). In the past there has been an over reliance on process indicators and a focusing on identifying outcomes that are easily measurable (Currie, 2002). Turner et al. (2010) discussed how the data resulting from such measures were not robust enough and, as such, the information generated did not shed enough light on the input and effectiveness of EPs. In the real world, it is fundamental that evaluation encapsulates the complexity of the EP role. Therefore, for it to be meaningful, the evaluation needs to be able to measure the direct work of an EP, as well as evaluating the outcomes of EP advice and consultations, where the EP works through others to bring about change.
1.4 Summary of Research

This research aimed to establish a tool that could be implemented across two EPSs and that would offer an effective method of evaluating consultation. It was conducted through an Action Research (AR) framework. This method was selected as it was deemed to be compatible with the aims of the research. Unlike traditional research, where the researcher makes claims about what is certain and true, the AR process is also the methodology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). It provided the researcher with a collaborative and consistent process where stakeholders were able to interact with the research (Cohen et al., 2000; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

The Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model was selected to guide the AR process (Timmins, Sheperd & Kelly, 2003). RADIO is a collaborative AR framework which was developed to help Educational Psychologists in Training (EPiTs) to manage their school improvement work (Timmins et al., 2003). RADIO provided a robust structure which enabled the researcher to maintain a partnership with stakeholders and colleagues (Timmins et al., 2003). Furthermore, as reported in previous research, RADIO also provided a useful process and planning tool (Ashton, 2009; Lightfoot, 2013; Timmins et al., 2003; Timmins, Mohammed, McFadyen & Ward, 2006). An overview of the thesis is presented below (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Overview of the thesis

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Chapter Two: Literature Review Stage One

2.1 Chapter Introduction
The following chapter sets out the literature review for the study which was conducted in two separate stages. The first part of the literature review focuses upon the changing role of the EP and the need for EPs to define their distinctive contribution within an increasingly accountable environment. It considers how professional practice frameworks have been implemented to address these challenges and to secure the centrality of psychology within EP practice. The second part of the literature review outlines the search strategy that sourced the professional practice frameworks for the research. It then considers the professional practice frameworks in further detail.

2.1.1 Literature Review Stage One
The first part of the literature review sets the context for the development of the evaluation tool. This section of the literature firstly considers the role of EPs within the rapidly changing context in which they work. It then moves on to focus on the effect of these changes on EPSs and how socio-legislative changes furthered the need to justify the ‘distinctive contribution’ that the EP brings. It considers the role of the EP as scientist-practitioner and the need for professional practice frameworks. Because the format for service delivery in the EPSs within this study is consultation, this is also briefly explored within the literature review, before it moves on to consider the drive for accountability within the current political and economic context. Finally, the evaluation of EPSs is discussed, prior to the second stage of the literature review.

2.1.2 Stage One Search Strategy
The literature for stage one was gathered using a number of methods. Initially, the search was broad and general, using key words such as: ‘role of the EP’; ‘accountability’; ‘reviews of the EP role’; ‘consultation’; ‘evaluation of EPSs’; ‘EP practice frameworks’. This generated literature from websites such as Google Scholar and sites associated with Government publications. The Welsh agenda and local agenda were also examined. A number of Government office websites generated information around the Welsh context and the local context (e.g., Assemblywales.org). The researcher acknowledges that these sources were not peer reviewed but they provided a broad range of literature which was considered alongside the studies located within the
Back copies of individual journals were hand searched; this included Educational Psychology in Practice, the main UK practitioner journal. The references within selected papers were reviewed which led to the consideration of a number of related papers which were also pertinent to the literature.

2.2 Setting the context

This section of the review begins by providing an overview of the historical context of the EP profession. This was identified as an important aspect of the literature as it provided an insight into how the many educational reforms placed upon the EP profession changed the role of the EP and the context in which they work. The effect of these reforms was significant for the EP profession and impacted upon the relationship between EP practice and its theoretical foundations. The confusion that subsequently built up around the role of the EP raised many questions about the unique contribution the EP offered.

2.2.1 Historical context

In the early part of the 20th century, views around educational provision for children and young people (CYP) with SEN were positioned within a medical model of ‘deficits’. The associated mental testing movement meant children were given medically diagnosed categories. This provided the initial impetus for the development of the profession of educational psychology (Wagner, 2000). Psychometric testing by early
psychologists can be traced back to Sir Cyril Burt, the first EP. He was employed as the London County Council’s psychologist from 1913 to advise on providing individual educational treatment. Aspects of his role included research, psychometrics and work with schools (Lindsay, 1985).

The later growth of the child guidance movement, which derived from the child guidance support systems imported from the US, led to the location of EPs in a psychiatric clinic setting. The first child guidance clinic opened in London in 1927. Work in the clinics was carried out by a team which included an EP, a child psychiatrist and a social worker. This contributed to the further constriction of the EP role to tester. The prevalent psychological model was one of individual deficit, leading to the need for clinical diagnosis (Lindsay, 1985; Wagner, 2000). Another small strand of educational psychology that emerged around this time was through the teaching profession with teachers in schools training to become EPs. This influence brought with it a strong educational component, working with teachers on identified problems (Lindsay, 1985).

Under the 1944 Education Act, significant reforms to the education system were brought into effect. The Act was mainly directed at mainstream education but it addressed certain aspects of education for children with SEN. However, it still focused on a medical model of disability. Children with SEN were placed into eleven categories of disability and special schools were still seen as the most appropriate places to educate pupils with SEN. However, at this time it was the role of the medical officer, not the EP, to examine the child and issue a certificate to show whether a child was “suffering from any such disability” (34(5)).

By the 1960s educational psychology was a small profession encompassing these different strands of educational psychology. Work was divided between that in a child guidance clinic and that in a school psychology service. In the 1960s and 70s, the profession moved towards an approach favoured by behavioural psychologists and tried to move away from the medical child deficit model (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008). Behaviourists had rejected the medical model and were advocating an approach that dealt with only what they could observe. This work stressed the possibility of modifying the problems of children with SEN and placed the responsibility with the teacher (Lindsay, 1985) The Summerfield Report (1968) provided the driver for this change in
The report identified future priorities as having greater focus on preventative work and there was a call for EPs to be involved in early identification and intervention (Kelly et al., 2008). The report recommended a major expansion of EP training and posts and in response to this the profession saw a rapid increase in the number of EPs in service in the 1970s and 80s. Alongside the increase in numbers there were also several other factors that were shaping EPSs at that time. EPs in England and Wales in the 1970s developed many exciting new ways of working to supplement and replace earlier patterns of working. Gillham (1978) was particularly influential at the time and called for the application of psychology within the text “Reconstructing Educational Psychology”. The child guidance model of delivery was developing. The philosophy of ‘giving psychology away’ (Miller, 1969) which had become prevalent in the 1970s had stimulated EPs to work primarily with parents and teachers in a training capacity. The growing numbers of EPs began to alter the balance in SEN procedures (Lindsay, 1985). Rather than medical officers carrying out assessments of children with SEN, by 1975 this role was carried out by EPs and there was a move from a medical towards a psychoeducational influence (Lindsay, 1985). There was a growing disenchantment with normative assessment techniques, especially tests of intelligence and challenges were made towards the way difficulties were assessed. Methods of intervention with individual children broadened to encompass a wide range of humanistic and behavioural therapies. EPs had also developed a role as consultant to schools on matters of policy and as providers of further training for teachers which shifted the balance away from simply working with referred children (Kelly et al., 2008).

The introduction of the Warnock Report (1978) had a dramatic effect on the work of the EP. The report formed the basis of the 1981 Education Act’s policies on SEN. The 1981 Education Act radically changed the conceptualisation of SEN. It introduced the idea of statements for SEN and an integrative and inclusive approach, based on common educational goals for all children regardless of their disabilities. It advocated a continuum of SEN, rather than discrete categories. It suggested that only two per cent of CYP required separate educational provision but another eighteen per cent required special provision within mainstream schools. The Act required Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to take advice from an LEA employed EP which meant that LEAs had to have a psychological service (Lindsay, 1985). Alongside this legislation came a
huge increase in bureaucracy. There was an increase in the proportion of EP time spent on individual assessments and this decreased the time available for preventative and systems work. Fears raised by Lindsay (1985) were founded and there was a reverse in the development of the EP profession and EPs were forced into the role of assessors and gatekeepers.

Over the next decade EPs became a valuable resource to schools to the extent that they supported them to get additional resources. Faupel and Norgate (1993) argued that this was “perhaps the single greatest disaster” (p. 132) for EPSs as EPs were seen to be the providers of additional resources to schools and, as such, became administration officers at the expense of being applied psychologists. For some EPs this became a privileged and powerful role and accorded them a great deal of status as they became major decision makers within the LA structure (Fallon et al., 2010; Faupel & Norgate, 1993). It also secured a position for EPs who wanted to be seen as ‘helpful’ to schools or the LA and, at the time, ensured that EP staffing levels would be maintained despite the threat of delegation of budgets (Wagner, 2000).

The 1994 Education Act replaced by the 1996 Education Act brought about the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, (DFES), (2001). This legislation was seen as according status to EPs through the legislation of LA statutory assessment processes and it continued to constrain the range and development of EPs’ functions (DFES, 2001; Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell, Squires, Woods, Lewis, Rooney & O’Connor, 2006, Norwich, 2000). EPs were placed at the centre of local authority. The EP role became restricted to that of ‘gatekeepers’ for special educational provision (Frederickson & Reason, 1995; Miller & Frederickson, 2006; Woods, 1994). Following on from this, the pressure for statements led to EPs spending more time carrying out statutory assessment work at the expense of providing early intervention when the child’s needs were first identified (DfEE, 1997; DfEE, 2000; Pennick & Lagunowitsch, 2010).

This gatekeeping role brought significant costs for the EP profession which became swept back into a medical model of delivery (Faupel & Norgate, 1993). The role and responsibilities of the EP became confused which undermined the profession’s credibility (MacKay, 2002). It was this distorted view about the role of EPs that underpinned some of the negative evaluations of EPs’ contributions, and potential
contributions, to children’s development, by some educationalists (Farrell et al., 2006). This bureaucratic role also created conflict with the theoretical roots of educational psychology relating to the application of psychology (Kelly & Gray, 2000). Reflecting on the call from Gillham (1978) for the application of psychology, a special edition of the Association of Educational Psychologists’ (AEP) journal Educational Psychology in Practice (1999), celebrated 21 years since *Reconstructing Educational Psychology*, the authors considered how far the ideals written in the book had crossed over into EP practice (Leyden, 1999). Farrell et al. (2006) reported that most of the contributors felt that the ideas had still not been implemented into mainstream practice and that the aspects of EP practice considered outdated and ill-judged in 1978, such as intelligence quotient (IQ) tests and the consequent ‘gatekeeper’ role, were still being practised.

2.2.2 Role definition within the EP profession

So far the literature has presented a historical context highlighting the constantly shifting role of the EP. This constantly changing working context created confusion around the role of the EP and potentially undermined the profession. The next section begins to explore how more recent legislative changes further contributed to the difficulties the EP profession experienced when attempting to define its role and how this added to both public and professional confusion (Gersch, 2009; Kinderman, 2005) around the role of the EP (Farrell et al., 2006).

This consistent theme of “reconstruction,” “reformulation” and “refocusing” of the profession (Fallon et al., 2010, p.2) has continued over the past decade and the profession is currently undergoing another period of rapid and immense change in light of the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). Government reforms have included: ‘Every Child Matters’ (DfES, 2004); the ‘Common Assessment Framework’ (2004); and changes to EP training from a one year Masters to a three year Doctorate to bring it in line with clinical psychology training. All of these reforms have resulted in a further period of considerable adjustment for EPs. They have also had a significant impact upon the delivery systems of EPSs and created a much wider spectrum of possible work. One of the consequences of such role expansion has been further decrease in role clarity (Stobie, 2002). As such, the EP profession was placed in a position that rendered it rather ambiguous and therefore subject to further role conflict and confusion.
Consequently, many EPs in the twenty first century continued to find it difficult to describe their role (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Stobie, 2002).

The drive for integration into children’s services resulting from these legislative reforms created a multi-agency focus with many EPs working in more diverse roles, with a greater range of role partners (AEP, 2008; Farrell et al., 2006). On the one hand, the literature considers how multi-agency working increases the feelings of professional identity for EPs (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Willdridge, 2013). However, on the other, for some professionals the blurring of boundaries that can occur within multi-agency working can prove stressful (Moran, Bunn & Bifulco, 2007) with the overlapping of the EP role with other professional groups leading to the erosion of professional identity for some EPs. The diversity of the EP role meant that EP service delivery differed greatly at both a service wide level and between individual EPs within services. This brought with it a number of complex challenges and created confusion about what it is that EPs do (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Fallon et al., 2010). The multi-agency working context led to questions being asked around whether other agencies do jobs which are similar to parts of the EP role. This is currently evident within the EPSs in which this study is taking place with EPs being asked to define their distinctive role and offer clarity about the unique contribution they make in comparison to other services (Kelly & Gray, 2000; Stobie, 2002). Consequently, this created a challenging context and, as highlighted within the literature, within such working contexts EPs can begin to lose sight of the beliefs, hopes and aspirations with which they entered the profession and become anxious and uncertain about their futures (Cameron, 2006). Cameron and Monsen (2005) suggest that the uncertainty around the professional role of the EP is one of the main reasons to explain why many EPs appear to be experiencing an ‘identity crisis’.

The ‘identity crisis’ and ‘insecurity complex’ within the EP profession has been widely acknowledged within the literature (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Farrell et al., 2006; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Love, 2009; Norwich, 2005; Willdridge, 2013) and are ongoing issues within the EPSs contributing to this study.

In addition, the literature highlights that alongside the ambiguity and confusion around the nature of the EP role there is also evidence indicating that the ideas EPs have about their role are not necessarily congruent with those to whom they deliver service (Mackay, 2002). Research indicates disparities between what schools want, what EPSs
want to deliver and a mismatch between what EPSs think they should be doing and what users perceive as their role (Ashton and Roberts, 2006; Kelly & Gray, 2000). Findings from a national survey of schools (Kelly & Gray, 2000) suggested that there were conflicts between what schools are looking for and what EPs want to offer.

Boyle and MacKay (2007) discussed how these disparities and conflicts were consistently reported in studies on the views of schools from the 1970s to the early 1990s. In the 1990s MacKay and Boyle conducted a secondary school study (Boyle & MacKay, 1990) and a combined study in primary and secondary schools looking at what schools expect the role of the EP to be (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009). MacKay and Boyle (1994) interviewed head teachers in 115 schools across Scotland. They noted that after more than a decade of reconstruction of psychological services, in which a major theme has been the reduced emphasis on direct work with individual children, the traditional role of individual assessment was one that continued to be strongly endorsed by teachers. This research also highlighted discrepancies that existed between EPs and teachers in their perceptions regarding the EP role. Boyle and MacKay (2007) later carried out follow up research finding a continued mismatch between what teachers wanted and believed they were getting and what EPs felt that teachers needed and believed they were receiving. The traditional Scottish EP role was based on individual casework and the new roles were related to interventions based on consultation, training, research and involvement in policy and organisational change. However, while EPs tended to believe the changes in service delivery were a valuable enhancement of practice, teachers reported valuing the traditional EP roles and preferred models of service delivery that offered a continuing commitment to these.

Research by Ashton and Roberts (2006) also highlighted a gap between the perceptions of a group of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos) and EPs. This small scale study was prompted through discussions with newly qualified EPs from the same LA who felt anxious because they were unclear about the unique contribution they could make to schools. The study aimed to explore which aspects of the EP role were valued by SENCos and also EPs themselves. It compared the views of the SENCos with those of the EPs in the study. This research found that EPs had their own ideas about what their services should look like which were not necessarily the same as those of their clients. Most of the SENCos valued the ‘traditional’ EP role of individual
assessment, which often led to statutory assessment and giving their expert advice to staff. The EPs in the study valued working through consultation, the relationship they shared with the school, the different perspectives they brought to understanding different problems and the fact that they included the views of the pupils. Within this piece of research there was also a suggestion of role conflict within the EP profession itself. The findings showed that the EPs themselves were struggling to agree on what they should be offering to schools. However, this piece of research captured the view of only a small group of eight EPs within one EPS and it is questionable to what extent the findings can be generalised.

The findings of Ashton and Roberts (2006) reflect the current context within the EPSs which this study is taking place. With recent job losses and a reduced service capacity there have been frequent changes within the service delivery of one of the EPSs. This EPS is currently delivering group consultation but the EPs within the team are not in general agreement about whether they should be offering this or whether schools actually want this aspect of service delivery. This demonstrates that decisions about what EPSs should look like may not be congruent with what the service users want. Furthermore, this supports the literature which demonstrates that EPs do not necessarily agree with each other about what they want to offer (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). It is not surprising; therefore, that confusion has built up around the role of the EP.

2.3 Role confusion
The literature has considered how, alongside the historical context, more recent legislative changes have contributed further to the confusion around the role of the EP and that this role confusion existed amongst EPs and service users. Unsurprisingly, this has created significant challenges for the EP profession over the years in relation to the application of psychology. Indeed, as highlighted by Norwich (2000), the profession spends a great deal of its time contemplating how much psychology is used in everyday work. It has been suggested that due to the complex historical background and changing socio-legislative context the gulf between educational psychology and its academic roots could be greater than in any other area of applied psychology (Kelly et al., 2008).

As the EP profession looked to address the challenges faced with regard to defining its role through the application of psychology, there was a realisation that social
constructionism could provide a way of working that could bridge the gap between theory and practice and move EPs away from the ‘within child’ focus towards a preventative way of working (Kelly & Gray, 2000). However, the application of social constructionist theory to EP practice brought with it significant challenges and “generated its own minefield of conflicts about role focus and about the relationship of educational psychology to education” (Kelly et al., 2008, p. 21).

As argued by Kelly et al. (2008), these challenges caused a delay in academic developments reflecting the theory of social constructionism which could have been applied to EP practice. This lack of cohesion between theory and practice and the subsequent scarcity of frameworks which might have enabled theoretical models to be embedded in professional practice created a lack of clarity and consistency within EPS delivery. Subsequently this led to the implementation of ‘loose approaches’ and the failure to adopt a collective approach across the EP profession. This challenge of adapting theory to practice is a further reason put forward for the lack of clarity around the role of the EP (Norwich, 2000) and the need for EPs to constantly reflect upon and question their role (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009).

As is evident within the literature, the EPs involved in this research have found it very difficult to describe and define their role (Corban, 2011; Love, 2009). Until very recently the EPs have maintained a ‘gatekeeper’ role within the LAs and the delegation of budgets to schools has been a very recent development. Subsequently, services are under increased scrutiny and the EPs are being asked to define their role. Furthermore, it has become apparent that a great deal of confusion exists between LA officers around the role of the EP.

2.4 Reviews of the role of the EP
The literature has explored how the changing legislative and working context for EPs has created confusion around the role. In addition, the challenges faced around the application of psychological approaches led to the implementation of ‘loose approaches’ (Kelly et al., 2008). Continued debates around what EPs do and whether an EP is the most appropriate professional to involve in a particular piece of work highlighted to the profession that it needed to provide clarity around its purpose to ensure that LAs and service users could be confident about the unique role they offer (Cameron, 2006;
Farrell et al., 2006). In response to this context a number of reviews on the role of the EP were undertaken and these will now be detailed within this section. The debate around the distinctive contribution the EP brings is particularly pertinent to the EPSs involved in this study as they are under increasing pressure to provide evidence to demonstrate this (Cameron, 2006). This adds weight to the rationale for this piece of research which is looking to find an effective service evaluation model of consultation.

As outlined, questions around the distinctive contribution of the EP profession have been one of the driving forces behind reviews of the EP profession (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). There have been numerous and frequent reviews of the role of the EP at an academic, practitioner, governmental and professional level (Fallon et al., 2010). Some of these have been broad ranging, such as ‘The Currie Report’ (Scottish Executive, 2002) and the ‘Review of the Functions and Contribution of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales in light of “Every Child Matters: Change for Children”’ (Farrell et al., 2006). Within the parameters of this review it is only possible to briefly consider the findings by the DfEE (2000), the Scottish Executive (2002) and the review by Farrell et al. (2006). The Welsh context will also be summarised as it is pertinent to the context of this research.

Within the Green Paper ‘Excellence for all Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs’ (DfEE, 1997), the government made a commitment to look at ways to shift the balance of EP work towards earlier intervention and support. The follow up report ‘Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action’ (DfEE, 1998) led to a reappraisal of the future role and training of EPs (Kelly & Gray, 2000; Kelly et al., 2008). A working group were tasked to determine future priority areas for EPSs. The subsequent report: ‘Educational Psychology Services (England): Current Role, Good Practice and Future Directions’ (DfEE, 2000) defined several future priorities for EPs. These included:

- To have a continuing role in working with children with SEN;
- Consultation, problem solving and solution focused approaches;
- “To apply psychology in an educational context” (p. 71)
The “Review of the Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland” (Currie Report) (Scottish Executive, 2002) published performance indicators and the core functions of EP work were identified as: assessment, intervention, consultation, training and research. The report considered that these five functions should be delivered at three levels: the individual level (child), at the group level (class/group/family) and at the organisational level (school/LA) (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Fallon et al., 2010). These five functions were reflected within the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2006) National Occupational Standards for Applied EPs (Fallon et al., 2010).

Following these reviews there were considerable changes to EP roles and responsibilities and a change in the training route for EPs. This context presented challenges and opportunities for the evolving role of educational psychology and formed the backdrop for the DfES funded review of the role of the EP (Farrell et al., 2006). This was one of the most comprehensive reports of EP service delivery in recent years (Kelly et al., 2008). It considered the views of a range of stakeholders as to the distinctive contribution that EPs can make in light of the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes and reforms (DfES, 2004).

The Farrell et al. (2006) review generated recommendations for the future role and function of the EP. As with the review by the Scottish Executive (2002), Farrell et al. (2006) also recognised that the core functions of EP work should be done at the level of the individual child, the group and the organisation. It is not feasible to outline all the recommendations from the review; instead, the most pertinent ones will be outlined. Despite these recommendations being delivered before the onset of traded services in England, it is important to note that the picture in Wales is very different to England. Farrell et al.’s (2006) review remains relevant to the context for this study as these recommendations are only just beginning to be implemented:

- *The extent to which the role and function of EPs is distinctive*: Farrell et al. (2006) stated that documentation about the range of work offered by an EP service should be explicit about the psychological nature of their contribution and when responding to a particular request for EP involvement, EPs should clarify the specific nature of the work required and the psychological contribution that they can offer and, where appropriate, clarify whether an
alternative provider is available who might be able to carry out the work with the same impact.

- **The impact of a reduction in EPs’ role in statutory work**: Farrell et al. (2006) considered how EPs should continue to have a key role in the statutory assessment of children with the most complex needs but that they should take advantage of the trend in the reduction of statutory work to expand and develop their activities in different areas where their skills and knowledge can be used to greater effect e.g. group and individual therapy, staff training and systems work.

### 2.5 Welsh context

In addition to the English context, it is important to consider the Welsh context as this is also relevant to the EPSs within this study. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) set out their priorities for the future through a document entitled ‘*Children and Young people: Rights to Action*’ (WAG, 2011) this presented a vision of a fairer, more prosperous, healthier and better-educated country. WAG adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) as the basis of all work for CYP in Wales. This was translated the rights into seven core aims for CYP. These were that CYP:

- Will have a flying start in life;
- Will have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- Will enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- Will have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- Have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
- Are not disadvantaged by poverty (WAG 2011, p.1)

The national approach includes developing policy, improving services for CYP, and evaluating the difference made to their lives so that achievements can be demonstrated. This political agenda, informs work at the authority level, in the form of the Children
and Young People’s Partnership Plan which aims to translate the seven core aims into actions. From this LAs need to assess and demonstrate how services support children and young people and the impact that services have for young people.

2.6 Role of scientist practitioner

The outcomes of the many extensive reviews on the role of EPs highlighted to the profession that the application of psychology is a fundamental part of the EP role. Each supported a movement away from the ‘historical’ EP role which has been outlined as one of over-involvement in administrative gate-keeping tasks towards the provision of a more sound use of psychological knowledge across the variety of contexts in which EPs work (Farrell et al., 2006) (see Section 2.4). As such there has been an explicit move for EPs towards a reconciliation of the pragmatic and the scientific through the “conceptualisation” of the role as that of a “scientist-practitioner” (Fallon et al., 2010; Lane & Corrie, 2006). This envisages EPs implementing scientific principles and methods within their practice (Fallon et al., 2010; Lane & Corrie, 2006; Miller & Frederickson, 2006). Fallon et al. (2010) discuss how alongside developing understanding around the core functions of EPs there has also been a move towards integrating psychological frameworks into EP working practice as a tool for drawing out “psychological knowledge, skills and understanding” (p. 4).

Kelly et al. (2008) argued that practice frameworks are an essential resource for the EP profession and that they provide a means of addressing the challenge that EPs face with regard to clarifying the complex relationship between theory and practice and enabling the integration and cohesion of complex theoretical perspectives with equally complex practice methodology. Effective practice frameworks can be seen to secure the centrality of psychology and the distinctiveness of the EP’s contribution in their professional interactions. Such frameworks also enable the integration of functions across different pieces of work (Fallon et al., 2010; Frederickson & Miller, 2008; Gameson, Rhyderch, Ellis & Carrol, 2005; Kelly et al., 2008; Leadbetter, 2005; Timmins et al., 2003; Woolfson, Whaling, Stewart, & Monsen, 2003).

The need to more clearly demonstrate the scientist-practitioner aspect of the EP role provided the impetus for the EPSs within this study to select consultation as a model of service delivery to schools. As highlighted within the literature, consultation has
emerged as a way of addressing the shift in the nature and balance of EP work and linking theory to practice. Consultation approaches have increasingly become seen as an important aspect of EP work (Athun, 2000; Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Kelly & Gray, 2000). Indeed, the Scottish Executive (2002) and Farrell et al. (2006) highlighted consultation as a core function of the EP role (Boyle & MacKay, 2007; Dennis, 2004). The significance of consultation is further highlighted by its inclusion in the UK core curriculum for initial training and within later professional development in EPSs (Dickinson, 2000; Kennedy, Cameron & Monsen, 2009). Before consultation is considered in more detail within section 2.7, it is important to distinguish between the professional practice model of consultation and the professional practice frameworks that have been developed to be used by EPs within their practice. Wicks (2013) provides a clear explanation of the difference between professional practice models, such as consultation, (Wagner, 2000) which support the application of theoretical models, and, ‘executive’ professional practice frameworks which can be applied across all areas of educational psychology practice, at any level and do not stipulate the psychology that should be used by the EP (Wicks, 2013). It is important to clarify for the reader that within this research, consultation is employed by the EPs as the model of service delivery. Several of the professional practice frameworks that are summarised within Sections 3.3.2 – 3.3.10, have been referred to within the literature as ‘executive frameworks’ (Kelly et al., 2008; Wicks, 2013) and have been used by EPIts and EPs to scaffold their practice (Woolfson, 2008). Unlike previous research, this study considers these professional practice frameworks as potential tools for the evaluation of consultation.

2.7 Consultation
The following section will consider consultation in more detail as it was selected by the PEP of the EPSs within this study as the initial focus for service evaluation.

As previously outlined, the EPSs within this study selected a consultation model of service delivery as a way of integrating the application of psychology into their working practices and demonstrating the distinctive contribution they can offer. This move towards more consultative ways of working is highlighted within the literature and Larney (2003) discusses how, in recent years, this has been one of the most significant changes within educational psychology. Many EPSs within the UK deliver service
through a consultation model but this approach varies widely (Wagner, 2000). For some, traditional methods of working are often maintained because of LA requirements and Wagner (2000) noted that EPSs are at different places within this model. The EPSs in the two Welsh LAs taking part in this research have adopted Patsy Wagner’s consultation model (Wagner, 1995; 2000; 2008) having been trained by Wagner in 2013. This is the predominant method of service delivery across the two EPSs who have been relatively autonomous in their decision making, until recent economic and political pressures took effect. Before the Wagner consultation model (Wagner, 1995; 2000; 2008) is outlined a brief background to consultation will be provided and the four most prevalent consultation models within the literature will then be detailed.

2.7.1 Background to Consultation
Consultation originated in the USA where school psychologists started to use and implement the approach within their school work (Conoley & Conoley, 1982; Coneley, Conely, Ivey & Scheel, 1991; Gutkin & Curtis, 1990).

As far back as 1981, research into the medical model of service delivery suggested its effectiveness was questionable. School psychology services were predominantly focused on the assessing, diagnosing and treating children’s diagnoses and far less focus was given to the environments in which children function (Gutkin & Curtis, 1990). School based consultation was seen as a feasible solution and an efficient use of time and resources. School based consultation emerged as one of the preferred models of school psychology practice over the next 10-20 years (Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Gutkin & Curtis, 1990).

There are a number of different consultation models available to EP practitioners. It is not possible within the scope of this literature review to discuss each model so the following four models will be briefly outlined: Mental Health Consultation; Behavioural Consultation; Process Consultation and Organisational/Systems Consultation (Larney, 2003). These models have been selected as they have been “particularly influential within the field of school-based consultation” (Sheridan & Cowan, 2004, p. 599). There are key differences which relate to the psychological theories that underpin the various models and these influence the process that is adopted within the consultation process (Kennedy et al., 2009). However, Miller and
Frederickson (2006) argue that all the models have some shared features. These include the participation of a consultee when identifying and exploring a problem and working with them to bring about change (Kennedy et al., 2009; Wagner, 1995).

Mental Health Consultation was developed by Gerard Caplan in the 1960s (Caplan, 1970; Larney, 2003). As the longest standing approach it was born within mental health rather than educational settings (Miller, 1996). Larney (2003) considered how this consultation model might be amenable to adaptation to the school contexts; however, it has not been widely applied by EPs for several reasons. It is perceived as being too psychodynamically-oriented (Larney, 2003; Watkins, 2000). Additionally its lack of supporting empirical evidence has contributed to its lack of popularity within psychological practice (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Larney, 2003; Wilkinson, 2006).

Process and organisational/systems share many features in common (Larney, 2003). They are rooted in the psychology of groups and organisations and, typically, the client is a group within an organisation or an entire organisational system itself (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999). Process consultation is often associated most prominently with the work of Schein (Miller, 1996; Schein, 1998). It aims to make people more aware of the events or processes in their environments and the ways in which these affect their work (Schein, 1998). In organisational/systems consultation, the aim is to work towards effecting change at the organisational/systems level. The literature indicates that both the process and the organisational/systems models are potentially useful approaches to consultation in school contexts but have not enjoyed huge popularity. One of the main reasons for this has been that these models are more alien to teachers than the behavioural approach described earlier and both models require detailed training input for teachers if they are to succeed (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999). This has been a barrier to school psychologists adopting them on a large-scale basis.

The literature highlights how behavioural consultation is the model which is most widely used and researched within school psychology both in the US and the UK (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Larney, 2003) and is drawn upon most widely within Wagner’s consultation model (Wagner, 1995; 2000; 2008). The model has its roots in social learning theory and it aims to work with consultees to identify and manipulate relevant person-environment variables to improve, eliminate and/or prevent identified problems
(Larney, 2003) and is viewed as a more straightforward approach (Miller, 1996). The role of the consultant is to lead the consultee through a structured problem solving process as a means of producing change (Larney, 2003; Wilkinson, 2006). One of the major criticisms of this approach relates to its lack of focus on the nature of the consultant-consultee relationship and how this can determine whether a favourable outcome will be achieved. Gutkin and Curtis (1999) discuss how an increasing amount of research has begun to address this issue and the behavioural consultation approach continues to be the model chosen by most practitioners.

2.7.2 Wagner’s Consultation model

As highlighted in the above literature, a number of EPSs nationally have selected consultation as the medium through which they deliver psychology services to schools. A wide range of these services, along with the EPS in this study, adopted the Wagner model of delivery (Larney, 2003). Therefore there will now be a brief synopsis of the literature around the Wagner model.

The Wagner model of consultation has been in development across the UK within EPSs for the past 26 years and is still in the process of ongoing development (Wagner, 2008). This model is discussed in three key works on consultation (Wagner, 1995; 2000; 2008) and is generally described as a collaborative approach focusing on a joint investigation, problem-solving, planning and intervention and evaluation and review process (Woolfson et al., 2003). It aims to promote change at the level of the individual child, the group/class or the organisation/whole school level (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Wagner, 1995). Wagner’s approach draws upon the behavioural consultation model but it is also derives features from a wide range of psychological theories: narrative therapy, social constructionism, systems thinking, solution-focused theory, and personal construct psychology. These psychological models are able to reflect the complex context in which EPs work (Wagner, 1995; 2000).

The approach places great emphasis on the equal role between EP and consultee as the ‘perceived expert’ role of the EP can be ‘deskilling’ due to the fact that the EP is potentially place in a position of power (Wagner, 2000). It encourages the EP to work with the professionals involved and not necessarily directly with the child thus enabling EPs to empower the team members around the child that are most appropriately placed
to support (Leadbetter, 2006; Pennick & Lagunowitsch, 2010). This, it is argued, improves its efficiency as the clients are best supported by those who work more directly with the child (Cording, 2011; Gutkin & Curtis, 1999). It involves shared assessment and intervention and recognises the professional skills of teachers (Idol, 1990; Larney, 2003).

2.8 Accountability within the current developments in Educational Psychology Services

So far the literature review has considered how the constantly changing role of the EP has contributed to confusion around the role. In turn, this has contributed to negative assessments of the profession (Fallon et al., 2010). For some EPs this led to an ‘identity crisis’ and loss of professional identity (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2006; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Love, 2009; Norwich 2000; Willdridge, 2013). In response to this numerous reviews of the EP profession were undertaken to explore the distinctive contribution of the EP and these identified that EPs should be applying psychological principles and methods to their practice. Consultation was identified as one of the EPs core functions within reviews of the EP role (Scottish Executive, 2002) and has subsequently been adopted by a number of EPSs nationally as the medium through which they deliver psychology services to school. As with many EPSs, the EPSs within this study selected a consultation model of service delivery as a way of integrating the application of psychology into their working practices and in order to demonstrate their distinctive contribution. This is particularly relevant within the increasingly accountable environment in which EPs are finding themselves situated.

2.8.1 Political and economic context

The following section of the literature review considers the issue of accountability within the current political and economic context of EPSs. It highlights how it is not enough just to implement a psychological model of service delivery but how thorough evaluation is also required in order to assess the effectiveness of such models, considering that EPs are under intense scrutiny to demonstrate accountability evidenced through their performance. The need to demonstrate that what EPs do during consultation makes a difference, adds weight to the rationale for this piece of research which look to find an effective service evaluation model of consultation.
Political reforms, arising from the 2008 global economic crisis and the introduction of the Coalition Government in 2010, forced massive reductions in public spending, cuts in LA funding and changes to the delivery of public services including EPSs. The publication of the ‘School Funding Reform-Proposals for a fairer system’ (DfE, 2011) placed the funding of EPSs under the responsibility of the LA enabling local decisions to be made about funding for EPSs and whether this should be delegated to schools. In Wales there was a continued drive for the Education department, through the School Funding Regulations (2010), to delegate funding to schools with a commitment to increasing the delegation rate to 85% within four years. Schools can then make their own decisions about how to spend this money (www.assembly.wales)

In response to this changing social, political and educational climate the AEP published the circular: ‘Principles for the delivery of Educational Psychology Services’ (2010) which highlighted the impact on EPSs. It outlined how the imposition of major reductions in public spending led to significant cuts in the funding for LAs. Subsequently, LAs began reducing many teams within their Children’s Services departments, including EPSs. Between Autumn 2010 and Autumn 2011 approximately 200 substantive EP posts disappeared from LAs (AEP, 2011). The impact across EPSs has been very varied with some services experiencing minor changes, and others facing complete re-structuring. The AEP (2011) define the nature of the current services as ranging from:

1) The ‘traditional’ LA model (fully core funded)
2) The ‘LA plus’ model (semi-traded)
3) Other models (fully traded/commissioned)

Running alongside these significant changes was the Government’s continuing agenda to improve the quality of public services. Willdridge (2013) discussed how the drive towards improving the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of public services had been on the Government agenda for many years. Both the White Paper: Modernising Government (Cabinet Office, 1999) and the National Audit Office (2001) called for an improvement in the evaluation, monitoring and the reporting of outcomes to stakeholders. In 2008 the WAG launched the SEF a key policy for educational reform founded on a set of principles and expected activities which include annual self-
evaluation updates using Estyn’s (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) Common Inspection Framework to identify areas for improvement. These LA self-evaluations would form part of the basis of Estyn’s inspections. The data produced by services to demonstrate their impact were then considered by LAs and used to inform decisions about the most efficient and effective deployment of public resources.

This political and economic situation has subjected the role of the EP to increased scrutiny (Fallon et al., 2010). The drive towards improved service delivery with comprehensive impact data means that EPSs need to be more accountable than ever for their performance and ensure increased consistency in the standards of their service delivery (Farrell et al., 2006; Timmins et al., 2006; Willridge, 2013). EPSs are no longer sheltered from market pressures and protected by their statutory function (Pugh, 2010). This reflects the working context of the EPSs within this study and managers are currently being asked to present to LA officers what a 30% reduction in EP posts would mean to the LA. In addition, they are also being asked to consider a traded model of service delivery. This demonstrates how the work of the EP needs to be evidenced through their performance and the results they produce (Farrell et al., 2006). This clear focus on accountable practice has created, now more than ever, the need for EPs to provide evidence based practice. Gersch (2009) argues that for educational psychology to be a valued and adequately funded profession with a secure future, EPs need to be seen as relevant, valuable, useful and capable of providing real solutions for people.

2.9 Evaluation of Educational Psychology Services
The drive for increased accountability has highlighted to the EP profession that it needs to be regularly updating the information it produces in order to monitor services, to determine whether they are meeting their goals (Boyne, Gould-Williams, Law & Walker, 2004) and to answer questions related to: ‘what works ‘and ‘what added value do they bring’? (Gersch, 2009). Such evidence can help to safeguard effective services and can assist with the drive for austerity and efficiency by helping to highlight the most cost effective ways to deliver positive changes (Lloyd & Harrington, 2012). In order to provide such evidence it is critical that EPSs evaluate the services they deliver and this provided the impetus for this piece of research. One of the specific areas this study wanted to address was how self-evaluation data could be used to communicate to the
public and LA officers about the effectiveness of the EPSs (Kaslow, 2004). The findings will also be used to inform future decisions about the evaluation of service delivery. The importance of this piece of research was highlighted by the Lamb Inquiry: Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence (DCSF, 2009), which emphasised the importance of the evaluation of different EPS service models and their impact on outcomes for CYP. Turner et al. (2010) concurred and discussed how EPs need to provide evidence of the positive impact they bring.

A particularly relevant question to address, having reviewed the literature about current evaluation within the field of EPSs, is with regard to how capable public organisations are of self-evaluation (Boyne et al, 2004). A piece of research commissioned by the DfES suggested that the quality of most SEN Services evaluations was poor (Gray, 2001). An evaluation carried out to look at how EPSs evaluate themselves (Hampshire Educational Psychology Services (HEPS), 2010) found that this was an area that needed to be addressed. This piece of research is especially pertinent to this study so will be considered in more detail within the Section 2.9.1.

2.9.1 Hampshire Educational Psychology Service evaluation

In 2010 HEPs: Research Evaluation Unit conducted an evaluation on behalf of the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP) which considered how EPSs currently evaluate themselves. Due to the poor response rate (24 EPSs) only limited information was collected but the collated responses highlighted that EPSs were struggling to find an adequate evaluation instrument to measure the impact of what they do.

One of the questions asked was: How do you evaluate the impact of the service? Many services indicated that they had either adopted or been looking to apply recognised models of evaluation. The most common amongst these was the Friedman Results Based Accountability model (Friedman, 1997) but other models included RADIO (Timmins et al., 2003). NAPEP (2010) received reports of nine services using a scaling system of some sort. Three were recognisable as Target Monitoring and Evaluation (Dunsmuir et al., 2009) and one had piloted Goal Attainment Scaling (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). Three services described assessing impact against a standardised measure of some sort, for example, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
NAPEP (2010) outlined how the comments indicated that EPSs recognised that evaluating impact was “the big question” they needed to address. Many were grappling with how best to achieve this but did not feel as though they had satisfactory mechanisms in place. The difficulties inherent in the task were highlighted with the diversity of the EP role making it difficult to measure the less tangible aspects of the difference EPs really make. The responses demonstrated that it was not always clear when a meaningful post measure should be taken or how to define the real indices of success. There are inherent difficulties in separating the impact of the EP’s contribution from the others who actually put the advice into practice. NAPEP (2010) considered that whilst many of these issues were valid they were not impossible to resolve.

2.10 Measuring EP impact through consultation

The literature highlights that one of the fundamental reasons behind the difficulties associated with measuring the difference EPs make is the fact that it is such a complicated process (NAPEP, 2010). Indeed, when considering the difficulties associated with evaluating consultation, it can be possible, to understand why this might be the case. One factor is that within the consultation model EPs are working with a wide range of people across a variety of different settings (Farrell et al., 2006). Another added complication is that it is often the consultee rather than the EP who implements the recommendations. This leaves EPSs with the challenge of defining outcomes that are measurable and can show a positive impact within a practice which is particularly complex (Dunsmuir et al., 2009).

The issue of how to measure impact for a client group with whom EPs do not work directly with has been greatly debated (Cherry, 1998; Dowling & Leibowitz, 1994; Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Sharp et al., 2000; Turner et al., 2010). There are many problems associated with what is measurable and whether what is measured correlates with the actual outcomes and the real value added from an EP’s involvement (Cherry, 1998; Turner et al., 2010). Sharp et al. (2000) make the distinction between ‘output measures’ (what is done) and ‘outcome measures’ (what is achieved). Through their research they found that output measures did not provide adequate information for service improvement purposes. The focus upon the need for outcome rather than output measures was also emphasised in a paper by Dunsmuir et al. (2009). This research
identifies that the challenge is to “define outcomes that are measurable” (p. 54). However, further literature indicates that there has been an over reliance on process indicators and only focusing on identifying outcomes that are easily measurable (Currie, 2002). The data resulting from measurable outcomes are not considered to be robust enough. Turner et al. (2010) discuss how such information does not shed enough light on the input and effectiveness of an EP. This relates in part to the complexity of the EP role and there are also inherent difficulties attached when attempting to apply a scientific, reductionist paradigm to this area of ‘soft’ systems. Many attempts to evaluate qualitative methods appear to have resulted in quantitative measurements.

Turner et al. (2010) suggested that process measures should be used alongside quantitative measures thus making evaluation more comprehensive. However, how to link output data to the input from the EP still proves problematic (Turner et al., 2010). In 2006 Scottish EPSs drafted quality indicators. These suggested that evidence of impact for CYP should be generated through both quantitative and qualitative data and should incorporate both process and outcome data (Turner et al., 2010). Also, the nature of the relationship, and where the EP is located within the “chain of impact” should always be considered (Turner et al., 2010, p.316). However, the challenge of highlighting the specific input and impact of an EP still remains. For evaluation to be meaningful this challenge still has to be addressed (Turner et al., 2010). Therefore, evaluation needs to capture the complexity of the EP role. Furthermore, it needs to find a way to measure the impact of the EP during consultation where they are working with others to bring about change.

This review of the literature has highlighted that the EP profession would benefit from finding a suitable self-evaluation tool and the reasons for this, but demonstrates that there are challenges associated with this task. It is essential that such an evaluation tool is effective in order for it to be valuable to EPSs (Gray, 2001). Dunsmuir et al. (2009) argued that for a self-evaluation tool to be effective it should collect data in a systematic manner in order to inform reliable judgements about the effectiveness of EPSs. The literature contends that the EP profession would benefit from a formalised transparent framework of evaluation which can be embedded in the day-to-day world of an EP (Currie, 2002; Turner et al., 2010). Turner et al. (2010) suggested that this is a role for applied psychologists and they should use their knowledge and skills to refine the tools
and processes required for evaluating their work. With this in mind, this study looked to establish a tool which would facilitate the EPSs to evaluate consultation.

The next stage of the literature review: Literature Review Stage Two, details the sourcing of the professional practice frameworks that were selected for the research process.
Chapter Three: Literature Review Stage Two

3.1 Chapter Outline
The second part of the literature review begins by briefly providing an overview of the service context in which this research was undertaken before outlining the search strategy that sourced the professional practice frameworks for the research. It then considers the different professional practice frameworks in further detail and finally presents the research questions.

3.2 Service context
As outlined within Literature Review Stage One, Wagner’s (1995, 2000) model of consultation is the method of service delivery adopted across the two services in which this piece of research took place. Prior to March 2013 a range of practice and perceptions existed around consultation. This led to the organisation of further joint consultation training from Patsy Wagner in March 2013 which acted as a refresher course prior to a re-launch of consultation in September 2014.

The two Welsh EPSs participating in this research have, in recent years, been searching for effective ways to evaluate the services they deliver (refer to Section 1.2.2). This piece of research was prompted by the drive from the EP management team to develop an evaluative framework tool which could be utilised in an efficient manner and embedded within a consultation model of service delivery. The focus of this research was at the individual level and concentrated on how individual consultations could be monitored and recorded through the integration of professional practice frameworks. As argued by Kelly et al. (2008), the review and evaluation of consultation is a key aspect of individual consultations and should take place at each distinct consultation meeting with the aim of reviewing and evaluating the meeting. Therefore, the overall aim of this study was to establish an evaluation tool that could collect relevant information on the impact of the EPSs service delivery. It focused on finding a method that could facilitate EPs, to successfully and appropriately evaluate individual teacher consultations and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA.
As outlined in Section 2.6 practice frameworks have arisen within the professional practice of EPs as a means of addressing the challenge that EPs face with regard to clarifying the complex relationship between theory and practice and to answer questions around the distinctive contribution they bring (Fallon et al., 2010; Frederickson & Miller, 2008; Gameson et al., 2005; Kelly et al., 2008). Wicks (2013) discussed the potential of ‘executive’ professional practice frameworks and how they can encourage effective evaluation which in turn should increase efficiency of EP working (refer to Section 2.6). However, the lack of research within this area means that it is difficult to know the extent of their use and, furthermore, their effectiveness as evaluative tools. Wicks (2013) called for more extensive use of practice frameworks and for further research to look at the relevance of such frameworks within EP practice models, such as consultation. This research considered whether the implementation of professional practice frameworks could provide a way for the EPSs within this study to formalise high quality evaluation within their consultation model of service delivery (Wimbush & Watson, 2000).

3.3 Professional practice framework search strategy
The following section outlines the literature search strategy that took place during this second stage of the literature review. This informed the selection of the most relevant evaluation frameworks that were then taken forward and included in the systematic selection process (refer to Section 5.5.1). Initially the search concentrated on finding EP professional practice models and frameworks. However, following these literature investigations and from discussions at thesis panel it became clear that further models outside the field of educational psychology needed further consideration. Therefore, the literature search for the second stage of the literature review was multifaceted in its approach. Firstly it looked to identify research around evaluation models/frameworks within EPSs and then it went on to explore evaluation tools from other professional disciplines.

3.3.1 Evaluation framework selection process
Relevant literature was identified using a number of different search strategies and sources of information (as outlined in Section 2.1.2). The research conducted by HEPs (2010) was a useful source and provided information from EPSs about the evaluation tools they were currently using. The search strategy was then extended to include other
types of service delivery and evaluation models, outside the field of Educational Psychology. Overall, this yielded some useful and potentially appropriate models:

- A framework for psychological assessment and intervention
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Activity Theory
- The Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action
- Friedman’s Results Based Accountability Model
- Measuring the impact of Casework
- Research and Development in Organisations
- Target Monitoring and Evaluation
- The Interactive Factors Framework

Following this review a systematic selection process was implemented through which certain practice models were either included in the research or excluded from the research if they were not deemed to be relevant. It is not appropriate to outline this selection process within this section of the review as a detailed explanation is provided within Section 5.5.1 as part of the AR process. A brief summary of the frameworks, selected for the initial stages of this piece of AR will now be provided.

3.3.2 The Interactive Factors Framework (IFF)
The IFF was developed and integrated into the problem-analysis process by Frederickson and Cline (2002).

The Problem Analysis Framework (PAF) was devised as arguably the first bespoke framework to inform and structure EP practice (Monsen, Graham, Frederickson & Cameron, 1998). It was described as a process whereby information is structured and then analysed in a way that facilitates understanding. The PAF was developed at University College London (UCL) and used to guide EPiT's practice and help them to structure case information (Monsen et al., 1998). As defined by Woolfson et al. (2003) the PAF had an emphasis on the generation of and testing of hypotheses; problem solving and the evaluation of evidence and psychological knowledge. However, this nine step model was perceived as very detailed and lengthy for daily use in EP practice (Woolfson et al., 2003). PAF was considered to be effective in a small scale study with ten EPs (Kelly et al., 2008). However, it is important to note that this study only
considered this one particular model and as highlighted by Wicks (2013) no comparisons were made at the time with other professional practice frameworks.

Following a period of research relating to the PAF framework, a number of areas for development were identified (Monsen et al., 1998). It was seen to require clearer guidance for the identification of “initial guiding hypotheses” and also for “resultant problem dimensions” (Frederickson & Cline, 2002, p. 286). This research led to the development of the IFF, an abridged version of the PAF that could be used by practising EPs (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). The IFF emphasised the importance of using a holistic and systemic approach to problems (Wicks, 2013).

The IFF offered a five phase approach, with action points for the EP (Woolfson et al., 2003). It required EPiTS to actively consider different levels of analysis and their interactions when formulating initial guiding hypotheses. It aimed to retain a systematic structure to guide EPs’ thinking, actions and reporting. Key principles within the IFF were the need for transparency of EP practice, collaborative working between the EPs and the various problem stakeholders, recognising EPs, parents and carers, teachers and children all bring their own perspective (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

3.3.3 A framework for psychological assessment and intervention (DECP)

The Framework for Assessment and Intervention (DECP, 1999) framework was published by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP). This intended to guide assessment by EPs and presented a change in perceptions of children’s difficulties recognising the interplay of the systems around the child (Wicks, 2013). The framework recognised that, although psychological assessment was a highly individualised, complex and creative process, there were some fundamental underpinning principles relevant to all EPs (DECP, 2002). It acknowledged that the assessment of CYP had moved away from the positivist frameworks which dominated the EP profession for many years and, consequently, that models of assessment should reflect a more constructionist paradigm. The framework recognised how psychological assessment involved the use of a variety of tools, techniques and approaches drawing upon relevant theory and evidence based research. It should also generate an understanding of what is happening, who is concerned, why there is a problem and what can be done to make a difference to the situation. It sought to provide information on
the processes of learning, the young person’s cognition, social and emotional development and the impact of the context on those areas (DECP, 2002).

3.3.4 The Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action (COMOIRA)
Gameson and colleagues at the University of Cardiff developed COMOIRA (Gameson et al., 2003; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008), as a flexible professional practice model. COMOIRA stressed the importance of practice being informed by theory and was used to guide the practice of trainee EPs (TEPs) during their fieldwork placements (Gameson et al., 2003; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008).

COMOIRA encourages and summarises the idea of rebuilding. It focuses on processes which consider and promote change at the organisational, systems, group or individual level. It can be used at these different levels in a variety of ways. COMOIRA comprises a ‘core set’ of psychological principles and has eight key decision points, each with a set of functions which are supported by a series of reflective and reflexive questions (Gameson et al., 2003) (see Appendix B). The emphasis on the reflective and reflexive practice that EPs use to facilitate change is one of the key features of COMOIRA (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2010). COMOIRA emphasises the importance for practitioners to ‘adapt’ and ‘personalise’ the model. This will ensure that it is suited to the service users and fits the EPs’ personal style and paradigm base. However, it is crucial to maintain the key features and central concepts of social constructionism and systematic thinking.

3.3.5 Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO)
The RADIO approach was developed by Knight and Timmins (1995) to guide the school improvement work of the EPiTs on The University of Birmingham training course (Timmins et al., 2003). RADIO was informed by the work of Schein (1989) which related to organisational culture and relationships between the researcher and stakeholders (Timmins et al., 2003). RADIO (Timmins et al., 2006) is a collaborative AR framework which supports the process of research from planning to delivery. RADIO has been used by EPiTs to evaluate their consultations. There are different research phases which include clarifying concerns, researching the concern and creating change. The AR method allows for many types of approaches, for example, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, case study.
3.3.6 Activity Theory (AT)
AT was first developed by Vygotsky in the late 1920s and it was further refined by Leontiev, Vygotsky’s student (Greenhouse, 2013). Subsequently, a second and third generation model was developed by Engestrom (1999) for understanding the perspectives and networks that occur across interconnected activity systems (Greenhouse, 2013). Engestrom’s model can be used to understand forms of multi-agency working. AT provides a framework for understanding human activity within the sociocultural context it occurs and it is capable of mapping the complex systems and practices that present within multi-agency teams. (Greenhouse, 2013). Leadbetter (2008) details how second-generation AT can be used when considering an individual child’s learning and development. EPs can use the framework to conceptualise their thinking and the planning of a piece of work and this can be then shared with others e.g. teachers. This model has been used by trainee psychologists for planning purposes and as a tool for considering possible ways of working with staff in schools (Leadbetter, 2008). AT can be used as a descriptive tool and to examine and make sense of systems and situations.

3.3.7 Target Monitoring and Evaluation (TME)
TME was designed to be used within a consultative model of service delivery. It derived from Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) which was originally devised to evaluate the outcomes of mental health interventions (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). TME was developed to overcome the difficulties identified with GAS but retained many of the key features e.g. it is constructed for individuals. TME has a five point code to measure the level of progress. An action plan is drawn up with the consultee. Three goals can be set that focus and organise the delivery of the plan, ensuring coherence and continuity across professions and settings. It can be completed with school staff, families and with the child (Dunsmuir et al., 2009).

TME was trialled as a pilot study by eight assistant EPs and thirteen EPs based in two LEAs in the South of England. Dunsmuir et al. (2009) considered the value and usefulness of the TME system as an evaluation tool for EP practice. The findings showed that TME provided a robust way to gather target oriented feedback on interventions and valuable data for performance management measures, quality control,
and accountability. The individualised nature of the measurement can be used for casework review and to supplement standardised and qualitative outcomes indicators.

### 3.3.8 Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI was developed in the mid-1980s by David Cooperrider and colleagues for their work in organisations (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008). It is based on the belief that groups within organisations often share a set of assumptions which cause them to act and think in certain ways. Often these assumptions operate at an unconscious level. A key aspect of AI is the belief that it is important to verify these assumptions every so often to check they are still current (Hammond, 1998). A four process cycle is used to evaluate/investigate these assumptions (see Appendix C):

1. **Discover** – what works well, searching for the best experiences, successes
2. **Dream**- what would work well in future/ develop a vision
3. **Design** – working together to plan/prioritise processes around how to achieve the vision
4. **Destiny/deliver** – making the vision real/, implementation of proposed design

### 3.3.9 Friedman’s Results Based Accountability Model (RBA)

One of the North Wales EPS already uses a model base on Friedman’s RBA framework (Friedman, 1997). This is based on a four-quadrant framework which aims to answer questions about the service delivery (see Table 3.1 below).

#### Table 3.1: EPSs Evaluation Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input/Effort</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much Service did we deliver?</td>
<td>How well did we deliver the Service?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output/Effect</td>
<td>How much effect/change did we produce?</td>
<td>What quality of change/effect did we produce?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3.3.10 Measuring the impact of Casework (MtiC)

Turner et al. (2010) developed a method of evaluating casework that could be administered by EPs with a view to capturing the impact that an EP had on outcomes for pupils. An evaluation tool was developed that combined “actual outcomes, evidence of impact and EPs’ reflections on their casework” (Turner et al., 2010, p. 327). The casework evaluation was carried out individually by the EPs and the method used was still in an evolutionary state during the piece of research (Turner et al., 2010). This approach was embedded in a constructionist relativist paradigm.

3.4 Summary

The findings from the literature review demonstrated that many EPSs in the UK were struggling to find a tool to evaluate their impact and this was ‘the big question’ that still needed to be addressed (HEPS, 2010). The senior managers within the two Welsh EPSs have been looking for ways to answer key questions about EPS delivery: ‘Is it effective?’ When is it effective?’ and ‘For whom is it effective?’ and in response to this, commissioned this piece of research. Furthermore, the literature highlighted that in the experience of many EPs it can become difficult to incorporate evaluation as an aspect of routine practice (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). This piece of research aimed to discover a professional practice framework that could be utilised in an efficient manner and used to evaluate what EPs do through individual consultations with teachers.

To the author’s knowledge there is no current existing research comparing a range of professional practice frameworks and considering which are most effective at evaluating EP consultations with teachers. Therefore, this is the first research of its kind. It is envisaged that this work will lead to a better understanding around how to evaluate consultation within EPSs. Hopefully, this may encourage further research through the wider application of the selected evaluation method/methods. Indeed, neighbouring EPSs have expressed an interest in this piece of research and wish to be involved in future communications.
3.5 Research Questions

This literature review generated the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to:

1a) Assessing consultation as a process?

1b) Providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users?
Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Chapter Introduction
Within Chapters Two and Three the rationale behind the study was outlined and research questions were constructed to facilitate this piece of research. The research questions were designed to enable the researcher to explore frameworks that assisted a group of EPs within two EPSs, to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to:
   1a) Assessing consultation as a process?
   1b) Providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users?

4.2 Context of the study
This study took place in two separate EPSs working across two bordering Welsh LAs. At the time of the study there was one PEP, two SEPs and eleven EPs. The structure of the EPS is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below. The PEP manages both EPSs and each service has an allocated SEP. However, at the time of the study one of the SEPs had been seconded to a different post within the LA for a fixed period of time. The PEP and SEPs meet regularly with LA officers at a strategic level. The two EPSs have half-terminally meetings at one of the office locations within the LAs. Out of the eleven EPs, one was unavailable during the time period of this study.
4.3 Chapter outline

This chapter firstly explores the ontological, epistemological and axiological position adopted by the researcher. An outline of the research design is then provided, followed by an exploration of the AR methodology and a discussion around the selected RADIO model. Following on from this the different phases of this piece of AR are presented according to the RADIO framework which guided the research process (Timmins et al., 2003). Consideration is then given to the chosen research data gathering methods and the rationale for their selection. Information is then provided about the data analysis methods used at the various stages of the research. A critique of the methodology will then follow and the chapter ends by exploring the ethical considerations that guided the researcher throughout the study. An overview of the different phases of the research process is presented within Table 4.1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of research</th>
<th>RADIO Stages/Activities</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-research</td>
<td>1-3 Exploration and clarification of focus of research with PEP</td>
<td>To develop rationale for research</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Exploration and development of research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>3-4 Meeting with PEP and SEP</td>
<td>Explore rationale for research</td>
<td>Identified stakeholders and the process for collaboration, feedback/discussion.</td>
<td>Exploration and development of research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying concerns</td>
<td>5-8 Meeting with PEP and SEP</td>
<td>Exploration of literature review</td>
<td>Identified need for refining frameworks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Designed proforma for systematic analysis</td>
<td>Information gathering to inform choice of evaluation model/framework</td>
<td>Refined frameworks to take to next phase of research</td>
<td>Gathering Information to inform Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Meeting with PEP and SEP</td>
<td>Negotiated methods for data gathering</td>
<td>Action research using multi-methods design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research proposal shared with EPs</td>
<td>Sharing of information in collaborative manner</td>
<td>Participant consent forms designed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial focus groups and questionnaires</td>
<td>Information gathering</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Philosophical considerations

Before consideration is given to the AR methodology it is important to firstly explore the ontological, epistemological and axiological views shaping this piece of research. These will now be outlined in order to assist the reader in understanding the researcher’s stance.

4.4.1 Ontology

Ontology is the philosophy of being (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). It is concerned with how we view the nature of reality (Marrow, 2007) and considers how we see and experience the world (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000). For this piece of research several paradigms were considered by the researcher. These were outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and include: positivism, post positivism, critical theory and social constructivism. These paradigms are presented in Table 4.2 below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemology (Nature of knowledge)</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Post-Positivism</th>
<th>Critical Theory</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective view of the world. Verified hypotheses are considered as facts. Findings are true.</td>
<td>Modified objectivist. Pure objectivity is impossible.</td>
<td>Subjective view of the world. Knowledge is reflected through the perspective of the researcher.</td>
<td>Subjectivist, researcher and participants construct knowledge together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontology (Nature of Reality)</td>
<td>There is a reality. Aims to uncover truth/facts using scientific methods.</td>
<td>There is a reality which is predictable only in terms of probability.</td>
<td>Virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors.</td>
<td>Relativism-reality is multiple and is constructed differently by people. Dependant on individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Experimental, verifying hypotheses, quantitative methods.</td>
<td>Modified experimental. May include quantitative and qualitative methods.</td>
<td>Involves dialogue with participants as source of information.</td>
<td>Qualitative, research through dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Questionnaires, Pre-test, post-test intervention and control group.</td>
<td>Pre-test, post-test. Questionnaires, Interviews, Triangulation.</td>
<td>Ethnographic interviews, Biographies.</td>
<td>Focus groups, group interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from the work of Allison and Pomeroy (2000); Gephart (1999); Guba and Lincoln (1994)

The researcher adopted a ‘critical realist’ stance which sits within the post-positivism paradigm (see Section 4.4.4) but before this is explored the positions of positivism and relativism are considered.
4.4.2 Positivism

Traditional research assumed a positivist view of the world. Positivism asserts that there is a reality out there to be discovered (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000). Positivism takes an objective view of the world and seeks to establish this through an empiricist; hypothesis testing model where knowledge can be elicited through direct observation (Gephart, 1999; Robson, 2002). Science is seen as a way of discovering the truth by gathering data through quantitative methods; a means by which we can begin to understand the world so that we are able to predict and control it. The positivist view assumes that only what is observable can provide us with the clearest knowledge and that which cannot be observed is of less worth (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

Positivism was a dominant force within social research until there was a shift away from it in the middle part of the 20th century. It became criticised for its underlying philosophy and application (Robson, 2002). Anti-positivists rejected the belief that there is only one truth (Cohen et al., 2000) and concerns were raised about the limits of the methods associated with positivism. Critics argued that the use of quantifiable measures created a significant challenge when applying them to the study of social contexts. It led to the omission of important data, stripping contexts from meanings and excluding the perspectives of the participants (Cohen et al., 2000; Gephart, 1999; Sarantakos, 1998).

4.4.3 Relativism

Relativists emphasise that the social world can only be understood if we consider the interpretations of individuals who are part of it and claim that it is only possible to determine what is probable (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000). Those who hold a relativist position would reject the positivistic belief that it is possible to govern human behaviour by universal laws. Relativism values qualitative methods (Robson, 2002). It assumes that knowledge is subjective and there is no objective truth. Relativists assert that reality is multi-faceted and situations are complex, constantly changing and are affected by their context. There are in existence multiple interpretations and perspectives based around the same events (Cohen et al., 2000). Robson (2002) discusses how, in its most extreme form, relativism asserts there is no external reality that can exist outside that of human consciousness. Relativism has been criticised for its inability to substantiate the information it obtains through the application of approaches that cannot be verified (Robson, 2002).
4.4.4 Critical realism

As outlined in Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 positivist and relativist paradigms use two different lenses to understand phenomena. Both paradigms have received criticisms for presenting incomplete accounts of social behaviour (Cohen et al., 2000). For this piece of real world action research it was decided that neither a purely positivist or relativist paradigm would provide an appropriate ontological or epistemological position for the researcher to place themselves. Instead the researcher adopted the post-positivist paradigm of critical realism. A critical realist stance provides a third way between positivism and relativism which allows for a more balanced approach (Robson, 2002). Critical realism was one of the most prominent of the post–positivist paradigms and it was largely established by the writings of Bhasker in the 1970s (Zachariadis, Scott & Barrett, 2010). The critical realist stance suggests that no scientific facts are beyond dispute and that knowledge is a social product (Jefferies, 2011). Within this paradigm, the researcher’s and the participant’s views are valued and it is assumed that the researcher and the researched cannot be separated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The foundations of critical realism lie within a realist ontology (Bhasker, 1978; Corson, 1991). The theory being that a reality exists that is multi-layered, independent of mind and cannot be reduced simply to how we experience it (Corson, 1991; Easton, 2010; Patomaki & Wight, 2000). Critical realists assert that we construe rather than construct the real world (Easton, 2010). They would argue that within the:

Real world there are entities, such as organisations, which have powers to act and are liable to be acted upon by others. These entities can also have their own internal structures, such as departments and individuals which in turn, have their own powers (Easton 2010, p.128).

As such, critical realism recognises the realities of everyday practice (Clegg, 2005). It acknowledges that subjective data exist, considers the ways individuals make meaning of their experiences and how the broader social context impacts on those meanings. Importantly, critical realism enables us to accept the fallibility of our knowledge and recognise the possibility of getting things wrong (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Zachariadis et al., 2010). The researcher believed that a critical realist paradigm supported research
within the real world context of this study. This paradigm choice guided the selection of an AR methodology.

4.4.5. Epistemology

Whilst ontology considers the nature of reality, epistemology addresses how that reality is known (Morrow, 2007). Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or of how we come to know. It questions how knowledge is created, acquired and communicated to other human beings (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). Carter and Little (2007) consider how epistemology can be seen to be a way of justifying knowledge (see Figure 4.2 below). The diagram demonstrates the influence that epistemology exercises upon the research methodology. The epistemological stance is central to the research process and can be seen to affect the data gathering methods which provide the basis of the knowledge produced.

![Figure 4.2: The Simple Relationship between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method (Carter and Little, 2007)](image)

As critical realism asserts that the two approaches of positivism and relativism can co-exist this allows the researcher to carry out scientifically grounded research whilst incorporating the views of the participants and giving consideration to the social context (Lightfoot, 2013; Robson, 2002).
4.4.6 Axiological position

Axiology has to do with the role of values and the influence these have upon the research process (Marrow, 2007; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). It is important for the researcher to acknowledge their own values and how these may influence the way in which the research is conducted, interpreted and subsequently reported. AR is often considered as value laden as it assumes that the researcher, in relation to everything else within the research, influences, and is influenced by others. AR researchers bring with them their own values. They undertake enquiries with others and often view themselves in relation to others, in terms of their practices, ideas and their environment. AR involves incorporating methods that nurture respectful relationships. It demonstrates a commitment towards ‘I/we’ forms of enquiry (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

The researcher values the principles of both collaboration and participation and wanted to transfer these beliefs to the research process. This intention guided the selection of an AR methodology. One of the central aspects of the research design was its participatory nature which placed the collaboration of staff members at the centre of the process. It was important to recognise the researcher’s interactive part in this study and consider the implications of an active researcher role. The researcher needed to be reflective about the decisions and actions taken during the research process and maintain an awareness of how her values could influence this study. The researcher did believe that this piece of AR research would create an opportunity to bring about some change and improve practice within one of the systems within the EPSs. Due to extensive reading and research around the EP practice frameworks the researcher had undertaken in the early stages of the AR process it was important to recognise the potential for bias. The researcher had thoughts around her preferred frameworks and the models that would be best fit for the EPS to evaluate consultation and it was important to reflect upon this as the research progressed.

4.5 Research design

Critical realism is unique in that it does not commit to a single type of research design but rather endorses an extensive variety of research methods which are chosen according to the type of the project and the aims of the study (Zachariadis et al., 2010). In keeping with the critical realist stance of the researcher, this piece of AR incorporates
a multi-methods approach. It focuses on collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data with the understanding that combining both approaches facilitates a clearer understanding of the research. This piece of research uses both focus groups and questionnaires to collect data. Through the implementation of a multi-methods approach the researcher aimed to bring greater rigour to the research process (Creswell & Clark, 2006). The triangulation of methods can be seen to provide contextually richer data and, thus, enables the researcher to be more confident about the findings of the research process (Robson, 2002).

The aim of this piece of research was to find a professional practice framework that offered an effective tool for evaluating individual EP consultation within the commissioning LAs. With this in mind, a predominantly qualitative research paradigm was selected as it was considered the most applicable to the aims of the study. As outlined by Robson (2002) the purpose of evaluation is to assess the effects and effectiveness of something. This study sought not only to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the evaluation frameworks that were piloted but it also looked to explore ways in which these models could be adapted. This was a summative piece of research but aimed to have a formative effect on future service developments.

This study involved the participation of other EPs. Therefore, a fundamental aspect of the research design was that it could be carried out within a collaborative relationship with those staff members central to the process. An AR methodology was selected as it facilitated the participatory requirement and evaluatory nature of the study. Kidd and Kral (2005) discussed how participatory action research is a dynamic process that develops from the unique needs, challenges and learning experiences specific to a given group. The implementation of this approach has also been shown to promote change at an organisational and individual level (Robson, 2002; Simm & Ingram, 2008). It has been recognised as a model that promotes professional development, can contribute to evidence based practice and is effective in changing practice and embedding change (Levin & Rock, 2003; Simm & Ingram, 2008; Torrance, 2004). As such, this methodology realised the aims of the PEP and the researcher in finding a framework for the evaluation of consultation that could be used across two EPSs. It enabled the combination of local knowledge and research knowledge. The PEP wanted to involve the EPs in this piece of research and to use the data generated to inform future planning.
(Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003). It was hoped that through this piece of AR the EPs would be empowered to understand and manage their own questions and recognise that they could go on to change issues effectively with a sense of autonomy (Gameson et al., 2003).

4.6 Action Research design

AR originated in the work of John Collier in the 1930s (McNiff & Whitehead, 2003), it was subsequently developed by the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s (McNiff & Whitehead, 2003) and became popular in education in the 1950s (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). AR was developed out of critical theory and introduced an action element. Critical theory aimed to understand a particular situation before considering how to change it. AR considered the action that was required in order to introduce change. AR is a flexible, contextually responsive methodology which can be integrated with other methods. This approach can bring rigour and a voice to the research process (Cohen et al., 2000). The purpose of AR is to influence or change some aspect of whatever is the focus of the research. Robson claims that improvement is central, “first, the improvement of a practice of some kind; second, the improvement of the understanding of a practice by its practitioners; and third, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place” (Robson, 2002, p. 215).

Unlike traditional research where the researcher makes claims about what certain and true, the AR process is also the methodology. This methodology provides the researcher with an interactive inquiry process where the researcher is able to interact with the research process. It provides the researcher with the opportunity to generate a living theory of practice and seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). AR researchers generally assume that there is no one answer, that knowledge is created and any answer is tentative. AR researchers do not look for generalizable outcomes but seek to produce personal theories and invite others to learn with them (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

AR is a cyclical process which involves planning a change, acting, observing what happens following the change, reflecting and then planning further action and repeating the cycle (Robson, 2002). McNiff and Whitehead (2011) discuss how one cycle of AR
leads on to another. Figure 4.3 below demonstrates an action-reflection cycle which involves the process of observing, reflecting, acting, evaluating, modifying and then moving in a new direction.

![Figure 4.3: Action-reflection cycle (adapted from McNiff & Whitehead, 2011. p. 9)](image)

4.7 Consideration of other research designs

Prior to the selection of the AR design other data analysis methods were considered by the researcher. Analytic methods such as discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) and grounded theory (Glaser, 1992) were studied and discounted for the reasons outlined below.

Discourse analysis was considered as this researcher wanted to use focus groups within the research process. Discourse analysis lends itself to the analysis of focus group data and is a popular method used by psychologists when analysing discourse (Willig, 2003). Different versions of discourse analysis exist, for example, discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis but these methods share a common concern around the role of language in the construction of social reality (Willig, 2003). Discourse analysis differs from other qualitative methods in that it attempts to understand the way in which reality is produced. It is considered to be a methodology which has a social
constructivist epistemology and believes that social reality is something we create through social interactions (Gerrig, 2004). This method was discounted as it and its epistemological position does not fit with the critical realist stance of this piece of research.

A further method considered was that of grounded theory. Grounded theory can be viewed as a methodology and positions itself within a realist epistemology. It is an inductive approach that looks to generate a theory which is grounded in the data. There is a belief within Grounded Theory that knowledge is increased by generating new theories rather than analysing data within existing ones (Biggerstaff, 2012; Cresswell, 1998). There are different versions of grounded theory. Glaser’s version and Strauss’s version incorporate different processes of theory generation through their coding systems (Heath & Cowley, 2004). This approach was discounted by the researcher as the constant comparison analysis that it requires was considered too time consuming, given the multiple phases of the research. Furthermore, it is recommended that when using Grounded Theory, the literature review is conducted once the research has commenced (Ng & Hase, 2008). This created difficulties for the researcher as the main body of the review of literature was done in the early stages of the RADIO cycle in order to inform the next part of the process. This method was discounted as the researcher was not looking for one single theory, instead recognising the need to describe the different interpretations of the participants.

4.8 Models of Action Research

The researcher chose the RADIO model to structure the design of this study. Before exploring the reasons behind the selection of this approach the researcher will briefly consider some of the other action research models that exist.

Illuminative evaluation, pioneered by Stephen Parlett (Parlett & Deardon, 1977), takes into account the wider contexts within which educational programmes function and it is primarily concerned with the idea of description and interpretation rather than with measurement and prediction (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972). It aims to discover what it is like to participate and looks to address a complex range of questions. Two main concepts underpin this approach, the ‘instructional system’ and the ‘learning milieu’.
There is no set format provided for illuminative evaluation which the researcher was looking for in order to conduct this piece of research (Kelly et al., 2008).

Living theory is an approach which aims to generate theories and understanding in AR and is distinguished by the asking of questions by the individual focused on producing explanations for their educational influences. The researcher is seen to be a creator of knowledge via the process of pursuing ways to improve practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; Whitehead, 2009).

4.9 Research and Development in Organisations

Although living theory and illuminative evaluation were considered, RADIO was used by the researcher in order to provide a greater structure for the work. The RADIO model (Timmins et al., 2003) was selected as it has been used in previous EP studies (e.g. Ashton 2009; Lightfoot, 2013) and has been found to offer a useful framework for structuring AR within the context of EP practice. RADIO is a collaborative AR framework which was developed to help EPiTs manage their school improvement work (Timmins et al., 2003). RADIO is a 12 step model and it takes into account the complexity of factors in the workplace. It allows flexibility in the methods of data collection and analysis (Timmins et al., 2003). An overview of the RADIO model is presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: RADIO model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO PHASES</th>
<th>RADIO STAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying concerns (Phase One)</td>
<td>1. Awareness of need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Invitation to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods mode (Phase Two)</td>
<td>4. Identifying stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Agreeing the focus of concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational change mode (Phase Three)</td>
<td>6. Negotiating the framework for data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Gathering information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Processing information with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Agreeing areas for future action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Action planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Implementing /action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The researcher considered RADIO to be contextually appropriate. It provided a robust structure which enabled the researcher to maintain a partnership with stakeholders and it facilitated the focus of the research. A further reason for its selection was that RADIO has been shown to provide a useful process and planning tool which encourages collaborative research between the researcher and participants in order to create positive change (Ashton, 2009; Lightfoot, 2013; Timmins et al., 2003; Timmins et al., 2006).

4.10 Research Phases

Sections 4.11 – 4.23 will be presented according to the RADIO design that provided the framework for this piece of research. The researcher has chosen to present it in this way in order to guide the reader through the research process as it proceeded. Each phase of the research will discussed chronologically and during each phase the research methods, data collection tools and data analysis methods that were involved in that phase of the research will be explored.

This piece of research incorporated the first 10 stages of the RADIO model, although the whole RADIO structure was considered. The RADIO framework used to guide the research as presented in Table 4.1. This provides an overview outlining how all of the phases in this piece of research fit into the stages of the RADIO model.

4.11 Pre-research Phase and research Phase One

The Pre-research Phase and Phase One of the study incorporated Stages 1-4 of the RADIO process. The stages of RADIO covered across these phases of the research are summarised in Table 4.4 below. The elements of each stage of the process are then discussed in turn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO STAGE</th>
<th>RADIO ACTIVITY</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Awareness of Need</td>
<td>Researcher’s discussions with PEP identified the need for research into the evaluation of EP consultation</td>
<td>Section 4.11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Invitation to Act</td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 4.11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.11.1 Stage 1-awareness of need:
The need to evaluate consultations was brought to the researcher’s attention through discussions with the PEP. The PEP wanted to establish an evaluation tool which would collect relevant information on the impact of our service delivery. As a doctoral student, the researcher was requested to find a method that enabled the EPs within the two services, to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA. This prompted Stage 2 of the RADIO process.

4.11.2 Stage 2 –invitation to act:
The PEP, at the request of the commissioning LA, requested this piece of work, focussed on the evaluation of consultation within the two services, from the researcher. The research was central to her continuing professional doctorate programmes, funded by the LA.

4.11.3 Stage 3 and 4- clarifying organisational and cultural issues and identifying stakeholders:
In order to better understand and to gain an insight into existing frameworks a ‘rich picture’ was formulated by the researcher prior to the research being undertaken (Checkland & Scholes, 1990). A review of the literature was undertaken which confirmed the need for further research in this area. The PEP, SEP, EPs and commissioning LA were identified as the primary stakeholders. The PEP and one SEP were identified as the key stakeholders with whom the research information would be processed as they were motivated to initiate change within the EPSs. As a member of one of the EP teams, the researcher had an understanding of the context in which the research was conducted. The processes for collaboration with the stakeholders were identified. It was agreed that regular meetings would be held with the PEP and SEP.
The joint team meetings, held half-termly between the two services, would have an allocated time set aside to focus on the particular stage of research in progress at the time.

Following the contracting of the research, Phase Two of the RADIO process commenced. This was the primary data collection phase of the research and will be described in the sections below.

4.12 Research Phase Two

Phase Two of the research incorporated Stages 5-8 of the RADIO process. The stages are summarised within Table 4.5 below. These will be discussed in the order that they were conducted within the research.

Table 4.5: Research Phase Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO STAGE</th>
<th>RADIO ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Agreeing focus of concern</td>
<td>The PEP and researcher agreed the focus of the research and the main aims of the research.</td>
<td>4.12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Stage 6: Negotiating framework for information gathering | Systematic Literature Review
An appropriate methodology and research design was selected:
Action Research Design
RADIO | 5.5.1, 4.12.2
| Stage 7: Gathering information using agreed methods | Information was gathered using the agreed methods
Initial focus groups
Questionnaires
Research Diary
Content Analysis | 4.12.3, 4.17, 4.16, 4.18, 4.21
| Research findings were shared with the | 4.12.4 |
4.12.1 Stage 5- agreeing the focus of concern:
The PEP and researcher agreed the focus of the research and designed the research questions (refer to Section 4.1). The main aims of the research were to find a way to evaluate consultation that would enable EPs to assess consultation as a process and provide outcomes which would demonstrate accountability to employers and service users.

4.12.2 Stage 6-negotiating framework for information gathering:
An appropriate methodology and research design was selected to address the research aims (Atkinson, 2011). The process for this is outlined in Sections 4.5 and 4.6. The PEP and one SEP met with the researcher and a decision was made to use an AR methodology which collected both quantitative and qualitative data. This proposal was then presented to the participant EPs during a joint meeting. The rationale for selecting AR and RADIO as appropriate for this participatory research is previously described in Sections 4.6 and 4.9.

In relation to the systematic literature review, through discussions with the PEP and SEP it was agreed that a pro forma would be designed by the researcher in order to carry out a systematic analysis of relevant professional practice models. The purpose behind this was to select models which could then go on to be piloted by the EPs across the two EPSs. It was agreed that this would then bring a specific focus to the research and guide the methodology and research design process in Stage 6. The framework for the selection process is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 as part of the cycle of research (see Section 5.5.1). This process led to the selection of five professional practice models which were taken forward in to the next stage of the research process.

4.12.3 Stage 7-gathering information:
Information was gathered using the data collection methods agreed with the stakeholders. This involved conducting one initial focus groups with each EPS, each individual EP completing an audit of previous knowledge questionnaire and a preference questionnaire. These data were then analysed to inform the selection of the
frameworks to be piloted. The piloting of the two selected frameworks COMOIRA and AI was undertaken. A planning meeting was held with all participants prior to the trialling of each individual model. This facilitated discussions around the implementation of the model and additional questions that could be added to the frameworks to support the evaluation process (refer to Appendix I). These discussions were recorded within the researcher diary and prompted the researcher to share some additional resources with the EPs (refer to Appendix O). Each model was then piloted, in turn, for a six week period. The EPs were asked to use the models to evaluate three individual teacher consultations. The EPs conducted the individual consultation and then used the frameworks as an evaluative tool to collate their personal views. Following the piloting of each model feedback questionnaires were completed. These data were then analysed to inform Stage 8 of RADIO.

### 4.12.4 Stage 8-processing information with stakeholders:
As the research progressed the PEP and SEP had regular meetings with the researcher in order to share the research findings following the data analysis process. Members of the EPS were consulted regularly during joint team meetings and on an impromptu basis to ensure that the model was developed collaboratively and reflected the needs of the Service (Timmins et al., 2003). Different phases of the model were re-visited during the research to encourage a flexible way of working.

### 4.13 Research Phase Three
Phase Three of the research incorporated Stages 9 and 10 of the RADIO process (as outlined in Table 4.6 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO STAGE</th>
<th>RADIO ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 9: Agreeing areas for future action</td>
<td>Final focus groups were conducted and data analysed and feedback to stakeholders</td>
<td>4.13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final focus groups</td>
<td>4.22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>4.22.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.13.1 Stage 9-agreeing areas for future action and Stage 10- action planning:

During Phase Three of the research a decision was made not to conduct the semi-structured interviews that had been originally planned. Within the initial research design all the EPs were going to take part in a semi-structured interview which would follow the professional framework piloting process. However, during a pre-planned meeting in Phase 3 of the RADIO model, the EPs had a collaborative discussion around the next stage of the research process. The general feedback from the EPs indicated that, rather than participating in an interview, it was much easier for the EPs just to attend one final focus group. From a logistical point of view the two teams felt that this would be easier to convene. Several of the EPs shared that since the piloting of the first framework (September-October 2014) several weeks had elapsed and, as such, it would be difficult to respond in detail to a set of interview questions about that specific framework. They believed that having a group discussion alongside fellow colleagues would aid the final selection of an evaluative framework. The EPs considered the focus groups to be more advantageous than the individual semi-structured interviews as they would enable them to come together as a group, discuss the models and recall important information. They believed that the focus groups alone would generate sufficiently rich data and that the interviews were, therefore, unnecessary and unfeasible within their heavy workload.

In collaboration with the PEP and SEP, the EPs agreed that it would be sufficient to collate the post-pilot feedback questionnaire responses as these had documented their views adequately and it would be possible to qualify this data further within the final two focus groups. As this was a piece of AR and involved a collaborative process a decision was made, following this direct feedback, not to conduct the interviews. The researcher recognised that one to one interviews would have provided an opportunity to explore the individual participants’ experiences. These would have collected rich data as it would be likely that more detailed responses would be gathered.
Following the data analysis of the post-pilot feedback questionnaires the two final focus groups were conducted with the two EPSs. Due to the time constraints of this research, Stages 10, 11 and 12 of the RADIO model were not completed by the point at which this thesis was submitted. During Stage 9 the findings of the focus groups were shared with the stakeholders. The next stages of the RADIO model are due to be implemented following on from this piece of research but will not be formally documented by the researcher.

Having provided an overview of all phases of the RADIO process, the following sections will look specifically at the processes of data collection and data analysis central to the research, which occurred at Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the research.

4.14 Data gathering methods

Prior to discussing the data collection methods implemented during Phase Two of the research, the researcher will firstly outline the reasoning behind the decision to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

The critical realist position considers that measurement is fallible and is that reality cannot be known with complete certainty. Therefore, an emphasis is placed on the importance of multiple measures and observation (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000; Trochim, 2006). In line with the critical realist stance of the researcher, this study adopts an AR design which collected both quantitative and qualitative data (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994). A range of data gathering methods was adopted across the different phases of the research and these were evaluated and used to inform the next phase of the model. Triangulation was used as a way of bringing a richer picture to the research process as collecting information by studying it from more than one standpoint; and by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data is a powerful way of demonstrating validity and enhancing the quality and credibility of the research (Silverman, 2001; Yin, 2009). An over reliance on one method may bias or distort the research (Cohen et al., 2000). Within this piece of research the use of focus groups are triangulated with the more traditional form of questionnaires.
4.15 Data collection

Within the research, data was collected according to the methods presented within Table 4.7 below. This outlines the data gathering methods and links them to the RQ:

What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to:

1a Assessing consultation as a process?

1b Providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users?

Table 4.7: Data Gathering Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO Phase</th>
<th>Data Gathering Method</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase Two</td>
<td>• Systematic analysis of evaluation frameworks</td>
<td>Data gathered to inform Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Initial focus groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pre-pilot questionnaires – audit of previous knowledge and preference questionnaires with all EPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Post-pilot questionnaires – feedback questionnaires on preferred models (COMOIRA and AI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research diary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase Three</td>
<td>• Final focus groups</td>
<td>1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collected during the later stages of phase 2 (Stages 7-8) were used to inform Phase Three of the research which addressed the research questions. An overview of the data gathering methods used within Phase Two is shown in Table 4.8 below. A research diary was used across all stages of the research to collect pertinent data (see Section 4.18).
Table 4.8: Phase Two Data Gathering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Gathering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit of previous knowledge questionnaire</td>
<td>All EPs completed an audit questionnaire prior to the initial focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial focus groups</td>
<td>Two initial focus groups were conducted with the separate EPSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference questionnaire</td>
<td>Following the initial focus group all EPs completed a questionnaire indicating their preferred model/models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback questionnaire (COMOIRA and AI)</td>
<td>Following the piloting of COMOIRA and AI all EPs completed a feedback questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each data collection method will now be discussed. Rather than presenting these in the chronological order as outlined by Table 4.8 they are discussed as individual data gathering methods.

4.16 Self-report questionnaire

Questionnaires are considered to be an efficient way of getting large amounts of data over a short time period Robson (2002). A questionnaire was selected as a data gathering tool alongside the focus groups. Four questionnaires were designed for the study. Two were incorporated into the pre-pilot phase of the research and two into the post-pilot phase of the research.

4.16.1 Pre-pilot questionnaires

Two questionnaires were used to collect data prior to the piloting stage of the research (see Table 4.8). Both questionnaires were designed alongside the PEP and one SEP and pre-tested informally with a small group of EPs. The questionnaires were then modified in light of the given feedback. The questionnaires were designed with the purpose of driving forward the next phase of the AR and looked to link the research questions with those of the questionnaire (Robson, 2002).
The audit of previous knowledge questionnaire (see Appendix D) collected data from the EPs around how familiar they were with five professional practice models and whether they implemented any of these within their professional practice (see Table 5.4). This questionnaire was completed by the EPs prior to the initial two focus groups. The preference questionnaire was completed by the EPs following the first two initial focus groups (see Appendix E). The EPs ranked their preferred professional practice models and indicated how likely they would be to use a particular framework within their practice (see Table 5.5).

Both questionnaires used closed questions to generate quantifiable data which could then be analysed and considered alongside the information from the focus groups. The questionnaires incorporated a semantic differential rating scale as a way of building a range of responses whilst generating numbers. These are useful as they combine the opportunity for a flexible response whilst generating quantitative measures that allows analysis to be conducted and correlations to be made (Cohen et al., 2000, Yin, 2011). The preference questionnaire also included a rank order question which allowed for degrees of response and reflected the preference and priority of the participants (Cohen et al., 2000). This assessed the level of consensus around the different models as each focus group member were asked to indicate their views as to whether a particular model should be selected. This information, alongside the data collected from the initial focus groups led to the selection of COMOIRA and AI as the preferred models to be piloted in the next stage of the research process.

4.16.2 Post-pilot questionnaires

All the EPs across both services piloted two frameworks over the course of a full school term. Within the first half-term period (approximately seven weeks) COMOIRA was used to evaluate three individual teacher consultations. Within the second half-term period (approximately seven weeks) AI was used to evaluate three individual teacher consultations (see Table 4.8). Following the piloting period each EP completed a feedback questionnaire about the framework (Appendix F). The post-pilot feedback questionnaires were co-designed with the PEP and one SEP and piloted with several EPs. This allowed the researcher to check the clarity of the questions, eliminate any ambiguities, gather feedback on the response categories and rating scales and gain feedback on the validity of the questionnaire items (Cohen et al., 2000).
The same feedback questionnaire design was used to collect data following the post-piloting period for both professional practice frameworks. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on such factors as the ease of use of the model and whether the model was able to evaluate consultation effectively. The questionnaire incorporated a set of scaled questions but the researcher noted the limits of scaled questions. In an attempt to mitigate against this, open ended questions were also included. Cohen et al. (2000) outline how rating scales can be limited in their usefulness by the need for a participant to select from a given choice. The use of open-ended questions enables respondents to reply using their own comments and opinions. However, open-ended questions were kept to a minimum for analyses purposes (Robson, 2002).

4.17 Initial focus groups

Due to the EPSs being separately located, a decision was made to run two groups rather than one. The time allowed for the groups was 60 minutes. The first group consisted of one PEP, one SEP and four EPs who constituted one of the EPSs and the second group consisted of the same PEP and six EPs from the neighbouring authority. The initial focus groups looked to gather the EPs’ views on the perceived strengths, limitations and applicability to EP practice of the professional practice frameworks discussed (see Section 5.6.4.1- 5.6.4.5).

Focus groups were selected as this method allows for the interviewing of several participants at once (Hendricks, 2008). It was logistically much more feasible to arrange for participants to meet in two groups in terms of time and expense. Focus groups are advantageous in that the responses of one person can help others recall important information they wish to share. The members, therefore, respond not only to the facilitator but to the others in the group which can generate much richer data (Hendricks, 2008). It is important for the researcher to consider the group context, particularly within established groups where it is important to recognise group dynamics. The researcher must aim to facilitate the group so that all members are giving the opportunity to participate and the most powerful voices are managed (Cohen et al., 2000; Coolican, 2009). Therefore, it was important for the researcher to retain awareness of the potential hierarchical structure with the attendance of the PEP and
SEP. This is a particularly challenging role for the facilitator but without this generalisation becomes problematic (Cohen et al., 2000).

Prior to the initial two focus groups being undertaken, an information briefing sheet was sent to all participants, this included brief summary of each model/framework that had been selected following the systematic analysis. This provided each EP with the opportunity to read around the professional practice models prior to the focus group activity. The sheet also explained the aims of the focus group and how it would provide an opportunity to discuss the professional practice models in turn so a decision could then be made about the model/models to be taken forward into the piloting phase of the research (see Appendix G).

Before the initial focus groups began the questions were written on a piece of flip chart paper (see Appendix H). At the request of the participants, each group was given an additional 30 minutes reading time before the focus group started. During this time they were encouraged to reflect, re-read the briefing paper and make notes if they so wished.

The focus groups began with an introduction and an explanation of the aims and objectives of the focus group. General ground rules and levels of confidentiality for the group were established. Within my role as the facilitator I had to ensure that I guided the discussion in order to keep it focused and not allow it to deviate from the topic (Yin, 2011). The focus group was audio recorded and minimal notes were taken of the key themes and written onto flip chart paper. This was as a way of ensuring that the researcher was able to actively listen to all the participant views, facilitate the interactions between the participants, contribute appropriate questions and deal with any issues that arose. A time keeper was nominated to ensure that each professional model was allocated the same discussion time.

The focus groups were conducted based around a set of open ended questions (Robson, 2002) which considered the strengths and limitations of each model and general thoughts around the applicability of the model to EP practice. Each professional practice framework was discussed in turn, the key points of the discussion were recorded on the flip chart and clarification sought to ensure that it reflected what the participants had
said accurately. Following each framework discussion the initial key themes that had emerged were verbally summarised to the group.

4.18 Research diary
Cutting across all phases of the research the researcher kept a self-completion diary. This provides a way of recording impromptu data and participant views that may be shared outside the focus groups and questionnaires (Corti, 1993). It allows the researcher to reflect upon the research process (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). A diary was kept which noted salient points throughout the study. This was used to record the discussions with stakeholders at each phase of the RADIO approach and during the regular joint ‘research update’ meetings held across the two EPSs (see Appendix I). It was used to capture views of the EPs when discussions were held around reflections on methodologies and future planning e.g. whether it was necessary to include the semi-structured interview process (Altrichter & Holly, 2005).

When using the diary the researcher was mindful of the fact that diaries can be prone to errors which may arise from incomplete recording of information, underreporting and insufficient recollection of the discussion (Corti, 1993).

4.19 Phase Two data analysis
The data generated from this stage of the research were analysed using a variety of methods. The data were aggregated at each stage of the AR process in order to inform the subsequent phase of the AR cycle. Within this section the data analysis methods for Phase Two will be explored. The research data for Phase Two were analysed according to the methods presented within Table 4.9 below.
Table 4.9: Phase Two Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Gathered</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit of previous knowledge questionnaire</td>
<td>Quantitative data</td>
<td>SNAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial focus groups</td>
<td>Qualitative data</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference questionnaire</td>
<td>Quantitative data</td>
<td>SNAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-pilot feedback questionnaire (COMOIRA)</td>
<td>Quantitative Qualitative data</td>
<td>SNAP Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-pilot feedback questionnaire (AI)</td>
<td>Quantitative Qualitative data</td>
<td>SNAP Content analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20 Questionnaires

Quantitative data were gathered from both the audit of previous knowledge and preference questionnaires which were completed before the piloting of COMOIRA and AI. Quantitative and qualitative data were generated from the post - pilot feedback questionnaires which followed the piloting of COMOIRA and AI.

For all four questionnaires quantitative data were collected from the rating scale questions. For coding purposes, each response was assigned a number which were then transferred into SNAP Questionnaire and Analysis summary software for analysis purposes. SNAP is a questionnaire and analysis software tool. The responses are collated using a code method and an analysis is carried out on the responses received to suit what information is required from the reporting. SNAP was used to organise the collection of data into categories. This generated statistics highlighting the number of responses in each category and presented this as an overall percentage. The data gathered from the questionnaires were considered alongside the information from the focus groups and then used to inform the subsequent phase of the research, in line with the AR model.

The post-pilot feedback questionnaires also generated data from a set of open-ended questions. The coding of responses involved combining the information contained in the responses into a limited number of categories which facilitated a simple description of the data for analysis purposes. All responses to a particular question were placed onto
one sheet of paper and then content analysis was used to organise the data into a small set of categories.

4.21 Content Analysis
Quality data can be analysed in different ways (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Content Analysis (CA) was selected as the method of data analysis for the initial focus groups and the reasons for this will now be considered.

A summative manifest CA was selected as the researcher wanted specifically to identify certain words and describe the obvious components (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Keywords were identified before and during the data analysis process and were derived from the researcher’s areas of focus during the focus group discussions. The CA focused on the strengths of the professional practice models, the limitations of the models and their application to EP practice. The focus group discussions were considered as a whole and then the content of the text was separated into the three areas outlined (themes) and then the data for each area were then organised according to content categories. Categories are defined as patterns within the text. A coding process was designed by the researcher to organise the data into content categories. The content categories were then analysed and divided into condensed meaning units as observed in the research of Graneheim and Lundman (2004).

Summative content analysis is different from other types of content analysis in that the text is approached in relation to a particular content and further analysis leads to an interpretation of the contextual meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For the purposes of this research the analysis was both quantitative and qualitative, first focusing on counting the number of strengths/limitations for each model and the frequency of specific words. Additionally, it also included a qualitative element which considered the content of the words and some basic interpretation.

4.22 Phase Three data gathering methods and data analysis
The data for this phase of the research were subject to more substantive analysis due to the fact that the data generated were used to directly answer the research question.
Phase Three of the research collected and analysed data according to the methods presented within Table 4.10 below, in order to address part 1a of the RQ: “What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to assessing consultation as a process”? and part 1b of the RQ: “What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users”?

Table 4.10: Phase Three Data Collection and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Gathered</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Not conducted</td>
<td>Section 4.22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final focus groups</td>
<td>Qualitative data</td>
<td>Thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each data collection method and data analysis method will now be discussed separately.

4.22.1 Semi-structured interviews

A collaborative decision was made not to conduct the semi-structured interviews that had been originally planned. The reasons for this are explained within 4.13.1.

4.22.2 Final focus groups

A final two focus groups were held during this phase of the research. The time allowed for the groups was 60 minutes. The first group consisted of one PEP, one SEP and four EPs who constituted one of the EPSs and the second group consisted of the same PEP and six EPs from the neighbouring authority. Before the final focus groups began the questions were written on a piece of flip chart paper (see Appendix J). These focus groups were run according to the same set of principles as outlined in section 4.17.

Data collated from this process were to inform a decision being made about the future framework being adopted across the EPSs. As this was the final step in the research process, these data were subject to more rigorous analysis. Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyse the data gathered from the final two focus groups according to the process outlined below within section 4.22.3.
4.22.3 Thematic Analysis

TA was selected as the method of data analysis for the final focus groups and the reasons for this will now be considered.

TA was selected due to its flexible and dynamic nature (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). TA is not affiliated with any particular epistemological positon and is also able to positon itself between the essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology which means it fits with the critical realist stance of the researcher. It is a method which works both to reflect reality and to unpick reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As TA is independent of theory it can be used as a specific research tool rather than a research method and can be used to analyse most types of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA was chosen as the most appropriate way to investigate the data from the focus groups. The literature was reviewed to provide a detailed protocol to carry out the TA. Up until recently TA has been perceived as not sufficiently rigorous to permit necessary peer scrutiny. However, more recently published protocols for carrying out TA have been produced (Floersch, Longhofer, Kranke & Townsend, 2010). Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that used appropriately and applied rigorously, TA is a robust technique. The researcher adopted the version by Braun and Clarke (2006) because of experience of using this approach in previous research conducted for the degree of Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology. It was also a familiar model to the members of the professional reference group who scrutinised the coding.

The initial focus group TA informed the selection of the models: COMOIRA and AI which were then piloted as evaluative frameworks by all EPs. The process for TA is outlined in Section 4.22.4 below.

4.22.4 Thematic Analysis process

TA is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data. Attride-Stirling (2001) notes that in order for qualitative research to yield meaningful and useful results it is crucial that the data is analysed in a methodical manner. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase step by step guide was used to guide the analysis of the focus group data (refer to Table 4.11 below). Although this is presented as a linear, staged approach, the analysis is an iterative and reflexive process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarising yourself with the data:</td>
<td>Full transcription of data which involved becoming fully ‘immersed’ in the data. Data read and re-read and noted down initial ideas. Discussed with EPs to check accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes:</td>
<td>Initial codes were generated. Data revisited in a systematic fashion across the entire data set and more succinct codes were generated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes:</td>
<td>Relevant extracts were collated into potential themes. These were checked against one another and back to original data set. Preliminary themes identified, coded data placed into relevant themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes:</td>
<td>Checked and finalised the themes. Generated a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defining and naming themes:</td>
<td>Themes and sub-themes were defined and named. The ‘essence’ of the theme was identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Producing the report:</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to research questions and literature, producing a report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to fully immerse herself in the data the researcher carried out a full transcription of all focus groups as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). All recordings were listened to by the researcher and typed onto a Microsoft Word document and then transferred onto an encrypted memory stick. Transcripts were regularly checked against the original recordings during this process to ensure accuracy. The two final focus groups were analysed separately and the themes were then collated into one data set.

When considering what constitutes a theme Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest it should capture something salient about the data. The authors do not give any indication as to the amount of data required to constitute a theme but consider that a theme represents “some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 86). It is down to the judgment of the researcher to determine the ‘keyness’ of a theme and this decision is not necessarily dependent on any form of quantifiable measures but rather it is in
relation to whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research. When conducting thematic analysis, the researcher can identify themes within the data using either use an inductive “bottom-up” approach or a deductive/theoretical “top-down” way (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A deductive approach can be conceptualized as being driven by the researcher and involves analysing and coding the data according to the researcher’s interest in a particular area.

The researcher identified themes at an inductive level. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that this provides a richer description of the data. At an inductive level the themes are data driven and do not fit into a pre-existing coding system. When conducting TA it is also important for the researcher to decide upon the level at which the themes are to be analysed. Themes can be identified at a latent or interpretative level or at a semantic or explicit level (Boyatis, 1998). When analysing at a semantic level, themes are identified at a surface level and the emphasis is on the explicit meaning of the data. Conversely, when analysing data at a latent level, there is an attempt to identify underlying ideas where the researcher looks to interpret the data. Within this research the themes were analysed at a semantic level in line with the critical realist position adopted. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that within a realist approach, you can theorise meaning in a simpler or more straight-forward way.

4.23 Critique of methods
The selected research design and methods will now be considered and critiqued in turn.

4.23.1 Action Research framework
The close and collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants was an important aspect of this piece of research and fit well within the flexible, qualitative design. However, AR can be criticised for this relationship and the effect it can have upon the research process. It could be argued that it is not possible to engage with people and systems without this having a significant impact upon the researcher’s decisions, about aspects of the design and data collection. When notions of collaboration and participation are taken seriously, then some decision making powers about aspects of the design and data collection are lost (Robson, 2002).
Due to the researcher’s immersion within the process it can be difficult to remain reflective and retain critical ways of knowing (Kidd & Kral, 2005). It could be argued that the researcher is at risk of allowing their own perspectives to influence the other participants which could undermine the study. It was important for the researcher to maintain reflexivity in relation to the impact of their contribution. Throughout the research I reflected upon my values, beliefs and attitudes and considered the way in which my involvement shaped and informed the research (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999).

Fortunately, during the study, no challenges arose within the group of EPs in relation to the research. Such difficulties can arise within AR, researchers may be faced with members who are in opposition to the process or there may be a loss of motivation or commitment (Kidd & Kral, 2005). The researcher did find that during the piloting phase of the frameworks some EPs used the frameworks for fewer consultations than was originally requested. This introduced a challenge to the process. However, it can be argued that by incorporating a multi-methods approach the validity of this data is increased. The data generated from the focus groups were triangulated against the questionnaire data which increased the likelihood of the reliability of the findings.

4.23.2 Questionnaire

Within this piece of research four questionnaires were used. It has been suggested that questionnaires are problematic in that their design is often based around the researcher’s assumptions as to what is important information to collect and may, therefore, not necessarily reflect what the participant considers to be important (Robson, 2002). The researcher attempted to resolve this by designing the questionnaires alongside the PEP and SEP (see RADIO Stage 6) and testing them informally with a small group of colleagues.

The feedback questionnaires which followed on from the piloting of COMOIRA and AI incorporated open-ended questions. The process of coding open-ended questions can be criticised for being very subjective. As a way of overcoming this, the researcher asked fellow doctoral student colleagues to study the coding system applied to the open-ended questionnaire data. This was essential in both challenging and verifying the findings of the research.
4.23.3 Focus groups
Focus groups have been criticised for not capturing a range of views. By virtue of the number of participants the researcher’s ability to control the interactions is reduced, offering the potential for the participants to follow their own agenda (Silverman, 2004). Due to the interactive forum the process has to be facilitated carefully so a small minority do not dominate and influence the responses (Kruger & Casey, 2000). This is a potential barrier and can place bias upon the data. The researcher attempted to remedy this by ensuring there were a variety of speakers during the focus groups. In addition, a questionnaire was completed at the end of each focus group so participants’ views were captured.

The researcher also felt it was important to recognise the impact that the presence of the PEP and SEP may have upon the group. However, the composition of the group was discussed openly and the participants are used to frequently sharing their views with one another around a range of professional topics. It was also important to consider the researchers’ role and the potential for impact. Due to the knowledge the researcher had gathered around the professional frameworks and the potential for bias towards specific models it was important to remain neutral during the discussions so as not skew the content and compromise the credibility of the data collected within the focus group.

The researcher tried to manage any possible misinterpretation of participant’s views by seeking clarification of statements and through the use of flip chart recording. The comments on the flip chart were reflected upon following the discussion of each framework to provide the participants with an opportunity to comment and correct.

4.23.4 Thematic Analysis
TA has been criticised as there are a number of things which can cause a poor analysis and deliver potential pitfalls. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that, due to the relatively straight-forward method of TA, the researcher should avoid a weak analysis which can result when a collection of extracts are placed together at a superficial level. It is the researcher’s role to ensure that their analysis is consistent with the data in order to define a plausible theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The flexibility afforded by TA can cause the data to become anecdotal or leave it open to bias which can compromise the validity of the research process (Willig, 2001). It is the job of the researcher to
determine the relevance of the data and consider how and when themes are identified. The ‘keyness’ of a code does not simply rely upon its frequency (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During analysis, it was not always easy to make a decision on what constituted a theme. In order to minimise the bias and bring reliability to this process the researcher asked a fellow colleague to study and code randomly selected excerpts of the transcribed focus groups. At subsequent meetings both sets of analyses were compared and collated into potential themes (refer to Appendix M). These were then checked against the original data set and preliminary themes were identified and finalised. A thematic map was generated and subthemes were defined and named (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Another concern is that, as TA does not require the same detailed theoretical knowledge as other qualitative analysis approaches such as grounded theory or IPA, it could be considered as having limited analytical and interpretative properties. As such, it provides just a description of the data. The researcher remained mindful of this and aimed to ensure that the analysis process was rigorous and driven by the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, TA was only one of the methods used to analyse data within this piece of AR.

**4.23.5 Content Analysis**

As with other areas of qualitative research CA has been criticised in relation to the concepts of generalisability, credibility and dependability (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In an attempt to achieve credibility within the CA the researcher took particular care over the selection of the condensed meaning units to avoid the pitfalls highlighted by Granheim and Lundman (2004) where meaning units can be too broad to manage the data or too narrow that meaning can become lost. As with TA, it was not always easy to constitute what made up a category so the researcher sought the views of colleagues and fellow doctoral students and compared their analyses of selected excerpts with her own in order to minimise bias.

**4.23.6 Multi-methods design validity/reliability**

This piece of research attempted to ensure rigour and trustworthiness through the triangulation of methods. A multi-method approach brings about more confidence in the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003). The researcher’s intention was that one
method would enhance the next and once the information is collated this provides contextually richer data than if it were seen from only one vantage point (Biggerstaff, 2012). The over reliance on one method can create an amount of bias which may lead to a distortion of the overall picture. If the outcomes of a multi-method approach correspond the researcher can be more convinced by the findings (Robson, 2002).

4.24 Ethical considerations

The researcher conducted the research in line with the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee guidelines (2014) and the British Psychological Society’s (2009) Professional Code of Practice. The researcher adhered to all recommendations provided by the University Ethics Committee and permission was granted for the minor amendments made to the study.

The aims and objectives of this study were given to all EPs in writing prior to the research commencing and all potential participants were presented with an ‘informed consent’ form (refer to Appendix K). This asked for written consent for each part of the research process. The participant information sheets, consent forms and all other documentation relating to the research were emailed to the researcher’s supervisor and approved by the University of Manchester ethics panel. All participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any point, without reason. They participants were given the option to ask for their information to be deleted at any time up until the data has been anonymised.

At the beginning of each focus group the researcher reiterated the purpose of the research, her role within the research process and provided an explanation of how the data would be used. No individuals were named during the analysis and the researcher was the only person with access to the dictaphone. Paper and electronic copies transcripts were used for analysis and a diary was kept for reflection. Electronic copies and records were kept on an encrypted laptop in a locked office and paper copies and notebooks were stored in a locked filing cupboard in the same office. The questionnaires were anonymised to protect the participant’s identity and kept in a locked filing cabinet. All participants were informed after the data had been collated. This information sharing occurred at the regular joint team meeting events which were built into the AR methodology.
All forms of the data analysis process were carried out by the researcher. However, it is crucial that, when analysing and coding data, alternative explanations are explored and considered (Yin, 2009). For this purpose, the researcher asked colleagues and fellow doctoral students to study randomly selected excerpts of transcribed focus groups and then compared their coding and comments with their own. This provided the researcher with different perspectives which created a depth of understanding around the data (Patton, 2002). The coding systems applied to the questionnaire data were also studied by colleagues and fellow doctoral students and the similarities and differences in the coding decisions were considered. This was essential in both challenging and verifying the findings of the research.
Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Chapter outline
This chapter outlines how the research emerged. The three phases of the RADIO model are detailed and due to the cyclical nature of this piece of AR each phase is discussed in turn. Each phase of the research informed the next so for each stage the data gathering methods will be considered along with the data analysis methods and the data analysis outcomes. The results aimed to answer the following research question:

RQ1: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to:

1a) Assessing consultation as a process?
1b) Providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users?

Multiple sources of data were generated and the links between data sets will be discussed at relevant points. Data sets are outlined in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Phases of the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of research</th>
<th>Data sets</th>
<th>Sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre –research Phase and Phase One</td>
<td>Researcher’s diary</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase Two</td>
<td>Systematic analysis, audit of previous knowledge questionnaire, preference questionnaire, initial focus groups, post-pilot questionnaires</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase Three</td>
<td>Final focus groups</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The stages of RADIO covered across all phases of the research are summarised within Table 4.1. The main emphasis of this chapter lies on the data gathered from the final focus groups (see Section 5.12.1). A detailed thematic analysis was conducted at this stage of the research to inform future decisions around the selection of a framework for the evaluation of consultation. The earlier stages of the data analysis are covered in less depth but were essential to the overall research process.
5.2 Pre-research Phase and research Phase One
The Pre-research Phase and Phase One of the study incorporated Stages 1-4 of the RADIO process. Within these phases of the research process a clear mandate for the research was established which is briefly summarised in Section 4.11.

5.3 RADIO Stages 1-4
The researcher started by creating a ‘rich picture’ prior to the commencement of the piece of research. This information contributed to Stages 1-4 of the RADIO model and was recorded within the researcher diary. The following stakeholders were consulted during several informal meetings in order to gain information to inform the research:
- PEP
- SEP from one of the LAs

Discussions with the PEP and SEP, documented within the researcher diary, highlighted the need for the two EPSs to find a tool that would collect relevant information on the impact of our service delivery. As a doctoral student the researcher was requested to explore potential professional frameworks that would facilitate the EPs within the two services, to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA. A thorough review of the literature confirmed the need for further research in this area. The processes for collaboration with the stakeholders were identified and regular meetings were arranged.

The data for Stages 1-4 was recorded within the researcher’s diary (see Appendix I). This information was used to inform the next stages of the research process. This data were not subjected to any form of robust methodological analysis as it served to highlight the rational for the study rather than serve as the main data set.

5.4 Research Phase Two
Phase Two of the research incorporated Stages 5-8 of the RADIO process. Sections 5.5-5.10 outline the different methods used to gather data at each stage of phase two, followed by the data analysis methods and outcomes. Sections 5.5.1-5.5.16 provides a description of the systematic analysis conducted to select the professional practice frameworks to present for discussion at the two initial focus groups. Following on from this, the data gathered from the initial questionnaires and focus groups and the outcomes
of the analysis are discussed. The outcome of the post-pilot questionnaire data is also covered.

5.5 Stage 5 and Stage 6- agreeing the focus of concern and negotiating framework for information gathering
The PEP and researcher agreed the focus of the research and established that the main aims of the research were to find a way to evaluate consultation that would enable EPs to assess consultation as a process and provide outcomes which would demonstrate accountability to employers and service users.

Further discussions with the PEP and SEP revealed the need to search the literature to source suitable professional frameworks which could then be carried forward into the next stage of the research. A thorough review of the literature was conducted. Through this process nine possible frameworks were identified (see Section 3.3):

- AI
- AT
- COMOIRA
- DECP
- Friedman’s Results Based Accountability Model (RBA)
- IFF
- Measuring the impact of Casework (MtiC)
- RADIO
- TME

5.5.1 Systematic Analysis
Stage 6 involved the devising of a framework which could be used to guide the selection process for choosing the professional models/frameworks that would be presented to the EPs and discussed at the initial focus groups. This involved a five step process as outlined below.

5.5.2 Step One: Framework for selection process
In order to select the most suitable models a framework was constructed and used to act as a guide to inform the selection of the most relevant consultation evaluation models.
The work of Wagner (1995; 2000) was consulted to facilitate the development of this framework. The general theories and principles underpinning consultation were incorporated into the framework which is presented within Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2: Frameworks for the Selection Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) <strong>Does the model utilise the main theories of consultation?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Interactionist</td>
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<td>2) Systemic</td>
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<td>3) social constructionist</td>
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<td>B) <strong>Does the model utilise the main processes of consultation?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Facilitate a collaborative approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Allow joint problem analysis</td>
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<td>3) Facilitate dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Allow solution-oriented thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Facilitate the formulation of an action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Facilitate a plan, do, review process which allows the participants to reflect upon the process and evaluate the changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>C) <strong>Can it be applied across the contexts in which the EP works?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Organisational</td>
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<tr>
<td>D) <strong>Can it be easily implemented into the consultation process?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>E) <strong>Is it sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diverse nature of EP work, including the changing needs of:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) different people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) different situations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) different groups?</td>
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<tr>
<td>F) <strong>Can it supply data to demonstrate the ‘added value’ and accountability?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>G) <strong>Does the model employ a range of both quantitative and qualitative techniques to triangulate the data?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>H) <strong>Does it allow the collection of data from a range of sources and contexts?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I) <strong>Has the model been used in other services and, if so, which types of Services?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>J) <strong>Is there any evaluation data on the impact of the model?</strong></td>
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**5.5.3 Step Two: Systematic Analysis**

The nine identified frameworks (see Section 5.5) were considered in detail alongside the pro forma. A systematic analysis took place of each model using the framework in
Table 5.2 and recorded within Table 5.3 below. This process guided the decisions around which models would be included and excluded from the research. The models that were included met all of the criteria. The reasons by which models were excluded are clarified in Step Three and Step Four below.

Table 5.3: Framework pro forma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DECP</th>
<th>COMOIRA</th>
<th>IFF</th>
<th>Activity Theory</th>
<th>TME</th>
<th>RADIO</th>
<th>MiC</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>RBA</th>
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5.5.4 Step Three: Exclusion of frameworks based on paradigms

All the models were initially considered in terms of their paradigms. As Wagner’s model of consultation draws upon social constructionism (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Wagner, 1995) it was considered essential that the framework adopted for evaluation would also need to fit the constructionist paradigm. As argued by Gameson et al. (2003) the paradigm used to evaluate should fit the paradigm of the approach.

The RBA model was considered not to fit comfortably within the paradigm of consultation. The reasons for this are summarised below.

5.5.5 Results Based Accountability Model

One of the EPSs already uses a model based on Friedman’s RBA Framework (Friedman, 2005). This approach distinguishes between ‘performance’ and ‘population’ results. Population results cover outcomes for the population and individual organisations then focus on managing and improving their contribution to this population result. The EPS uses the RBA model to measure the impact of their service on service users (Welsh Audit Office, 2010).

RBA is based on a four-quadrant framework which aims to answer questions about service delivery (see Section 3.3.9). This framework appears to rely on quantifiable results which would place it in the reductionist, positivist paradigm. When considering this framework in relation to the systematic analysis the following questions were asked as to: “Would this framework encapsulate the complexity of the EP role due to its focus on what is measurable”? “Could it be applied across a range of contexts in which EPS work”? “Is it sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diverse nature of EP work”? Due to its focus on quantifiable outcomes and its position within a positivist paradigm it was felt that it did not sufficiently and fully provide a convincing answer to these questions and a decision was made to exclude it from the study.

As demonstrated by the research of Keevers, Treleavan, Backhouse and Darcy (2010), when using RBA as an evaluation tool, activities could potentially become decontextualised for the purposes of quantification and this would hamper the inclusion of the local practice experience of the EPs.
5.5.6 Step Four: Further exclusion of frameworks
Although the following frameworks were considered to sit comfortably within the paradigms of consultation during the systematic analysis process they were excluded from the research because they did not fully meet the criteria. Reasons for this are explained in the sections below.

5.5.7 Target Monitoring and Evaluation
TME (Timmins et al., 2003) was designed to be used within a consultative model of service delivery. It derived from GAS (Kiresuk & Sherman, 1968). A summary of TME is provided in Section 3.3.7. Lengthy discussions with the PEP commissioner and other stakeholders raised questions around whether TME would encapsulate the complexity of the role of the EP and what they do during consultations. The focus on measurement raised the following questions: What does it actually measure? Does it measure the influence of the EP or the teacher’s ability to implement an intervention effectively? Is it just a glorified rating scale? Does it provide useful data about the impact of the EP?

A decision was made to exclude TME as a framework because it was concluded that it appeared positivist, reductionist in nature, focusing only on outcomes that are measurable. Despite being an important aspect, pupil outcomes alone do not illuminate EP effectiveness. In the complex context of EP work there is often a crucial difference between an identifiable outcome (concrete, measurable) and what is achieved (subjective, judgement).

5.5.8 Research and Development in Organisations
RADIO (Timmins et al., 2006) is collaborative in nature and steers away from a positivist design (see Section 3.3.5). There are different research phases which include clarifying concerns, researching the concern and creating change. Within this method there is space for all types of approaches including interviews, questionnaires, surveys, action research, case study as long as the chosen approaches meet address the research questions.

The RADIO model does fit the constructionist, relativist paradigm and did, therefore, fit with the theoretical perspective of consultation. Questions were raised around whether RADIO could be applied to an individual consultation (see section 5.5.3, C. 1). A
decision was made to exclude RADIO as it was considered that it lends itself more readily to systemic work at an organisational level and this research was focused on individual consultation meetings. Timmins et al. (2003) discuss how the processing of information with stakeholders can lead to organisational change. Despite being excluded as a framework for the individual consultation meetings RADIO was adopted as the framework used to guide the action research process of the study (see Section 4.9).

5.5.9 MtiC

Turner et al. (2010) developed a method of evaluating casework that could be administered by EPs with a view to capturing the impact that an EP had on outcomes for pupils. The casework evaluation was carried out individually by the EPs. This approach was embedded in a constructionist relativist paradigm. A decision was made to exclude this model from the research due to the following factors. This framework was devised to evaluate individual casework and does not, therefore, gather data from a range of contexts or accommodate the diverse nature of EP work across different groups and situations (see section 5.5.3, C.2 & C.3). It can only be used to look at the outcomes of individual casework and does not evaluate every consultation across different contexts. Despite this piece of research focusing on individual consultations the PEP questioned whether this model could encapsulate the complexity of what EPs do through consultation.

5.5.10 Step 5 – Inclusion of frameworks

The frameworks that met the selection process criteria were carried forward into the next phase of the research. These were selected on the basis that they were well developed, comprehensive and flexible frameworks that fit with the model of consultation and met the criteria, as defined in Table 5.2. It was hypothesised that the consultation model of working could be evaluated and rationalised through an application of these frameworks into the everyday practice of the services. It was anticipated that a robust exploration of these frameworks would provide a relevant, transparent and ethical process for the evaluation of EP consultations within this piece of research.

The five frameworks that met the selection process criteria were as follows:
These five frameworks are summarised within Section 3.3.

5.6 RADIO Stage 7: gathering information
Within this stage of the research process information was gathered using the agreed data collection methods and the data sets were analysed. The outcomes of the data analysis process are discussed within this section.

5.6.1 Audit of previous knowledge questionnaire
Two weeks prior to the two initial focus groups with the two EPSs, all EPs were asked to complete an audit of previous knowledge questionnaire (see Appendix D). This collected data around how familiar the EPs were with the five models (Q1) and whether they implemented any of these within their current professional practice (Q2).

5.6.2 Data analysis outcome
The audit of previous knowledge questionnaire was analysed using SNAP software (see Section 4.20). This generated statistics highlighting the number of responses in each category and this was also presented as an overall percentage. The results are illustrated in Table 5.4 and Table 5.5.
Table 5.4: Audit of previous EP knowledge Q1

1. How familiar are you with the following professional practice models / frameworks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
<th>Fairly familiar</th>
<th>Know a little</th>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Theory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Factors Framework</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103
From the data presented within Table 5.4 it was evident that the majority of EPs were most familiar with AI and COMOIRA. Only two EPs were not at all familiar with COMOIRA and only one EP was not at all familiar with AI. Interestingly, both of the EPSs have regular trainees from Cardiff and, therefore, those supervising the trainees have regular discussions around the COMOIRA model. Both EPSs have, in recent years, had a professional development session based on AI.

None of the EPs were very familiar with either AT or IFF and the majority of EPs reported that they knew only a little or were not at all familiar with AT, DECP or IFF.
### Table 5.5: Audit of previous EP knowledge Q2

2. Are you currently using any of the models / frameworks in your professional practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Theory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Factors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results generated when asking whether the EPs currently use any of the models within their practice (see Table 5.5) revealed that approximately half of the EPs used COMOIRA and AI. The majority of EPs had not used AT, DECP or IFF within their practice.

Those EPs who were using professional practice models within their practice were asked to briefly describe how they were using the models within their practice and these written responses were collated (see Table 5.6).
Table 5.6: EP responses from the Audit of Previous Knowledge Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| If you answered 'yes' to any of the models/frameworks in question 2 please describe very briefly how you are using them. | Appreciative Inquiry is used as a framework for working with a school to develop positive change as well as using it to structure certain types of consultation. - COMOIRA is used particularly with supervision of TEPS as this is the model they use. \n
Using informally in a small number of school settings. Looking to extend this next year in a more formal/planned way (AI) \n
All the time (COMOIRA) \n
Casework, everyday use (COMOIRA) \n
As an awareness and in conversations with parents and teachers (AI) \n
I use the forward thinking solution oriented aspect of AI in my approach to consultation. \n
COMOIRA used with EPiTs (Cardiff) \n
Reflecting through supervision with Cardiff students. |
5.6.3 Initial focus groups
Two weeks prior to the initial focus groups, all EPs were provided with information briefing sheets (see Appendix G). This provided the EPs with information about the five frameworks selected for the research and references for further reading where required.

All EPs attended one of the two initial service focus groups. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes. The EPs gave consent for the groups to be audio recorded for the researcher’s reference. During each of the focus groups the selected frameworks were discussed in turn. The EPs were initially asked to comment on the perceived strengths of the framework, then upon the perceived limitations and finally asked for their views on the applicability of the framework to EP practice. The researcher wrote the key points that emerged from the discussion on a flip chart. Clarification was sought by the researcher on the meaning and interpretation of the data with the participants. Participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on key points and discuss with colleagues.

5.6.4 Data analysis outcome
The initial two focus groups were analysed using a qualitative summative approach to content analysis, often referred to as manifest content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) in order to inform the ongoing process of identifying and evaluating preferred models. Keywords had been identified before and during the data analysis process and were derived from the researcher’s areas of focus during the focus group discussions. These targeted the strengths, limitations and applicability to EP practice of the five models. The content of the text was separated into these three areas (themes) and then the data for each area was then organised according to content categories. Categories are defined as patterns or themes within the text. A coding process was designed by the researcher to organise the data into content categories. Summative content analysis is different from other types of content analysis in that the text is approached in relation to a particular content and further analysis leads to an interpretation of the contextual meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For the purposes of this research the analysis was both quantitative and qualitative, first focusing on counting the number of strengths/limitations for each model and the
frequency of specific words. Additionally, it also included a qualitative element which considered the content of the words and some basic interpretation. The EPs’ views regarding each model were collated and put into tables. Significant amounts of information were gathered for each model and these will be discussed in more depth (see Sections 5.6.4.1 - 5.6.4.5).

5.6.4.1 COMOIRA

Themes emerging within the three categories which related to the COMOIRA model are shown in Table 5.7 below. The focus group text was read through several times and then sorted into content categories. The content categories were then analysed and divided into condensed meaning units as observed in the research of Graneheim and Lundman (2004).
Table 5.7: Content analysis of data for the COMOIRA model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths of the model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>People interacting together</td>
<td>Correct rules to judge the game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Emphasis on reflection is an important element</td>
<td>It fits with what EPs do generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td></td>
<td>It applies as much to EPs as everyone else in the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes change</td>
<td></td>
<td>At different levels: organisational, group, individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fits with consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed for EPs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Draws upon and focuses upon psychology as the core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Works with our values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Based on EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Its perpetual, it allows you to regroup and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can come at it from any angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not linear, can complete any box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes equal partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on supporting each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limitations of the model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time demands</td>
<td></td>
<td>Designed for trainees rather than EPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EPs don’t have the same time as trainees to complete it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Data produced will be too varied as it’s so flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Too much data to evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Content categories</td>
<td>Condensed meaning unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Application to the evaluation of EP practice | Training           | Yes we could use it but would need training
Would need time to look at how to use it |
Analysis of the data surrounding the strengths of COMOIRA revealed the EPs perceived this framework to be reflective as well as reflexive. Discussion revealed that the EPs thought these were important elements. Words and phrases such as “emphasis on reflection is an important element” and “it applies as much to EPs as everyone else” were generated. It was seen to promote change at a number of levels which was considered an important element as this fit within the consultation model of service delivery. The fact that the model was developed for EPs was considered to be important as this meant it was “based on EP practice”, “works with our values and beliefs” and “focuses upon psychology as the core”. It was seen to be a flexible model and one which promotes equal partnership through its “collaborative” nature.

Within the data collated surrounding the limitations of the model only two categories were identified: “time demands” and “too flexible”. As COMOIRA was designed for TEPs, some of the team felt that they would not have the time required of them to complete the framework and whilst some of the team felt that the flexibility of the model was strength some considered it to be a limitation. They thought it would ‘produce too much data to evaluate’ and that the data would be too “varied”.

When considering the application of the model to evaluate EP practice, the general views were very positive. Some EPs identified that EPs “would need training” and “would need time to look at how to use it”.
### 5.6.4.2 IFF

Table 5.8: Content Analysis of data for the IFF model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths of the model</td>
<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>It comes from a constructivist perspective&lt;br&gt;It is holistic&lt;br&gt;It sees problems in context which EPs do&lt;br&gt;Strikes a chord with what is unique to EPs: seeing situation in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed for EPs</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s been designed to be used by TEPs&lt;br&gt;Its thorough - it’s been developed over years and adapted for EPs&lt;br&gt;It looks for evidence to support practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td></td>
<td>It encourages you to be reflective&lt;br&gt;It allows for changing hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td></td>
<td>The structure/phases are useful&lt;br&gt;It has a sense of order which is helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructionist</td>
<td></td>
<td>It works at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent</td>
<td></td>
<td>It promotes transparency of EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Content categories</td>
<td>Condensed meaning unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a natural process&lt;br&gt;Doesn’t fit with the way we work&lt;br&gt;Too mechanistic to apply to evaluation&lt;br&gt;Applies to consultation but not evaluation&lt;br&gt;Too linear&lt;br&gt;Lack of flexibility in terms of application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
<td></td>
<td>Too wordy&lt;br&gt;How would we fit it in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too scientific</td>
<td></td>
<td>You set a hypotheses and test it&lt;br&gt;It sees things as an absolute&lt;br&gt;Less empathy than COMOIRA&lt;br&gt;Lacks understanding of others’ perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of hierarchy</td>
<td></td>
<td>EP leads and collates all information&lt;br&gt;EP seen as expert&lt;br&gt;EP seen as leading process-not equal partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too complicated</td>
<td></td>
<td>Needs translating to be user friendly&lt;br&gt;Language needs to be more friendly&lt;br&gt;Needs translating for stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Content categories</td>
<td>Condensed meaning unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to the evaluation of EP practice</td>
<td>Translating it to stakeholders</td>
<td>It would need translating to others/stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes reflective practice but wouldn’t use it to collect data for evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of the data surrounding the strengths of IFF, (refer to Table 5.8), revealed that many of the EPs considered one of its main strengths is the fact that it is based on a “constructivist” perspective. This fits with the EP perspective of “seeing problems in context” which is something “unique” to EPs. As with COMOIRA (Gameson et al., 2003) the EPs saw the fact it is based on EP practice in a positive light. It was seen as a model which “is thorough” because it’s been developed “over years and adapted for EPs”. One EP liked the fact that it “looks for evidence to support practice”. As with COMOIRA the idea that IFF is “reflective” was seen to be a strength and the fact that it “allows for changing hypotheses”. The systematic structure was seen by some EPs to be useful as was its “transparent” nature which “promotes transparency of EP practice”. IFF was considered to be a model that would “work at different levels” of EP practice which would, therefore, fit with the consultation model of delivery.

Significant amounts of information were gleaned when discussing the limitations of IFF and upon analysis five content categories were identified. Many of the EPs considered it to be too “rigid” with phrases used like: “not a natural process,” “too linear,” “lack of flexibility” and “doesn’t fit with the way we work (consultation)”. Some of the EPs thought it could apply to consultation but was “too mechanistic to apply to evaluation”. It was considered to be a “time consuming” model and some EPs felt that they would not be able to “fit it in” to their practice. It was viewed a “scientific” framework with phrases such as: “you set a hypotheses and test it”; “it sees things as absolute”. EPs felt that it lacked an understanding of the perspective of others and had “less empathy than COMOIRA”. Another limitation was seen to be the “sense of hierarchy” with the view that the EP is “seen as the expert” and as “leading the process” rather than it being an “equal process”. IFF was seen as “too complicated” by many of the EPs who commented particularly upon the language which they believe needs to be “more user friendly” and needs “translating” as it was particularly complicated.

When analysing the data generated from the discussion around the application of the model to EP practice two content categories were identified. Most of the EPs believed that a lot of work needed to be done to “translate” the language of IFF in order for it to be implemented and understood by others. The EPs generally struggled
to see how it could be used to evaluate what EPs do through consultation with phrases such as “wouldn’t use it to collect data for evaluation”.
### 5.6.4.3 AI

Table 5.9: Content Analysis of data for the AI model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                      | Positive Psychology| Looks at what works
Strengths based
Like the ‘dream’
Solution focused-questions focus on strengths rather than problem
Fits with consultation and what we do as EPs
Problem-solving- allows you to reframe problems- only a problem because of the view we are taking |
|                      | Simple             | Quick
Simple and easy to use
Easy to understand                                                                                                                                         |
|                      | Evaluative         | Cyclical
Useful for generating valuable data-data you can work towards
Can use it to facilitate evaluative discussion-generates feedback from consultee
Generates rich and complex data
Lends itself to evaluation at a number of levels                                                                                                           |
|                      | Promotes autonomy  | Allows EP to be autonomous
Doesn’t interfere with EP practice
Flexible-doesn’t restrict EP work                                                                                                                          |
# Appreciative Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows creativity</td>
<td>Fits beautifully with Person-centred planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>It fits with working at a number of levels: individual, group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fits with most ways of working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the model</td>
<td>Looseness</td>
<td>Structure is too loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>The language can be off putting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too positive</td>
<td>Doesn’t facilitate looking at what’s not going well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot look at problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t allow you to explore weaknesses within EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to the evaluation of EP practice</td>
<td>Problem solving element</td>
<td>How to introduce problem solving element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May only be able to use ‘discover’ element for evaluation purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear and simple</td>
<td>Simple and easy to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May be too simple. May need to create a framework to apply to evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handbook is user friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fits well with EP practice</td>
<td>Fits well with EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Works well with person centred planning tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes positive psychology and solution focused work which we do as EPs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When analysing the data from AI around the perceived strengths of the model six content categories were identified. Words such as “quick”, “simple” and “easy to use” were generated and many of the EPs though that as well as being a simple model it is “easy to understand”. The fact that it uses “positive psychology” was seen by many EPs as a strength. With it using “solution focused-questions” and due to its “focus on strengths rather than problems”, it was seen to fit “with consultation and the work of EPs”. Discussion revealed that often problems are generated by the “view we are taking” and that AI “allows you to reframe problems” or the view we take of problems. Many EPs thought it would be a useful “evaluative” tool due to its “cyclical” nature. Discussion revealed that AI may be “useful for generating valuable data, data you can work towards” and that the data generated would be “rich”. It was considered to be a tool that could “facilitate evaluative discussion”, generate “feedback from (the) consultee” and that it would lend “itself to evaluation at a number of levels” which would fit well with what EPs do. EPs liked the fact that it “promotes autonomy” and “doesn’t interfere with EP practice” and “its flexibility doesn’t restrict EP work”. Across the two services the EPs are involved in promoting Person Centred Planning (PCP) to schools and AI was seen as allowing the creativity to “fit beautifully with PCP”. The flexibility of the model was considered an important element as it fits with “most ways of working” and “at a number of levels”.

Three content categories were identified when looking at the data surrounding perceived limitations of AI. The lack of “problem” focus was a factor for some EPs, in terms of it not facilitating what is not going well or enabling EPs to “explore weaknesses” within their own practice. The language was considered by one EP as “off putting” and its structure was considered too loose by another EP.

When considering the application to EP practice, one of the categories that emerged indicated that it might be useful to introduce a “problem solving element” to the model. One EP felt that it would only be possible to use the “discover” element of AI for evaluation purposes. Many of the EPs thought that AI would be “simple” and “easy to use” although one EP thought it might be helpful to create a framework in order to apply it for evaluative purposes. One fundamental factor was in terms of it fitting well with EP practice. Many EPs were in agreement that it “promotes positive
psychology”, and “solution focused” work which is central to the consultation process. It was also considered to be a useful tool which would work well with PCP, a topic which EPs are currently presenting and offering training to schools.
### 5.6.4.4 DECP

#### Table 5.10: Content Analysis of data for the DECP framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths of the model</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>It’s useful for guiding individual assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The framework is good for guiding assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the model</td>
<td>Applicability to EP practice</td>
<td>It doesn’t fit with consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Within child’ focused</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Its within child focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Referral based ‘within child’ language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outdated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very scientist practitioner-assessment based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to EP practice</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Doesn’t fit with consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t fit with evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only one content category was identified when analysing the data for the strengths of the DECP framework. From an “assessment” perspective it was considered useful for “guiding individual assessments” and the framework itself was viewed as being “good for guiding assessment”.

When analysing the data around perceived limitations of the DECP framework the applicability to EP practice within the two services was identified. It was evident that many of the EPs did not believe it would fit with consultation as a model of service delivery and was not “applicable” to consultation. The DECP framework was also seen as a “within-child” focused model and this was identified as a fundamental weakness with many of the EPs agreeing. Phrases such as “very scientist-practitioner based” and “referral based within child language” were used and many of the EPs expressed the opinion that the framework is a very ‘outdated’ version of EP practice.

The main category when analysing the data around the applicability to EP practice was that the DECP framework was “not applicable”. It was not perceived as a model which would fit with consultation or the evaluation of consultation.
5.6.4.5: Activity Theory

Table 5.11: Content Analysis of data for the AT model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths of the model</td>
<td>Fits with EP practice</td>
<td>Social constructionist-allows for different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fits with psychology of consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Makes sense of situations and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporates lots of different voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Based on dialectic materialism-examines contradictions and opposing views to make sense of a situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Captures the complexity of EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well developed at different levels</td>
<td></td>
<td>Three generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Based on EP practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can be used at different levels: organisation, multi-agency working, in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language based</td>
<td></td>
<td>The language we use can alter things/situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The language we use can often create the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops a rich picture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporates lots of people’s views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives opportunities to analyse things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Activity Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content categories</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Limitations of the model     | Complexity         | Very hard to understand  
Too complicated  
Needs translating  
Don’t understand it  
The framework is confusing  
The diagram is off putting-makes it more difficult than it needs to be  
How would you translate it to others |
|                              | Too descriptive    | It’s a descriptive tool  
Wouldn’t allow for evaluation                                                                                                                        |
| Application to EP practice   | Training           | Would need additional training  
Need to understand it  
Need to adapt it to use for evaluation purposes                                                                                                 |
When analysing the data from Activity Theory around the perceived strengths of the model, four content categories were identified. One of the fundamental factors was that it fits with EP practice and “captures the complexity of EP practice”. The “social constructionist” paradigm of AT “fits with the psychology of consultation”. It was viewed as a model that could make “sense of situations and systems” which is an important aspect of consultation. A further strength was that it was seen as a model that “incorporates lots of different voices” and “allows for different perspectives”. Discussion revealed that the model facilitates the development of a rich picture because it “incorporates lots of people’s views” and “gives opportunities to analyse”. The importance of language was raised and it was recognised that the language used in situations is fundamentally important as this can “alter situations” and “can often create the problem”. AT was viewed as a model that was well developed at different levels. It was seen as applicable across a range of contexts: organisation, multi-agency working, in schools. The fact that it was based on EP practice and had been developed across three generations was seen as strength by some of the EPs.

Two content categories appeared from the data around the limitations of AT as a model. One of the fundamental factors that arose was related to the complexity of the model with many of the EPs in agreement. Comments such as “too complicated”, “don’t understand it” and, “confusing” were generated. The diagram was seen as “off putting” and as making the model more “difficult than it needs to be”. How the model would be described to others was also seen as potentially problematic, due to its complexity. The model was also seen as very descriptive which was seen as a limitation when applying it to the evaluation of consultation.

When discussing the application of AT to EP practice the majority of EPs considered that in order take AT forward they would require additional training in order to “understand it” and to “adapt it for evaluation purposes”.

5.7 Preference questionnaire
At the end of the two initial focus groups all the EPs completed a preference questionnaire. The questionnaires were anonymous and collated by the researcher. The EPs firstly ranked their preferred professional practice models and then indicated
how likely they would be to use each particular model for the evaluation of their practice.

The preference questionnaire was analysed using SNAP software (Section 4.20). This generated statistics highlighting the number of responses in each category. The results are summarised in Table 5.12 below.

**Table 5.12: Preference Questionnaire rank responses**

Please rank from 1-5 (1 = most preferred, 5 = least preferred) the models/frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Number of rank responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was evident from the Rank 1 responses that the majority of EPs most preferred the models of COMOIRA and AI. IFF and AT both had one Rank 1 response. The DECP model was the only framework that did not receive any responses within the most preferred rank. COMOIRA, IFF and AI received the highest number of Rank 2 responses with eight EPs selecting these models. Again the DECP model was not selected and AT had one Rank 2 response. COMOIRA and AT both received one response within the Rank 3 category. AI and IFF had the most Rank 3 responses.

The majority of the EPs gave AT and DECP a number 4 ranking. Only one other model received a Rank 4 response, with one EP selecting COMOIRA. Half of the EPs chose the DECP model as their least preferred framework. AT and IFF had 2 responses within the Rank 5 category. COMOIRA and AI did not receive any responses within this category. Therefore, results from the preference questionnaire revealed that the majority of EPs most preferred the COMOIRA and AI models.

Following the ranking of responses the EPs were then asked to indicate how likely they would be to use the professional practice models to evaluate EP practice. The results are presented in Table 5.13 below.
### Table 5.13: Preference Questionnaire responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very likely to use</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fairly likely to use</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Would use a little</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Not likely to use</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Factors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from these results that the EPs were ‘very likely to use’ COMOIRA and AI. The EP responses for COMOIRA indicated that the majority of EPs would be either ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to use this framework to evaluate EP practice. Only two out of the ten responses for this category indicated that they ‘would use a little’ and none of the EPs said that they would ‘not (be) likely to use the model’.

Results for AI revealed that nine of the EPs would be ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to use this as a model to evaluate EP practice. Only one EP showed that they ‘would use a little’ and there were no responses within the ‘not likely to use’ category.

Conversely, the responses for AT revealed that the majority of EPs would either not be likely to use this framework or would only use it a little. Three of the ten responses fell within the ‘fairly’ to ‘very likely’ to use category.

AT and DECP had the highest number of responses within the ‘not likely to use’ category. Both had four responses.

The DECP framework had the least number of responses within the ‘very likely’ and ‘fairly likely’ to use categories. Only two EPs indicated that they would use this model to evaluate EP practice. Four of the EPs reported that they ‘would use a little’ and four indicated that they were ‘not likely to use’ this framework.

IFF was the only framework that didn’t have a response within the ‘very likely to use’ category but five of the EPs indicated that they would be ‘fairly likely to use’ this model to evaluate EP practice. The results revealed that five EPs would either ‘not be likely’ to use IFF or ‘would use a little’.

5.8 Data analysis feedback meeting

The information from the focus groups, alongside the data from the preference questionnaires acted as a guide to select the models to take forward to the piloting stage of the research.

A meeting was held with the PEP and SEP to discuss the outcome of the data analysis and make a decision on the models that were to be taken through to the
piloting stage of the research. The researcher diary was used to record the meeting discussions.

Based on the data collated from the initial two focus groups and the preference questionnaire a decision was made to take the models COMOIRA and AI into the piloting stage of the research process.

**5.9 Piloting of professional practice frameworks**

This stage of the research involved the piloting of the two selected frameworks: COMOIRA and AI. Each model was trialled for approximately a seven week period and was used to evaluate three individual teacher consultations. EPs were provided with an Information Sheet (see Appendix L) which provided examples of both the COMOIRA and AI models. Following each piloting period each EP completed a feedback questionnaire (see Appendix F). Evaluations of each of the models are now be examined in turn.

**5.9.1 COMOIRA Quantitative data analysis outcome**

The post-pilot feedback questionnaires were analysed using SNAP software. This generated statistics highlighting the number of responses in each category and this was also presented as an overall percentage. The results are illustrated in Table 5.14.
Table 5.14: Post-pilot feedback questionnaire: COMOIRA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have found the model easy to use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA provides a useful structure / guide for the evaluation of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA hinders / restricts the EP’s working practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA is effective at demonstrating that the consultation has made a difference.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA can evaluate individual consultations.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four of the post-pilot feedback questionnaires were not completed, the reasons for which were unknown. Results revealed that half of the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that COMOIRA was an easy model to use. As the responses were anonymous it was not possible to tell whether these responses had been from the EPs who were supervisors of the Cardiff TEPs who would have been familiar with the model. Five of the EPs who responded either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that COMOIRA provides a useful structure for the evaluation of consultation. Only one of the respondents answered “disagree” to this question and none of the EPs “strongly disagreed”. Interestingly, two of the respondents said that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that ‘COMOIRA hinders/restricts the EPs’ working practices although four of the EPs “neither agreed nor disagreed” with this question and two EPs “disagreed”. When considering whether COMOIRA is effective at demonstrating whether the consultation has made a difference, three of the respondents either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with five EPs “neither agreeing nor disagreeing”. Responses to the question about whether COMOIRA can evaluate individual consultations revealed that five EPs either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with this statement. Two of the respondents “neither agreed nor disagreed” and one EP “strongly disagreed”.

5.9.2 COMOIRA Qualitative data analysis outcome

The qualitative data from the open-ended responses was summarised and used to triangulate the data from the scaling questions. A summary of qualitative responses for the open-ended questions is summarised in Table 5.15. All the data are presented but in order to make them more accessible they were organised into themes following a content analysis of the responses.
Table 5.15: Open-ended responses from the post-pilot COMOIRA Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the strengths of COMOIRA when using the model to evaluate consultation?</td>
<td>Evaluative tool</td>
<td>Really useful evaluation tool for the EP Knowing you are completing an evaluation means you think that way in the consultation Has helped me be clearer about me constructing hypotheses though these happen after events and through reflection It enables me to be clearer for next consultation Helped me know what I need to develop in my own skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>It focuses on different ways of looking at things and encourages the idea that change will happen It is quite specific about what the changes area and who will make them It goes even further to review if the changes have happened and helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Structure, Self-reflection - individual and joint Process useful for evaluation Structures: The questions I understand make sense to me Provides some prompts for during consultation. Provides same structure. Good for reflection Thorough Being able to choose the starting point and recognising the relationships between areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What are the limitations of COMOIRA when using the model to evaluate consultation? | Structure     | Too structured  
I didn't understand all the terms  
I found it hard for both models - to post hoc apply a model  
Would be fine if I worked with COMOIRA probably                       |
|                                                                         | Evaluation    | It doesn't really let you know if the consultation was effective for the other person as you don't ask them  
Sometimes the boxes don't make sense  
Too many boxes that you feel you need to fill in  
The model did not help my evaluation, instead felt I needed to fill in boxes |
|                                                                         | Information laden | Could be perceived as too much information to process                                                                                      |
|                                                                         | Problem focussed | Does it focus on problems and things that need to be changed quite heavily?  
Perhaps a bit more of "what successful changes have already been made and recognition of positive ideas etc. that have made a difference/progress, may be helpful at some stage? |
<p>|                                                                         | Process driven  | Can feel a bit process driven rather than person led                                                                                       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your general thoughts about the application of COMOIRA when evaluating consultation?</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Would like to use it with the person I am consulting with at the end of the consultation because what I think went well and what is good for others might not be the same thing. It is helpful to aid more structured reflection. Would like to use it more within practice and think I would then be more skilled at using it to evaluate. Very useful structured test allowing self-reflection and thinking following consultation. Links consultation to theory i.e. theory and practice. Feels like it brings more psychology to what we do. The core of COMOIRA is helpful on reflection of consultations. Useful to have time to reflect and look/consider a range of factors that might be playing a role in a situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Have key people made the change and have these helped?” could be useful for evaluation and “what has happened so far and how has this gone” as both these may give some idea of outcomes. The model may be more evaluative if completed all together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>As I am not COMOIRA trained, I found it hard use COMOIRA post hoc to review consultants for which I hadn't used COMOIRA. Does that make sense? I would need training in COMOIRA. I am not sure I fully understand the model to use it effectively. I felt it did not help me to evaluate and also felt I was repeating myself in different boxes. Some questions were easier to answer than others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.9.3 AI Quantitative data analysis outcome

The post-pilot feedback questionnaires were analysed using SNAP software. This generated statistics highlighting the number of responses in each category and this was also presented as an overall percentage. The results are illustrated in Table 5.16.
Table 5.16: Post-pilot feedback questionnaire: AI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have found the model easy to use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate Inquiry provides a useful structure / guide for the evaluation of consultation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate Inquiry hinders / restricts the EP’s working practices.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138
Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate Inquiry is effective at demonstrating that the consultation has made a difference.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate Inquiry can evaluate individual consultations.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four of the post-pilot feedback questionnaires were not completed for reasons which are unknown to the researcher. Results revealed that half of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that AI was an easy model to use with three of the EPs “disagreeing” or “strongly disagreeing” with this statement. Whilst three of the respondents “agreed” that AI provides a useful structure for the evaluation of consultation, half of the EPs who responded “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with this. Interestingly, six of the respondents said that they “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” that AI hinders/restricts EPs’ working practices. None of the EPs’ responses indicated that they believed AI was restrictive to EP practice.

When considering whether AI is effective at demonstrating whether the consultation has made a difference, four of the respondents “agreed” with this statement and only one EP “disagreed”. Responses to the question about whether AI can evaluate individual consultations revealed that the majority of the EPs “agreed” that this was the case. No EPs “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with this statement.

5.9.4 AI Qualitative data analysis outcome

The qualitative data from the open-ended responses was summarised and used to triangulate the data from the scaling questions. A summary of qualitative responses for the open-ended questions is summarised in Table 5.17 below. As with COMOIRA, all the data are presented but in order to make them more accessible they were organised into themes following a content analysis of the responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | Structure | Opens up thinking  
| | | Less structure  
| | | Structure and simple  |
| | Develops practice | Looks at developing practice - allows you to think about what you will do in the future - like the "what could be" bit  |
| | Applies psychology | Useful application of positive psychology  
| | | It is based on a social constructionist perspective  |
| | Positive focus | Makes you think positively about the consultation, look for ways it could be improved  
| | | Makes you look for strengths rather than negatives  
| | | Brings psychology  
| | | Allows free thinking  
| | | Positive focus  |
| | Simple | Simple  
<p>| | | I am familiar with model and process  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the limitations of AI when using the model to evaluate consultation?</td>
<td>Interpretation of AI</td>
<td>Interpreting what thinking was required of me Some aspects don't seem to apply to some situations but this could be me getting used to the model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No weaknesses</td>
<td>There are no weaknesses if you accept the premise and creating the reality in the moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Too loose to provide any dependability? Evaluation Too vague, open maybe? More focus/challenge? Lack of structure Doesn't really allow you to think about what went on as much as COMOIRA - needed more structure so harder to think it through Restrictive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your general thoughts about the</td>
<td>Training and practice</td>
<td>With practice/more use I think this will get better in that it would be an embedded part of thinking processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>application of Appreciative Inquiry when</td>
<td></td>
<td>I don't feel I know enough about AI to be able to use effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluating consultation?</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Yes generally a flexible positive model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quite difficult to evaluate with this tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure how it could give us structured feedbacks about what we do. Very loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is sound in principle and practice. Care needs to be taken in separating the 'evaluation element' too distinctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td></td>
<td>Would be good to see how teachers might respond to thinking about consultation like this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to engage with others, not just post hoc, by me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.10 RADIO Stage 8: Processing information with stakeholders
As the research progressed the PEP and SEP had regular meetings with the researcher in order to share the research findings following the data analysis process and make decisions about the next steps. Members of the EPS were consulted regularly during joint team meetings.

5.11 Phase Three
Phase Three of the research incorporated Stages 9 and 10 of the RADIO process. Phase Three consisted of two final focus groups, one for each EPS. The data gathering methods, data analysis and outcomes are discussed in turn. The data for this phase of the research were subject to more substantive data analysis due to the fact that the data generated were used to address the research questions and to inform Chapter Six of the thesis.

5.12 RADIO Stage 9: Agreeing areas for future action
Within this stage of the research process the data from the two final focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis and feedback was given to the stakeholders.

5.12.1 Final focus groups
Both EPSs were asked to participate in a final focus group within their own EPS. Each lasted approximately 60 minutes. The data generated from the discussions were audio recorded with the participants’ consent. The questions were displayed on flip chart paper and the researcher read these out in turn to the group (see Appendix J). After allowing time for the EPs to discuss some working examples of how the frameworks had been used for evaluation purposes, each question was then discussed in turn. A record was made of the pertinent points and the researcher checked out meaning and interpretation of the data with the participants. Clarification was sought and the participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on key points and to discuss the questions with colleagues which allowed for both individual and group views to be obtained.
5.12.2 Data analysis

TA was carried out on the fully transcribed audio-recorded discussions from the two focus groups (see Appendix M). This was conducted according to the six step phase Braun and Clarke (2006) method outlined in Table 4.11. The themes from COMOIRA and AI were considered separately. Emerging themes and concepts were coded and revisited systematically to allow the assessment/reassessment of relevant data.

For COMOIRA four themes were identified and AI yielded three major themes. The researcher then created a thematic map of the emergent themes for both COMOIRA and AI and subsequently thematic maps of each of the individual themes were identified (see Appendix N). Given the researcher’s proximity to the research and for validity and reliability purposes, the emergent themes and codes were checked by a small group of EPs for inter-coder agreement. At this point, it was necessary for the researcher to justify and explain their interpretation of the data. This process was invaluable as it generated changes in the overall structure and labelling of the final thematic map.

The models will now be considered separately and each theme identified and discussed in turn.

5.12.3 Data analysis outcome: COMOIRA

Themes identified from the transcripts of COMOIRA will now be detailed. Within the text the main codes resulting from the emergent themes are highlighted in bold italics and the sub codes resulting from the subthemes are highlighted in normal text italics hereafter. The first thematic map below (see Figure 5.1) details the themes that emerged in relation to the strengths and limitations of COMOIRA, its ability to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability and preferred ways forward. The subsequent thematic maps explore each individual theme and sub theme in detail.
5.12.3.1 Change

The first subordinate theme *change* held a number of subthemes as highlighted in Figure 5.2 below.

![Diagram](image-url)
One theme of particular interest was that of change as it generated a great deal of discussion around how EPs capture the changes made through consultation with one respondent asking “how do you capture the seeds that we place that then go away and change systems?”

Another EP commented that often EPs are not aware of the changes that are made following their involvement stating “the change could be that behaviour has become normalised or the situation has got better so we don’t hear again, so those changes we don’t really monitor do we”. To some extent, this notion of change being difficult to identify or ‘capture’ adds weight to the rationale for a service evaluation model of consultation.

The issue of who controls change was an interesting subtheme which generated questions around whether some teachers had the power or control necessary to make the changes that were identified during the consultation. EP comments included “is the ability to change it even within their control?” and “how far are the key people able to make change within the constraints of the system they are in”.

The theme of who controls change is important in relation to the consultation process and the contribution the EP can make to this. Some of the EPs reflected on who the consultations were conducted with and the influence they had within wider systems. One EP noted that “you could have an amazing consultation with someone but they’re in a system where they have no power to create change whatsoever and then you are really consulting with the wrong person because what can they do?”

This highlighted how the systems around the consultee are especially important to the subsequent implementation of the change process and could potentially be a barrier to change. The barriers to change were considered to be a critical element with the ‘willingness of the consultee to make the changes’ an important factor that led to any subsequent changes that then occurred. One EP questioned why some consultees do not want to implement the proposed changes, asking “what are their anxieties about change; is there something they don’t want to give up.”
Interestingly, the barriers to change could be seen to have a direct impact on the consultation process and whether the EP was able to contribute positively. Some respondents saw the willingness of the consultee to implement suggested changes as being fundamental to this “how far are people willing to make the changes and how able are they? That sort of affects my practice and how the conversations might go.”

Therefore the interaction of the EP with the consultee can be seen to be of particular importance and critical to the consultation process. This relationship and the conversations that subsequently developed were identified as having a direct influence on the outcome of the consultation and as to whether the consultee would then make the necessary changes. One EP’s comments included: “I’m thinking about how I interact, if it’s difficult for them (consultation), then you are not going to get that change are you out of them?”

The questions used within COMOIRA were viewed by some EPs as being helpful to the change process. The question: ‘Have key people made the changes and have these helped’ was seen as a useful reflective tool that would encourage others to focus on changes that have been made (see Appendix O). COMOIRA was also considered to be a useful tool for reframing the problem which may then bring about change in itself “a different perspective, a different view might make a difference in their own behaviour regarding the situation.”

This angle of reflecting and reframing appears to be beneficial to the change process as it encourages the positive notion that changes can be made and enables problems to be viewed differently in terms of finding solutions based on what has been successful previously.
5.12.3.2 Accountability

Another important theme was related to accountability and the issue of whether using COMOIRA to evaluate EP practice would demonstrate to the LA that the EPS had made a difference through their consultations with others. COMOIRA was considered a useful tool in that it would allow EPs to demonstrate changes that had been made through their involvements. One respondent stated “COMOIRA shows this is the change that has happened…to demonstrate we have had a positive effect.”

Gathering evidence around this positive effect was seen to be crucial to the issue of accountability with the EPs discussing how to demonstrate the impact they make through consultation and how to identify what a reasonable outcome would look like. The issue of who EPs are accountable to and what they are accountable for indicated that this needed further clarification. Questions arose such as “accountable to the LA or to who we are working with?”

The explicit psychology within the model was seen as enhancing the accountability of the service as it would help to answer questions around “what psychologists do” and the differences EPs make through applying psychology. Respondents
commented “when we have got senior managers coming and saying “what is it that your service offers? We have a paper trial” and “I think that it might be a good way of capturing that we use psychology to make a difference.”

As well as providing a tool that captured the psychology used within consultation COMOIRA was also recognised as a model that could be applied across other areas of working to demonstrate accountability and provide evidence about what EPs do within other parts of their practice, for example, group consultation and training were mentioned. The difference in the approach of the EP, when compared to other professionals, was considered to be related to the “psychology behind the question” and COMOIRA was seen as a tool that could provide evidence for this explicitly. One EP’s comments reflected this “it might enhance our accountability because of the explicitly of the psychology. We don’t do that anywhere else.”

It is important to note that there were also some reservations about using this model to demonstrate accountability due to its subjectivity and how it would be interpreted by managers who were not psychologists. Consideration was given to the fact that managers may be looking for hard measures to demonstrate the difference EPs make e.g. “children’s learning measures”. If this was the case then some of the EPs did not see COMOIRA as the “right tool to do that”. One EP’s comments captured this “personally I don’t think that it’s the tool to do this on its own.”
A clear and important theme that emerged around the COMOIRA model was related to *applying psychology*. The *transparency* of the model and its clear link to the core of psychology provided a tool whereby the application of psychology was “clearly demonstrated for other people.” It appeared that the *transparency* the model provided was a particularly valuable function of COMOIRA as it made the psychology used within the consultation process explicit to the service users. One EP noted that “it’s a strong tool because it makes the psychology very clear.”

The *reflexive* and *reflective* nature of the tool was viewed very positively as it naturally lends itself to the evaluation process. Some of the respondents’ comments included “I liked it as a reflective, evaluative tool” and “as a reflective tool it’s got a lot about it.”

The reflexive element was seen as strength as it applied to the EP as well as the consultee. This encouraged the EP not only to reflect upon the practice of others but
also to consider their contribution to the consultation process. Therefore, the psychology was as applicable to the EPs’ practice as it was to the consultation process. One respondent stated “another strength is its reflexive in the sense that the psychology applied to us as much as it does to everyone else.”

The fact that the COMOIRA model was written for EPs by EPs was viewed as strength and appeared to give the model credibility. It was seen to fit with EP practice due to the fact that it “sits easily with social constructionism.” It was also considered to facilitate psychology through the conversations that evolved when implementing the model during the evaluation of the consultation. In this sense COMOIRA could be seen to promote the application of psychology to the evaluation process.

5.12.3.4 Future Implications

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5.5: Future Implications**

Under the theme of future implications it became apparent that further knowledge of COMOIRA was considered necessary for some EPs if the model was going to be taken forward and used for future evaluations. With this in mind, some EPs thought it would be beneficial to use COMOIRA during their consultations as “it must be a
lot easier if you are doing COMOIRA, to evaluate using COMOIRA.” Further suggestions included having a *trial with teachers* in order to gain and further the EPs’ knowledge around COMOIRA. Using the model in future consultations with teachers, rather than as a self-evaluation tool, was considered as one way forward. EP comments included “that could be a possible way forward to try it at the end of a consultation” and “I think you need to share it with the person you are working with.”

The aspect of needing *time and appropriate systems* raised a fundamental issue in terms of time constraints. Therefore, it would be important for managers to consider the *time* required for further piloting and reviewing of the model as this was considered to be crucial in order to take the model forward: “we need to build in some time and some systems to follow it through properly otherwise it’s not worth doing it.”

For one EP, the issue of *time* was related to the idea that COMOIRA was a “laborious” tool and that having to record what was already “internalised” was “another job to have to do”. This raises an issue with regard to how evaluation is implemented so it is not viewed as additional work that is unnecessary.

Some of the EPs believed that COMOIRA could only be used as an *evaluative tool* if this process was facilitated by an EP; otherwise the psychology behind the process of consultation would be lost. One EP’s comments captured this:

> we know there is a huge psychological theory that underpins that (consultation) and that’s what we are tapping into by asking these questions so if you are evaluating us, if someone without psychology is evaluating using those questions you are going to get a very different evaluation.

Therefore, the EPs’ involvement in the evaluation process would need further consideration as it was viewed as a necessity in terms of the capturing of the psychology used within the consultation process.
In relation to the future use of COMOIRA as an evaluative tool, some of the EPs felt there was scope for adapting the form to use with clients and this would be a useful next step. Suggestions included “part of the next step could be to adapt the form for use with clients” and “work needs to be done on it [the form] in order to make it fit for purpose.”

This raises some further implications for future consideration. It may be necessary to allow some time to ascertain whether the COMOIRA form encompasses all the aspects required for the evaluation of consultation or whether further adaption is necessary before it can be implemented with service users.

5.13 Data analysis outcome: AI

Themes identified from the transcripts of AI will now be detailed. Within the text the emergent themes are highlighted in bold italics and the subthemes are highlighted in normal text italics. The first thematic map (see Figure 5.6) details the themes that emerged in relation to the strengths and limitations of AI, its ability to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability and preferred ways forward. The subsequent thematic maps explore each individual theme and sub theme in detail.

![Thematic Map for AI](image)

Figure 5.6: Thematic Map for AI
5.13.1 Evaluation

The first theme related to evaluation provided a lot of rich data and yielded a number of sub-themes. The interpretation of the model for some EPs caused an element of confusion. This mainly related to the way it was being used for evaluative purposes. One EP was unsure whether they were reflecting upon “my dream or their dream?” The language of the 4Ds (see Section 3.3.8) was cited by another EP as “strange” and they were unclear about the dream question. Interestingly a lack of knowledge of the model appeared to be a factor in this confusion as the same EP commented that they knew very little about the model of AI. However, this highlights the need for further training if the AI model is to be used in future EPS evaluation.

Figure 5.7: Evaluation
One sub-theme of particular interest was related to the evaluation of change and how this can be captured by an evaluation tool, with one respondent asking “what does change look like and how do we capture it?”

This sub-theme raised the issue of how to assess the difference EPs make and this was recognised as a particular area of difficulty. It was acknowledged that from an interactionist perspective EPs are working with others to create change so there has to be a willingness from the other person to “want to change.” This highlights the ongoing challenge that faces the EP profession who are often working through others to bring about change and are, therefore, dependent upon others to implement the necessary changes. This led onto the issue of demonstrating accountability and the question: How does AI help EPs to demonstrate that what they do makes a difference? Interestingly, AI was seen as a tool that would enable EPs to “improve their practice” in the future and “create positive change” in their role.

A strong sub-theme to emerge under evaluation was related to future implications. AI was viewed by many of the EPs as having the potential to develop further and, as a model, to cater for the differing styles of the EPs across the two teams. EP comments included, “As a team of differing EPs who bring different theoretical frameworks to the game I feel AI allows everyone to fit in” and “if we are looking at which to move forward as an evaluative tool I would want to invest time in AI as it has more potential as a tool.”

In order to explore how AI could be developed in the future for evaluative purposes the EPs felt that it would require further use and “experimentation”. One EP suggested a professional development session with worked examples so the framework could be developed. Another EP felt it would be helpful to “populate it with extra questions” which would help to “generate outcomes”. Some of the EPs believed that the model would be best placed as part of an evaluative package. With one EP suggesting that “it would need to be part of a bigger picture.” Another EP thought that “it would work best as part of an evaluative package.”

This raises an important implication for the EPSs in relation to the allocation of time to develop this model either as part of a package or for further piloting and reviewing.
of the model for future evaluation purposes. Interestingly, certain EPs did not think that the AI model required any further work and thought that it already fitted well with the process of consultation. The same EPs felt that it had the potential on its own to capture what EPs do through consultation. The framework was seen as complementing “the process we often go through.” This was captured by one EPs comments:

(the framework looks at) what is happening now that needs to stick around or change, what it might look like, how you are going to get to that, what you are going to put in place for it to be successful.

These contrasting opinions suggest that it may be beneficial to have further discussions between the two EPSs to explore these views in more detail as these views could potentially impact on the effectiveness of the future implementation of AI if it was to be selected as an evaluative tool.

5.13.2 Strengths

![Figure 5.8: Strengths](image-url)
The subordinate theme **strengths** also produced a number of sub-themes. AI was seen as a tool that captures the complexity of consultation despite its simplicity. Due to its “fluid”, “broad” nature it was seen as “open to wider interpretation” which was thought to create a richer picture. The **structure** of AI was seen as encouraging **creativity** as that there are no “right or wrong” answers. It appeared that this open structure appealed to the EPs due to its inclusive nature which allowed the integration of individual ways of working and, therefore, did not restrict EP practice or force the EPs into a specific way of working. Interestingly AI is a familiar model to many of the EPs due to recent training and is used by some within their practice. It may be the familiarity of the model that instilled such confidence in the model as many of the EPs were confident in the application of AI approaches within their working practices.

The **positive psychology** used within the model and the **solution focused** element was considered to be strength of the approach and matched with the belief systems of the EPs. This was reflected in one of the EPs’ comments “there is a lot of positive psychology, which I use a lot of anyway.”

Many of the EPs liked the emphasis on “thinking what went well”. This was seen to be an important factor for encouraging change. Solution-focused theory is very much part of consultation so AI can be seen to complement this process (Wagner, 1995). The language of the 4 Ds was considered to facilitate the evaluation of consultation and facilitate a positive rather than “problem saturated” discovery pattern. The emphasis on **reframing** enabled the EPs to have conversations that led to a shift in the thinking of others rather than focusing on the problems. This could be seen to focus the thinking on the positive differences that could be made rather than ruminating over the negative issues. One respondent stated that “it makes them think that a difference (positive) can be made.”

Interestingly, this led to AI being viewed as an **empowering** model, something that could be used to “empower others within their own practice”. The positive, **solution focused** psychology used within the model was considered to have the ability to encourage others to look at “something in a way that enables them to make a positive change” and this was considered to be very **empowering**. This is an
important finding when considering this issues that relate to EPs working through others to try and bring about positive change.

5.13.3 Limitations

![Limitations Diagram]

It is important to note that some of the perceived strengths of AI were seen as limitations by two of the EPs. In these instances, the framework was considered too simple to capture the complexity of the problems that are presented to EPs. The looseness of the model was seen as contributing to its simplicity and one of the EPs said that they would benefit from a more structured model. Two EPs reflected on the visionary nature of the model and their comments reflected that it was too visionary and “so far removed from reality”. One of the EPs stated “it’s all very rose tinted glasses.”

Having a vision that was too far removed from reality was thought to be “dispiriting as it would never be achieved”. Another limitation was related to the fact that AI does not “acknowledge people’s difficulties” or recognise concerns and one EP considered this to be a fundamental missing element of this framework: “you have to acknowledge people’s concerns somewhere.”
It may be important to explore these concerns further in order to move forward with the AI model. It could be that adapting the form to incorporate an element that recognises the concerns of the service users would help to allay some of these perceived problems with AI. A further suggestion could be that additional training or peer discussion may alleviate some of the EPs’ concerns.

5.14 RADIO Stage 10: action planning
The researcher originally intended to complete Stage 10 as part of the research process. Following the data analysis of the final focus groups, the researcher provided feedback to the PEP and SEP. It was originally proposed that, at this meeting, a decision would be made around the professional practice frameworks and the potential of the models as a future service evaluation tool. However, due to the competing demands placed particularly upon the PEP and organisational factors affecting the EPSs within the LAs during the final stages of this research, Stage 10 was not completed. It is crucial that Stage 10 is concluded in terms of moving the research forward as this stage is needed to inform Stage 11: Implementing Action and Stage 12: Evaluating Action (see section 4.13.1). In the researcher’s opinion an important next step would be to consider whether the services are going to implement one of the models. The findings suggest that the data are not conclusive and indicated that some of the EPs had a preference towards COMOIRA and some towards AI. Therefore, the researcher would recommend further piloting and data gathering around the individual models. Additionally, further consideration could be given as to whether the EPSs look at using more than one model or design a bespoke evaluation tool based on these future research findings.

5.15 RADIO Stage 11 and Stage 12: implementing action and evaluating action
The researcher was aware at the start of the research that, due to time constraints, Stages 11 and 12 of the RADIO framework would not be completed within the time scale of this piece of research. These stages are due to be completed outside the parameters of this study.

The next section of the research (Chapter Six) will consider how the results relate to the research questions and literature.
Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction
This study aimed to explore the most effective professional practice frameworks that would assist a group of EPs’, across two EPSs, to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA. Chapter Six considers the research findings and how these relate to the research questions, with reference to the existing literature. RQ1a is addressed first and then RQ1b is considered. The future implications arising from the research are then considered. Following this the personal reflections of the researcher will be discussed, followed by the theoretical contribution of this piece of research and the limitations of the study. Finally, the wider implications of the study are explored. The future research directions are outlined within Chapter Seven: Conclusion.

The study aimed to address the following research question:

RQ1: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to:
   1a) Assessing consultation as a process?
   1b) Providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users?

An AR design was used to explore the research questions and this was conducted using the RADIO framework (Timmins et al., 2003). Ten EPs from two EPSs participated within the research alongside the PEP for both services and an SEP from one of the services. The research was conducted as outlined within Table 4.1. It is important to note that the data considered in this section are gathered from the final phases of the project. Due to the AR design of the study the data gathered during the earlier phases of the research was used to inform the next steps during Stages 1-7 of research process (see Sections 5.2-5.6). The information collected during the final phase (Stage 9) of the research is the focus for this section of the study (see Sections 5.11-5.14).
6.2 RQ 1a and 1b

As outlined, the results for RQ1a and RQ1b derived mainly from the data generated from the final focus groups. Alongside this, the data from the post-pilot questionnaires was also consulted to support the validity of the focus group data (see Sections 5.9-5.10). The final focus group questions generated a number of themes that fit with the research questions and some themes that did not fit with the research questions but had pertinent issues in relation to future implications. The themes generated are presented in Table 6.1 and linked to RQ1a, 1b and also to the future implications (see Section 6.5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Practice Model</th>
<th>Main Themes</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<td>Reflective and reflexive</td>
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</table>
6.3 RQ1a: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to assessing consultation as a process

As previously outlined, the results for RQ1a predominantly derived from the final focus groups. The data from the post-pilot questionnaires were also consulted to support the validity of the focus group data. The data analysis feedback meeting outlined in Section 5.8 selected COMOIRA and AI as the models that would be looked at specifically within this study. Following the piloting of each model, the EPs considered what they thought about the models of COMOIRA and AI in relation to the evaluation of individual teacher consultations. It was not within the scope of the thesis to discuss each theme that was generated in detail; rather this section will focus specifically on the themes that appeared to have the most significance for the service. In terms of COMOIRA, the themes: applying psychology and change were the most significant. In terms of AI the theme: strengths was the most significant. In addition, a number of AI sub themes were linked to RQ1a and the main themes resulting from COMOIRA. Therefore, the themes applying psychology, strengths and change were identified as being most pertinent following a process where the researcher and fellow doctoral colleagues considered the dataset and selected the information most relevant to the service. These themes were shared with stakeholders. Table 6.3 below outlines the themes and links them with the dataset.
Table 6.2: RQ1a - Links to the dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>COMOIRA Theme</th>
<th>COMOIRA Sub-theme</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>AI Theme</th>
<th>AI Sub-theme</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Change</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Reframing Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Captures complexity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Limitations</td>
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<td>5.13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Too visionary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6.3.1 COMOIRA: Applying psychology

When considering whether the COMOIRA model was able to assess consultation as a process, one theme of particular interest was that of applying psychology (see Section 5.12.3.3).

The EPs considered that one of the ways that COMOIRA lends itself to the assessment of consultation as a process is in relation to the transparency of psychology provided through its psychological core (Gameson et al., 2003). The transparency of the COMOIRA model was seen by many of the EPs as making the psychology of EP practice more explicit and, therefore, demonstrable to other
people. Furthermore, it was seen as facilitating psychology through the conversations that evolved whilst implementing the model. This was considered to promote the application of psychology to the evaluation process. Therefore, it could be suggested that this emphasis focused the evaluation of the consultation explicitly on the psychology that had been used within the consultation. This research suggests that, COMOIRA could potentially provide a tool whereby the psychological knowledge of the EP could be utilised to shape the evaluation of the consultation; and enable the EP to effectively communicate the psychological principles behind the consultation process.

The fact that it was written by EPs for EPs was considered to be strength of COMOIRA and this was seen to give the model credibility. There was a common belief amongst the EPs that the reflexive element of COMOIRA was a particularly useful tool (see Section 5.12.3.3). The reflexive questions were considered to provide opportunities for EPs to reflect upon their own practice and to instigate them to look at ways to develop their practice in the future. This is in line with Kelly et al.’s research (2008) that discusses how COMOIRA encourages EPs to use psychology explicitly in order to guide their practice. Another one of the key aspects of the COMOIRA model is its emphasis on reflection and the application of reflective psychology (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2010). In this study, these elements encouraged the EPs to reflect upon their own practice within the consultation, so from an evaluation viewpoint it was seen to be as relevant for the EP as the consultee. Some of the EPs considered how using COMOIRA as an evaluative tool had helped them to be clearer around constructing hypotheses, due to the focus on reflection, and this then guided thinking around future consultations.

6.3.2 Appreciative Inquiry: Strengths

When considering whether the AI model was able to assess consultation as a process one theme of particular interest was related to the strengths of the model (see Section 5.13.2). Within AI, the positive psychology which is central to the model was considered to be a particular strength, cited as being complimentary to EP practice and as fitting with the belief systems of many of the EPs. Additionally, the solution focused element that it offered was seen to fit with the psychological approaches used during consultation sessions. Despite its simple structure, AI was seen as
encouraging creativity which appeared to allow the EPs the flexibility to integrate their own ways of working as psychologists when assessing the consultations and it was not seen as restricting individual practice.

The research of Wimbush and Watson (2000) considered one possible way to formalise high quality evaluation was to integrate it through the implementation of transparent practice frameworks. However, it was considered to be essential that such a framework would encapsulate the complexity of the EP role. The systematic literature review that was conducted as part of the research (see Section 5.5.1) ensured that the selected models would complement the process of consultation but it was uncertain whether they could capture and evaluate the complexity of the consultation process. The findings from this research demonstrate that, interestingly, for some EPs, AI was seen as a tool that was able to capture the complexity of consultation due to its ‘broad’ nature (see Section 5.13.2). Some of the EPs reported that, it’s open simple structure was one of the strengths of AI. The fluid, broad nature of the model was seen as being open to interpretation and thus creating a richer picture. This is a valuable insight when considering AI in relation to the assessment of consultation as a process, as it would suggest that, as an evaluative tool, AI has the potential to capture the complexity of the consultation process and the psychology applied within the consultation. However, it is important to note that the simplicity and looseness of AI was considered by two EPs to be a limitation and AI would benefit from a more structured approach when applying it to the assessment of consultation.

6.3.3 Application of psychology within the assessment of consultation

The findings from the themes COMOIRA: applying psychology and AI: strengths suggest that using such frameworks within the assessment of consultation as a process may contribute towards the recommendations for EPs to communicate their psychological knowledge (BPS, 2007). The application of psychology is seen to be a fundamental part of the EP role as highlighted in the reviews on the role of the EP (DfEE, 2000; Farrell et al., 2006; Scottish Executive, 2002). Indeed, such reviews called for a more sound use of psychological knowledge across the variety of contexts in which EPs work (Farrell et al., 2006) and for the ‘conceptualisation’ of the role as that of ‘scientist-practitioner’ (Fallon et al., 2010; Lane & Corrie, 2006). It
could be suggested from these findings that professional practice frameworks may potentially provide a resource that links the application of psychology to the evaluation of consultation (Frederickson & Miller, 2008; Gameson et al., 2003). As such, implementing such models for evaluative purposes may offer one way for EPs to demonstrate that their professional practice is informed by psychological theories (Gameson et al., 2003).

6.3.4. Change
Another interesting theme that emerged from the COMOIRA data with regard to assessing consultation as a process was in relation to change. The issue of change also occurred as a subtheme across two of the main themes within the AI dataset: evaluation and strengths. Therefore, the data across both the COMOIRA and AI models relating to change and the assessment of consultation as a process will be presented in the following section.

The majority of the EPs identified the issue of change as one that produces a significant challenge for EPs, particularly in terms of how to capture and measure the changes that occur during and following consultation. This supports the research of Pilgrim (2007) which found that working consultatively leaves EPs with the challenge of defining outcomes that are measurable and can show a positive impact. The issue of how to measure the impact of EPs has been greatly debated within the literature (Cherry, 1998; Dowling & Leibowitz, 1994; Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Sharp et al., 2010; Turner, 2010) particularly in relation to the complexity around what is measurable and whether what is measured correlates with the actual outcomes and whether these can be linked to the EPs’ contribution in the process (Cherry, 1998; HEPS, 2010; Sharp et al., 2000; Turner et al., 2010).

The questions used within COMOIRA were seen by some EPs as being helpful to the change process because they encouraged the focus to be specifically on the changes that had occurred from the consultation. Therefore, COMOIRA could potentially enable EPs to demonstrate the changes that they had made as a result of their consultations via the process of reframing the problem (see Section 5.12.3.1). Gameson and Rhydderch (2010) encourage the adaptation of the formal language of the model and provide examples of how the language of the model could be adapted
(Appendix O). These suggested adaptations were used by some of the EPs in the study and the focus of the questions within this framework, for example: ‘Have key people made the changes and have these helped?’ were considered to be helpful and seen to encourage others to focus on the changes that had been made. This appeared to be related to the fact that COMOIRA facilitates the reframing of the problem which can then lead to constructive changes occurring. Furthermore, the specific emphasis of the questions around the change process meant that during the evaluation of the consultation there was a focus on what changes had happened and what had facilitated this course of change. This is in line with the research of Gameson et al. (2003) and Gameson and Rhyderrch (2010) which highlights how COMOIRA focuses on promoting, monitoring and evaluating change. Therefore, this angle of using reflection could be interpreted as being beneficial to the change process as it encourages the notion that changes can be made and it enables problems to be viewed differently.

With AI, the positive emphasis on thinking about what went well during the consultation was seen as strength and an important factor for facilitating the change process. The positive psychology used within the model through the language of the 4 D’s was considered to be a strength and encouraged a positive rather than problem saturated discovery pattern. This solution focused emphasis is very much part of consultation so AI can be seen to complement this process (Wagner, 1995). Again, as with COMOIRA, the emphasis within the AI model on reframing was considered to be a strength and something that would enable the EPs to have conversations that led to a shift in the thinking of others. Consequently, it was seen that this would allow the consultee to believe that positive changes could be made. This element of AI was considered to be empowering and something that could be used to “empower others within their own practice” (see Section 5.13.2). Interestingly, for some of the EPs the positive emphasis of AI was viewed as a limitation and seen as too visionary (Section 5.13.3). The fact that it was considered to be so far removed from reality was thought to be dispiriting for the consultee as it was offering something that was unachievable. The exclusion of the recognition of the consultee’s concerns was considered by some EPs to be a fundamental missing element of this framework.
Within this research the issue of barriers to change, raised within the COMOIRA focus groups, offered an insight into the factors that can be instrumental where no subsequent changes occur following a consultation. This further contributes to the difficulties associated with assessing the impact of the EP during consultation. The EPs considered how one specific complication when evaluating consultation is that it is often the consultee rather than the EP who implements the recommendations made which leaves EPSs with the challenge of demonstrating what difference they have made. The issue of how to measure the impact for a client group with whom EPs do not work directly with has been greatly debated within previous literature (Cherry, 1998; Dowling and Leibowitz, 1994; Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Sharp et al., 2000; Turner et al., 2010). The issue of barriers to change was considered to have a direct impact on the consultation process and as to whether the EP could contribute positively to this.

Within the AI dataset for evaluation (see Section 5.13.1) it was acknowledged that from an interactionist perspective EPs are working with others to create change so there has to be a willingness from the other person to want to change. The readiness of the consultee to make the necessary changes was perceived as having a direct influence upon the success of consultations themselves. This finding is particularly pertinent when considering how to assess consultation as a process and highlights the relevance of the literature around individual reactions to the change process. Bovey and Hede (2001) conducted a piece of organisational research in Australia in nine organisations undergoing major change. Despite a number of limitations in relation to the methodology used the findings are interesting. They highlight how certain individuals react to the change process and the defence mechanisms that can be triggered when individuals are faced with change, for example, resistance. When considering this piece of research in relation to EP practice, it demonstrates how important it is for EPs to understand the human factors linked with reluctance to change and how these can impact on the success of the consultation process.

In addition, when considering the willingness of the consultee to engage in the consultation process, the interaction of the EP with the consultee was seen to have a direct influence on the outcome of the consultation and as to whether the consultee would go on to make the necessary changes. This finding within the COMOIRA
dataset (see Section 5.12.3.1), was of particular interest as it appeared that a particularly important function of any future evaluative framework is that it should emphasise reflexive thinking and develop this within EP evaluation. This encourages the EPs to consider their role in the change process and supports the findings of Gameson et al. (2003) that is not acceptable to attribute the lack of change to the service user, without considering the EP’s part in the process. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for the service user and practitioner to monitor and evaluate changes in relation to their co-constructed questions and change issues. Gameson and Rhydderch (2008) consider how one of the eight key decision points within the COMOIRA model: Construct and Explore Relevant Hypotheses, could potentially enable EPs and service users to explore together the implications of their potentially competing hypotheses which may be an inhibitor of the change process and present difficulties within the collaborative working process. This is particularly relevant when considering these findings and suggests that COMOIRA could potentially provide a tool for the EPs in the two LAs to begin to address this particular aspect of the barriers to change.

A further element associated with change, within the COMOIRA dataset, was in relation to who is in control of the change (see Section 5.12.3.1) and how far is the consultee able to make changes within the constraints of the systems they are in. Consideration was given as to whether some of the consultees were part of a system where they did not have the power to create change and, therefore, whether the EP was consulting with the right person. The findings of this research suggest that the use of professional practice models as an evaluation tool within EP practice could potentially help with these change issues specifically if they were implemented as an evaluative tool in collaboration with the consultee. The frameworks could be implemented as a tool to examine whether changes had been made following the consultation and, if not, explore the reasons for this. In addition, these findings highlight how important it is for the EP to try and develop an understanding of the organisations in which they work, as the organisational culture often determines how receptive the organisation (school) will be to the suggested intervention (Bryan, Klein & Elias, 2007). If EPs can begin to understand the contextual factors of the organisation, for example, the common beliefs and attitudes, they can begin to explore and evaluate how certain schools may react to the recommendations.
generated from consultations that are related to organisational change factors (Bryan et al., 2007; Schein, 1998) and how this then impacts upon the staff members within the school. Therefore, it seems important for EPs to try and develop an understanding of the impact that organisational culture can place upon the members of staff with whom they work (Bryan et al., 2007). This insight would be an important element in the evaluation process.

6.4 RQ1b: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users
The results for RQ1b again predominantly derived from the final focus groups. The data from the post-pilot questionnaires were also consulted to support the validity of the focus group data. Following the piloting of COMOIRA and AI, the EPs considered what they thought about the models in relation to the evaluation of individual consultations and their ability to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users. As with RQ1a, it was not within the scope of the thesis to discuss each theme that was generated in detail; rather this section will focus specifically on the themes that appeared to have the most significance for the service. The themes: accountability and evaluation were observed as the most noteworthy due to their overarching quality. These themes were identified as being most pertinent for the service following a process where the researcher and fellow doctoral colleagues considered the dataset and selected the most relevant information. Table 6.4 below outlines the themes and links them with the dataset.
Table 6.3: RQ1b - Links to the dataset

| RQ1b: What are the EPs’ views on the most effective models of evaluating consultation in relation to providing outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| **Theme** | **COMOIRA Theme** | **COMOIRA Sub-theme** | **Section** | **AI Theme** | **AI Sub-theme** | **Section** |
| Accountability | Accountability | Explicit psychology | 5.12.3.2 | Evaluation | Demonstrating accountability | 5.13.1- |
| | | Evidence | | | | |
| | | Demonstrate changes | | | | |
| | | Reservation | | | | |
| Evaluation | Future Implications | Use as an evaluative tool | 5.12.3.4 | Evaluation | Interpretation | 5.13.1 |

6.4.1 COMOIRA: Accountability

When considering whether the COMOIRA model was able to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users, one theme of particular interest was that of accountability (Section 5.12.3.2). Up until relatively recently, EPSs within the UK had been protected from market pressures due to their statutory role (Pugh, 2010). However, in the past few years there has been a clearer focus on offering value for money within public services and the outcomes of EPs work has come under scrutiny with increased accountability to stakeholders (Fallon et al., 2010). In recent years contextual pressures have arisen within the EPSs where this study was conducted and questions asked around whether other agencies can do the job of an EP (Cameron, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006). This created the impetus from the PEP for this piece of research to look for ways to provide outcomes that demonstrate accountability to employers and service users.

Interestingly, within this study COMOIRA was viewed by some EPs as a model that could potentially provide an evaluative tool that would enhance the accountability of the service, through the explicit psychology present within the model (see Section 5.12.3.2). The explicit psychology was seen as enhancing the accountability of the service to employers and service users as it would help to answer questions around ‘what psychologists do’ and ‘the differences EPs make’. COMOIRA was seen to be
a good way of capturing the psychology that EPs use and as providing a tool that would enable EPs to demonstrate the changes and positive effects that had been made through their involvements. These findings indicate that, as an evaluative tool, COMOIRA could potentially provide clear and explicit evidence of the psychology used within consultation, through the application of the core psychological principles of: social constructionism, systemic thinking, enabling dialogue and informed reasoned action. It was also suggested that it could possibly offer a paper trail for managers to present as evidence to senior managers about the distinctive contribution of the EPSs. Furthermore, the conversations that evolved when implementing COMOIRA as an evaluative tool demonstrated that many of the EPs believed that it could be applied at a number of different levels, not just during consultations with teachers. Therefore, these findings suggest that COMOIRA may have the potential, as an evaluative tool, to demonstrate accountability and provide evidence about what EPs do within other parts of their practice, for example, group consultation (see Section 5.12.3.2).

However, it is important to note that not all of the EPs were in agreement with the ability of COMOIRA to demonstrate accountability and one of the EPs felt that COMOIRA, as a tool on its own, was unable to do this (see Section 5.12.3.2). A further reservation levied at COMOIRA in relation to its ability to demonstrate accountability was with regard to its subjectivity and how it would be interpreted by managers who were not psychologists. It was recognised that that managers may be looking for hard measures to demonstrate the difference EPs make and, in view of this, some of the EPs felt that COMOIRA was not the right tool to do this. Taking this into account, a possible suggested way forward may be to continue to pilot the models for a period of time to collect further data within this area. Equally, discussions could be had with stakeholders to emphasise the importance of looking beyond easily measurable outcomes which are not necessarily robust enough to capture the complexity of the consultation process. This is in line with the findings of Turner et al. (2010) that emphasise how such information does not shed enough light on the input and effectiveness of an EP.
6.4.2 Appreciative Inquiry: Evaluation
In relation to AI the issue of demonstrating accountability was a sub-theme within evaluation (see Section 5.13.1). AI was seen by the EPs as a tool that would enable EPs to “improve their practice” and “create positive change”. This point was not elaborated upon, but it appeared that the positive psychology in the AI model encouraged the reframing of problems and focused thinking around what could be done differently to improve practice to bring about positive change. Such evidence could then be provided as evidence to demonstrate accountability to services users and employers.

6.4.3 Demonstrating accountability
As Norwich (2000) purports, the challenge that EPs have faced over the years of adapting theory to practice and the gap between theory and practice is one of the reasons put forward within the literature for the lack of clarity around the role of the EP. Indeed, the two EPSs involved in this research are currently trying to provide evidence around their unique role and their distinctive contribution for employers. These findings indicate that the models of COMOIRA and AI could be seen to potentially offer a way for the EPs to bridge the link between theory and practice and may conceivably be a way of to provide clarity around the EP role to employers and service users. This is in line with the work of Kelly et al. (2008), which argues that practice frameworks are an essential resource for the EP profession as they provide a means of addressing the challenge that EPs face with regard to clarifying the complex relationship between theory and practice and enable the integration and cohesion of complex theoretical perspectives with equally complex practice methodology. Therefore, the models of COMOIRA and AI could provide a potential way of helping to provide answers and evidence to employers and service users around what psychologists do in comparison to other professionals (Kelly et al., 2006; Wicks, 2013) and, as identified within previous research, secure the centrality of psychology and the distinctiveness of the EPs’ contribution (Fallon et al., 2010; Frederickson & Miller, 2008; Gameson et al., 2005; Leadbetter, 2005; Kelly et al., 2008). Furthermore, the implementation of professional practice models to evaluate what EPs do would offer a further way to meet one of the central functions of educational psychology which is to “communicate psychological knowledge” (BPS, 2007, p.5).
6.4.4 Evaluation

Evaluation was a theme that emerged from the AI data and it generated a great deal of discussion around the ability of the model to evaluate change which is explored in detail within Section 6.3.4; and the future implications of the model which is discussed in Section 6.5. However, in relation to RQ1b and the ability of AI to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability to employers and service users it is important to highlight the concerns of some of the EPs around the AI model in relation to evaluation (Section 5.13.1). For some EPs, the interpretation of the AI framework was considered to be confusing in relation to the way it was being used for evaluative purposes. Interestingly, a lack of knowledge of the model appeared to be a contributing factor as the same EPs commented that they knew very little about the model. This issues arising from this are explored within the future implications section (Section 6.5).

Within the COMOIRA dataset evaluation was a sub-theme within the future implications theme (Section 5.12.3.4). In relation to evaluation process itself, the EPs’ involvement in the process was seen to be pivotal in order for the psychology not to be lost. Indeed, both the AI and COMOIRA models are theoretically complex and, therefore, it would seem advisable for an EP to be part of the evaluation to make it accessible to the consultee. The EP would need to facilitate the evaluation procedure in relation to: the translating of the psychology behind the model, guiding the process of self-reflection and the decision making around future direction. Without this, the ability of the models to demonstrate accountability could be lost. Some of the EPs suggested that the evaluation of the consultation should be a collaborative process undertaken alongside the consultee following the meeting. This is in line with the research of Kelly et al. (2008) that the review and evaluation of consultation is key aspect of individual consultations and should take place at each distinct consultation meeting with the aim of reviewing and evaluating the meeting. As highlighted by the work of Gameson and Rhydderch (2010), one of the distinctive features of COMOIRA is a commitment to embedding on-going evaluation throughout the EPs’ work with service users. Implementing this finding would enable the EPSs to generate outcomes at every consultation which would then demonstrate accountability for service users. This information could then be collated
across the two EPSs and presented to stakeholders. Therefore, these findings are potentially significant for the EPSs within this study who are under increased scrutiny due to the current political and economic climate with stakeholders making decisions about the future of services based on reduced budgets (Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2006). Furthermore, using the models as collaborative evaluative tools, alongside service users, would enable EPs to find out whether what they were delivering was meeting the needs of the service users. This is a useful consideration as previous literature has highlighted the disparities between what EPs want to deliver and what schools want (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Mackay, 2002). Therefore, these models can be seen to potentially provide a way for EPs to: constantly reflect upon their own practice, consider how this can be improved and as a tool that facilitates them to meet the needs of their client group.

The theme of evaluation generated a number of issues which need further consideration by service managers. Conducting further trails in collaboration with the consultee was offered as a way to develop the COMOIRA model in the future and seen as an important aspect to furthering EP knowledge of the model and its role in the evaluation of consultation. Therefore, it may be necessary for further research to be conducted using the models collaboratively with service users, in order to consider fully their potential as frameworks which can demonstrate accountability to employers and service users. In addition, further training across the EPSs may be required. These issues are explored further within Section 6.5.

However, these initial findings are interesting and it may be that, following further research, these professional practice frameworks may have the potential to formalise the evaluation of individual consultations and they could potentially provide a way that EPs can demonstrate evidence about their performance and the results they produce (Farrell et al., 2006).

### 6.5 Future Implications

The final focus group data generated a number of themes that had pertinent issues in relation to future implications (see Table 6.4 below). The issues arising from the future implications dataset will now be considered.
When considering future implications it appeared that a deeper understanding of the models was required by certain EPs in order for them to be adopted as an evaluative tool. Within the AI theme of evaluation, the interpretation of the language of AI caused an element of confusion for some EPs which mainly related to the way it was being used for evaluative purposes (Section 5.13.1). Interestingly, a lack of knowledge of the model appeared to be one of the factors behind this confusion as the same EPs commented that they knew very little about the model of AI. In relation to the COMOIRA model some of the EPs considered that further knowledge of the model was required in order for them to use it in the future for evaluative purposes (see Section 5.12.3.4). For some of the EPs, the idea of using COMOIRA as a framework during consultation was considered as something that would be beneficial for professional development purposes and to enhance their knowledge of the model (see Section 5.12.3.4). Therefore, it is apparent that further training implications exist if either model is to be implemented in the future. This training may benefit from strategic planning and consideration would need to be given to follow up sessions and supervision.

With both frameworks some adaptations to the models were considered necessary by some EPs in order to move them forward and to make them fit for purpose. For COMOIRA, some of the EPs thought that there was scope in adapting the form to use with clients and this would be a useful next step within the evaluation process (see Section 5.12.3.4). This reflects the suggestions made by Gameson and

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### Table 6.4: Future implications

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<th>Section</th>
<th>AI Theme</th>
<th>AI Sub-theme</th>
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<td>Evidence</td>
<td>5.12.3.2</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>5.13.2</td>
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Rhydderch (2010) for applied psychologists to adapt and personalise the COMOIRA model for use in their local context. For AI one recommendation was to “populate it with extra questions” (Section 5.13.1) which could possibly help to generate more measurable quantitative outcomes. It was suggested that one possible way forward would be to set up professional development sessions and look through worked examples so the frameworks could be developed. A further suggestion for AI was that it would be best placed as part of an evaluative package which would help to build up a richer evaluative tool (Section 5.13.1). Additionally, with both frameworks, some of the EPs felt that they would require further piloting and experimentation in order to consider thoroughly their future scope for evaluation.

The demands of time were illuminated throughout the discussions. The potential investment of time and appropriate systems (see Section 5.12.3.4) for further training and piloting of the models could be viewed as a potential barrier for the development of any future evaluation tool. The dissonance between what training is required and how this could be managed within current time and financial restraints is a concern in terms of moving both of the models forward. Furthermore, the recent competing demands and priorities of the EPSs are a concern. These competing demands have heightened due to financial pressures placed upon the EPSs with a view to transition into traded services; however, this also adds weight to the rationale for the development of a service evaluation model of consultation.

When considering the future potential of COMOIRA and AI as evaluative tools, the findings from this research suggested that both models could be applied across a number of different levels of EP practice. For COMOIRA, group consultation was highlighted which indicates that COMOIRA could possibly be adopted not just for individual teacher consultations but to evaluate consultation on a wider level which is aimed at the level of the individual, group or organisation as discussed in Section 2.6.2 (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Wagner, 1995). Training was another area identified as a specific area of work that COMOIRA could be used to evaluate. The fact that AI was open to such wide interpretation and had a natural structure which encouraged creativity (see Section 5.13.2), could be perceived as providing it with the potential to be implemented across a range of EP practice. Interestingly, this finding indicates that the models could possibly be used as an evaluative tool within other areas EPs
work to define and showcase the range of skills beyond consultation to employers and service users.

6.6 Personal reflections
6.6.1 Action Research model

The close and collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants was an important aspect of this piece of research, however, AR can be criticised for this relationship and the effect it can have upon the research process. The researcher tried to ensure that she remained reflective and considered the impact she potentially brought to the research process. Fortunately, during the study, no challenges arose within the group of EPs in relation to the research which can be an issue within AR (Kidd & Kral, 2005). During the piloting phase of the frameworks, some EPs used the frameworks for fewer consultations than was originally requested. This introduced a challenge to the research procedure, however, it was hoped that by incorporating a multi-methods approach offered validity to the data. The data generated from the focus groups were triangulated against the questionnaire data which looked to increase the likelihood of the reliability of the findings.

When reflecting upon the choice of the AR design for this piece of research, the researcher considered that it proved to be a valuable methodology. The collaborative approach created opportunities for joint decision making and contributed towards a shared vision for the development of a future evaluation framework within the EPSs. Furthermore, the RADIO structure provided a framework whereby stakeholders were involved in the research process. Its emphasis on collaboration promoted a less manager-directed approach to service evaluation and enabled the EPs to play a part in service development issues. This is in line with the findings of (Timmins et al., 2003). RADIO proved useful in facilitating communication between all those involved in the process through the provision of its clear research structure. It proved valuable in identifying the needs of the EPS, through Stages 1-4 of the process, and it provided a framework whereby the researcher and stakeholders regularly came together to reflect upon the outcomes of the various stages of the research and use these to inform the next steps. As with the findings of Timmins et al. (2003), RADIO provided a valuable framework for negotiation and addressed the need for a dynamic
research process that was able to respond to the range of perspectives within the EPSs.

In terms of personal reflection in relation to the researchers’ own practice, this piece of AR has offered the researcher an insight into how organisational theory could prove to be a valuable area for future professional development. It has demonstrated to the researcher how important it is to try and develop an understanding of the school organisations in which EPs work and the impact of that organisational culture upon the members of staff with whom EPs work (Bryan et al., 2007). It seems that this understanding is a key element when evaluating the changes that occur through consultation (Bryan et al., 2007; Schein, 1996).

6.6.2 Future implementation

In terms of the RADIO model, Stages 10-12 were not addressed. This was a result of the time scale of the research project and due to the competing demands placed upon the EPSs. This is discussed further in section 6.8.3. As this was a piece of AR, the researcher has not made any decisions around the potential future model that should be taken forward as a service evaluation tool but, instead, will offer some personal reflections. In the researcher’s opinion the findings from this study have identified some interesting implications (see Section 6.9) and highlighted some important issues for the EPSs to consider. In addition, it has also illustrated that further research needs to be done within this area.

One particularly interesting observation when the EPs were asked to consider the future implementation of both models as evaluative tools was that there was a divided opinion between the EPs. AI was viewed by some of the EPs as having the most potential to develop further as it was seen to cater for the differing styles of the EPs across the two teams. When thinking of ways forward, these EPs wanted to invest time in AI as an evaluative tool. However, two EPs believed AI to be too simple to capture the complexity of consultation and commented on its visionary nature being too far removed from reality (see Section 5.13.3). COMOIRA was viewed by some EPs as a useful tool for evaluation due to the reflective element and its ability to capture the psychology used within the consultation. These EPs thought
that COMOIRA would provide a way to capture the psychology that EPs use to make a difference.

When considering the future implementation of these models; for the COMOIRA model, several suggestions were generated by the EPs in relation to steps that would need to be put in place prior to future implementation. Further knowledge of the model was a requirement for some EPs and others thought a trialling of the model would be beneficial. Another suggestion included sharing the model with the consultee and trialling it at the end of individual consultations. The issue of the investment of time came up for both models but was emphasised more clearly for the COMOIRA framework. The idea of building in time and systems to prioritise this area was considered necessary.

When considering the future implementation of the models the researcher would recommend to stakeholders that both EPSs have further training around the two models. This could include peer training as the data from the audit of previous knowledge questionnaire (see Table 5.4) indicated that around half of the EPs were either very familiar or fairly familiar with COMOIRA and AI. Furthermore, an extended piloting period would seem preferable in order to trail the models alongside the service users and gather feedback following this process.

In addition, it would be important for stakeholders to consider the potential of these models alongside the new initiatives being offered by the EPSs. All school staff across both LAs are currently being trained by some of the EPs in PCP. PCP is being driven forward by the LA and all schools are being encouraged to adopt this approach within the next couple of years, with support from the EPSs. Therefore, it would be beneficial for a future evaluative framework to have the capacity to capture the effectiveness of this approach and its place within consultation and to evaluate the role of the EP within this process.

6.7 Theoretical contribution to knowledge
A review of the literature revealed that whilst professional practice models had been studied on an individual basis, for example the research by Gameson et al. (2003; 2005) and Gameson and Rhydderch (2010) on the COMOIRA model, research that
compares and contrasts professional practice models in a systematic and data driven way had not been widely conducted. This piece of research was conducted in a rigorous way, included multiple data sets and incorporated both quantitative and qualitative information. As well as conducting this research in a systematic and data driven way a further contribution to knowledge was that it considered the models in terms of their potential as evaluative tools for EP consultation, rather than specifically as professional practice frameworks. In the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first research of its kind in relation to COMOIRA and AI. In addition to this, a critical assessment was carried out, which considered the application of the COMOIRA and AI models to the evaluation of individual teacher consultations. This research is unique in this field and is the first of its kind to consider the application of a range of professional frameworks in the evaluation of EP practice. Furthermore; this study is unique in that it elicits EPs’ views on a range of professional practice models.

This study adds to the research around self-evaluation and how EPs evaluate themselves. This is very relevant when considering the literature around evaluation within field. The HEPS (2010) research highlighted that EPSs were struggling to find an adequate evaluation instrument to measure the impact of what they do (HEPS, 2010). Furthermore, it found that EPSs recognised that evaluating their impact was the ‘big question’ they needed to address and many were grappling with how best to achieve this due to the inherent difficulties associated with this task. This study has begun to explore this research area and has, therefore, hopefully contributed to knowledge in this field.

Previous literature has contended that there needs to be a formalised transparent framework of evaluation which can be embedded in the day-to-day world of an EP and suggested that applied psychologists they should use their knowledge and skills to refine the tools and processes required for evaluating their work. (Currie, 2002; Turner et al., 2010). In addition, Wicks (2013) called for a more extensive use of practice frameworks and further research to consider their effectiveness as evaluation tools. It is hoped that this study has contributed to these suggested areas of research.
6.8 Limitations of the research

6.8.1 Model selection
A main limitation of this study is the narrow focus on two professional practice models. It is noted that had further models been included within the research then this would have generated richer data. Future research could include a wider range of models as it would be interesting to gather information around the effectiveness of other models in relation to the evaluation of EP consultation. Future research could incorporate the models that met the selection process criteria during the systematic review (see Section 5.5.1) but were not then taking forward to be piloted.

It should be noted that the most well-known and well used models were selected by the EPs for the piloting process. This is evident when considering the data from the audit of previous knowledge questionnaire (see Table 5.4) which indicated that around half of the EPs were either very familiar or fairly familiar with COMOIRA and AI in comparison to, for example, AT where only two of the twelve participants were in these categories. Familiarity and previous experience with models may have skewed the selection process, which could indicate an element of bias. Had more training been available on the other models this may have affected the choices of the EPs.

6.8.2 Transferability of findings
The specific contextual factors of the study are noted. A critique of an AR design conducted across two small services is that it cannot be generalised to other service contexts (Robson, 2002). It would be important, therefore, for future research to take note of these contextual limitations and consider how research could begin to explore using a wider sample, for example, include more EPSs. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the focus of the research was limited to only one area of consultation and it was not applied to further areas of consultation, for example with group consultations. Further research in this area could incorporate the wider aspects of EP consultation or extend the focus to other areas of service delivery.

6.8.3 Time implications
As discussed within section 6.6.2 the researcher acknowledges that due to the time frame of the study and the competing work priorities and pressures on the EPs, the
SEP and PEP, the full stages of the RADIO model were not operationalised. The original plan included Stage 10 of the RADIO model. During Stage 10 the findings of final focus groups were due to be shared with the stakeholders and decisions made around the potential of the models as a service evaluation tool. This element is crucial in terms of moving the research forward and is needed to inform Stage 11: Implementing Action and Stage 12: Evaluating Action which were due to be conducted outside the parameters of this study.

6.8.4 Methodological considerations
One critique in relation to the methodology of the study is that the individual interviews were not conducted for the reasons outlined in Section 4.13.1. It is important to note that this may have strengthened the reliability and validity of the data through the richness of the information that can be captured within individual interviews. However, despite this the researcher asserts that the research is methodologically strong due to the incorporation of a multi-methods approach. The data generated from the focus groups were triangulated against the questionnaire data which increased the likelihood of the reliability of the findings and offered validity to the data.

6.9 Implications for practice
Despite the limitations noted within section 6.8, there are some potentially valuable implications resulting from this piece of research to consider for the EP profession. The following suggestions are aimed at EPSs and offer further pointers when considering future ways to evaluate EPSs.

6.9.1 Data driven
A key element to the government’s agenda to improve the quality of public services is that services should be delivered on the basis of evidence – based practice. This posits that data should be collected in a systematic manner with a clear focus upon outcomes which can then be used to inform judgements about the effectiveness of services (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). Consequently LAs have explored potential ways to collect information to validate and evaluate their services. This research integrated this guidance by using a systematic process to guide the study. This proved useful as it provided a clear rationale for the decisions that were subsequently made and the
actions that were then taken. Furthermore, collecting data in such a robust way harnessed valuable information about the potential of professional practice models in relation to the evaluation of EP consultations. The potential benefit to collecting evidence in this way is that EPSs are under increasing pressure from stakeholders to demonstrate accountability. As highlighted by Fallon et al. (2010) the relatively recent introduction of a traded model service requires EPs to have a clear focus on the outcomes of their work and further highlights the need for EPs to evaluate what they do and demonstrate their unique contribution.

An important finding from this study is that when used evaluatively, practice frameworks could potentially be seen to provide evidence around the distinctiveness of the EPs’ contribution to the consultation process which could be used to enhance the accountability of EPSs. This supports previous research showing that effective practice frameworks can be seen to secure the centrality of psychology and the distinctiveness of the EPs contribution in their professional interactions (Fallon et al., 2010; Frederickson & Miller, 2008; Gameson et al., 2005; Kelly et al., 2008; Leadbetter, 2005). An important consideration for the EP profession is the potential of these frameworks to provide a form of effective evaluation which could help to safeguard EPSs (Lloyd & Harrington, 2012).

6.9.2 Applying psychology
A further interesting consideration from this study is in relation to the importance of the reflective and reflexive components within the professional practice models and how this contributed to the evaluation process. This element of the frameworks linked the application of psychology to the evaluation process, with the EPs reflecting on how the consultation went and upon their own contribution to the individual consultation. This finding can be seen to meets the requirement of the HCPC which states that practitioner psychologists must be able to reflect critically upon and review their practice and record the outcomes of such reflection (HCPC, 2015).

The strength of the models in their ability to utilise psychology and link this with the evaluation of the consultation could be viewed as important for the EP profession and potentially offer a tool to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This
supports the findings of Kelly et al. (2008) that practice frameworks are an essential resource for the EP profession as they provide a means of addressing the challenge that EPs face with regard to clarifying the complex relationship between theory and practice. Indeed, recent reviews have called for a more sound use of psychological knowledge across the variety of contexts in which EPs work (Farrell et al., 2006) and for the ‘conceptualisation’ of the role as that of ‘scientist-practitioner’ (Fallon et al., 2010; Lane & Corrie, 2006). It could be suggested from these findings that professional practice frameworks may potentially provide a resource that help EPs demonstrate that their professional practice is informed by psychological theories and research evidence (Gameson et al., 2003). This finding provides useful information for the EP profession and indicates that implementing practice models within the evaluation of consultation may contribute towards the direction for EPs to draw upon psychological knowledge and skills (Frederickson and Miller, 2008; Gameson et al., 2003) and apply this psychology to their practice. This is seen to be a fundamental part of the EP role (DfEE, 2000; Farrell et al., 2006; Scottish Executive, 2002).

6.9.3 Stakeholder and service user feedback
Another interesting implication is that the focus on stakeholder feedback proved to be a useful contribution to the research process. As outlined by Timmins et al (2003) RADIO provides a process whereby stakeholders are involved in the research process. The involvement of stakeholders throughout meant that the decision making was collaborative and guided by the findings of the stages of the research. In addition the key people required in order to agree to further action were involved and able to sanction this at key decision making stages.

6.9.4 Future implications
This study has highlighted the importance of strategic planning. This is an important finding and managers will need to consider this in relation to the future development of these professional practice models as evaluative tools. This research has implications for future continued professional development opportunities. It will be important for stakeholders to consider the need for further training for the EPs, in relation to the models themselves but there may also be some potential in the developing the knowledge of EPs in relation to organisational psychology. The
findings from this research highlighted how certain individuals react to the change process and the defence mechanisms that can be triggered when individuals are faced with change, for example, resistance. When considering this piece of research in relation to EP practice it demonstrates how important it is for EPs to understand the human factors linked with reluctance to change and how these can impact on the success of the consultation process (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Furthermore, these findings emphasise how important it is for EPs to try and develop an understanding of the organisations in which they work as the organisational culture often determines how receptive the organisation (school) will be to the suggested intervention (Bryan et al., 2007) and how this then impacts upon the staff members within the school (Bryan et al., 2007; Schein, 1996). Further insight into this area would be an important element in the development of a future evaluation tool.

Further implications that arise from this research include the need for stakeholders and service managers to consider the service systems in relation to professional development. It is recommended that ongoing supervision and the sharing of practice across both EPSs should be considered an important factor in the future development of the professional practice frameworks. This has time implications for both EPSs in relation to peer supervision and, furthermore, appropriate systems would need consideration in order for this aspect of work to be prioritised and not lost amongst the competing pressures that the EPSs have to face. It would also be important for stakeholders and managers to build in appropriate systems for the review of this aspect of service development.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Chapter Introduction
The aim of this piece of research was to establish an evaluation tool that would collect relevant information on the impact of EP service delivery in relation to consultation. It focused on finding a method that would facilitate two EPSs to successfully and appropriately assess individual teacher consultation and gather relevant data about the effectiveness of the EPSs for the LA. This research adopted an AR approach which added a positive dimension to the process. It created a greatly needed dialogue around ways to evaluate what EPs do through consultation in an ever increasingly accountable climate where EPSs are developing traded models of service in order to generate income (DfE, 2011).

This research identified many positive and valuable aspects with regards to both the COMOIRA and AI models when these were implemented to evaluate consultation. It demonstrated that they have the potential to assess certain aspects of the consultation process and, as such, could conceivably contribute towards providing outcomes which can demonstrate accountability to employers and service users. The study findings also proposed that professional practice models could possibly be used to evaluate the wider aspects of EP practice and, therefore, be of broader benefit to EPSs. It is hoped that this research has contributed to knowledge within the area of self-evaluation within EPSs as this was the ‘big question’ that many EPs needed to and were struggling to address (HEPS, 2010). This piece of research is unique in that it was conducted in a rigorous way and included multiple data sets incorporating both quantitative and qualitative information. It is the first of its kind to consider the models of COMOIRA and AI in terms of their potential as evaluative tools in the field of individual EP consultation.

The researcher hopes that this study will instigate future research in this area and will stimulate EPSs to continue to explore how professional practice models can be used effectively to evaluate EP practice.
7.2 Future Research Directions

- Future focus could be given to the adaptation and development of the AI and COMOIRA models within the context of current EP practice. AI was not developed specifically as a framework for EP practice and despite COMOIRA being developed for EP practice it was designed in 2003 so the context in which EPs work has changed dramatically. Indeed, these models predate many of the new initiatives within education, for example, PCP and Education, Health and Care plans (DfE, 2015). In relation to this, the models may benefit from further piloting and consideration could be given to how any further adaptations and development would complement the current context within which the EP profession works.

- This research focused specifically on the two models of COMOIRA and AI. Future research could incorporate the models that met the selection process criteria during the systematic review (see Section 5.5.1) but were not chosen to be piloted as part of this research. For example, the models: AT (Leadbetter, 2008) and the IFF (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). In addition, it may be useful for future research to consider the design of a bespoke evaluative framework that combines key elements from different professional frameworks.

- The focus of the research was limited to only one area of service delivery. It focused upon individual teacher consultations and not at consultation on a wider level which is aimed at the level of the individual, group or organisation (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Wagner, 1995). Future research could look at consultation on a broader level, for example, parent consultations, group consultation which is a current model of service delivery within the EPSs involved in this study. Furthermore, future research could look beyond consultation and incorporate different areas of service delivery within the evaluation process, for example, training was another area identified as a specific area of work that COMOIRA could be used to evaluate.

- This study was conducted across two small services. Future research could look to use a wider sample group and involve a higher number of EPSs. Indeed,
neighbouring EPSs have expressed an interest in this piece of research and wish to share the findings.

- Future research could consider implementing the models collaboratively, alongside teachers, to facilitate a joint evaluation of the consultation. The models could be used to encourage the practitioner and service user to reflect upon the consultation and assess its impact. It would be interesting to collect data around whether this process provides opportunities for EPs to develop their practice in the future, helps them to provide evidence about their performance and the results they produce. This is in line with one of the recommendations made by Farrell et al. (2006).

- The researcher would recommend that any future research incorporates Stages 10, 11 and 12 of RADIO which includes the following stages: action planning, implementing action and evaluating action.
References


DES (1968). *Psychologists in Education Services (The Summerfield report)*. London: HMSO.


### Appendix A: Search Strategy example for Literature review Stage One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search History</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<th>Display</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>15499</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>exp public sector</td>
<td>76913</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>exp self-evaluation</td>
<td>9934</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>combine 1 and 2</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Display</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: COMOIRA model
Appendix C: Appreciative Inquiry Model
Appendix D: Audit of Previous Knowledge Questionnaire

1. How familiar are you with the following professional practice models/frameworks? (Please tick as appropriate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
<th>Fairly Familiar</th>
<th>Know a Little</th>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY THEORY (AT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERACTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK (IFF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Are you currently using any of the models/frameworks in your professional practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If you answered ‘yes’ to any of the models/frameworks in question 2 please describe very briefly how you are using them

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Adrienne Eddleston
Appendix E: Preference Questionnaire

Appendix E: Professional Practice Model Preference Questionnaire

1. Please rank from 1-5 (1=most preferred, 5=least preferred) the models/frameworks

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

2. How likely would you be to use the following professional practice models/frameworks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Very likely to use</th>
<th>Fairly likely to use</th>
<th>Would use a little</th>
<th>Not likely to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMOIRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY THEORY (AT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERACTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK (IFF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Adrienne Eddleston
Appendix F: Feedback Questionnaires for COMOIRA and AI

Evaluation Model Questionnaire: Appreciative Inquiry

Please indicate the number of consultations you have used the model for up to this point ……………………………..

Please indicate on the scales below to what extent you agree with the following statements.

1) I have found the model easy to use?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Appreciative Inquiry provides a useful structure/guide for the evaluation of consultation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Appreciative Inquiry hinders/restricts the EPs working practices?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) Appreciative Inquiry is effective at demonstrating that the consultation has made a difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Appreciative Inquiry can evaluate individual consultations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the following questions about Appreciative Inquiry:

6) What are the strengths of Appreciative Inquiry?

7) What are the limitations of Appreciative Inquiry?

8) What are your general thoughts about the application of Appreciative Inquiry when evaluating consultation?

**Evaluation Model Questionnaire: COMOIRA**

Please indicate the number of consultations you have used the model for up to this point ……………………………..

Please indicate on the scales below to what extent you agree with the following statements.

1) I have found the model easy to use?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) COMOIRA provides a useful structure/guide for the evaluation of consultation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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3) COMOIRA hinders/restricts the EPs working practices?

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4) COMOIRA is effective at demonstrating that the consultation has made a difference?

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5) COMOIRA can evaluate individual consultations?

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Please answer the following questions about Appreciative Inquiry:

6) What are the strengths of COMOIRA?

7) What are the limitations of COMOIRA?

8) What are your general thoughts about the application of COMOIRA when evaluating consultation?
Appendix G: Briefing Sheet

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE MODEL/FRAMEWORK BRIEFING SHEET

As you are aware I am undertaking a piece of research to find an evaluation tool which will collect relevant information across the X and X Educational Psychology Services. I have carried out a systematic review of the literature and following further consultation with our Principal Educational Psychologist and Flintshire Senior Educational Psychologist the following professional practice models were selected: The Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action (COMOIRA), The Interactive Factors Framework, Activity Theory, Appreciative Inquiry, The framework for psychological assessment and intervention (DECP).

I have provided a brief summary of each model/framework and also included some references if you wish to find out any further information. We will have the opportunity to discuss each professional practice model in the focus groups that are due to be held in July 2014. The focus group will provide us with the opportunity to discuss each model so a decision can then be made about which model/models will be taken forward into the piloting phase of the research.

Many thanks for your time
Adrienne Eddleston

The Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action (COMOIRA)

The first COMOIRA paper proposed a new and flexible model for professional practice which was designed to integrate theory and practice (Gameson et al., 2003). COMOIRA (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008) has been used recently to guide the practice of trainee EPs at Cardiff University during their fieldwork placements.

COMOIRA encourages and summarises the idea of rebuilding. It focuses on processes which consider and promote change at the organisational, systems, group or individual level. It can be used at these different levels in a variety of ways.

One of the key features of COMOIRA is the degree of emphasis on the reflective and reflexive practice that EPs use to facilitate change (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2010). COMOIRA emphasises the importance for practitioners to ‘adapt’ and ‘personalise’ the model. This will ensure that it is suited to the service users and fits the EPs personal style and paradigm base. However, it is crucial to maintain the key features and central concepts of social constructionism and systematic thinking.

The structure and basic processes underpinning COMOIRA were first published in Gameson et al (2003) in a visual form (see Appendix One). COMOIRA comprises a set or core principles, concepts and theories with eight key decision points (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008). The core and key decision points are supported by a series of reflective and reflexive questions (Gameson et al, 2003) designed to aid all parties to think clearly about the complex processes associated with change and to use psychology explicitly (see Appendix Two : COMOIRA short form).
The flexible framework enables the model to be used in relation to a range of diverse issues and needs within everyday practice. It ensures that the model is suitable across different contexts and at a variety of different levels i.e. individual, group and organisational. The movement between key decision points is always through the core reinforcing the idea that core elements underpin all aspects of the process. However, the order in which key decision points are used is flexible and the sequence can start anywhere, follow any path, include any number of and repeat key decision points.

**Core**

At the core of COMOIRA sit Social Constructionism, Systemic Thinking, Enabling Dialogues and Informed and Reasoned Action. These underpin and influence all aspects of the process. Each of the decision points will be briefly outlined below.

**Construct and Explore Relevant Hypotheses**

This allows those involved to collaboratively explore the belief systems, assumptions and expectations that are likely to impact on the process (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008). How the relevant people construct and explore relevant hypotheses in relation to:

- factors that are causing and/or contributing to the issue or concern
- factors that are maintaining the issue or concern
- what needs to be done to improve or find a solution to the issue or concern (Rhydderch & Gameson, 2010)

**Explore Constructions of Intention to Change**

This enables all relevant people to explore together how far each:

- maintain ownership of relevant issues and processes
- intend to do something different in order to promote the chosen changes
- is ready and willing to change
- is committed to investing time and energy in making the desired or intended change (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008)

**Explore Constructions of Ability to Change**

This helps all relevant people explore together how far they and others:

- consider they have the skills required to make the desired or intended changes
- feel they have the right to make those changes
• feel confident in their ability to make and maintain those changes
  (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008)

**Reflect, Reframe and Reconstruct**

This prompts the relevant people to:

• reflect together on issues emerging from the four main aspects of the core as well as those emerging from the request and the other key decision points

• consider and explore together some possible alternative ways to reframe/reconstruct these issues in order to promote the process of change

• consider together what needs to be done next and what part of the model may help promote and maintain relevant and appropriate change (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008)

**Facilitate change/s**

This prompts all relevant people to decide who will make the desired or intended changes. The main function is to facilitate changes in ways that empower people to maintain and manage those changes independently (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008)

**Evaluate the change/s**

This helps all relevant people to monitor and evaluate the outcomes together in relation to the desired/ intended change (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008).

**Review the process**

This allows the relevant people to:

• consider what has happened and how the process has gone so far

• consider people’s roles in the process so far

• take account of how COMOIRA has been used so far

• check what other options might be relevant at this point

• decide what needs to be done next (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008)

**Construct and Clarify Key Change Issues**

This allows relevant people to construct:

• what they would like to be different

• who they think should make those changes
• when, where and how they should make the change/s

References:


The Interactive Factors Framework

The Interactive Factors Framework (IFF) was developed and integrated into the problem-analysis process by Frederickson and Cline (2002).

As defined by Woolfson, Whaling., Stewart & Monsen (2003) the Problem-Analysis Framework (PAF) has an emphasis on the generation of and testing of hypothesis; problem solving and the evaluation of evidence and psychological knowledge. It was developed to inform and structure the EPiT (Educational Psychologists in Training) training at the University College of London. Following its implementation a number of areas for development were identified (Monsen, Graham,Frederickson&Cameron, 1998) and The University College of London spent the next 6 years developing a more systematic approach which became the IFF.

The IFF requires EPs to actively consider different levels of analysis and their interactions when formulating initial guiding hypotheses and subsequent implementation (Woolfson et al, 2003). It aims to retain a systematic structure to guide EPs thinking, actions and reporting. Key principles within IFF are the need for transparency of EP practice, collaborative working between the EPs and the various problem stakeholders, recognising that EPs/parents and carers, teachers, children all bring their own perspective. Knowledge of the framework should be shared.

The IFF offers a five phase approach, with action points for the EP. Finally, a critical reflection is carried out by the team on what went well and areas that require development. The analysis can be addressed at the individual pupil, group and the school level. The client has a significant part in the decision making process. The phases will be briefly described in the following section.

Phase 1: Establishing roles and expectations

This phase involves laying the foundations for the problem solving relationship by clarifying and negotiating the role of the ‘problem owner’, the expectations and desired outcomes. Other stakeholders are identified e.g. family, child. The role of the EP is clarified. The framework is explicitly shared with all stakeholders to ensure
transparency. By the end of this phase there should be a clear understanding of how everyone will proceed and the individual roles within this process.

**EP Phase 1 action points:**

- Clarify what school seeks to achieve with EP involvement
- Identify who the stakeholders are and arrange a joint meeting
- Share the framework
- Negotiate all stakeholders roles in the process
- Negotiate who will be responsible for recording minutes of the meetings—preferably school as the problem owner
- Move to phase 2 or agree date of phase 2 meeting
- Agree distribution list for minutes

**Phase 2: Guiding hypotheses and information gathering**

The EP facilitates the gathering of relevant background information. The stakeholders discuss their views of the problem and evaluate the source and validity of their views. Views can be reframed as hypotheses for which more data will be gathered. Hypotheses from all stakeholders should be shared and documented. This includes hypotheses based on psychological knowledge that the EP wishes to explore.

**EP Phase 2 action points**

- Facilitate expression of hypotheses about problem area, encouraging stakeholders to be specific and provide evidence
- Ensure children are also viewed as stakeholders and consulted where appropriate
- Introduce EPs hypotheses based on psychological knowledge, theory and research
- Encourage reframing of view of problem if viewed as intrinsic to child
- Conceptualise and record hypotheses at different ecological levels, identifying the source and who is responsible for data collection
- Agree time plan for information gathering and date of Phase 3 feedback meeting to arrange joint intervention plan
- EP arranges to collate stakeholders findings to devise preliminary problem analysis for Phase 3 feedback meeting
- Minutes recorded and sent
- Carry out information gathering

**Phase 3: Joint problem analysis**

The EP collates the information gathered in Phase 2 and reflects upon it the aim being to identify problem dimensions that have emerged. Reflection is an important aspect of this phase. New hypotheses may arise that require a temporary return to Phase 2. Joint agreement can then be reached on what the identified problems are and how these relate with each other to result in the problem situation. The
ecological systems structure from Phase 2 is used again to focus attention on ways in which the solutions may be targeted. Priorities for intervention are agreed.

**EP Phase 3 action points**

- Examine hypotheses that have been confirmed and integrate these into an ecological analysis of the dimensions of the problem at the level of child, family, school, community
- Draw the different problem dimensions as a diagram (Woolfson et al. 2003, p. 293) interlinked with arrows to provide a visual representation (see Appendix 3)
- Share problem analysis with other stakeholders at feedback meeting
- Identify and discuss with stakeholders hypotheses that were not confirmed to help reframe their view of the problem
- Agree with stakeholders including child where appropriate the new shared view of the problem and priorities for intervention
- Ensure recording and distribution of minutes

**Phase 4: Joint action plan and implementation**

An intervention plan is drawn up and implemented for the priorities agreed at Phase 3. Specifics should be agreed and recorded e.g. what action will be taken, who will be responsible, within what time scale

**EP Phase 4 action points**

- EP shares professional knowledge of possible interventions with stakeholders taking account of their views and experiences of similar intervention
- Clear action plan to be agreed and recorded with details of stakeholder’s roles regarding implementation, who is to do what and when
- Evaluation procedures are agreed and recorded with details of who, what and when
- Phase 5 meeting arranged
- Recorded minutes are distributed

**Phase 5: Evaluate, reflect and monitor**

All stakeholders critically review outcomes and agree on next steps. Plans for maintenance of positive changes that have occurred and for future monitoring should be put in place. Roles and remits should be specific. How to address areas where the ‘hoped for’ progress was not made are discussed which may require a return to Phase 2. The group can work through Phase 2, 3 and 4 again if required, taking account of new/updated information and consider new hypotheses and gather additional data if needed. A critical reflection is carried out by the team on what went well and areas that require development.

**EP Phase 5 action points**

- Analysis of what actually happened following Phase 4
• Evaluation data gathered and shared
• Reflect jointly with stakeholders on evaluation outcomes and develop a maintenance plan
• Where outcomes not successful identify underlying issues and return to earlier phase if required
• EP supports stakeholders in reflecting on the experience and how it could inform future working
• EP reflects on his/her involvement and identifies strengths, weaknesses and personal development needs

References:


**Appreciative Inquiry**

I will only provide a brief summary of this framework as we have had previous training in this area at one of our joint team meetings (Cooperrider,Whitner & Stavros, 2008).

Appreciative Inquiry was developed in the mid 1980s by David Cooperrider and colleagues for their work in organisations. It is based on the belief that groups within organisations often share a set of assumptions which cause them to act and think in certain ways. Often these assumptions operate at an unconscious level. A key aspect of Appreciative Inquiry is the belief that it is important to verify these assumptions every so often to check they are still current (Hammond, 1998). A four process cycle is used to evaluate/investigate these assumptions:-

5) **Discover** – what works well, searching for the best experiences, successes
6) **Dream**- what would work well in future/ develop a vision
7) **Design**- working together to plan/prioritise processes around how to achieve the vision
8) **Destiny/deliver** – making the vision real/, implementation of proposed design

This model could be applied to evaluate the work of the EPs. For example some **Discover** and **Dream** questions could include:

• What do you value/ have you valued most whilst working alongside the EP Service?
• Please provide an example/examples of when you felt that working with the EP Service produced the most effective outcomes

• What do you think are the most useful/valuable ways to work with the EP Service in the future?

References:


A framework for psychological assessment and intervention

This framework was drafted by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) in 2002 (see Appendix Four). It is intended to guide assessment by EPs. It emphasises the direct link between assessment and intervention and the written recording and reporting.

The framework recognises that, although psychological assessment is a highly individualised, complex and creative process, there are some fundamental underpinning principles relevant to all EPs (DECP, 2002). It acknowledges how the assessment of children and young people has moved away from the positivist frameworks which dominated the EP profession for many years. The DECP (2002) argue that current models of assessment need to reflect the body of psychological knowledge, which emphasises social constructionism. The framework recognises how psychological assessment involves the use of a variety of tools, techniques and approaches which draw upon relevant theory and evidence based research. The assessment generates an understanding of what is happening, who is concerned, why there is a problem and what can be done to make a difference to the situation. It seeks to provide information on the processes of learning, the young person’s cognition, social and emotional development and the impact of the context on those areas (DECP, 2002).

References:


Activity Theory

Leadbetter (2008) in Kelly, B., Woolfson, L., & Boyle, J. (2008) outlines how Activity Theory (AT) has developed over the past 70 years from the original ideas of Vygotsky and Leontiev. Researchers such as Cole (1996), Kozulin (1998) and Engestrom (1999) have expanded this work.
Engestrom extended the first-generation Activity System triangle to produce the ‘second’ and ‘third’ Activity Theory models (see Appendix Five).

Although Engestrom is not the only researcher working with Activity Theory he has written extensively in this area. Five principles of AT can help us understand better the complexities of this approach as summarised in Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle (2008):

1. The prime unit of analysis of AT is ‘a collective, artefact-mediated and object–oriented activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems’ (Daniels 2001, p.93).
2. Activity Systems are usually multi-voiced reflecting a multiple of viewpoints with different interests
3. Activity Systems develop over long periods of time and are transformed and transforming
4. Contradictions are central to an understanding of AT as they are sources of tension and eventually change and development. By examining contradictions, new objects can be created and new ways of working developed
5. Through examination of contradictions participants may question established patterns of working and new motives and objects may be formed. These transformations may occur over lengthy periods of time and result in a much wider range of possibilities for action.

Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle (2008) discuss how AT can be applied to the practice of EPs and the tasks undertaken by them across a number of important domains. It is a framework that can be applied to any situation where human action is taking place.

A Descriptive Framework

Leadbetter (2008) details how second-generation AT can be used when considering an individual child’s learning and development. EPs can use the framework to conceptualise their thinking and the planning of a piece of work and this can be then shared with others e.g. teachers. This model has been used by trainee psychologists for planning purposes and as a tool for considering possible ways of working with staff in schools (Leadbetter, 2008). AT can be used as a descriptive tool and to examine and make sense of systems and situations.

An analytic device

AT can be applied to more complex areas of work. Analysis and comparison across different systems can provide helpful data. AT can be used to track changes over time by constructing models from data collection, people’s views, document analysis and other methods and then repeating the data collection when changes occur (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008).

Contradictions

AT can be used to consider contradictions emerging from different subject positions (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008).
**Organisational Development Approach**

AT has been developed as a way of engaging with organisations to examine and expand efficient working systems.

**Multi-agency teamwork**

Engestrom’s third-generation model can be used to understand forms of multi-agency working. AT provides a framework for understanding human activity within the sociocultural context it occurs and it is capable of mapping the complex systems and practices that present within multi-agency teams. (Greenhouse, 2013).

**Service Development and Service Delivery**

AT can be used to facilitate both small and large scale changes within EP Services (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008).

**References:**


Appendix H: Initial Focus Group Questions

Focus gp Qs

1. What are the strengths of the model?
2. What are the weaknesses of the model?
3. What are your general feelings about the application of the model to EP practice?
Appendix I: Researcher Diary

[Handwritten notes]

- Appreciate Mary’s comments.
- The list: what did go well, what could we do better.
- What would be the same next time?
- What did go well?
- What could we do better?
- How can we improve?
- How did we evaluate the team’s needs and goals?
- How can we improve?
- What might we change?
- What can we do to improve the team’s performance?
- What unique qualities did you bring to the team?
- Why are they significant?
- What additional resources were used?
- What differences did you notice in the team?
- What else do you think we could do?
- What contributed most to the success of the team?
Appendix J: Final Focus group questions

Q1: What are your views on the use of COMOIRA as an evaluative tool in relation to:-

A) Its strengths when using it to assess consultation as a process?
B) Its limitations when using it to assess consultation as a process?
C) Its ability to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability?

Q2: What are your views on the use of AI as an evaluative tool in relation to:-

A) Its strengths when using it to assess consultation as a process?
B) Its limitations when using it to assess consultation as a process?
C) Its ability to provide outcomes which demonstrate accountability?

Q3: What are the preferred ways forward from here?
Appendix K: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Selecting an Effective Model to evaluate consultation

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study aiming to find an evaluation tool which will collect relevant information on the impact of our service delivery.

Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

The research is being conducted by Adrienne Eddleston, Educational Psychologist, Educational Psychology Service.

Title of the Research:

Selecting an Effective Model to evaluate consultation

What is the aim of the research?

This study will aim to find a professional practice model which will collect relevant information on the impact of our service delivery. It will focus on finding a method that facilitates us, as Educational Psychologists, to successfully and appropriately evaluate consultation. This professional practice model should enable us to gather data about the effectiveness of the Service for the LA. The research will focus on piloting different professional practice models as part of our consultations.

Why have I been chosen?

All Educational Psychologists are invited to take part in the research.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

1. In order to determine the ‘best fit’ models to pilot across the two services a rigorous review of relevant evidence based literature has been carried out and a summary of the selected models has been written and presented in a briefing sheet. This will be sent out to you for you to read.
2. You will then be asked to attend an initial focus group (60-90 minutes) which will aim to gather data to guide the selection of the professional practice models to be piloted across the two services.
3. You will take part in the piloting process (12 weeks).
4. During the piloting of the various professional practice models every EP will be asked to fill in a questionnaire to rate different aspects of the model. This questionnaire will be designed in conjunction with the Principal Educational Psychologist and Flintshire’s Senior Educational Psychologist.
5. Individual interviews (60 minutes) will be held following the piloting of the different models.
6. Once all the data has been analysed it will be presented to both the EP Services.
7. You will then be asked to attend a final focus group (60-90 minutes) which will be held in the spring term 2015 (date to be agreed) with the purpose of making a decision about the evaluation models/methods that will subsequently be adopted.

What happens to the data collected?

Anonymous data will be stored securely and analysed by the researcher, as follows:

The focus group discussion will be recorded on a dictaphone and this will be analysed during the data analysis. No individual will be named for the recording or during the transcript and I will be the only person who will have access to the dictaphone. The recording will be deleted after the data has been transcribed.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire during the piloting of the evaluation models. This will take place after a minimum of six consultations. The questionnaires will be piloted by a small group of EPs. The questionnaires will be anonymous but will have a code for the specific model being tested. The data from the questionnaires will be analysed. During the study I will be using a diary to record any discussions that take place outside the focus group discussions and interview sessions. I will be the only person with access to the diary and I will only record comments and not names.

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview following the testing of the various models. Questions will be based around your views on the model you trialled. The discussion will be recorded on a dictaphone. No individual will be named for the recording or during the transcript and I will be the only person who will have access to the dictaphone. The recording will be deleted after the data has been transcribed.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All data will be anonymised and individual participant’s responses will not be identifiable. Any focus group references which make participants potentially identifiable will be removed.
What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

You are under no obligation to participate in the research and it is up to you whether or not to take part in the research. You will have the right to withdraw from the research at any point, without reason, before or at any point during the research. You can ask for your information to be deleted at any time up until the data has been anonymised.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

No

What is the duration of the research?

September 2014 - first focus group (60-90 minutes)

September to December 2014, 12 week piloting of model. The piloting of the models will be incorporated into our normal school consultation visits so there should not be any additional time commitment. Mid-way through the piloting you will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

January 2015 - interview (60 minutes)

Date to be agreed for final focus group (60-90 minutes)

Where will the research be conducted?

Within the EP Services

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Findings will be collated to form the basis of my Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology (University of Manchester) and published in peer review journals

Contact for further information

Adrienne.Eddleston@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Or

Supervisor: Dr Cathy Atkinson, Room A6.5, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Rd, University of Manchester. Email: cathyatkinson@manchester.ac.uk

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and
CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes taken from the focus groups, diary, questionnaires and interviews.

5. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant ___________________________ Date ______________ Signature ___________________________

Name of person taking consent ___________________________ Date ______________ Signature ___________________________
Appendix L: Information Sheet

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE MODEL/FRAMEWORK INFORMATION SHEET

As you are aware I am undertaking a piece of research to find an evaluation tool which will collect relevant information across the X and X Educational Psychology Services.

Following on from our focus group discussion I met with X and X to discuss the data collated from the focus group and the questionnaires. We have selected COMOIRA and Appreciative Inquiry (see attached) as the professional practice models we will now take forward into the piloting phase of the research. A decision was made to pilot the COMOIRA framework first and then follow this with the Appreciative Inquiry model. We are hoping that the piloting process for both evaluation tools will be completed by December 2014. As previously discussed the framework is being used as an evaluative tool so you are not being asked to change what you do during your consultation sessions.

What next:-

1. Use the COMOIRA framework to evaluate three individual teacher consultations.
2. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the framework.
3. Use the Appreciative Inquiry framework to evaluate three individual teacher consultations.
4. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the framework.
5. You will be asked to take part in an interview to discuss both frameworks.

Many thanks for your time
Adrienne Eddleston
Appendix M: Description of the final focus group analysis process for COMOIRA

Step 1: full transcription of data carried out

Step 2: initial codes were generated and then the data was revisited in order to gather more succinct codes.

Step 3: Relevant extracts were collated into potential themes and preliminary themes were identified as in the example below:

Preliminary theme: *Applying psychology*

EP9: and I suppose if you were sharing it with your audience, *the hidden psychology is very clear isn’t it that there is a core of psychology* and we are going to have this conversation around that but we are using, the way we are working together, is actually *using the psychology* and in that *it’s a strong tool cos it makes that very clear* and it’s not about having a cosy chat and a coffee and look there’s an outcome

EP9: but I suppose like you were saying, that affects the whole hidden agenda, in a positive way though, that *we are applying psychology, because you’re applying psychology at lots of different levels aren’t you?*

Step 4: Final themes checked and finalised and thematic maps were generated defining themes and subthemes
Appendix N: Example of a thematic map
Appendix O: COMOIRA Questions