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Hello and welcome back to our new look Psych-Talk, I hope you like our new cover. We’ve been busy trying to make some changes and looking for ways to improve our already popular magazine. Please get in touch, let us know what you think and if you have any suggestions of what you like, dislike, would like to see included, let us know. Feedback is always welcome.

It also seems like a good time to take stock and see where we are heading – as the SMG has now reached the ripe old age of ten! So time for a celebration and we’ve gathered together for this issue, some articles from former members. Theresa Allen was the first ever Chairperson from 1993-1994 and her article on page 7 gives an insight into the SMG’s conception. We should be grateful to the original members for their dedication and for putting us on the map! Also contributing to this issue are former Psych-Talk Editors, Andy Field and Angus Smyth, as well as Alex Linley, former Chair and Psych-Talk Editor.

We’ve also seen changes to our Committee over the summer months as people graduate and leave us. So it’s been goodbye to Ann Phillips, Chair, Jo Frost, Vice-Chair, Alexa Spence, Conference Consultant, Rachael Morris, International
Officer and Kate Tubman, PR. A big thanks to all of them for their work and commitment and good luck for the future.

We welcome Louise Glover as our new Chair, see Louise’s report on page 3. Also new members – Kerry Nesbitt, Secretary, Kerry McFarlane, Conference Officer, Hayward Godwin, PR/Marketing and Keith Chrystie, International Officer. I’m looking forward to working with them in the coming year and you can read their introductions inside. Further to this, Simon Prangnall takes over as Vice-Chair, so best wishes to Simon as well.

Our remaining members, Angela Mcneilly, Karen Monaghan, Duncan Stewart, Gareth Hagger-Johnston and Lara Webber will remain in their current roles and continue their sterling work.

There’s lots for you to read this month but I highly recommend Dr Petra Boynton’s article on page 24 advising on how to get the best out of academics. She should know, she deals with us all the time and has given us lots of food for thought and the best way to approach this. Remember how important it is to make a good first impression!

So welcome back to yet another academic year and I hope you enjoy reading Psych-Talk.

The next issue of Psych-Talk will be published in December 2003, the deadline for which is October 10th 2003. Articles should be emailed to myself at acadden@blueyonder.co.uk or sent in the post on a floppy disk to Avril Cadden, Editor, 11 Marigold Avenue, Motherwell, ML1 1DS.

Any Psych-Talk queries can be emailed to myself at acadden@blueyonder.co.uk or to Deputy Editor, Angela Mcneilly at AngelaMcNeilly@aol.com.

The Student Members Group Committee
A Report from the Chair - Louise Glover

As the new Chair I would like to say a little about the SMG and what it involves. I will outline my aims and suggest why you should consider becoming a committee member. My membership on the committee has helped me to develop my communication and organisation skills. It has enabled me to gain ready access to information about the study of Psychology and how to become a psychologist. I find the thoughts and opinions of other students fascinating and helpful. I have made contact with many like-minded
psychology Students, psychologists, and others working within the BPS. The same opportunity is available to you.

I am currently in my final year at Edinburgh University. I have been a member of the SMG of the BPS for 2 years. I began as Secretary and, this year, took on the role of Chair. I have a particular interest in neuropsychology and hope to become a Clinical Psychologist.

As Chair I hope to develop the SMG and build upon the work undertaken during the past 10 years. The main role of the SMG is to develop awareness of undergraduates about the BPS and increase membership numbers. This is achieved through university representatives, conferences, promotional campaigns and the website (http://smg.bps.org.uk/). In addition, I hope to help make the SMG more useful to its members by using the ideas of students, university representatives and the other members of the committee.

Student membership of the BPS is tremendously important; these members are the psychologists of tomorrow. They are the people who will develop current theories and practices and create new theories of their own. They are the next practitioners.

The committee comprises various positions, which I will briefly mention here. It is important that the committee works as a team to be most effective.

The MLO (Members Liaison Officer) has regular contact with the representatives at universities. At SMG meetings we discuss how to utilise the representatives more effectively.

The Conference Officers plan and coordinate two conferences a year - The London Lectures in December and the Annual Conference in the Spring.

Our student magazine, Psych-Talk, allows students to express their own ideas and thoughts. They can obtain information and develop links with other students and the SMG. The Editor and Deputy Editor help coordinate articles and arrange all matters concerning the publication of the magazine.

The SMG also makes international links with other Psychology Student Organisations through our International Officer. In order to support the International Officer, I have represented the SMG in Turkey, Portugal, and in Austria. These were congresses of EFPSA (European Federation of Psychology Students Association) The intention is to help improve and develop the links between other European countries. I recently attended the American Psychological
Association’s Annual Convention in Canada. I found out more about studying psychology in America including how to become a psychologist there and about movement between England and America of practitioners, researchers and other psychologists. This was very useful and allowed me the chance to make many contacts with American students and knowledgeable professionals. There will be more about this in the next issue of Psych-Talk.

The PR/Marketing Officer deals with the media, marketing and PR enquiries, as well as the publicity of the SMG.

The Internet Officer maintains the website and improves its style and informational content.

The Secretary takes the minutes of meetings and deals with SMG committee applications.

The PsyPAG SMG Representative liaises between the SMG and Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group (PsyPAG).

To become a student representative or apply for committee positions for the next academic year, please contact myself or any of the other SMG officers at smg-officers@bps.org.uk. Positions run from September through the academic year. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

**Introducing the new committee:**

Keith Chrystie – International Officer & EFPSA Officer

Hi everyone! I’m Keith Chrystie, the newly elected international and EFPSA officer for the SMG. I’m studying psychology at Southampton University as a mature student (27 yrs), with my main interests being the change of social norms, and football. I commute every day from sunny-sunny Bournemouth with Hayward, the new PR officer. As he said in his introduction, this gives plenty of time for scheming and planning new, improved and more entertaining ways of introducing people to the BPS.

He, of course, spends most of his time asleep (sorry mate), but we are both set on developing the work of our predecessors in the SMG. For me this will entail learning about what everyone else in the whole world of psychology is up to, and then bringing that information back to all of you, so that we can all work towards a better psychology. To that end, Hayward has set up a website called “Psychwire”, for
which I am the leading journalist. Here is where you'll find all the juicier bits that I can't include in Psych-Talk, humorous and serious, about the events I'll be attending; as well as a forum for discussing the informal or otherwise aspects of psychology.

I'm looking forward to an entertaining and productive year, and as Hayward said, COME AND JOIN IN!

Kerry Nesbitt - Secretary

I am a 4th year psychology student studying at the University of Edinburgh and I am the new secretary of the SMG. I have been interested in the work of the SMG since having the opportunity to travel to Turkey last year and represent British psychology students at the annual conference of EFPSA.

I combined my psychology studies with biological sciences in my first and second years of university and as a result have a strong interest in sociobiology and the evolution of behaviour and language.

I am currently working on ideas for my dissertation and hope to base it on the impact of today's text messaging culture on language ability in youths.

I am on the committee of the University of Edinburgh's psychology society and am responsible for organising this year's Fresher week events for new students.

This summer I will be participating in an International Voluntary Service project in Turin, Italy where I will be working with people with psychiatric and social problems.

Kerry McFarlane – Conference Officer

Hi everyone! Firstly, I would like to express how good it feels to be a part something I take such an interest in. For months now I have been collecting and reading Psych-Talk and to be a part of the SMG feels excellent!

Secondly, I should introduce myself to you all. My name is Kerry McFarlane and I have recently completed my second year of study at City University, London where I am working towards a BSc in Psychology. Despite all the hard work it involves (I'm sure you all know what I'm referring to) I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at university so far, and I look forward to what is ahead.
Outside of my course at University I have the benefit of being a British Psychology Society/Students Members Group (BPS/SMG) representative, which involves actively recruiting new BPS/SMG members. At my university I am involved in setting up a support group for other psychology students. However, outside of university I take pleasure in reading (I'm a big Harry Potter fan!), I love music and I enjoy socialising.

My psychological interests start from my fascination of the mind, how it works and influences our behaviour, and extends to a more specific interest of language and its development in young children. This is one of the reasons I have chosen to base my third year project on language development in children under two years old.

In the future I hope my knowledge of, and academic achievement in psychology will lead me into a career where I can use what I know about people and how and why they interact in the world to mine and to others advantage.

As the newly appointed Conference Officer I look forward to organising fun and exciting conferences all about psychology, and hope to see you all there.

Hayward Godwin – PR Officer

My name is Hayward (although I have many, many nicknames - the favourite is 'Harry Potter', which you would probably get instantly if you ever saw me!) and I'm studying at Southampton University. I commute there each day from a sunny seaside town called Bournemouth which gives me a lot of time to scheme and plan ways to convince more people to join the BPS!

To be honest, I actually spend most of my commuting asleep, but I am very eager to work on and develop the SMG in general to students and non-students. I am interested in just about every area of psychology that you can think of, but one thing that I do enjoy is getting together a group of people and working as a team on a creative project. I have recently been working on a student psychology website called 'psychwire' – there's more about this on page 31. I invite you all to take a look at it.
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Ten Years of The Student Members Group

By Theresa Allen

Ten years ago a group of psychology undergraduates (myself included) decided it would be a brilliant idea to form a psychology student society. The idea sprung from attending an annual Congress of the European Federation of Psychology Students Associations (EFPSA). Many countries attending the conference had their own national psychology groups. This enabled them to organise their own conferences, research groups and meetings. A similar group in the UK would provide a forum within which students would be able to discuss their work, get experience of conference presentations and have some say in the direction of taught undergraduate psychology courses. In August 1993 a budget was approved for the group and The Student Members Group was officially formed. This was followed by a rather hurried production of the first newsletter, ‘Psych Talk’ published in December 1993. With limited access to more sophisticated software, a photocopier, Pritt Stick and a liberal dose of creativity, the newsletter got edited, printed and sent to the BPS for publication and distribution.

The main purpose of the first newsletter was to let students know that The Student Members Group was up and running. It did the job and thankfully Andy Field took up the post of Editor shortly afterwards. Graham Pluck (who has
since done time editing Psych-Talk) and Helen Johnson joined the committee shortly afterwards and between us we began to plan future meetings and conferences within the BPS and EFPSA. One of the first committee meetings was held on the beach at Brighton after an annual BPS conference. Obviously a very formal affair! It was there the decision was made to hold our own annual student conference. A year later the first student conference was held in Warwick. This conference was perhaps the biggest turning point for the new group. Many more students were beginning to become involved in the group’s activities and new committee members joined the mayhem. The conference itself was exhausting, particularly for Graham who awoke at 6am each morning as there were no clocks available in the accommodation blocks. Poor Graham wondered around the campus each morning to put up posters only for someone else to take them down an hour later. We never did find out who did that.

Shortly after the Warwick conference my time as an undergraduate was up and I stepped down as Chairperson. It was time for a new Chair with new perspectives to further develop the group. I kept in touch with the committee for some time afterwards. In 1996, Clash who was then Chairperson developed a website for the group and encouraged more students to join.

The group has gone from strength to strength. Many students have been able to benefit from the hard work of each committee. I wish the current committee every success and hope they remember SMG’s tenth year as fondly as I remember the first.

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Interview with Alex Linley, former SMG Chair & Psych-Talk Editor

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and what you are currently doing just now in terms of employment?

I'm 30 this year, so in some ways still a youngster, but in other ways getting older – I suppose it depends on your perspective! I have three young children who occupy most of my time when I’m not working, and when I am working, I’m a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Leicester. As well as this, I’m completing my PhD (“Psychological processes in
What made you decide to study psychology?

I have always been interested in human motivation and behaviour, and when I was self-employed with my own business in my younger years, I came to realise that the only thing I really enjoyed was being able to understand the customer and motivate my staff. However, things didn’t work out perhaps as I would have planned (although I’ve never had any regrets), and the business went into liquidation.

Reading “The Jigsaw Man” (by Paul Britton – see below) was what made me decide to study psychology. I was in a lot of debt (student loans pale into insignificance compared to what I owed then), and I was faced with a choice of just working to pay off this debt or trying to do something with my life as well. In “The Jigsaw Man”, Paul Britton talks about how he decided to go to university to study psychology, despite the fact he had a young child and another on the way, and a mortgage to pay. He worked nightshifts to pay his bills, and studied in the day. And I read this and thought “If he can do that with children and a mortgage, I can do it with just myself to worry about.” So Paul Britton was probably the catalyst that led me to study psychology, although the interest had always been there. And now I feel like I am doing what I was born to do.

How did you come to be involved with the SMG?

I sent in a book review to Psych-Talk, and Angus Smyth, the Psych-Talk Editor, got in touch and asked me if I wanted to meet up for a drink when he was next in Leicester (visiting the BPS offices). Angus and I met, and he asked if I would be interested in joining the SMG Committee. I applied, and things went from there.

How long were you involved with the SMG?

I think it was for two years, but I could stand corrected when you check the records. It was a great time, anyway.

What roles did you have during your time there?
I started as Chair, and held that position throughout my time with the SMG. Also, however, due to Angus becoming quite ill, I stepped in to cover as Editor of Psych-Talk, I think for a period of about eight months, until you took over yourself, Avril.

As you know the SMG are celebrating their 10th anniversary. In your experience, or your time with the SMG, what changes have you seen?

One of the most gratifying changes with the SMG is to see the development of their professionalism and continuity over the years. With such a fluid and changing membership as undergraduate students, it can be a real problem to try and develop a sense of continuity. However, I think that that has now been achieved and it is great to see.

Here I would like to pay tribute to two people who I think have made that happen. The first is Angus Smyth, who as Psych-Talk Editor brought a real professionalism to the SMG, and ensured that Psych-Talk was published when we said it would be, and always made sure that it was packed with loads of great features for psychology students. The second is Lisa Morrison, who works for the BPS but also serves as a link person for the SMG, thus enabling some sense of continuity that was lacking before. With this continuity, the SMG has been able to move from strength to strength, and Psych-Talk is a real reflection of that.

What you do think you've learned from your experience of being involved with the SMG or what have you taken away from your time spent with the SMG?

I learned a lot from my experiences with the SMG, and some of the best lessons were simply to do with the value of being involved. It's amazing how many opportunities open up, simply when you stick your head above the parapet and start to stand out even a little bit. So, the first and most important lesson was simply to get involved and see where it takes you. Second, I learned a lot about trying to help people to play to their strengths, some people are good at some things, and some at other things, and a real secret of organisational success is to get people doing the things they're good at. Third, I learned a lot about the difficulties and opportunities of organising conferences and editing publications – hard work, but well worth it for the end result.
What’s been the high points? What aspects did you enjoy the most?

For me, there were two real high points. First, was organising the first Positive Psychology conference to be held in the UK in 2000. When you look at where positive psychology is now, we really did well to be in there right from the beginning. Second, I was given the opportunity to edit a Special Bulletin, which I did on “Psychological trauma and its positive adaptations”. That gave me a great chance to contact some of my heroes and to get them to write short pieces for the Special Bulletin. Doing this opened up a lot of contacts, and I made some good friends as a result of it.

Who do you consider to be the most influential psychologist in your own life? Anyone that you’ve met and also anyone that you’ve been able to interview or speak to?

There is no way that I could single out any given psychologist as the most influential in my own life. There are many of them, but I’ll note some here. First, obviously, is Paul Britton, not only because of “The Jigsaw Man” spurring me back to academia, but because he is one of the cleverest people I know in terms of understanding human personality and motivation. As Psych-Talk readers may remember, I had the great honour of interviewing Mr. Britton for Psych-Talk (July 2002), which was a lifetime’s ambition satisfied for me.

At Leicester, during my undergraduate days, Lorraine Sheridan and Adrian North helped me to believe in myself when I was still in a period of trying to work out who I was and where I was going. Julian Boon opened my eyes to what psychology, for me, was really about (personality and motivation) with his lectures on love and destruction, as well as the role of the big picture and not just the little bits that psychology tends to get broken down into.

At Warwick, I have been privileged to work and become good friends with Stephen Joseph, my PhD supervisor, who has always been more of a collaborator than a supervisor per se. From Stephen I have continued my learning about how to think, rather than what to think, which questions to ask and why we should be asking them. My time at Warwick was a real highpoint for intellectual development and professional reflection, and I have Stephen to thank very much for that.

More broadly, Carl Rogers has been seminal in my developing understanding of constructive personality development, while Martin Seligman has been hugely
influential in my own career through his advocation of positive psychology, something to which much of my career has been dedicated. And Robert Sternberg and Phil Zimbardo have both inspired me through their passion and enthusiasm for our subject, as well as the breadth and quality of their work. And I am delighted to say, that with the exception of Carl Rogers (who died in 1987), I have had the honour of working with some, and meeting all, of these great psychologists.

What are your plans for the future?
To make sure I enjoy seeing my young family grow and develop, and to grow and develop myself, both personally and professionally. I think psychology has so much to offer people, and I’m very keen on playing my part in trying to get that message across. Where that takes me, we’ll have to see.

What advice would you give to students interested in pursuing a career in psychology?
Psychology is a huge discipline, and as such there are a myriad of career paths that you could follow specifically as a psychologist, and even more as someone who simply uses psychological knowledge. I have had the great benefit of learning from many inspirational teachers throughout my career so far, and I don’t think you can underestimate the value of listening to different people and their take on psychology and the world. And note that this learning doesn’t just happen in the lecture hall or the tutorial, but is an inherent part of reading and reflecting on the works and lives of others.

I also benefited from some excellent advice about not to specialise too soon, but to be aware of the richness and diversity that psychology has to offer before deciding on a career path. It’s easy to get sucked in by the allure of clinical psychology, but that’s not the best career for everyone, and psychology as a whole is much bigger than just clinical psychology, but this message can sometimes get lost.

So, my advice to aspiring psychologists would be to listen to the wisdom of those who have trodden the path before you, while also recognising that what was right for them may not be right for you, and that you should be sure to choose your own path carefully. In essence, I guess this comes down to “Psychologist, know thyself.”
Alex, on behalf of Psych-Talk and the SMG – thank you. Also on a personal note, I took over the Editorship of Psych-Talk from Alex and I would like to say thanks for all his patience and support in the early days when I wondered just what I'd let myself in for – and I'm now so glad that I did! Thanks Alex and good luck in your future ventures! Avril

A few words by Angus Smyth, former Editor

It's fantastic to see the SMG make it to the grand old age of 10. I enjoyed my time working on the SMG committee and editing Psych-Talk as it gave me an opportunity to interview many of the leading psychologists around the world. Their enthusiasm for psychology was breath taking and I suppose one of the most memorable experiences was having Albert Bandura email me apologising that he had missed the deadline for Psych-Talk.

Many people were very kind to the SMG and it's only fit that Dr Nicky Hayes and Jessica Kingsley Publishers be included in the short history of the group. Nicky was fantastic and gave hours of her time helping out the SMG speaking at conferences and writing articles etc. So many students contacted the SMG saying how wonderful it was to meet the author of one of their textbooks. Many stated it had been Nicky's textbooks that had encouraged them to study psychology at University.

Jessica Kingsley Publishers were the first publishing house to add the SMG to its mailing list and to basically take us seriously. JKP sent many books for review. Shame on those other lowbrow academic publishing houses who refused the SMG - you all know who you are!

In the late 90's we had a highly motivated and talented team working on the SMG. The Internet was becoming more accessible to students and the brilliance of Kirk Bowe our Internet Officer, meant the SMG was reaching psychology students both at home and from all corners of the world. And of course there was a chap called Linley who liked to hide behind pillars and stare in awe at Robert Sternberg. It was one of the few times I saw him lost for words and it was certainly the only time I saw Lindy Newton lost for words. The shock almost drove me to become a sociologist!
Sadly my student days ended and that four letter word 'work' loomed. I would urge students to get involved in the SMG and if you are really interested in psychology you will meet people with the same motivation that you have.

I wish the SMG well for the forthcoming years and I still read Psych-Talk - it will always have a special place in my heart.

Best wishes,
Angus

Angus, thank you for this and for your continued support.
Avril.

An Interview with Andy Field
By Gareth Hagger-Johnston, The University of Edinburgh

Can you tell me a little bit about your background, and what your role involves?

I got my first degree from City University (London) in 1994, Ph.D. from Sussex in 1997, Lecturer at Royal Holloway (University of London) until 2000 at which point I returned to Sussex.

An academic basically has three roles: teaching, research and administration. These have to be juggled. The most pressure on me is from research: University funding depends on grants and so an academic's ability to get grants and publish research in good journals is key to their career development. Despite the job title of 'lecturer', most of my time is spent doing research.

Teaching-wise, I teach second year research methods and clinical psychology. I've always loved teaching and I put more effort than I have to into doing it well - it is, without doubt, the most rewarding part of the job. The rest of my time is spent doing administration. I am admissions tutor for psychology and so I do admissions days, give talks in schools, and spend lots of time responding to phone calls and emails about admissions stuff and going to meetings to decide on admissions policy and so on.

An average day is split between all three tasks which makes it very difficult to focus and I tend to find that a lot of
my research writing gets done at weekends and during the evenings. It is an all-consuming job!

You’re well known for your book, "Discovering Statistics Using SPSS for Windows: Advanced Techniques for Beginners" which is very popular with students. How did the book come about?

I’m delighted to hear it’s popular. It came about because when I was doing my PhD I was getting really frustrated with the lack of statistics books that told me what I wanted to know and were entertaining to read. I guess I just thought ‘wouldn’t it be nice if there was a book about statistics that made me laugh’. Anyway, to fund my PhD I used to teach statistics to undergraduates and then to postgraduates and I used to produce these daft little handouts with stupid examples on them that people seemed to like. At the time I still had some connections to City University and I met this bloke Dan Wright there who was very into his stats and was co-ordinating a series of books for Sage. We were out one night having a few beers and he suggested I write a book for the series. I think I probably laughed and said ‘don’t be an idiot I couldn’t write a book’, but he basically got me drunk and before I knew it I’d agreed. So, he helped me put a proposal together and luckily it got accepted.

At this point I had actually completed my PhD so it was an incredibly stupid thing to do .. you know, take on writing a book when I already had a book-length thesis to write. The other funny thing is that Sage contracted me to write a 200 page (max) book, and me being the way I am I wanted this thing to be a work of perfection so it ended up being 500 pages! They were literally screaming at me to stop bloody writing!

I discovered recently that these sorts of over-runs are very expensive and they were convinced that it wouldn’t recoup its costs, that’s why they ended up persuading me to do the typesetting - basically they were trying to save money because they thought it could potentially flop! It amuses me no end that it recently became their top-selling book (although still a very long way from the Waterstones’ bestsellers shelf at this stage...).

In all the book took me about 18-24 months to write and I am very proud of it. Having said that I’m just writing a second edition and so I’m going through it spotting all the things I don’t like about it ... it’s also more serious than I
remember it being?? I can honestly say that I am absolutely staggered by how well it has been received. I didn’t expect it to sell at all (well, I thought my mum would probably buy a copy). Most important I’ve had so many nice emails from people saying it has helped them - from all over the world, which never ceases to amaze me. Every time I get one, cheesy though it sounds, it really does give me warm glow - like I might’ve actually done something worthwhile.

Will there be a chapter on loglinear models? This was the only technique not covered in the book which was a course requirement on my statistics course.

  Yes, that was supposed to be in the first edition but like I said, the publishers stopped me writing!

Which aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?

  I absolutely love teaching .. it’s definitely the most rewarding part of the job: contributing to someone’s education is just an amazing experience. There is no better feeling than having someone tell you that they didn’t understand something until you explained it to them, or that you helped them to achieve something that they didn’t expect. I also (obviously) love research: one of the great beauties of this job is that you can put your mind to answering any scientific question you like, so you have no excuse to ever be bored.

  Having said that, I also enjoy the fact I get to play football twice a week.

Who do you consider to have been the most influential Psychologist in your own life?

  Without a doubt it would be Graham Davey, who was my PhD supervisor (and now colleague at Sussex). I know that sounds terribly sycophantic, but I think most people would say the same - your PhD supervisor *should* have a profound impact on the way you look at psychology! There’s no question that I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing now if it hadn’t been for Graham, and I’m still in awe of his ability to easily pick out important theoretical issues in a way that I just can’t!

  I suppose I’m quite behaviourist in my outlook so Watson, Skinner and Hans Eysenck have been quite influential too (but again, that’s largely Graham’s fault!). There are
hundreds of other psychologists that I really admire and I'm constantly meeting new ones.

What can undergraduates do that would support later PhD work and teaching?

To do a PhD having a first helps (but isn't essential). The basic problem is you have to get funding which either means applying to ESRC for a grant (in which case having a first will help but isn't essential) or applying for a teaching bursary from the department you're going to (in which case it depends on who you're up against, but having a first won't do you any harm). Teaching bursaries basically mean you do teaching and in return the department pays for your PhD and living expenses! Funding is the hard part. The other thing you have to do is find a supervisor willing to take you on and they will vary in their views of whether you need a first or not (you'll need a 2:1 for sure though). The other thing you can do is getting a stonking grade in your final year research project (that always looks good to a potential supervisor)!

In terms of teaching, I'd just say once you're on your Ph.D. put your name forward for teaching (if you're not already on a teaching bursary) - you'll get paid for it and it's good experience! Most universities have training sessions for new teachers but it really is a matter of just getting stuck in and learning from your own mistakes. The first seminar I ever took was absolutely dreadful .. I won't go into details, but suffice it to say I was quite shy back then and was absolutely scared stiff and it went hideously wrong! Still, it didn't put me off. Lecturing still scares me to this day, but after the first 5 minutes I usually calm down!

Desert Island Psychology Papers!
You are sent away to a desert island, which has ample food and shelter but no psychology library. You can only take three Psychology papers or books with you. Which are the three most influential papers / books to you, which you couldn't leave behind?

Can't I take some CDs and my guitar instead? Oh, well, if I'm stuck with psychology books/papers then to be honest I've got so much I've been meaning to read that I'd probably take something I hadn't read before. However, if you're forcing me to take stuff that I have read before then I'd probably take the following:
Ecological Learning theory by Graham Davey.
Just because I thought it was a great book when I was an undergraduate, really nicely written and a very interesting view of basic animal learning.

Tabachnik & Fidell: using multivariate statistics (or possible Howell's Statistical methods for psychology).
I’ve been meaning to read Tabachnik and Fidell from cover to cover for years so a desert island would be a great opportunity .. what I have read is great though. If I took Howell it would simply be because I seem to dip into it most days when I can’t find the answers in my own book (and yes, I do read my own book for statistical advice - crazy eh!? - I’m not the oracle of statistical wisdom that some assume I am!)

Mackintosh 'Conditioning and associative learning', because my grandad bought it for me not long before he died, and I probably need to read it again!

What subjects do you think will be taught in undergraduate Psychology departments in 20 years time?
I think this will very much depend on the BPS. One thing is for sure research methods will still be taught! I think it will always be a bit fragmented because psychology is such a diverse and interesting topic and the BPS (who accredit degrees and provide benchmarking for course content) will want to keep the breadth in the degree programs.

I don’t think it will change too radically unless another discipline of psychology becomes particularly prominent. One thing I hope will change is that clinical psychology is not currently one of the BPS core areas and I think it should be - many people do their degrees because of an interest in clinical psychology and to my mind (although I am biased) it should be in the core curriculum.

Where do you see yourself in 20 years time?
Enjoying a quieter pace of life on a beach somewhere having had a nervous breakdown. Alternatively, I’ll still be trying to write the perfect statistics textbook ....
Today’s Children...Tomorrow’s Future
By Angela Mcneilly
An Interview with Jim Boyle, Course Director, MSc
Educational Psychology,
Strathclyde University, Glasgow

Turning on the television to yet another news report on youth crime, one can’t help but view the methods being implemented currently to tackle such issues as bearing some relation to the old adage...you know the one...it involves a horse, a bolt and a door? Psychology students are taught very early in their studies about the importance of early childhood developmental processes; Freud and Piaget are but two of the names that become indelibly etched on student minds within this context, therefore it can be seen that the role of the educational psychologist is not only one of vital importance to a child in need but one which can offer much to society in general. Yet all one has to do is ask any schoolteacher in most schools throughout the country and they will all agree that there is a severe lack of qualified educational psychologists within the British education system. So how can this be explained? After all there is a high level of psychology students graduating every year...what prevents those who are interested in this field from seeking postgraduate qualifications? Without wanting to open a minefield of political satire, perhaps the answer in part lies in communication of information. This article therefore seeks to briefly explain the ethos behind one such postgraduate course.

The philosophy of the programme at Strathclyde University takes on a holistic approach. It adopts an ecological view of the consultation process and how the individual’s difficulties are addressed while applying psychological theory and research with respect to the challenges that are faced in the attempt to ensure social inclusion. The MSc at Strathclyde is a two year full-time programme within which three major theoretical perspectives are drawn upon. These are: symbolic interactionism (involves highlighting the extent to which problems can be seen as
being situation specific), systematic approaches (highlighting the cyclical nature of the process of change) and social constructivism (which highlights how language can be used to construct and deconstruct with respect to labeling and pathologising the individual).

Having worked on a volunteer basis during my final year at university with offenders and youngsters at risk of offending I became aware that no amount of punitive measures will ever fully prevent youth and the subsequent, adult crime that takes place in our society. This is not to be dismissive of the current criminal justice system per se but highlights in my humble opinion the idea that youth crime is primarily a societal problem which should be tackled at its very roots...when the child is still a child. If a child for whatever reason cannot function 'normally' within the expected norms of the education system, and appropriate interventions are not applied, that child may very well go on to face a lifetime of difficulties. All is not without hope, there are a great many agencies in existence today which aim to help and support children in our society who through no fault of their own in many cases, face extremely difficult life experiences. In this context and in my humble opinion, educational psychologists hold a very important role in our children's future. Government bodies should view this as not only a vital role but also one, which should be held in honorable esteem as, if today’s children are tomorrow’s future, then surely we should be investing accordingly in them?

I would like to point out at this stage that these opinions are purely my own personal ones and came about in part due to my own experience with some of the individuals I worked with during my voluntary experience. It was painfully obvious to me in some cases that had the individual benefited from aid while within their education experience, their lives may have taken on a very different perspective. It wasn’t until I carried out my final year empirical project which required the help of school age participants that I became aware of the shortage of such help...too late for me at that point to change career direction but hopefully articles such as this may in some small way help by highlighting the need for and the importance of, qualified educational psychologists within our education system.

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1 Strathclyde University MSc Educational Psychology Prospectus.
James Boyle, the MSc course Director at Strathclyde University, gave the following interview to me, we at the BPS/SMG would like to thank him for taking time out of his very busy schedule to do so. He also kindly allowed his email address to be included at the end of the interview should anyone require any further information regarding MSc educational psychology or indeed on the role of the educational psychologist.

Could you briefly explain the main role of an educational psychologist?
The role of an educational psychologist is to work at the levels of the individual child or family, the classroom, the school (or other educational establishment) and the local authority to promote social inclusion and raise the standards of achievement for all children and young people in the 0-19 age-range. It's a challenging job, but one which offers great variety.

What requirements do you ask of applicants for the MSc Educational Psychology programme at Strathclyde?
Applicants are required to have a first or second class Honours degree in Psychology (or equivalent) which is recognised by the British Psychological Society as providing the graduate basis for registration, around two years professional experience of work with children, young people or families, and evidence of an understanding of the work of educational psychology services. Competition for places is high, with 174 applicants for the 2003 intake, and this can drive up the minimum standards. Applicants to Scottish programmes are not required to have PGCEs, but in the rest of the UK, a PGCE and teaching experience are currently required, although this may change in the future.

How many places are there on the programme and how long does it take to complete?
There are currently 24 funded places at both Strathclyde and Dundee. Scottish programmes are full-time and take two years to complete. Successful completion of the programme and a probationary year meet the requirements for registration as a Chartered Educational Psychologist. Programmes elsewhere in the UK currently offer a one-year full-time MSc with a two-year probationary period, but are scheduled to offer three-
year programmes leading to a doctorate qualification from 2005.

What is the philosophy behind the Strathclyde educational psychology programme?
We believe that educational psychologists can make a distinctive contribution by bringing to bear an ecological approach to the processes of consultation and problem-solving. Such a holistic approach recognises the limitations of traditional, ‘within-child’ deficit explanations of learning, social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. In terms of theoretical perspectives, the programme is informed by symbolic interactionism, highlighting the extent to which the understanding of problems can be situation-specific; systemic approaches, highlighting the cyclical nature of the process of change; and social constructivism, highlighting how the language of ‘deficits’, labeling and pathologising is constructed and how it can be deconstructed by means of language.

What are your feelings about the number of places currently available on educational psychology courses?
Currently, there are 48 funded places available in Scotland, which should be sufficient to meet the needs of the profession in the foreseeable future. However, there may be further expansion should proposals to extend the statutory remit to include the 19-24 age-range be accepted. The number of funded places for programmes in the rest of the UK may be more problematic, however.

I appreciate that this may be a subjective question but would you agree that educational psychologists contribute a vital role in the future of our children?
Yes. Educational psychologists are involved in consultation, assessment, intervention, training, research and policy development with key stakeholders in a wide range of settings. They are also routinely involved in work with other professionals in multi-disciplinary teams in a local authority. As a result, they can make a difference. Increased accountability has also resulted in a greater emphasis upon
the monitoring and evaluation of service delivery and practice. It is encouraging to note that consumer surveys and focus groups reveal high levels of user satisfaction with the contributions that educational psychologists make.

Psychology overall has progressed in leaps and bounds in the last few decades. What would you like to see in the way of changes occurring for the future role of the educational psychologist in the coming decade?

This issue was recently considered by a working group on the provision of educational psychology services in Scotland set up by the Scottish Executive Education Department (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/peps-01.asp). The working group identified a number of changes that would be important in the coming decade. I would like to highlight three. Firstly, time-sampling studies reveal that administrative tasks can take up to 25% of an educational psychologist’s working time. I would like to see psychologists being freed up from routine administration that could be carried out by others and the time released used for intervention and practitioner research linked to evidence-based practice. Secondly, the development of more formal structures for continuing professional development (CPD) linked to the dissemination of good practice would be beneficial. This would tie in with the BPS’ proposals regarding a CPD framework for applied chartered psychologists. Finally, proposals to extend statutory responsibilities to cover the 19-24 year age-range have implications for the links between educational and clinical psychologists. I would welcome the development of joint training initiatives and closer working practice with particular regard to therapeutic work.

Thank-you Jim for all your help and advice.

Jim Boyle can be contacted at jboyle@strath.ac.uk

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The Future Of Psychology- A Thespian Perspective
By Angela Mcneilly
Some 20 something years ago I experienced for the first time live theatre. This had been courtesy of one of my better schoolteachers who had ran the after school drama club, she had taken a group of us to the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow. It was a wonderful experience but nothing compared to my return visit there two decades later. On July the 19th this year we took our seats in the very beautiful, very old and very grand Citizen’s theatre to witness our son’s first live stage performance in a real theatre. By this point you will perhaps be wondering what on earth this has to do with the future of psychology indeed psychology at all...please bear with me.

Having two sons is a blessing I have always said, as although there is of course the usual sibling rivalry they both are quite simply the most precious gifts we have ever received. Our eldest at 17 has spread his wings and ventured out into the world of adulthood. He has no idea of course of how absolutely proud we are of him and all that he has achieved so far in his short life...yes egocentrism has returned! Our first born dearly beloved is as different from his brother as any two people can be yet his younger brother is often mistaken for his elder in family photographs such is the wonder of genetics. Still wondering where this is going? Well wonder no further...personality. From the same genes both our sons have grown yet their personalities are strikingly different. Both equally appealing in their own right and perhaps second time around as parents we knew a little more but having brought them both up following the same morals and principles it just makes one wonder...again...what lies behind the mystery of personality.

This article however...before you all switch off thinking it is just another personality lecture...is not about personalities per se but what they help us achieve...oh yeah and while we are at it, a look to the future of psychology added in just for good measure.

Sitting there in that theatre I felt goose bumps rise as the show began. The kids involved came from all over Scotland and had auditioned several months earlier for a place. They had then spent many many hours raising funds to pay for the course as the Scottish Youth Theatre is a charity based organisation and encourages all its participants to attempt to raise at least some of the money themselves. This I think is a fantastic way of teaching children the value of money whilst encouraging them to work towards goals they set for themselves. For two weeks many of the kids, including our
own 12 year old, who hadn’t been away from home longer than 4 nights before, stayed on a residential basis. Just as well really as the first week called for 9-hour workshops, the second week, 11-hour workshops and boy did all their hard work show. This is where the science bit comes in...as I have said, there were kids from all over Scotland, many who had never met each other before, boys and girls ranging in ages from 12 upwards and each one with their own personality. The strength of these personalities was obvious from the very first moment on day one when the kids left their parents to join together as a theatre company. No tears of fear or moments of angst at leaving their families behind, these kids embraced the adventure they were about to go on. What gives a child the ability to do this? Confidence, self-esteem and... oh yes and an extravert personality does help! I watched with tears of pride pricking my eyes as the boy we had left behind 2 weeks previously shone on the stage, bathing in his moments of glory and thriving on the audience’s gasps of pleasure and rapturous applause. This little kid of ours who had not long left the comfort of the womb in relative terms, was there on that stage giving the performance of his life...(to date)...without a nerve in sight. Which set of genes did he get this ability from? His father is a quiet reserved type of guy...you know the sort...any more laid back and he’d be sleeping. His mother, yes I hold my hand up I am known for my moments of attention seeking...usually when I have had one too many though! Certainly I could never walk those boards myself. So what does that leave? Our parenting skills, have we handled our responsibilities well enough to enable this kid to have such levels of confidence and self-esteem? Why then isn’t our eldest up there too in the limelight, as it is he much prefers to shine on the footie field? If anyone has the answer do me a favour and keep it to yourself as I suspect once the answers to the age old mystery of personality types is solved, we as a species will become very boring and stagnant.

So this leads me to the future of psychology bit. One of the scenes the kids performed was on the theme of the evolution of man. Now I am no theatre critic and words fail me when I try to describe just how these kids got this across but let’s just say it was the best explanation of evolutionary psychology I have ever seen. From the slime and the sludge mans ascent was depicted...his progress to walking man, his discovery of fire and meat eating right through to what
perhaps can be seen to be his descent, in his ability to kill his fellow man in war. A truly profound look at evolution with an equally profound message behind it...we made the mess and now we have to clear it up, well that's what I got from it anyway! In relation to the future of psychology, I seem to remember way back in my earliest student days reading something about some guys taking psychology to the stage in order to promote it to the masses. Having witnessed it first hand (although I presume it wasn't aiming to be a psychology piece) I would totally advocate it...after all isn't learning so much more fun when it is entertaining as well? So in this coming decade of the BPS/SMG perhaps that is something we could all try and not just in relation to psychology, let's stop looking at what we study as work and stop to remember, we chose to study...and there is no reason why it can't be fun too.

At last years conference in Bournemouth I remember speaking to someone who was a not only a psychology student but a drama student (if you recognise yourself here my apologies for not remembering your name and perhaps you could take my idea further with some suggestions or let us know what you have been up to...emails to myself or Avril?) I thought at the time what a fabulous idea to amalgamate the two disciplines...although having said that psychology is at the basis of everything we do from the minute we wake up until...yes well... even when we dream too! So in order to promote psychology to all surely we must make the most of all mediums...the theatre is one such medium and I am a living witness to this. Psychology student or not I got so much more from that show than just parental pride and admiration I learned that if we are indeed to promote this discipline we love so much to all, then starting with the children we stand a very good chance of succeeding especially when we make learning so exciting.

As I drove around the corner on the final day I witnessed something very special, a whole lot of kids who two weeks previously had been total strangers, hugging each other good bye...my boy included. Many of the girls were shedding tears such was their fondness for their new found friends, both male and female. Such an open and unashamed display of emotion was a treasure to witness in this stiff upper lip society of ours so to the boys and girls of the Scottish Youth Theatre Summer Festival 2003, many many congratulations and well done!!! I was so very proud to have
been there to see your performance and it is a memory that will stay with me always—Thank you!!!

To all psychologists out there, budding or otherwise, don’t always think the best lessons come from a textbook...look around you, the environment we eat sleep and breath in holds many wondrous surprises and often you may come upon them when you least expect it just as I did that warm summer evening in the Citizens Theatre!

Angela McNeilly
Deputy-Editor Psych-Talk...and very proud mum!
email: angelamcneilly@aol.com

Any ideas, suggestions or events relating to this article can be sent to the above or Avril Cadden our Editor at acadden@blueyonder.co.uk

How to get the best advice from academics
By Dr Petra Boynton

It’s a rainy Wednesday morning and Professor _________ arrives in her office after spending the previous week abroad at a conference. She is jetlagged, cold, stressed, and has a busy day of lectures and meetings ahead of her. Before that she has to answer all her post and emails. In the correspondence there are ten requests for information from students, and all of them will end up in the bin. But before you categorise Professor_______ as a queen bee who’s too up herself to talk to students, let’s see things from her point of view. She’s busy, which is reason enough not to answer every request she gets, but perhaps something else is going on? Maybe it's what’s in those letters and emails she receives.

Every day lecturers and researchers receive requests for information like our professor, and in many cases this networking is a skill that is important to learn and vital for your future career – particularly if you want to be an academic. However, there are right and wrong ways to go about making links and getting information, and the aim of
this paper is to outline some key blunders people make, whilst suggesting some useful solutions to improve your networking skills. Although some of the examples given may seem harsh to you, the purpose of the paper isn’t to make you feel you can’t ask for help, or aren’t yet in a senior enough position to do so. It’s to help you avoid wasting your time and other people’s.

I’m an academic working in the area of sex and relationships. It’s a popular area, and the result is I’m frequently quoted in the press as well as being invited to speak at conferences. I’m also interested in the field of research methods, and all this means I’m regularly the target of students who want help with their dissertations. Mostly I want to help out, but like Professor__________ I’m often put off doing so because of the way I’m approached. So before we go any further, let’s look at the most common mistakes people make.

Five Ways to Irritate an Academic
1. Expect them to do your work for you
Professor________ switches on her answering machine. One of the messages goes like this “Hi Professor, I’m Dave and I’m doing a dissertation on such-and-such. I’d like you to help me, as it’s your area I believe. My mobile number is…so you can call me back” Strangely this is an approach we hear all the time. Ask yourself, would you want to call him back? Dave won’t be getting a call. And nor do people who write in asking for a list of papers, want you to give them a literature search print out, or who’d like you to read or edit their work. Sometimes people try this in a face-to-face approach. One of my colleagues encountered a student who said "I want to start my writing-up next week so could you make sure you’ve done the literature review by then".
Avoid this mistake by…having a specific question, call the person in question - never ask them to call you back, and don’t ask them to do anything that you can’t do yourself.

2. Give a free tutorial
One of my colleagues is a statistics wizard, and he’s written a couple of ‘rough guides’ to stats. He’s frequently emailed or called by students wanting him to tell them how to do t-tests, or even sending him datasets to look at! If you call a lecturer from another university with a research question that suggests
you want tuition rather than information, don’t be surprised if they don’t want talk to you. 
Avoid this mistake by...using existing resources (see Box One below). Talk to your course tutors, or get extra guidance. 
Don’t feel that in approaching another lecturer elsewhere you can hide your ignorance on a particular topic. Your lecturers are there to help you and would rather know if there’s something you’ve not understood. If you have a problem with the standard of supervision offered by your tutor, you need to raise this with your institution.

3. Assume they have lots of spare time
Professor_______ like lots of her peers is often called by students who want to engage her in a conversation. She’s quite famous and senses they want to tell other people they’ve talked to her. Like most of her peers she has very little time. Many students assume that their lecturer’s jobs revolve around teaching, but actually they also have course planning, supervision, marking, and administration to do, not to mention applying for funding, running studies and writing papers or books. And some may also have consultancy or other work positions too. Therefore they really don’t have time to spare on long conversations or to enter into email pen-pal relationships.
Avoid this mistake by...asking a specific question, and only following it up if absolutely necessary or if invited to do so.

4. Expect them to answer something you don’t understand
If you’ve not thought out your research question or aren’t sure of what you’re looking for, then formalise the idea before networking. You don’t have to be exactly certain of what you want to find out, after all that’s what networking is about. However, if you’ve no idea what you could do for a dissertation then don’t expect a busy academic to find an answer or idea for you.
Avoid this mistake by...having a general idea about what you want to do and use other experts as a resource for specific information – for example, ask them for a copy of a paper they have given.

5. Believe they should reply to you
Professor_______ had a number of emails from a particular student asking for her to help with finding him references. She was too busy and didn’t reply (and frankly nor would
most of us). He eventually sent her an abusive email saying that she’d held up his project. He’d clearly not realised that our Prof’s job isn’t to do his work. Aside from that, many academics are busy, may be away, or have some other personal reason for not corresponding. Remember, the academic world is a small one. The student who upset our Professor may be interviewed for a job by her later in his career, or she could be a friend or research colleague of his tutor.

Avoid this mistake by...... remembering that if you try and keep your approach polite but you still don’t get a reply, not to take it personally. Certainly don’t send another message criticising the academic for not getting back to you. You should have other people in your networking strategy who will get back to you.

So how can you make your question stand out from the crowd? Apart from not making the mistakes outlined above, there are a number approaches you can take – and some of them begin before you consider making contact with an academic. That means using all available resources. Go to lectures and tutorials, talk over questions or problems with your tutors and your peers, and use your library. If you need to find information, then do literature review using the databases in your library (now’s a good time to take a class in literature searching if you’ve not already had it). If you can’t find a particular paper then ask your librarian or tutor for help. (Box One below contains search engines and useful resources). Read as widely as you are able, discussing pointers and questions with the most appropriate people. If you then discover a key paper by an academic and you want to know more – for example, they may refer to developing a questionnaire and you’d like to use a copy in your research – then this is when it’s appropriate to make contact. And once you’ve made that contact and they’ve helped you out, remember to thank them.
### Box One – Useful Study Resources

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<tr>
<td>Web of Science</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence Based Medical Information</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tripdatabase.com">http://www.tripdatabase.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science Search Engine</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sosig.ac.uk/harvester.html">http://www.sosig.ac.uk/harvester.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychinfo (Psychological Research)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apa.org/psycinfo">http://www.apa.org/psycinfo</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochrane Library of Systematic Reviews</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/cochrane.asp">http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/cochrane.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Practice Research Database</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gprd.com">http://www.gprd.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>How to choose an educational search facility</td>
<td><a href="http://www.albany.edu/library/internet/choose.html">http://www.albany.edu/library/internet/choose.html</a></td>
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The following books may also help:

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**Why do people approach academics if it’s not for information?**  
My experience suggests there are several reasons, outlined in Box Two below

### Box Two – Alternative Reasons for Making Contact

- Procrastination – “if I contact a number of experts it’ll seem like I’m getting on with my dissertation/essay/revision”.
- **Panic** – “help! I’ve a project to hand in next week and I’ve not even started it yet. If I call so-and-so they may be able to write some of it for me”.
- **Laziness** – “I’m not really bothered about doing much extra work, but that person knows a lot about the area. If I call them they can do the work for me and give me all they know”.
- **Uncertainty** – “I’m not very confident about my abilities. If I ask other people they can help me understand what I have to do, or at least give me some ideas better than my own”.
- **Misunderstanding** – “I have no idea what my lecturer wants me to do. Perhaps if I talk to another one they’ll be able to help me, and if I pick someone from another university my lecturer will never find out about what I don’t know”.
- **Kudos** – “So-and-so is famous. If I say I got ideas from them my grade is bound to go up”.
- **Megalomania** - “I’m fabulous and my research idea is amazing, I should tell Dr____ because they work in this area and will be impressed by my ideas”.

Most academics can see through these, and particularly if they think you are being lazy or haven’t managed your time they won’t feel inclined to help you – especially if you aren’t their student. Sometimes I hear from a student with an amazing idea and am all too happy to provide additional information, or even have an email discussion with them. If I sense a student is enthusiastic I’ll also be willing to provide them with ideas or other contacts who could help them. Remember though, that although your project or essay may seem very exciting to you, it may seem less so to a person whose life’s work is in the area. They may have heard of your idea time and again, so contacting them in the hope they’ll offer you praise that you can use to justify your work may not work. And beware – not all academics are honest souls. It’s not unknown for them to ‘adopt’ an idea that a student has let slip, and pursue it.

This paper has outlined the common mistakes in making contact, reasons why people are prone to make them, and what to do before approaching an academic. If you feel you do need to make contact, what’s the best way forward? Use conference abstracts as well as papers to find contacts who are working in the area where you need information. You may also want to make links with doctoral or postdoctoral students who may have more time to talk to you, or may be closer to a particular research idea. Never feel you should only approach academics who are famous or cited most in the
press. They’re also more likely to be the busiest and won’t have time to deal with your enquiries.

To sum up, only ask for information you genuinely need, make contact with the most appropriate person, and have a specific question. Be polite, keep to the point, and remember to thank them. If they provide something that significantly adds to your work (for example, a copy of an interview schedule), it is good practice to record this formally in an acknowledgements section, and (if you feel it’s appropriate) to send a copy of this work to the academic who helped you.

Remember, this paper is a guide on how to get the best from networking, not to talk you out of it. Thirteen years ago I wrote a letter to a senior academic saying I wanted to do a PhD evaluating research on sexually explicit material and where could I find funding? He replied saying I could do the research with him. Which I did. Asking for help and advice can get you exactly what you want, so long as you know what that is, and you make it easy for the person you are asking to help you.

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**SO MUCH NEW RESEARCH, SO LITTLE TIME?**

The best new psychological research delivered free to your inbox

Examiners like students to show they’re up to date with the latest research. But there’s so much of it...journals can be expensive, and in any case, who has the time to wade through them all and understand the studies? Well, we do!

The Society has set up a new e-mail research digest service aimed primarily at A-level students, undergraduate students and their lecturers. We are constantly trawling the journals for the best psychology has to offer, and each fortnight we write fun, plain English summaries of those most relevant to your studies, showing you how the research fits into your syllabus. The digest is free and available to all.
Here's some tasters to show you just what is on offer:

**Designed to boogie**
Music permeates through human culture in every corner of the globe. But why should our brains have evolved this ability to enjoy music? It's been suggested that it's merely an epiphenomenon – a coincidental side-effect of the cerebral hardware we've evolved for language. But in a special 'music and the brain' issue of Nature Neuroscience, Isabelle Peretz (University of Montreal) and Max Coltheart (Macquarie University, Sydney) describe patients with localised brain damage that exhibit the condition of 'amusia', leaving them unable to recognise the tunes of familiar songs, and yet able to recognise the lyrics. Some people are even born with the deficit. These and other cases strongly suggest there's a dedicated music module in the brain; that we’re ‘designed’ to boogie.


Syllabus advice: refer to biological psychology modules on localisation of function; to comparative modules on evolutionary explanations of behaviour; and to the concept of modularity in modules on the cognitive approach in psychology.

**Therapy – the patients’ perspective**
Sophia Messari (Royal London Hospital) used semi-structured interviews to find out what five patients diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia thought about their cognitive behavioural therapy sessions. Several themes emerged from discourse analyses of the interview transcripts. Four of the five clients described their therapy sessions as a meeting between two equals that trusted each other. And they felt this was vitally important – an interesting finding given such issues have been described elsewhere as the 'non-specifics' of
therapy. It wasn’t all good news though – four clients felt that, in part, their therapy was a means of demonstrating compliance with the medical establishment.


Syllabus advice: Refer to psychopathology modules on schizophrenia and the treatment of mental disorders.

Why don’t kids ever want to help?
Using story-telling, Susan Sy (Mount St Mary’s College, US) and colleagues asked pre-school children to rate the happiness of someone who either failed to act altruistically (e.g. not sharing), acted altruistically (e.g. sharing), or victimised someone (e.g. stealing) – with a teacher present or absent. The kids’ ratings suggested they rated happiness mainly in terms of selfish gain, not yet having a fully developed sense of morality. For example, they didn’t rate an altruistic person as any happier except when a teacher was present – whom they presumably thought would offer praise. They rated victimisers as happy too, and happier still in the presence of a teacher – perhaps imagining the perpetrator would be extra satisfied at having ‘got away with it’.


Editor’s Note:
Thanks to Christian Beresford Jarrett, Editor, 'E’ Research Digest, at the BPS

INTRODUCING psychWIRE...
"There is no such thing on earth as an uninteresting subject:
the only thing that can exist is an uninterested person"
- G. K. Chesterton

There are two kinds of students when it comes to studying any particular subject.

Firstly, there is the 'passive' kind. These people basically go to lectures, take their notes, and forget about their subject after leaving the lecture theatre. Obtaining their degree is no different to cashing a cheque after working for a period of time in an average job. The knowledge they obtain is soon discarded after university as they continue doing what is expected of them and basically carry on with their lives as though nothing ever really happened.

The second kind is the 'active' kind. This type go to lectures, take their notes, but do not forget about the lecture after it has finished. They assimilate all of their newly acquired knowledge and let it affect them. They discuss it with others. They end up seeing the world in a different light.

It is the second kind of student that a new website has been set up for. If you are reading this, then you are already in that category. The website is called psychWIRE and it is there for people like YOU.

It exists for students and anyone else to get together and discuss anything that has a psychological slant to it. This can range from advice to other students, right through to academic reviews, and across the spectrum to even your own theories and ideas concerning psychological topics. If you look at what is there at the moment, you can see that we are open to all who wish to contribute, in whatever form that they can.

This project is fairly new, but has already received a great deal of positive feedback from others. It is forging links with other sites and message boards (including the very popular psychstudent message board). It will be developed constantly, to include as wide a range of information and topics as possible.

All that is needed now is more people to visit the site, offer suggestions for how to improve it, and send in any articles that they feel may be of interest to others.

Internet Links
CBT with the Adult Mental Health Team
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I have spent the last year as an Assistant Psychologist in an Adult Mental Health Team. The job was in a standard Community Mental Health Team in a very rural area. I was one of two Assistants, there was one psychologist and the rest of the team were nurses, social workers and Occupational Therapists.

The approach used by the psychologist was Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is a mixture of behavioural therapy such as desensitisation, relaxation and activity scheduling and cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapy involves strategies such as helping the client to identify and challenge their negative thoughts or anxious predictions so that they learn to think in more constructive ways. Newer approaches to CBT also include Mindfulness, which teaches clients to distance themselves from their thoughts and Acceptance and Commitment therapy, which focuses on the client’s values. One of the key assumptions of CBT is that there is an interactional relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The therapist always aims to work collaboratively with the client and CBT empowers clients by broadening choices they can make through guided discovery. It is goal orientated and problem focused and it is also educational; CBT aims to teach the client to be their own therapist (Hawton, K., Salkovskis, P. M., Kirk, J. and Clark, D. M., 1989.)

Our duties as assistants involved having our own caseload of up to 10 clients who had been assessed by the intake team as having a ‘moderate’ degree of mental illness and who presented with problems of anxiety, depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or Eating Disorder, etc. We assessed the client and constructed a Case Formulation, which is a process whereby CBT (or whatever other psychological theory is being used) guides the interpretations of the findings
of the assessment, and helps to build an individualised approach to therapeutic treatment (Tarrier, N. and Calam, R., 2002). We then created and carried out a programme of therapy based on the formulation and guided by programmes such as those written by Hawton, Salkovskis, Kirk and Clark (1989).

It has been an amazing experience. Actually seeing psychology working – to have someone come to you at the beginning, low with depression and anxiety and to complete a programme of therapy, to help that person to learn to care for themselves psychologically. To see them finish the sessions considerably happier than when they began, ready to face new challenges such as getting a new job, etc, is very satisfying.

I have also grown psychologically myself. If you use CBT enough, you actually begin to believe it yourself! I am finishing my contract considerably more confident than I began it. I have managed to treat my own social phobic tendencies as well as those of my clients and would recommend the book Low Self Esteem by Melanie Fennel to anyone who feels they have less than perfect self-esteem.

The only down side has been my initial naivety. I thought that once I had the Assistant’s post I had cracked it! Wrong! The struggle to get a place on a Clinical course is even harder than that of getting an Assistant’s post. And of course, if you fail to get in one year, you know that you have another year until you can try again. However, I feel I now have a good CV, good experience, confidence in my ability and stand a much better chance this year.

Whatever happens next, even if I never make it as far as being a psychologist, I will never regret my decision to leave nursing and take an awful wage because the experience has been so fantastic. One thing I would say to anyone interested in or having got an Assistant Psychologist’s post is to join your local Assistant Psychologist Support group. Mine has been invaluable to me – both in terms of mutual support and of information (Assistant Psychology jobs must be the most under-advertised jobs that there are).

Well, that’s enough reflection; I have to get on with my search for my next Assistant job now because my contract has nearly ended. I will be really sad to leave adult mental health but I can’t wait for the next challenge!
The importance of values in psychology
By Gareth Hagger-Johnson, The University of Edinburgh

Psychology is not value-free by any stretch of the imagination, since everything from topic-choice to publication is influenced by the values of researchers and funding bodies. The pervasive influence of values is not necessarily undesirable – values can play a supportive role in science and need not be covert, undisclosed beliefs that operate behind the scenes. We would benefit greatly from making values more explicit and evaluating the consequences of holding them. Indeed, “science without humanity” was one of Gandhi’s seven deadly sins (Smith, 2000). All humans have the right to posit values, and therefore so do psychologists (Smith, 2000). However, for applied psychologists (e.g. health, clinical) client groups experience directly the consequences of psychological theories put into practice via the research process. Prilletensky (1997) argued that psychologists would benefit from clear guidelines on how to appraise the moral implications of their (value-based) work.

The American Psychological Association (APA) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) have become increasingly involved in social advocacy. They have become involved in a ‘rhetoric of value controversy’ (Kendler, 1999). As examples,
Kendler points to the APA guidelines on affirmative action, abortion and nuclear freeze. The APA has adopted a position and made explicit its values by contributing to public political debate. Smith (2000) argues that this in our personal, political and psychologist roles we should as if there were not only truth, but also as if there were right or wrong choices and better or worse policies. We are adrift and useless unless we take our convictions, and those of our opponents, seriously. We have to address others’ values on their own turf, so that each argument is symmetrical, as Piaget would put it (Chapman, 1988). By creating conditions in which it is possible for others to see things from our point of view (e.g. in journals and at conferences), we create conditions for restructuring experience.

Currently, all speech takes place against a background of recognised values and norms, roles and institutions, rules and conventions. Only speech that fits within pre-established expectations is recognised as valid. Kurtinen et al. (1990) argued we must critically examine the conditions under which it is possible to achieve a rational consensus on “truth through discourse”. The “ideal speech situation” is one in which communication is optimised between a “community of truth seekers” such as psychologists. Theoretical discourse approximates these very conditions – scientists have equal opportunity to assume dialogue roles and to put forward and examine claims. However, this assumes that all scientists have equal opportunity to publish their work, which may not be the case. Nonetheless, the conditions of the “ideal speech situation” are an ideal to work towards.

To avoid alienating certain segments of society, Garfield (1983) argues that psychologists must be open about their values and be sensitive to how their work is perceived. If psychology is to be accepted as a “reliable agent for social change”, psychologists cannot be perceived as a group of detached individuals working on the fringe of normality. The fact that values rest on personal opinion does not make them arbitrary. Smith (2000) calls for a move towards “humane behavioural science” in which psychologists are qualified to work within a causal network where values are embedded at every stage of the research process. It makes no sense, to Smith (2000), to “pass the buck” to philosophy to deal with values, since “we are all in this together”. But since values are personal, how can psychologists agree on which are appropriate? Mental health provides an example of how
personal values feature in the work of psychologists. We all have a “mental health” and most people have strong views on this issue. And yet nowhere is there an agreed criterion of what positive “good” mental functioning should be.

Everyone has intuitions about the wrongs of genocide, torture and slavery (Kurtinen et al. (1990) and the rightness of human rights. But a theory of moral relativism, in which there is no right or wrong, provides no means for criticising these practices. The reverse, moral absolutism fails because no consensus can be reached. Kurtinen et al. (1990) conclude by calling for the emergence of a universal consensus. No theoretical, practical or metatheoretical claim should be exempt from critical examination.

Kurtinen et al. (1990) distinguish “epistemic” or “cognitive” values (e.g. the truth) from “nonepistemic” or “noncognitive” values (e.g. moral, political or social), both of which may feature in science. Epistemic values are a driving force in psychology and in the rest of science. While empirical knowledge cannot decide what is good or right, it can increase the range of what people know and possibly lead thinkers to modify their judgements (Kendler, 1999). Psychology can help evaluate the consequences of holding certain facts and values (e.g. stereotypes). Epistemic values are the basic goal of science, and understanding is achieved through theoretical knowledge. Yet since theories are value-dependent and data are theory-dependent, facts do not “speak for themselves”. What criteria, then, exist for theory-selection? To Howard (1985), value judgements are the only criteria we have.

Kuhn & McMullin (1983) agreed on five epistemic values: (1) predictive accuracy of a theory, internal coherence, no logical inconsistency or unexplained co-incidences; (2) external consistency, fits well with the established nomological network; (3) unifying power, the ability to bring together hitherto disparate areas of knowledge; (4) fertility, the ability not only to make correct, novel predictions but to function like a metaphor in English Literature to provide scientists with imagery; (5) simplicity and Ockham’s razor (the notion that one should always select the most simple solution). The fifth value is less widely accepted but still has aesthetic preference for many scientists. The authors agree that theory selection is a sophisticated form of a value-judgement exercise – not an algorithm we can use to select which of a set of competing theories is best. To Howard,
science is a cauldron in which competing theories struggle for acceptance, and epistemic values can help "weed out" the inept contributions.

Piaget is among the few commentators on relationships between science, psychology, knowledge and values. He was a genetic epistemologist who used psychology as a means for addressing epistemological questions. The study of children's development helped answer questions regarding the evolution of knowledge that in turn would provide criteria for deciding among different forms of judgement involving truth and value. His biographer, Chapman (1988), explains how a value-conflict (or disequilibrium) between the interests of truth (science) with those of value (religion) formed Piaget's early research questions:

This conflict was considered at the root of contemporary world problems, as well as being a source of personal anguish. [Chapman, 1988, p. 18]

The process of equilibrium regulates exchange of social values, by virtue of living in a common culture. His thinking began as follows: (1) Human beings need values by which to live; (2) Truth is such a value; (3) What happens if the search for truth in the form of science undermines the other values that make life meaningful? This was the major intellectual and spiritual crisis faced by Western civilisation in the years preceding World War One. If a method could be found for distinguishing inferior from superior forms of knowledge (and by implication, forms of judgement), this method could be applied to "questions of value as well as matters of fact". To Piaget, epistemology might aid us in choosing among different ways of judging among values or theories (Chapman, 1988).

Piaget did not argue that science and religion have their own separate spheres of activity. Rather, science and religion interpenetrate one another without losing their respective identities. At times, his own scientific writing acquired spiritual connotations. He referred to thought itself as the Divine-like condition of all existence. In tracing the history of forms of knowing, the genetic epistemologist became a medium by which thought became aware of itself – this could be experienced as a form of self-transcendence.

Values are also a suitable topic for study in psychology in their own right. To get a full grasp on human nature, we need to understand human values. Renner (2003) adopted an individual difference approach to values, defined as "guiding motives in life". He found that German nouns formed a five-
factor structure: (1) balance; (2) intellectualism; (3) conservatism; (4) salvation; (5) profit. Adjectives formed a four-factor structure: (1) balance; (2) salvation; (3) profit; (4) intellectualism. To Renner, values are “cognitive constructs” that explain preferences in life goals, principles and behavioural priorities. In other words, values predict behaviour. Values are imagined here to be stable, not bound to specific situations. Preliminary cross-cultural work on African languages shows some replicability outside Germany.

In conclusion, values need not be shared by all psychologists, but this situation is manageable by fostering an “ideal speech situation” where all claims are both voiced and open to scrutiny. Diversity of values in psychology might be taken as a value in itself, not incompatible with the shared fundamental of epistemic knowledge. We would do well to know what our values are and how they might influence our future work. This is particularly important if the wider public might experience the consequences of our research in applied settings.

References


Marbles – a Vygotskian Perspective
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Lev Vygotsky, a 20th century Russian intellectual, is generally accepted as the founder of the socio-cultural approach to developmental psychology (Miller, 2002). Despite the fact that Vygotsky was a contemporary of Piaget, his rise to prominence in the West did not begin until the 1960s when translations of his major works began to be published. Though Vygotsky’s perspective of childhood development is generally referred to as learning theory, through its application to real-world situations the practical relevance of the Vygotskian approach may be understood. Vygotskian learning theory will be used here to explore the game of marbles; appropriately, a game firmly grounded in the social and cultural aspects of childhood.

Marbles is a game which is seemingly understood by everybody despite the lack of written rules. As rule based play involving the manipulation of small objects, marbles may offer a wide range of developmental opportunities from motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination to Piagetian notions such as class inclusion and conservation. However, Vygotsky’s work presents a challenge to Western theories of developmental psychology, such as those of Piaget, in their assumption that individuals operate independently from their physical and social environment.

The underlying assumption of Vygotsky’s theory of development is that the smallest unit worthy of analysis is the child acting within a social context. This context embraces the specific environment of the individual as well as the shared cultural beliefs of society in a broader sense. It may be
suggested that marbles inhabit both personal and general social spheres; the game is played by small groups of children whose only concern is their localised experience, whilst entire internet web sites testify to the games’ epic history, cross cultural popularity and continuing contemporary relevance. It is difficult to imagine a child developing in a context in which marbles in some format does not exist.

The specific context in which marbles is played is likely to be any location where groups of children can gather together under their own volition, for example, playgrounds, back yards, pavements etc. Adults are unlikely to have a direct supervisory role, as there are no written rules to read and explain, no complex equipment to demonstrate and no particular financial or social investment on behalf of parents. Whilst parental pride in the feats of their offspring may revolve around academic, artistic and sporting achievements, they are unlikely to extend to their child’s particular prowess at marbles. Nevertheless, context specific identities are formed, whereby a child can gain peer respect and a positive sense of self within the game regardless of their abilities in other spheres. Marbles therefore occupy an exclusively child-centred domain, where the game’s only relationship with adults is likely to involve nostalgia for their own marble-playing childhood.

The game of marbles has undoubtedly passed through the generations via the oral tradition. Though versions of the game have been documented, written rules have no place in the everyday context of the game. This raises a number of issues relating to Vygotskian theory. Firstly, though inevitably having some human origin, the game of marbles pre-dates the child; it already exists externally to the child, awaiting discovery. When a child first comes across marbles being played by other children, in order to participate independently, they must develop their skills and knowledge through interacting with their peers and with the game itself. Thus a skills gap is created between where a child is now and where they could be with assistance from other children. Vygotsky referred to this gap as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and suggested it could be closed through instruction and support or “scaffolding” (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, whilst it is possible to learn the rudiments of the game through observation, only through the understanding of the naming and value systems is a child able to participate on a higher level. Of course, these vital details are communicated
through language, which demonstrates Vygotsky’s view that language is a sign system fundamental to development (Vygotsky, 1978). He suggests that language is a necessary precursor to thought, which he in fact referred to as “internal speech”; thus through the process of internalisation, the child is enabled to form their own strategies for winning the game. This process illustrates the underlying Vygotskian principle that social interaction is the precursor to personal understanding – the external pre-dates the internal – whilst through further development, thought eventually precedes action (Vygotsky, 1960).

Interestingly, it is precisely this oral tradition of knowledge transfer that creates the different specific contexts for this particular game. It may be inferred that marbles will be played with differing rules, names and value systems in different locations – there are likely to be such differences even between two playgrounds within the same village. Thus just as the context of the game influences the way the child plays, children develop the game through their interaction with each other and with the marbles, thus influencing the context. Vygotsky emphasised this notion of interrelation; the idea that child and culture cannot be separated reflects the fundamental principle that culture (in this case the game of marbles) is a medium for development of the child and also subject to development by the child (Miller, 2002).

Vygotsky’s theory of play suggests that play develops according to the needs of the child. Here, in making an important distinction between a child’s “needs” and “wants”, he indicates that not all outcomes of play will be pleasurable for the child, but that even the unpleasant outcomes are developmentally important (Vygotsky, 1978). In comparison with other games, the “outcome” of a game of marbles can be particularly exhilarating or devastating for the respective winner and loser, since a common form of the game involves the winner keeping the loser’s marbles. Motivation for partaking in the game may stem from a desire to belong to a group, to gain admiration for a display of skill, a desire to win, or even an inability to opt out. Through marbles, the child has to balance their motivation to participate with the possibility of loss, not only of their pride but of their actual possessions. This would seem to involve a particularly complex emotional transaction for a child and one which may be more readily associated with the adult world; indeed it has
been suggested that marbles is a precursor to gambling and as such not entirely appropriate for children (Griffiths, 1998).

Exploring this notion further, it may be suggested that a game of marbles represents in childish terms many aspects of the adult world. Any child knows that full participation in the game cannot occur without an understanding of the differing values of the distinct types of marbles. Of course, the value is the context-specific value, and is completely unrelated to the real world purchase cost of each marble. In this sense, marbles are a child’s currency; knowing how to trade within the rules of the currency determines the likelihood of acquiring more marbles and thus becoming “wealthy” or the reverse. Just like real world interactions, friendships and rivalries are born out of marble-based wealth, and power systems evolve where the “richest” are able to determine the rules of the game. It is perhaps ironic that Vygotskian theory, which developed against a background of Marxist ideology, is being used to explore a game with such overt capitalist overtones. However, purposeful play is not always entirely mercenary; whilst the learning of most rule based games requires children to discard former naïve conceptions of the game, there is an aspect of marbles which invokes not only the context-specific, relative values of the marbles, but an acknowledgement of a co-existing personal value system. For example, a child may have their own “favourite” or “best” marble which may be more related to aesthetics or superstition than the value of the marble within the game. Playing may involve protecting or saving such a marble even where not economical to do so within the specific context. In this sense, a marble becomes a symbol with an independent identity, and it seems likely that whatever properties that created this phenomenon contributed greatly to the widespread popularity of the game itself.

With respect to the label of gambling however, it could be argued that unlike games which require betting on an outcome that is outside the control of the gambler, marbles encourages the players to bet on their own skill. To a large extent, the outcome of a card game depends on the luck of the deal whilst the result of a bet on a horse or other event is beyond the influence of the person placing the bet. However, playing with marbles as currency affords the opportunity to assess one’s own skill relative to others and decide whether the chances of winning are worth risking potential loss of marbles. In experiencing such a concrete loss or gain, a fuller
understanding of the meaning of “loss” and “gain” may be reached. Realisation that one's own gain results in another's loss and vice versa brings a complex emotional focus to the consequences of winning and losing. Because the game is so child-centred, there are no adults present to soften the experience by offering consolation to the losers and curtailing the gloating of the winners, the experience can be particularly intense.

Given such experiential intensity, it is perhaps unsurprising that many adults have vivid childhood memories involving marbles. What may be more surprising is the adult who has a general sense that marbles were present in their childhood, which is not driven by specific memories. It is almost as though the pervasiveness of the game has contributed to a type of collective memory in which a single marble has come to symbolise childhood. This may be understood through linking Vygotsky’s theory of memory with his emphasis on development through social interaction and the external pre-dating the internal. Vygotsky believed that what we refer to as memory is a process of reconstruction of previous experience rather than an automatic recall of fixed images (Kozulin, 1990). Thus personal reconstruction of experience constitutes individual memory. However the process of sharing and discussing memories leads to a repackaging of the memories to take account of the input of others. In the internalization process the meanings of the memories are then transformed, ready for the cycle to begin again. Thus it may be suggested that where a number of people share an experience, memories can merge to form a generally accepted version rather than context specific individual memories.

In conclusion then, it may be said that marbles, like society as a whole, is both a product of its history and subject to continual change. Though Vygotskian theory was conceived during the first half of the 20th Century, its versatility and contemporary relevance may be demonstrated through its application to the everyday interactions that form the basis of human development.

Notes

1. For example, www.yesterdayland.com contains details of the history of marbles, where to buy marbles and accessories,
marble books and video games, photographs of marbles and well used memory and messages boards.

2. Vygotskian theory has an overall orientation within Marxist philosophy, supporting such ideas that the mind is influenced by social interaction and that a socialist society contributes to the development of its less advanced members through the sharing of experience (Miller, 2002:381). However, on a more specific level, Vygotsky did not look to Marxism for intellectual guidance; in the 1920s Marxist theory had not explored any of the psychological concepts necessary for the study of mind or behaviour (Kozulin 1990:121).

3. The prevalence of such memories is evident from those posted on the www.yesterdayland.com memory board. For example, “I have a few marbles left in the house, I can’t remember if I have ever played marbles, but I must have or how did they get there?” (Bluechick, 1971)

References


Why are people scared of spiders?
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We all have friends who are scared of spiders – the thought of a spider makes them shiver, and any spider found in the house is disposed of as quickly as possible. We may even be one of these ‘spider-haters’ ourselves. For some people, the fear is stronger than this – they have a phobia of spiders, which can have a very negative impact on their life. It may lead them to avoid certain situations (holidays in exotic locations with large arachnids) and places (the attics of dusty old country houses), and can cause them great embarrassment. Although their reaction may seem extreme to others, for the phobic person it is a terrifying and uncontrollable sensation.

DSM-IV defines phobias as a psychological problem characterised by fear or avoidance of objects or situations that are not objectively dangerous, where the problem disrupts one’s life. They are common in the general population, with specific phobias, where the sufferer experiences this fear or avoidance in relation to a circumscribed object or situation, are found in 7% of men and 14% of women (Kessler et al, 1994).

Why is it that so many people are held hostage by a fear of such a small and (at least in the UK) harmless creature? The behavioural school suggested that spider phobia develops through conditioning, and this was demonstrated in Watson & Rayner’s (1920) well-known classic study on ‘Little Albert’, in which a small child was classically conditioned to acquire a phobia of white rats. However, later studies failed to replicate Watson & Rayner’s findings. It was seen that, in
fact, direct conditioning experiences are found only rarely in the development of specific phobias (e.g. Davey, 1992), and so a number of broader models of phobia acquisition and maintenance have been suggested, which combine conditioning explanations with other non-behavioural elements.

Seligman (1971) asked why it is that fear of some objects, such as spiders and snakes, is a great deal more common in the general population than fear of other objects, such as rabbits or chairs. His ‘preparedness theory’ suggested that humans are ‘prepared’ to associate fear with certain objects, and this means that we are much more readily conditioned to develop a phobia of these particular objects rather than others. Seligman proposed that this phenomenon a tool of evolutionary survival – the ‘prepared’ items that are more commonly the objects of phobias in humans are those that were threatening to our prehistoric ancestors. Modern man still carries the survival instinct, and so this evolutionary hangover is why so many people develop a phobia of harmless British house spiders.

Linked to this idea of evolutionary survival is that of disgust. Matchett & Davey (1991) suggested that we are ‘prepared’ to experience phobic disgust of certain animals because we associate them with disease and contamination. This ‘disease-avoidance’ model of phobias can be applied to all creepy-crawlies, including cockroaches, moths, and of course spiders. Thus people may be scared of spiders because of the threat of disease, and this causes them to avoid spiders, which perpetuates the fear.

Despite its intuitive appeal, there has been only mixed evidence for Seligman’s evolutionary theory, and the role of disgust in specific phobias is still unclear, with some studies finding that disgust plays a strong role and others only a minor one. In my student project I attempted to clarify the relative roles of disgust and fear in spider phobia. The study involved spider phobic volunteers repeatedly watching a spider video, and reporting their levels of disgust and anxiety. The volunteers were randomly allocated to three independent groups, and their emotional states of fear and disgust were manipulated by exposure to either a fearful object (a live tarantula), a disgusting object (fake vomit, made from a mix of parmesan cheese, yoghurt, vinegar and vegetable soup!) or a neutral object (a soft toy). Statistical analysis of the self-rated disgust and anxiety levels showed that being in an
emotional state of fear, but not being in a state of disgust, increased the phobic response to the spider video. The findings of the study therefore failed to lend support to the disease-avoidance model of animal phobias, and suggested that disgust is not in fact a separate causal factor in spider phobia.

So although people may develop a phobia of spiders because of conditioning, we still are not sure why spiders are the subject of more phobias than other animals, nor exactly why some people develop a phobia of spiders and others do not. The biological evolutionary explanation is still a possibility, and some researchers have also proposed a cognitive theory of specific phobias. The good news is that, if the fear becomes a phobia, it is treatable – many studies have found cognitive-behavioural therapy to be very effective. Although there is currently no one clear-cut answer as to why people are scared of spiders, we can at least do something about our fear if it becomes too disruptive to our lives.

References:


Positive mood facilitates both creative problem solving and memory recall
Summary

Current study examined whether positive state of mind, rather than neutral improved performance on cognitive tasks, such as creative and memory recall tasks. 44 non-psychology undergraduates aged between 18-24 completed cognitive tasks in either two conditions: positive or neutral mood. The hypothesis was that those participants who were positively induced would be able to create greater number of images and be able to recall full list of words using less number of memory trials, compared to the participants in the neutral mood condition. Results obtained supported the prediction, which meant that positive state of mind does improve performance on both creative and memory recall tasks.

Key words: Positive mood, cognitive ability, creativity and memory recall

Introduction

Mood maybe defined as an “intervening variable or predispositional factor that is a source of information or discriminable stimuli to the organism about the current functioning characteristics of the organism”. (Nowlis 1956, p.352). According to Isen and Shalker (1982), mild induced mood states affect a wide range of cognitive processes, including attention, memory retrieval and evaluation and judgmental processes. Earlier studies by Isen & Daubman (1984) and Isen and Means (1983), have all suggested that increased use of heuristics, more rapid decision making, and broadened categorisation among positive-affect participants, have been seen as evidence of lowered cognitive capacity. However, Isen, Daubman and Nowicki (1987), suggested that positive affect can indeed influence the way cognitive material is organised and thus influence creativity.

Isen et al (1987) conducted different experiments, in which the positive effect was induced by means of seeing a few minutes of a comedy film and also by obtaining a small bag of sweets and negative affect was also induced via viewing traumatic film. The creative tasks Isen et al (1987) used were Duncker’s (1945) candle task, whereby the participants had to take a book of matches, a box of tacks,
and a candle that were provided for them. Participants had to “affix the candle to the corkboard in such a way that it will burn without dripping wax onto the table and or the floor beneath”. The result showed that those who were negatively induced and those who engaged in physical exercise failed to produce comparable improvements in creative performance. These results were explained in terms that a creative problem-solving task is one involving the capability to see relatedness in diverse stimuli that normally seem unrelated.

Further, Mendrick’s (1962) theory of creativity specifically relates word associations of cognitive representation and defines creativity in terms of the formation of new associations of cognitive elements that are in some way useful. Thus, this theory of creativity is also compatible with the process suggested to result from positive affect, a process involving making new association and combining cognitive elements in new ways. Therefore creativity, which is a significant skill and is often thought of as a stable characteristic of persons, can be facilitated by a transient pleasant affective state. Thus, it seems that positive affect should be viewed as influencing the way in which material is processed, rather than just the amount of capacity present.

Additionally, Pearson, Logie and Gilhooly (1999) found that specialist component of the working memory model are involved during the performance of mental synthesis. Thus, spatial manipulation of material during synthesis draws on the resources of spatial working memory. Mental synthesis, in which visual imagery is used to manipulate and combine separate components into new configurations, such as using randomly selected letters of the alphabet and creating real life images, has been shown to be involved during a wide variety of different creative tasks.

Pearson et al (1999), also found from requesting participants to produce real life images from letters of the alphabet, that 7-9 is the maximum number of mental synthesis that participants could produce. This meant that mental synthesis could be considered as a creative task and from Isen et al’s (1987) finding it can be suggested that creation of mental synthesis should increase if one is in positive mood, rather than in negative or neutral mood. It was found that one’s state of mind, which could be either negative or positive did not only affect the creativity in people, but also had major impact on memory recall ability. Ellis and Ashbrook (1988) illustrated that depressed or negative mood is connected with
poor recall of neutral material. Badley, Megg and Williams (1995) produced evidence to support the fact that “depressives show memory biases in explicit tasks, such as free recall or recognition”. This statement is supported by Channon and Green (1999) as they have reported that depressed patients have poor memory because they fail to use appropriate performance strategies spontaneously.

These findings suggest that if people who are depressed perform poorly on memory recall tasks, those who are in positive state of mind should be able to do much better on similar memory tasks, which is implied in Channon, Baker and Robertson (1993). Channon et al (1993) compared ‘retrieval of high, medium and low structured material, using word list consisting of uncategorised and categorised words presented in randomised and clustered order’. This finding from Channon et al (1993) showed that depressed participants were found to be impaired when compared to control participants on the medium level of structure and the randomised categories list measured by free recall.

Furthermore, Oaksford, Morris, Grainger and Williams (1996), explained that positive mood facilitates creative problem solving, judgmental processes and memory retrieval because it makes more and more diffuse memories available. When the solution to a problem (such as creative or memory retrieval) is reached, it usually just pops into consciousness in a flash of insight. This is due to the fact that positively valenced information represents a large, heterogeneous, and more diverse set of representations in memory than does negatively valenced information, positive mood is likely to prime more unusual, creative and flexible associations than does negative mood (Fiedler, 2000).

Present study

The hypothesis of this study was that those participants who were positively induced (in the positive condition), would perform better on creativity (create more mental synthesis images) and would also take less trials to free recall the memorised list of words, compared to the neutral condition (who were neither positively or negatively induced). This was hypothesised because, it was found from Isen et al (1987) and Pearson et al (1999) studies, that the production of creative tasks such as mental synthesis increases under positive mood condition than neutral.
Method

Participants

Participants were 44 non-psychology University College London undergraduate students aged between 18-24. They were selected randomly and 22 participants were randomly assigned to each group (positive and neutral), with equal number of female and male participants. All completed both memory recall and creative task.

Design

An independent measure design was applied in this study, which was a two-by-two mixed factorial design. There were two independent variables: mood conditions (neutral versus positive) and cognitive tasks (memory recall versus creative). The scale of measurements (dependent variable) for both cognitive tasks was different, because for memory recall task it was the number of trials taken to recall all the words correctly. Whereas for the creative task it was measured in terms of the number of images created by the participants.

Materials

Positive mood was induced by means of presenting participants a folder of funny/happy pictures and one page of cartoons. Also sweets were offered to participants after they observed the folder. The other material used was a mood to measure the mood of all participants prior to the experiment. The mood questionnaire used was exact replication of Isen et al's (1987) 9 point Likert scale except, the word 'sober' was changed to 'annoyed' since the word annoyed appeared a better opposite word for amused than sober was. Furthermore, the mood questionnaire's lowest score (very positive) was 5 and highest (very negative) was 45.

Procedure

All participants were tested individually in a quiet atmosphere prior to the experiment. First, the control group were given the 9 point Likert scale to complete then were presented with a list of fifteen words, such as water, hair, basement, pavement etc. Participants had approximately five seconds to learn and then recall and this learning and recalling pattern continued until they managed to recall the full list of words in one go. Participants were afterwards presented with a creative task: the creative task consists of the number of images they can make from 5 letters, such as O D
V T I. Participants were given two minutes to complete this task and for both of these tasks standardised instructions were presented.

Although, participants from the positive mood condition also experienced the same procedure in order to complete the tasks (memory and creative) as the neutral mood group, however, before participants started the two tasks, those in the positive mood condition were presented with a folder to observe for two minutes. At this point, participants were asked how they felt about the pictures and cartoon in the folder and were informed that their responses would be used in another experiment. Afterwards participants completed Isen at al's Likert scale, followed by the two cognitive tasks. This means that except for the part of the experiment that involves viewing the folder, all other procedures were similar in the neutral group. Experiment took approximately twenty minutes to complete and all debriefed.

Result

The mean mood scores for both positive and neutral mood conditions rated by the participants does differ significantly (t (42)= -5.287, p<0.001). The average mood score in the positive condition is 19, whereas the average score for the neutral mood condition is 27. This expresses the fact that participants in the positive condition were much more positively induced than the neutral condition since lowest score indicated positive mood.

From observing table 2 below, it shows the results of memory recall task (measured in number of trials) and result of the creative task, which is measured in number of creative images produced by the participants in both conditions.

Table 2: Mean and the standard deviation (SD) of memory trials and creative images produced by participants from both positive and neutral mood conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative images:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory trials:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that the mean score of the creative images is higher in the positive mood condition than in the neutral condition, where only half as much creative images were produced. This meant that participants in the positive condition created more images, thus the positive state of mind has some effect on the performance of the creative task. Similarly, according to table 2 participants in the positive condition have taken less trials to recall the complete word list in contrast to participants in the neutral condition.

In order to find out whether these descriptive statistics were statistically correct, two independent t-tests were used to analyse the data. The first t-test analysed the creative task and result showed that: $t(42) = 5.889$, $p<0.001$ and this meant that participants in the positive mood condition produced significantly more creative images than the neutral mood condition.

Similarly, the t-test analysis for the memory task was statistically significant, $t(42) = -2.131$, $p<0.039$. Therefore, the hypothesis that those who have been positively induced would create more images and would take less trials to recall the full list of words, than those in the neutral mood condition has been found to be statistically significant. This also meant that the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that, as hypothesised those individuals in the positive mood condition managed to produce more creative images and recalled the full list of words using less number of memory trials compared to participants in the neutral mood condition. Furthermore, results from this study do seem to correlate strongly with Isen et al (1987) findings. Isen et al (1987) found from requesting participants to do a creative task (Duncker’s candle task) that participants who were negatively induced and those who engaged in physical exercise failed to produce comparable improvements in creative performance as the positively induced participants.

Furthermore, this study’s finding is also supported by Channon and Greens’ (1999) study. Channon and Green (1999) stated specifically that depressed patients performed badly on memory free recall tasks, because they were found

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2 Even though a two way independent ANOVA test must have been used to correctly analyse this data, since the measure used to obtain these results used different scales (number of trials and images), it would not make sense to use ANOVA for this particular experiment.
to be impaired when compared to control group on the medium level of structure and the randomised categories list measured by free recall. Similarly in the current experiment it was found that those participants who were positively induced or non-depressed took less trials to recall the complete list of words. This meant that depression can reduce ones’ ability to free recall whereas positive mood can enhance it.

Moreover even though the hypothesis of this study was significant, the study does suffer from some limitations. For example the fact that university students were chosen as samples meant that these results could not be generalised to other population or different age groups. Thus, future studies should consider using both students and adults as samples so that the results could be easily generalised. In addition to this, another limitation is that negative mood could not be induced due to ethical guidelines, which meant that the study could not directly compare positive state of mind with negative. Thus, the comparison between neutral and positive state can sometimes appear to be unclear. Nonetheless, having said that since many of the previous studies, such as Isen et al (1987) and Channon and Green (1999) have not observed the effect of neutral state of mind, the current study has indeed investigated something fresh and unique within psychological research. This leads to the suggestion that future studies should examine the effect of all three state of mind: positive, neutral and negative to obtain the differences between them.

One primary implication of this study is that positive state of mind can easily be induced by means of showing pictures of people smiling or by presenting short comedy films (Isen et al, 1987). This meant that depressed individuals in the clinical sample could also be shown positive items to induce positive mood, which is more likely to increase their memory recall ability and could perhaps lead to reduction in the depression that an individual experiences.

Conclusion

Therefore the interpretation applied to this study that positively induced participants performed better on both creative and memory recall tasks than participants in the neutral condition is that, good feelings increase the tendency to combine material in new ways and to see relatedness between divergent stimuli (Fiedler 2000). However, one question that remains is that if good feelings increase the
ability to combine materials in new ways, does this mean that people in a positive state of mind have the tendency to notice more features of stimuli.

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Retirement-Transitions: Be or let it be!
By Irina Roncaglia, BSc, University of Birkbeck, London

‘Courage is intelligent endurance’

The notion of retirement in our society has been associated with the idea of ‘liberation from work’, where the sudden freedom from it can embrace positive and negative situations. These may include more time for leisure activities, contemplation of past lives and development and nourishment of new interests or anxiety, stress related to financial responsibilities and a sense of void. Retirement has acquired a multi-layered significance for different individuals within different contexts and given its complexity and fluidity, it is very difficult to provide a satisfactory and appropriate definition (Szinovacz & DeViney, 1999). One’s working life is no longer characterised by a series of stages dictated by fixed timetables (Blaikie, 1999), but by processes characterised by fragmented phases. This fragmentation within a working career, characterised by a series of ‘job-portfolio’ or protean careers are reflected in the process of a retirement where ‘blurred’ withdrawals from work are preferred to a clear-cut retirement (Shin-Kap & Moen, 1999). For older persons, this marking passage into the later stages of adulthood signifies a subjective developmental and social psychological transformation that has great consequences on the physical and psychological well being (Moen & Wethington, 1999). In addition, a delayed involvement in financial planning translates into too little savings too late, with the consequent onset of psychological distress (Ferraro & Su, 1999). Psychologists have emphasised the importance of the retirement transition according to different theoretical models. Role theorists suggest that being retired can be viewed as an absence of role identity with an emphasis on role exits (Ashforth, 2001). Such rolelessness can cause distress and anxiousness where the saliency of previous roles and their identity were such that, they occurred as an extension and
expression of the self (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). Highly identified individuals are more likely to experience difficulties when the boundaries around the role-identity are not permeable and flexible.

According to continuity theory approach (Atchley, 1989) the consistency and continuity of patterns over time are fundamental to provide an acceptance of change without experiencing too much distress. Instead of seeing retirement as the termination of a role-identity, it is seen as a continuation and opportunity to maintain and develop new social contacts and lifestyle patterns. Clearly, the nature of the retirement transition depends not only on the specific characteristics which accompanies the causes for this event, but by the broader context in which this takes place (Quick & Moen, 1998). So, Retirement is not to be considered just as the last phase in the life-course of individuals because it can last as long as 30-40 years where new meanings need to be nourished, new identities possibly re-constructed and old regular, ritualised patterns of behaviour replaced.

My interest in the retirement of ballet dancers, beside a personal one, lies in their unusual characteristics where the average retirement age span from early to mid 30s, with an optional receipt of a pension income by the 35th birthday. 'This could sound quite appealing but the appearances are quite deceiving! Retirement associated with chronological age cannot be applied to ballet dancers because it is a transition experienced 'off-time'. As Gullette (2003) suggested traversing ready-made transitions and so-called stages does not signify or constitute age expertise. Retirement for ballet dancers can be very stressful with behavioural problems that can range from eating disorders, substance abuse and deep depression (Lavallee & Wylleman, 2000; Gray & Kundel, 2001). In addition, there seems to be reluctance among professionals to talk about this period in a dancer's life, almost as if there was a fear of losing concentration and focus over an already short lived career (Ogilvie & Howe, 1981). Very few studies have actually analysed the experience of retirement in ballet dancers, taking into account exclusively the post phases and giving little importance to the whole experience. The intensity and psychological commitment that dancers are accustomed often nourish a role-identity at the expenses of other social roles, dominating the overall self-concept (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). This process is likely to cause distress once that self-concept needs to readjust and accepted within to a new
reality. Furthermore, the public nature of a dancer's identity, the enactment of their role are very particular experiences where the collective esteem given by the institution, organisation or community can oscillate drastically as a direct result of individuated performances. Retirement for dancers means inevitably a loss of this collective approval, which is highly difficult to replace (Roncaglia, 2003). To address the change from a ‘dancer’s identity’ to a new role-identity, we need to acknowledge the quality and nature of the pre-retirement periods, the opportunities available for a new career, the nature and timing of the retirement transition as well as the support available and coping strategies adopted. Within a life-course approach, retirement should be considered as a celebratory passage, which needs to be considered in its entirety and complexity. This is in view to accompany these young professionals (and with them other similar professions) through a new phase for a productive and fulfilling life.

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The Two Faces of the Yorkshire Ripper
By Cedric E Ginestet, Thames Valley University

“Personalities whose main goals in life are (...) to manipulate, dominate and control.” Douglas & Olshaker, 1995 (p.29)

From 1975 to 1981 one man cast a pall of fear over the North of England. He committed 14 horrendous murders all bearing the similar hallmarks of a macabre routine. More than 300 detectives worked full time for three years on what
constituted the ampest manhunt that England ever witnessed. The Yorkshire Ripper's murders apparently came to an end with the arrest and subsequent conviction of a bearded lorry driver called Peter William Sutcliffe. During the jury hearing, Sutcliffe claimed that he was in fact accomplishing a divine mission. There was instant public clamour for explanations, as Sutcliffe's character did not parallel the crimes he committed.

The accusation and conviction of Sutcliffe remain to date controversial as compelling evidence (O’Gara, 2003, Brannen, 2003) draw a distinction between the real Ripper and his copycat. The crux of O’Gara’s (2003) controversial hypothesis rests upon the idea that Sutcliffe was only the copycat killer, who would have perpetrated four murders, whereas the Ripper would have deadly attacked 10 victims. He also alleges that the police grouped all the murders out of impatience and frustration since they were unsuccessful in unveiling the real Ripper's identity. Indeed, Sutcliffe’s extraordinary willingness to plead guilty for all 14 murders provided the police with the perfect culprit. Based upon a psychological analysis of the scarce available information, this paper will therefore attempt to test the O’Gara’s hypothesis of the copycat killer. Once the different facts will be presented, the author will analyse and compared both Sutcliffe’s and the Ripper’s profiles and highlight similarities and inconsistencies between the two faces of Yorkshire Jack.

Modus Operandi and Signature

The Ripper's way of operating or modus operandi was influenced by his smooth-character, which allows him to con his preys by enticing them to accompany him to some isolated alleys. He would then suddenly strike them with a hammer blow to the head, and drag them in the darkness to perform his sordid routine. He mainly perpetuated his atrocities on prostitutes even though some ordinary working girls could also satisfy his cruel addiction. He also systematically robbed his victims of any jewellery.

His signature or what constituted the Ripper's unique hallmarks was characterised by the intensity of his sexual assaults. Semen was indeed usually found in both victims’ rectum and vagina. He would then repetitively stab the women in the genital with a cornered file or a knife and also rip open the hammered victims’ stomachs with the claws of his hammer. All the murders in the Ripper frame were also linked by the sheer level of brutality, sometimes the savage
biting of the victims' breasts and the repositioning of the victims' bodies and clothing. He would finally redress his victims and rearrange the clothing, particularly the shoes, and cover the remaining body with the victim's own coat. One of the inconsistencies noticed by O'Gara (2003) is that this signature characterised all but four murders. This led him to believe that Sutcliffe was only partly responsible for this series of atrocities.

**A Mission from God**

According to O'Gara (2003), who personally met Peter Sutcliffe, the latter married a girl exhibiting serious mental problems. She was sexually cold, devoid of love for him and totally self-centred and domineering. Despite the fact that Sutcliffe was certainly already deranged before meeting his wife, she nevertheless aggravated his case and especially accentuated his hatred for the opposite sex. All women therefore became tangible vehicles for his incommensurable wrath. In the light of Canter's (1995) theory of rape motives, Sutcliffe can be regarded as an epitome of the 3rd type of serial rapist, who typically strives to establish an intimate relationship with his victims and is prone to treat them as persons. Indeed, he apparently told one of his victims that 'she shouldn’t say anything to the police'.

Sutcliffe also corresponds to the coward serial rapist described by Douglas and colleagues (2001), who attacks women by retaliation, in order to assuage his desire for revenge. All his early attacks contained a strong sexual component, where Sutcliffe would masturbate while touching up his victims. From 1976 onwards, his sexual assaults paralleled those of the Ripper, who had a special squad chasing him. O'Gara (2003) therefore hypothesised that Sutcliffe's self-esteem and desire for recognition was tarnished by the Ripper's notoriety at that time. While his attacks received scant publicity, the Ripper's murders made the news headlines.

Such a gulf in media coverage could only prompt Sutcliffe's endeavours to raise his crimes to the level of cruelty of those bearing the Ripper's hallmarks. In 1976, he attacked Marcella Claxton in Roundhay Park, Leeds, who was his first prostitute victim. Ironically, this assault was hardly mentioned in the media until after his arrest. However, this story did not escape the scrutiny of the Ripper, who deliberately murdered Irene Richardson in the same Roundhay
Park, in order to tantalise Sutcliffe, who was not long to replicate. As the Ripper intended, he rose to the bait by murdering Jean Jordan in Manchester.

From that point in time, O'Gara (2003) conjectures that Sutcliffe's motives for killing began to be submerged by, what he himself called a 'mission from God'. His personal narrative (Canter, 1995) was one marked by grandiosity and he felt compelled to pit his wits against the demoniac Ripper. Once he murdered his fourth and ultimate victim, who lay undiscovered, the disturbed Sutcliffe came back to the crime scene in order to expose the body and plant a newspaper with one large Ripper story under the victim's body. At that stage, Sutcliffe was desperate to be captured, and to fulfil his divine mission, where he would metaphorically placate the Ripper by sacrificing his own freedom.

The rest is history. His conspicuous demeanours in Yorkshire red-districts caught the attention of the police, and precipitated his arrest and subsequent incarceration. However, notwithstanding Sutcliffe's culpability for some of the crimes, the signature of a great majority of these murders appears to portray a radically different profile.

Hammer and File

The gratuity of the violence inflicted by the murderer of the ten most horrendous crimes among the fourteen presumably perpetrated by Sutcliffe sketches the contours of a psychopath, who seems more inclined to consider his victims as objects rather than as persons (Canter, 1995). Indeed, a review of the ironclad evidence demonstrates the total absence of any consideration for his victims. On the contrary, each murder is characterised by an implacable ferocity, where the victim is hammered unconscious at the very beginning of the assault.

Another important feature of the Ripper's signature is his bizarre conscientiousness for redressing his victims and particularly repositioning the shoes. This characteristic might indicate certain fetishist traits. As defined by the ICD-10 (WHO, 1992), fetishism is the “reliance on some non-living object as a stimulus for sexual arousal and sexual gratification” (p.218). Interestingly, Sutcliffe, in stark contrast with these speculations, did not display any type of paraphilia, which would directly exclude him as a potential perpetrator of this series of murders.
Additionally, Douglas and colleagues (2001) convincingly affirm the widespread sexual disturbance of serial rapists and particularly the tendency to deny any personal characteristics to their victims. Under this expert light, the Ripper's meticulousness in repositioning the clothes reinforces the idea that this killer was animated by an obsessive compulsion to materialise his fantasies. By emphasising the victims' universally shared characteristics (e.g. shoes, coats), the killer depersonalised his victims, thereby facilitating his macabre task. In the same impersonal vein, the Ripper did not intend to establish any form of intimate communication with his victims, which readily differentiate himself from Sutcliffe, who attempted to create a semblance of intimate relationships with the women he sexually assaulted in the first part of his criminal career. Such conclusion would thus yield support for the O'Gara's (2003) thesis, thereby he accused a stocky bearded Irishman: Billy Tracey, whose description reveals clear similarities with Sutcliffe’s profile.

Simple Copycat or Real Doppelganger

An alternative approach to this intricate node of juridical arguments would be an attempt at seeking similarities rather than differences between the real Ripper and his alleged surrogate. Assuming the involvement of Tracey in this affair, one can notice that both suspects are engaged in non-demanding jobs. While Sutcliffe is employed as a lorry driver, Tracey’s daily task is to slice bovine flesh in a slaughterhouse. Both activities are indeed characterised by the low level of social contact that they necessitate. These findings are strikingly consistent with Canter's (1995) accounts of psychopaths’ employment patterns.

Additionally, both Sutcliffe and the Ripper seem to display extreme sexual proclivities. This is reminiscent of research conducted by Baker and White (2002), who examined the behaviours and cognition of 53 sex offenders. They particularly noted the importance of deviant fantasy and positive psychotic symptoms among this population. However, while the Ripper’s adoration for shoes appear to demonstrate a strong fantasy element, Sutcliffe, on the other hand, exhibited several psychotic symptoms in claiming to communicate with God. Ultimately indeed, the Ripper’s and Sutcliffe’s personalities do not correlate and the following
differentiation of the two characters shed more light upon their inherent differences.

Premeditation vs. Impulsion

In many ways, Sutcliffe and the Ripper exemplify two diametrically opposed profiles, which are respectively those of the disorganised asocial criminal and the organised non-social one (Hazelwood & Douglas, 1980). On one hand, Sutcliffe demonstrated, in many instances, his impulsiveness and a certain lack of organisation. His inaugural offences were marked by a strong sense of sexual inadequacies, where Sutcliffe was solely able to masturbate in front of his victims. He also occupies an unskilled work as a lorry driver, and returned several times to the crime scene, possibly to relive the event. Strikingly, as such a profile would predict, Sutcliffe did turn to religion once he was caught. Overall, he can be typified as a coward of relatively low intelligence, who readily admitted his crimes for the sake of notoriety.

At the opposite end of the spectrum lies the organised non-social serial killer. In concordance with this second profile, the Ripper demonstrated a high level of intelligence especially in respect of his ability to manipulate the police and potentially being successful in leading his copycat to be arrested for his crimes. A brief review of his habitual signature also shows his sexual potency conveyed by unleashed sexual outbursts. Details of his modus operandi also provide evidence that he was socially adequate and able to entice his victims into his clutches by the use of conning techniques. He was certainly mobile as he operated on three different constabularies, and subtly played with the ego of the police officers, who would not transmit any information to their colleagues from adjacent counties. Coherent with this profile, he undoubtedly followed the media as he was able to notice the copycat’s sexual assaults and lured him into a fatal competition. Undeniably, the Ripper was using a direct strategy, not only while performing his crimes but also in developing a global subterfuge, where the copycat and police officers were mere pawns playing in his hands. Finally, an organised non-social serial killer would have only admitted the strict minimum when being caught. This type of attitude lies miles away from Sutcliffe’s behaviour, who readily endorsed the 14 crimes once he was arrested.

Conclusion
Having analysed different perspectives, one can not dismiss the compelling psychological evidence portraying two radically different profiles, which therefore identify Sutcliffe as the copycat killer and corroborate O’Gara’s (2003) thesis. Indeed, according to Canter’s (1995) taxonomy of serial rapists, Sutcliffe appear to treat his victims as persons, while the Ripper depersonalises his victims and approach them as mere objects to assuage his wicked fantasies. According to Hazelwood and Douglas’ (1980) classification, the Ripper and Sutcliffe can also be categorised under two different labels, thereby they epitomised a non-social organised murderer and an asocial disorganised one respectively. In fact, these psychological conjectures paralleled the biological evidence yielded by the autopsy, whereby ten murders were conducted by a serial rapist known to be blood group B, whereas Sutcliffe was blood group O.

Hence, given the compelling psychological and biological evidence disputing Sutcliffe’s culpability in all but four murders, one can legitimately question the way the investigation and the arrest of the pseudo-Ripper was staged in order to lead to such a quagmire. As the inaugural quote of this essay exemplified it, the type of personalities casting the mould for psychopathology is overwhelmingly driven by an addictive obsession to “manipulate, dominate and control.” (Douglas et al., 1995, p.29). However, such attitude is certainly not the monopoly of serial killers. By retaining salient information about the Ripper, police officers in management position from different constabularies illustrated how can hubris easily overcome their professionalism. Psychopathology, just as intelligence can therefore be envisaged as a widely shared personality trait, which would solely vary in degree of intensity across individuals (Damasio, 2000). This paper might therefore pave the way for further research into the preponderance and variation of psychopathic traits in serial killers, police officers, and laypersons alike.

Reference


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LIGHTHEARTED …

You might be an INTERNET addict if …

You find yourself staring at your IN-Box waiting for new E-Mail to arrive.
You dream about creating the world’s greatest website.
You think faxes are old-fashioned.
Everyone you know asks why your phone line is always busy.
You get up before the sun rises to check your email.

You find yourself in the very same chair long after the sun has set.

You spend Saturday night making the counter on your home page pass the 2000 mark.

You email your tutor informing them that you’re going to be late.

Your favourites bookmark takes 15 minutes to scroll from top to bottom.

Your computer cost more than your car.

You develop a liking for cold coffee.

You physically fight the other surfer in the house to get online first.

Your dog has its own home page.

It takes you 2 hours to check all 14 of your mailboxes.

You wake up daily with your keyboard imprinted on your forehead.

You check your email.....it reads "no new messages" so you check it again.

You’d rather go to http://www.weather.com than look out your window.

You invent another person and chat with yourself in empty chatrooms.

Your partner says that communication is important in a relationship, so you buy another computer and install a second phone line so that the two of you can chat

The remote for the TV is missing and you don’t even care!

By Karen Monaghan

Glasgow Caledonian University

CONFERENCE NEWS …
The World Scientific Congress of Golf takes place every four years at its St. Andrews venue, bringing together the leading golf researchers and practitioners from around the world. The 2002 congress was held from July 22nd-26th, and attracted over 300 delegates, with the continents of North America, Asia, Europe and Australasia all represented. The congress is an occasion where thought provoking discussion and debate on golf science is mixed with some serious banqueting, and of course, lots of golf. This was the first time I had attended the congress, and despite being the youngest delegate, found that everyone was very welcoming and respected my opinions and research. Indeed, this was an excellent opportunity to meet some of the worlds leading golf-science researchers as well as some top international coaches.

The congress was very much a multidisciplinary event with papers presented in areas ranging from psychology, to physiology, equipment design and agronomy. The focus of this report however is on the psychology papers that were presented at the conference. There was a total of 75 oral presentations made, 13 of which were focused on psychology related topics, in addition there was a symposium titled ‘Teaching the Mental Game’. Quite a lot of the psychology papers were focused on issues relating to learning, practice and training, however other notable presentations examined issues such as performance stress and the yips, imagery, and also the golfer-caddie partnership. Unfortunately I didn’t manage to make it to all of the presentations due to overlap, so my review summarises some of the papers that I did make, which I found particularly interesting.

The first paper that focused on learning in golf was presented by Guadagnoli et al. from the University of Nevada and was titled ‘The Efficacy of Video Feedback for Learning the Golf Swing’. In this study participants were split into three different feedback groups and trained for a total of 6 hours over a ten-day period. It was found that training with video aided feedback was superior to both training with verbal feedback, and self-guided practice in enhancing iron
play. These findings underline the practical importance of using video aided feedback for facilitating learning in golf.

Christina & Alpenfels from the University of North Carolina and the Pinehurst Golf Institute respectively, presented a thought provoking paper titled ‘Why Does Traditional Training Fail to Optimise Playing Performance?’ In this presentation they argued that the transfer of performance from the practice range to the golf course is less than optimised by traditional training methods. The position of the authors is that traditional teaching methods (i.e., instruction and practice) do not encourage practice and learning under conditions that golfers face during competitive play, therefore limiting the development of essential physical and cognitive skills. Christina & Alpenfels suggest that transfer learning is a more appropriate training method as it encourages the development of physical and mental skills in more of a simulated playing context.

Kingston et al. (University of Wales Institute) produced an excellent review paper of literature that examines internal performance stress and the yips in golf. The yips are defined as a debilitating movement disorder that is characterised by a snatchy, jerky movement and a reduction in the fluidity of a stroke, and is most often associated with putting and chipping. Kingston et al. provided an anxiety-based case for explaining the yips, suggesting that performance anxiety may lead to an internal focus of attention, where a performer pays too much conscious attention to the mechanics of their stroke, resulting in the extreme form of choking that is the yips.

The most notable paper presented in the ‘Teaching the Mental Game’ symposium was by Debbie Crews of Arizona State University and titled ‘Harmonising Mind and Body’. Dr Crews provided a review of her work investigating the brain activity of golfers using EEG, and reported on advances in this line of research. Crews has examined the brain activity of golfers of all levels, ranging from elite to novice players, and has compared brain activity during successful and unsuccessful shots, confident and non-confident shots. The findings from Crews’ research suggest that optimal performance is harmonic in nature with synchronisation in brain activity between the left and right hemispheres. In terms skill level differences, elite golfers tend to be able to achieve harmony more consistently than novices.

Finally, there was my own paper, which was titled ‘The Effects of Outcome Imagery on Golf-Putting Performance’.
This was a study that I had conducted for my undergraduate project, and subsequently knocked into shape for this conference. The study examined the influence of positive and negative imagery on the putting performance of skilled and unskilled golfers. To cut a long story short, the main finding was that negative imagery was detrimental to both putting-confidence and performance where as positive imagery did not facilitate confidence or performance. It was therefore suggested that golfers should employ strategies to avoid negative imagery. To my relief, the presentation went down very well, and I came away from the conference with my head held high having gained valuable experience of presenting to an international audience. To top things off, my paper was later accepted for publication in the Journal of Sport Sciences. On reflection, I thoroughly enjoyed both the academic and social side of the congress, and whilst the experience of presenting was somewhat nerve-racking it was extremely beneficial. I would actively encourage other students to write-up their research and submit it for conference presentations or refereed publications, the experience will enhance your communication skills and it looks great on your CV.

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**BPS Sport & Exercise Psychology Section**

Sport and exercise psychology is a rapidly developing area that is becoming increasingly recognised in both academic and applied environments. This development is reflected in the Sport and Exercise Section of the BPS, which is now in the process of transition to becoming a Division of the BPS. This change in status will be central to the continued progression of sport and exercise psychology in the UK. Membership of the Section is open to Student members of the BPS at a cost of £3. Benefits to members of the Section will include:

- A newsletter on current issues in sport and exercise psychology; contributions are invited;
- Opportunity to submit an entry for the Annual Undergraduate Dissertation Prize;
- Opportunities to present papers and posters and take part in symposia and workshops;
- Opportunities to contribute to shaping the future of sport and exercise psychology and to take part in the development of the section.

If you are interested in joining the Sport and Exercise Section of the BPS, please contact the Section Manager for further information.
Professor Dave Perrett  
on psychology of faces

Professor Bob Rafal  
on cognitive psychology

Professor Kathy Sylva  
on developmental psychology

Professor Richard Wiseman  
on psychology of luck

Professor Steve Reicher  

The SMG Annual Conference is an excellent opportunity to present your research to an audience of peers and academics. Running alongside the BPS Annual Conference, it is a good chance to ‘network’ and make invaluable contacts.
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
2nd European Conference
5-8 July 2004
Grand Hotel Majestic, Verbania Pallanza, Italy

Positive Psychology is an innovative and fruitful approach to the study of individual behaviour and social processes that is attracting increasing interest across Europe. A growing number of theoretical, empirical and applied projects are investigating subjective well-being, creativity, personal strengths and resources, and their implications for individual and social development. This Second European Conference provides an opportunity to discuss new theoretical perspectives, to foster networking among scholars, and to explore the applications of Positive Psychology. The conference will be of value to anyone interested in the promotion of well-being and fulfilment at individual, communal, and social levels.

Submissions
Paper and poster presentations are welcome. The conference will provide broad coverage of research topics in the field of Positive Psychology, including applied areas such as education, work/organisation, health, social policies and intercultural relations. Several parallel sessions will be organised as round tables: six to eight papers grouped together, with a discussant who invites the presenters to illustrate and debate their findings in a prominently interactive environment.

Deadlines

Speakers
Eminent scholars from both the United States and Europe will be speaking at the conference. Speakers from the US include Martin Seligman (Pennsylvania), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Claremont) and Barbara Fredrickson (Michigan). Speakers from Europe include Felicia Huppert (Cambridge), Ruut Veenhoven (Rotterdam), Ursula Staudinger (Dresden) and Dmitry Leontiev (Moscow).

Location
The conference will be held at the Grand Hotel Majestic in Verbania Pallanza, on the shores of Lago Maggiore, one of the most beautiful Italian resorts. Travellers, poets and writers from all over the world have found inspiration and quiet residence here. The Borromeo Islands, the exotic beauty of the botanical gardens, museums and the Musical Weeks of Stresa offer opportunities for combining work with culture and recreation. Pallanza is 70 Km north-west of Milano Malpensa International Airport.

Registration and accommodation
Early registration fees (before February 28th, 2004) are 200 Euro (150 Euro for students). Until March 31st, registration fees will be 250 Euro (200 Euro for students), and afterwards 320 Euro (270 Euro for students). Registration fees include coffee breaks throughout the conference and a welcome reception at Grand Hotel Majestic on Monday evening. Since Pallanza is a well-known holiday resort, hotels of various categories will reserve room allotments for conference attendees until March 31, 2004. Details on hotel rates and booking will be provided in the second call (October 10, 2003).

Contact
The conference is organised by Professor Antonella Delle Fave and her research team at the Laboratory of Psychology, Department of Preclinical Sciences LITA Vialba - Faculty of Medicine of the University of Milano, with the active help of the Steering Committee of the European Network of Positive Psychology.
For submissions, registration, and further information, please contact:
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Book Review
"How to study : Practical Tips for University Students"
Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford: 2003
Website: http://www.blackwellpublishing.com
ISBN: - 4051-0693-x

Reviewed by Karen Monaghan, Glasgow Caledonian University

Written by Phil Race, an independent Education and Training Consultant and part-time Senior Academic Staff Development Officer at the University of Leeds, How to Study takes the student through each stage of studying at university. The book discusses academic life from the very beginning of university entrance, on Day One, right up until the student takes their final examinations. Each chapter is divided into a numbered list of important topics for the student’s attention. Phil Race writes with insight and humour, enabling the reader to identify with the requirements of academia, each step of the way, in a relaxed manner. Nevertheless, the book stresses the need for the student to seriously prepare for the rigors ahead.

The book focuses on learning techniques and sensible time management which are both indispensable skills for the
psychology student which quickly must be mastered to ensure academic success. There are several chapters concerning notetaking in lectures, essay writing, presentation skills and exam revision. This book offers psychology students very practical and detailed tips to help cope with exam preparation, even reminding the student to ensure that the alarm clock is set for the correct time the night before!

There is also a chapter devoted to the "ups and downs" of student life where the author acknowledges that there will probably be times when the student is stressed and perhaps even depressed. He suggests practical things that can be done to counter these common symptoms of fear and anxiety. There is also good advice offered about what to say if, incredible as it may seem, the student ends up in a police station under the influence!

In summary, a very readable and enjoyable study guide, encouraging wise time management. Certainly one of the better study guides for university students, around at the moment. Well worth the read for every student who wants to excel in the all important exams, receive their well deserved certificate and who would prefer to emerge reasonably sane at the end of it all!

Psych-Talk - Guidelines for Contributors

1. Psych-Talk welcomes submissions relating to any area of psychology. Various types of submissions are welcomed, including:
   • Book reviews
   • General interest articles
   • Work and placement experiences
   • Interviews with psychologists, researchers, and academics
   • Course and job application experiences
   • Reviews of recent research
   • Discussion topic essays
   • Conference reports

2. Manuscripts should be submitted in English, preferably as a Word file attachment, to the Psych-Talk Editor (details given
Manuscripts may also be submitted by post, together with an accompanying floppy disc, to avoid re-keying the text.

3. Manuscripts should be written in a style that is accessible and understandable to a broad-based psychology student readership. The readership should not be assumed to have any specialist knowledge, other than an acquaintance with psychology.

4. References should be kept to a reasonable minimum, and should be included in alphabetical order, in the format below:

**BOOK:**

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:**

**CHAPTER IN AN EDITED BOOK:**

**CONFERENCE PAPER:**

5. Length of articles is typically between 500 and 2000 words, but longer articles are accepted.

6. Authors should include details of their affiliation (i.e. university or place of employment) as they would like it to appear on the article.

7. Authors should also include their contact details (email, postal address, telephone number) so they may be contacted throughout the review process. Authors should specify if they
would like their contact details (i.e. email address) included with the published article, so that readers may contact them.

8. All articles are reviewed by the Editor, and are accepted or revised at his or her discretion. If major revisions to an article are made or required, the author will be contacted for approval before going to press.

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**Write for The Psychologist**

*Have you thought about writing for The Psychologist? It’s the only publication of The British Psychological Society that goes to all members (as well as some non-members and journalists), and as such it’s the perfect way to get your name known early in your career and brush up on your writing skills at the same time.*

*As well as articles that give general overviews of any area of psychology, written in a way that aims to capture the interest of an extremely diverse audience, The Psychologist has its own regular students page that is always looking for your contributions. This page is largely by students and for students, so send your articles on any issue relevant to students to the Associate Editor for the students page, Nicola Hills, on Nicola_Hills@hotmail.com*

*For guides on writing and submitting for The Psychologist, as well as sample issues and a searchable archive, see www.bps.org.uk/publications/thepsychologist.cfm. The editor of The Psychologist, Dr Jon Sutton, is also always keen to hear your views and suggestions on jonsut@bps.org.uk*