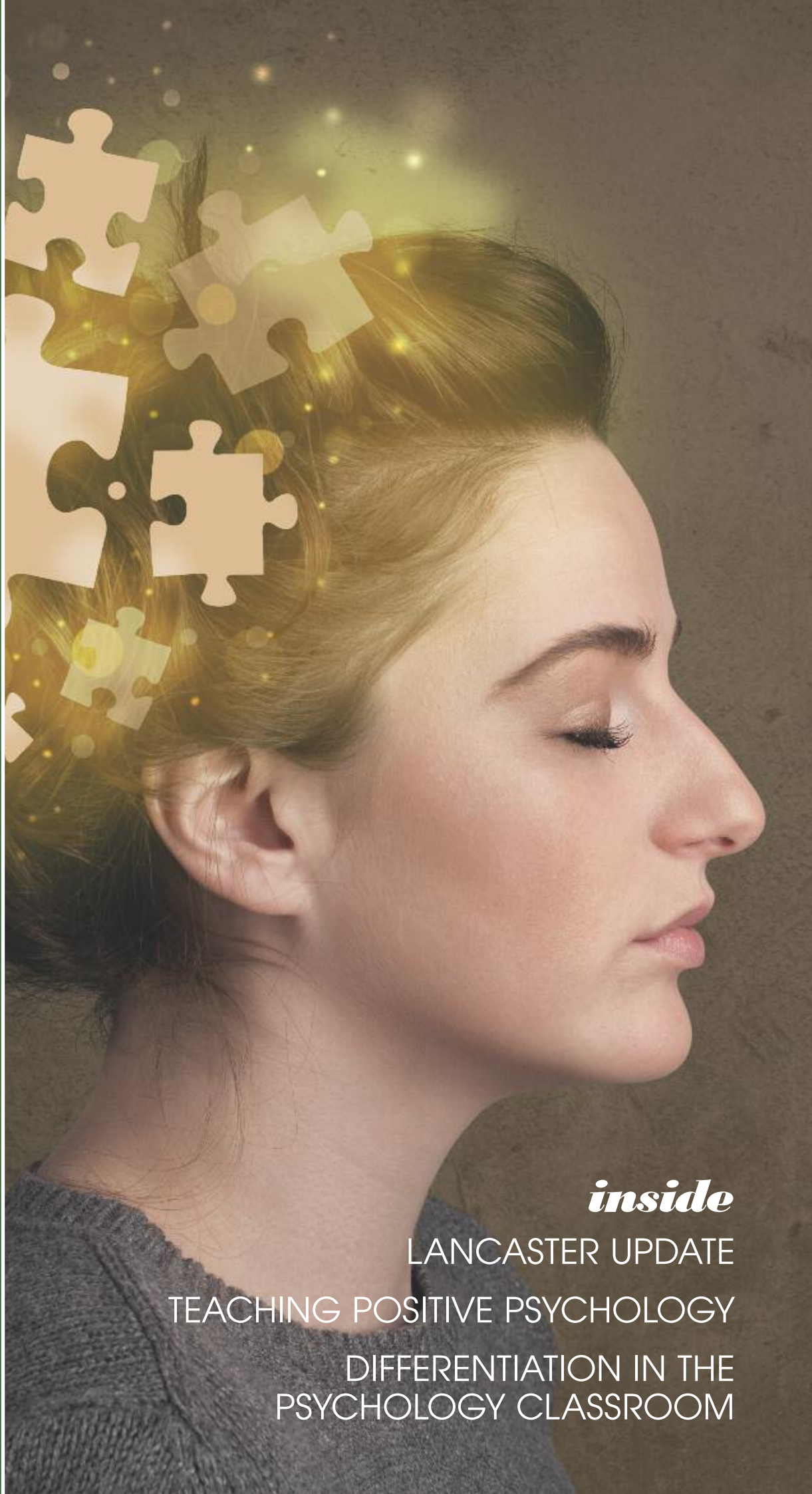


ATP TODAY

The Magazine of the Association for the Teaching of Psychology

FEBRUARY 2015



inside

LANCASTER UPDATE

TEACHING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE
PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM

We welcome contributions and letters from readers. Please send your correspondence to the Editor. The Editor reserves the right to edit and/or amend all articles submitted. **The views expressed by contributors to the magazine are their personal views, and publication does not mean that those views are endorsed by the ATP.**

ATP Today is published three times a year.
The next edition of the ATP Today will be published in June 2015 (copy deadline May 1st 2015).

Published by The Association for the Teaching of Psychology
c/o The British Psychological Society
St. Andrews House,
48 Princess Road East,
Leicester, LE1 7DR.

All correspondence, and copy for future editions, should be sent to the Editor, Dorothy Coombs
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com

Please send correspondence, and submissions, as Word documents. Photographs should be supplied as jpegs and as separate files not embedded into word documents.

Data Protection Policy

The ATP stores data about our Members for the purposes of administration only. We will usually only contact you to send you the materials that comprise our membership benefits (for example, newsletters), or with information that is relevant to our Members (for example, information about conferences, or changes to our membership terms and conditions). On a very occasional basis, we may contact you to remind you to renew your membership, to update our records, for consultation or to evaluate our services to our Members. If you prefer not to be contacted for these purposes, please go to www.theATP.org

Front Cover: Young person thinking with glowing puzzle mind on grungy background
© ra2studio/Shutterstock



Scan the QR code to get to the ATP Facebook page... see you there!

Design, print & production:
MYPEC,
Festoon Rooms, Sunny Bank Mills,
Farsley, Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS28 5UJ
Tel: 0113 257 9646
E-mail: info@mypec.co.uk
www.mypec.co.uk

© Copyright 2015 MYPEC Ltd ISBN 0305-7607

CONTENTS



- 3 From the Chair
- 3 From the Editor

ATP NEWS

- 4 ATP Annual Conference 2015 – Lancaster
- 6 CPD Event – Watford
- 6 EFPTA Board Meeting – Edinburgh
- 7 UCLan School of Psychology
- 8 Would you like to see pupils with increased confidence and fantastic oral presentation skills?
- 9 Teaching Positive Psychology

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 10 Getting it right: How to write an effective essay
- 10 Revising key concepts without dying of boredom
- 11 Differentiation in the Psychology Classroom
- 12 Teaching Evaluation in an Engaging and Meaningful Way
- 14 I like to move it, move it

RESEARCH FOCUS

- 16 I can... if I really want

FEATURES

- 19 REM sleep in infants: a new idea
- 20 Comparison of the new A-Levels in Psychology
- 22 Roasting some old Psychology Chestnuts
- 24 Existential Psychology

STUDENT CORNER

- 26 A Sense of Colour
- 27 Notices

PLEASE MAKE SURE WE HAVE THE CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS FOR YOU.

www.theATP.org



FROM THE CHAIR...

Happy New Year to you all.

As I write this we still only have two A level Specifications cleared through OFQUAL and if you are anything like me, loathed to make a decision until you have seen them all. Consequently, I am hoping that by the time you read this all four specifications will have been cleared and we can all make informed decisions as to which Specification to follow. Some of the changes are very interesting with some new ideas being seen across all boards. I do not envy any of us the task of planning for September 2015. However, I am sure that at our annual conference we will be able to talk to each of the examination boards, exchange ideas and support one another through this challenging time.

On the matter of the Conference, Helen Kitching ably supported by your committee is making good headway planning for this year's Conference at Lancaster University 10-12 July 2015. We have held prices down again this year, so that you can receive three days of the best CPD at an exceptional price. We have four

super keynote speakers, Professor French (anomalistic), Dr Collins (history of psychology), Dr Levine (bystander behaviour) and Dr Mitchell (positive psychology). Further details of this event can be found in the double-page spread in this issue and check our website and Facebook page for regular updates. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there. If you haven't already booked your place, please visit www.atpconference.org.uk or our booking agents at: <http://www.kcjones.co.uk/atp2015>

The ATP continues to lobby government on your behalf and there have been some very interesting articles by Phil Banyard, Dr Julie Hulme and our own Deb Gajic published in The Psychologist November edition that will help our case with the Government realising the economic value of our subject.

Please do not hesitate to contact the committee or me if you have any suggestions or concerns that we can help you with and encourage colleagues to join the ATP for further support and guidance where possible.

Helene Ansell



FROM THE EDITOR...

It has been my great pleasure to guest edit ATP Today for a second time. I've taken advantage of this relatively 'quiet' period for me conference-wise to take on this role again after a mad flurry in the Autumn term. With jobs ranging from securing keynote speakers, having another site visit to Lancaster with Dorothy, where we had fun creating a photographic route from the bus stop to the main conference buildings, to a very productive meeting with the psychology department, who are keen to work with us. My mind is buzzing with ideas for entertainment and breakout events. I have also signed the contract for 2016 with University of Sussex.

I have really enjoyed reading all the submissions for this edition of ATP Today and have had a go at integrating some of the Teaching and Learning ideas into my own lessons. Rachel Oakley's ideas for junk modelling went down very well with my year 11s and 12s. I was pleasantly surprised at how creative my students were with their models and their attention to detail. My year 12s created 3-D models of the Multi-Store Model of Memory, whilst I gave my year 11s freedom to create whatever they wanted from the topics we had already covered, as part of their extended learning day. Models included a recreation of the Little Albert experiment and a fabulous depiction of a landscape with key visual perception terms labelled on it. You can see the evidence in the pictures that accompany Rachel's article.

Geoff's article on Psychology 'chestnuts' got me thinking about the Little Albert experiment. So often it is quoted that they didn't decondition Little Albert because his mother withdrew him from the study. However, reading the original article, they knew that Albert would be leaving and made a conscious decision to see if the phobia persisted rather than remove it. Later on in the article, they do speak about Little Albert being removed early. However, they had had the opportunity to remove his phobia before this happened and chose not to do so. As an interested after-thought, I recently discovered with my students, that Watson and Raynor had two sons, both of whom attempted suicide, reportedly as a result of their upbringing. Rosalie Raynor published an article on parenting, firmly believing that children benefitted from the breaking of the mother attachment as early as possible. Their children were raised to be independent and with little overt affection at home. It certainly makes for an interesting discussion when it comes to attachment types.

New specifications will certainly be on everyone's mind and hopefully Ann Skinner's article, comparing the specs, will help with your decision-making.

I really hope you enjoy the articles as much as I have and I hope to be able to welcome you to conference in the summer.

Helen Kitching, CPsychol, AFBPsS, MSc
Guest Editor

We are delighted to be holding the conference at Lancaster this year. Lancaster University is set in 360 acres of beautiful parkland and lies approximately three miles south of the City of Lancaster. The campus is easily accessible via road, rail and bicycle and is within 70 miles of Manchester's International Airport and is only two and a half hours from London by rail. The campus features a woodland walk if you wish to have some quiet relaxation time and a 'trim trail' if you want to add in some exercise. If the weather is nice, we will have our usual Saturday morning relaxation session after an early breakfast, before breakout sessions begin.

We will be based in Charles Carter and George Fox buildings

for our breakout events, exhibition and keynote lectures. The buildings are directly opposite each other with easy access.

Barker House Farm, a beautifully converted 17th century building, will play host to our evening meals and entertainment, as well as breakfast. It features a bar area, dining and function rooms. We have a late license until 2.00am.

The department of Psychology at Lancaster have kindly agreed to sponsor our Friday night wine reception and we hope to run a number of workshops where researchers within the department will update on their current research. We are also delighted that Dr Alan Collins has agreed to be one of our keynote speakers.

ATP CONFERENCE 2015

*10th-12th July,
Lancaster University*

SAVE THE DATE!

ATP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016

is being held at University of Sussex, 8th-10th July. Situated on the South Coast near Brighton, this leafy campus university, set at the foot of the South Downs National Park, offers us a great exhibition space and breakout rooms, with dining and accommodation all within a very short walking distance.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Graham Mitchell

University of Northampton

Teaching Positive Psychology: Strengths and Strategies

Positive psychology is about well-being, thriving, achievement and optimal development. Although positive psychology is not new, it has emerged more recently as an important and popular area in university psychology teaching. This presentation will look at reasons for its popularity and its use in the teaching of A-level Psychology. The roots of positive psychology will be examined before focusing on three important research findings that can have immediate application in the classroom and beyond. Some consideration will be given to the positive psychology activities of a group of school, college and university psychology teachers. Information will also be provided on how to keep up to date in this area.

Dr Graham Mitchell is Subject Leader for Psychology at the University of Northampton. Before working in universities, he taught A-level Psychology in school and college. His research interests lie in the area of Positive Psychology, particularly the role of hope and other self-belief variables in achievement and recovery. Graham teaches on three Positive Psychology modules. He can be contacted at: graham.mitchell@northampton.ac.uk

Professor Chris French, Goldsmiths,

University of London

Fifteen years of weird science at Goldsmiths

Ever since records began, in every known society, a substantial proportion of the population has reported unusual experiences many of which we would today label as 'paranormal'. Opinion polls show that the majority of the general public accepts that paranormal phenomena do occur. Such widespread experience, of and belief in the paranormal can only mean one of two things. Either the paranormal is real, in which case this should be accepted by the wider scientific community which currently rejects such claims; or else belief in and experience of ostensibly paranormal phenomena can be fully explained in terms of psychological factors. This presentation will describe some of the findings from 15 years research at the Anomalous Psychology Research Unit at Goldsmiths, covering such topics as dowsing, psychics, alien abduction, sleep paralysis, and memory for anomalous experiences.

Dr Mark Levine, Department of Psychology,

Exeter University

Groups, Violence and Bystander Behaviour

In this talk I will discuss recent developments in the social psychology of pro-social and anti-social behaviour with a particular focus on the 'bystander effect'. I will argue that, contrary to traditional textbook approaches to bystander behaviour, group process can play a part in promoting helping and also in tackling violence. I will describe field experiments, analysis of CCTV footage of violence and experiments in fully immersive virtual reality which, all explore bystander behaviour in violent or dangerous emergencies. I will argue that an understanding of the social identity relationships between perpetrators, victims and bystanders is central to the establishment of safer public spaces.

Mark Levine is a Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Exeter. His research focuses on the role of social identity in pro-social and anti-social behaviour. His recent work, supported by both the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) examined the role of group processes in the regulation of

perpetrator, victim and bystander behaviour during aggressive and violent events. He is currently involved in three EPSRC funded projects exploring the role of identities and behaviour in the digital age. These are all interdisciplinary collaborations with colleagues from departments of psychology, computer science, engineering, mathematics, animation and robotics.

Dr Alan Collins, Lancaster University

Abstract tbc

Dr Collin's main research interests are in history of psychology and psychiatry. In particular, he is interested in how psychology has adopted and changed concepts, such as memory, and how understanding the history of a concept gives us insight into how it is currently being used. More generally, he is interested in how psychological ideas and practices might change how we view ourselves and others. He is also interested in how psychology has evolved in the UK and how examining this history can help us better understand matters such as the role of psychology in modern British society, the relationships between intellectual and craft skills, and disciplinary demarcation.

EXHIBITION

As ever, the exhibition will play host to a variety of exhibitors from publishers to materials and, of course, the exam boards. You will have the opportunity to find out about books for the new specifications as well as speak one-to-one to exam board representatives.

BREAKOUT EVENTS

We will have breakout events focusing on the specification changes to support you with your preparations for teaching in September. In addition, we will offer the usual wide range of teaching and learning workshops. If you have never been to conference before, go to our conference website where you can find last year's breakout programme to see for yourself the type of choice and wide range of events that are offered.

If you are coming to Lancaster and are interested in running a workshop or just discussing ideas for one, please contact me. I am always happy to hear your thoughts and ideas and support you if you haven't run a workshop before: helenjkitching@gmail.com

Very best wishes and hope to see you in Lancaster!

Helen Kitching,

ATP Annual Conference Organiser

Our conference website can be found at:
www.atpconference.org.uk/

or scan the QR code:



For current updates on the conference join our Facebook group: The ATP: The Association for the Teaching of Psychology.



ONE DAY CPD EVENT AT WATFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS

SATURDAY MARCH 7TH 2015

In response to feedback received at our Annual Conference and our very successful one day event held in Darlington, the ATP is running a CPD event in the South of England. The aim of the day is to provide high quality, low cost, CPD for psychology teachers and it will consist of interactive workshops, facilitated by experienced teachers, on a variety of topics relevant to all specifications. There will be plenty of opportunity to network with like-minded professionals.

We are delighted to announce that the following workshops and speakers have now been confirmed:-

- 1) Jock McGinty – Watford Grammar School for Boys – Psychology Applied Learning Scenerios (PALS)
- 2) Andy McCarthy – Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School & Canterbury Christ Church University – A systematic approach to evaluation (as applied to an examination answer)
- 3) Helene Ansell – The Chetwynd Centre, Stafford – Practical work in Psychology
- 4) Deb Gajic – The Polesworth School – New Specifications for September 2015 – Approaching new style exam questions



THE EVENT WILL BE HELD AT:-

Watford Grammar School for Boys
Rickmansworth Road, Watford, WD18 7JF

Nearest Train station:- Watford

The conference fee is £50 and it will include refreshments and a light lunch. The day will begin with registration and coffee at 9.30am and finish at 3.00pm.

****Book your place early to avoid disappointment as places will be limited****

Please pay the £50 delegate fee through PayPal, via our website www.theatp.org In order to qualify for this bargain price you must be a member of the ATP. You can join via the website www.theatp.org

If you have any queries please contact:- d.gajic@sky.com

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS BOARD MEETING AT NAPIER UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH

October 25th 2014

The Autumn Board meeting of EFPTA was hosted by the School of Life, Sport and Social Sciences at Edinburgh Napier University. This was facilitated by Morag Williamson (who is a member of staff there) and it proved to be an excellent venue.

Representatives from England, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Russia and Scotland attended. The Board were delighted to welcome Helene Ansell (ATP Chair) and Ann Skinner (ATP Membership) as observers, and they took an active part in what was a very productive meeting. One of the priorities was to set out a three

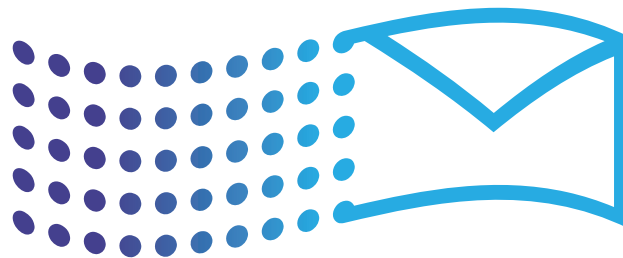
year work plan for EFPTA which includes setting targets for attracting new member associations across Europe, adding to our contacts in the world of psychology education and, perhaps most importantly, producing a 'Fact Sheet' describing what we know about where, and what type of, psychology is being taught at pre-tertiary level. We hope that this information will secure for us the continued support of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) to which we are affiliated whose mission includes the promotion of pre-tertiary (school) psychology in Europe.



The Fact Sheet may also be circulated more widely as a poster or flyer, to raise awareness more generally.

Dorothy Coombs
EFPTA President, www.efpta.org

UCLan School of Psychology launches new psychology teachers' email discussion list



PETER K ROBINSON • Associate Dean, School of Psychology,
University of Central Lancashire Email pkrobison@uclan.ac.uk

No doubt many members of the ATP make extensive use of social networking services such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and others in their personal lives. The use of such services within professional networks is somewhat more problematic however, with frequent concerns being raised about data protection, personal security and difficulties in controlling spam/spoof contributions. In many schools throughout the UK therefore the use of such services has been restricted or banned entirely.

Traditional email communication remains an effective way for colleagues to stay in touch with each other, and for very many years software such as Listserv, Mailbase and Majordomo has been available to organise email such that one email message sent to a site hosting the software can be distributed to numerous recipients. Replies may then be directed back to the host site (and subsequently re-distributed) if they are of general interest, or alternatively recipients can reply directly to the sender. Such software therefore lies at the heart of email Discussion Lists (or Groups).

Within the UK, Jisc (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee) acts to support post-16 and higher education, and research, by providing leadership in the use of information and communications technology in learning, teaching, research and administration. It is funded by all of the UK post-16 and higher education funding councils. One Jisc project JISCMail facilitates professional communication within the UK Education and Research communities by enabling the setting up of professional email Discussion Groups, spanning a wide range of disciplines. Currently JISCMail has over one and a half million users.

Peter Robinson, recently appointed Associate Dean in the UCLan School of Psychology has had many years of experience in organising Discussion Lists that span the School/FE/HE interface. In 1998, he launched the Biotutor Discussion List for teachers delivering the GCSE and A-level Biology curriculum. The List soon grew and now has over 500 members, mainly from schools but with some contributors from Universities, Learned Societies and the Exam Boards. In 2000, Peter and Valery Cobb (an enthusiastic science technician from Caistor Grammar School) launched the Scitech Discussion List for school science technicians, and this now has nearly 700 members.

With his own move to the UCLan School of Psychology in 2013, Peter became interested in offering a similar service for teachers of GCSE and A-level psychology and, in September, launched the JISCMail Discussion List, PSList (pslist@jiscmail.ac.uk). The group is growing daily and has already attracted members as far away as Bangkok.

PSList is an entirely free service and is intended for the dissemination of good practice, and to assist subscribers in resolving problems related to all aspects of the teaching of the psychology and neuroscience at GCSE and A-level (in Scotland up to Scottish Higher Certificate level). Discussion of any relevant topic is welcome. Discussion is non-moderated, informal and supportive.

It is envisaged that, as the List becomes established, various organisations, such as Universities and relevant Learned Societies may use PSList to announce relevant schools liaison events, or suggest relevant resources. The service may also be used to

advertise relevant vacancies. Of course PSList may be a further way to announce the activities of the ATP and of ATP members, though non-ATP members are equally welcome to join the group.

By default, PSList will send subscribers email messages individually, as they are received and processed. However, to minimise the amount of incoming mail, users may prefer to receive either a weekly digest (a compilation of all postings to the List in one large message) sent each Friday, or an just an index (a list of all the topics sent to the list during the week along with information about who sent each message and how to retrieve it). JISCMail will also compile all PSList email into a searchable archive, allowing users to see if questions have already been asked and answered. All necessary details will of course be emailed to users upon joining.

A key feature of PSList is that it is private – it is not intended for school pupils themselves (though this is not to say that a teacher could not submit a question on behalf of a pupil). Subscription thus requires a letter (on paper carrying the School/College/University letterhead) to be sent to the List Owner – Dr Peter K Robinson, School of Psychology, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, United Kingdom. The letter should clearly state the name of the intended subscriber, together with his/her email address (a telephone number is also useful in case there are problems with the email address). By restricting subscription in this way it is felt that subscribers may feel free to discuss relatively sensitive issues, such as examination performance or difficulties in teaching certain elements of the syllabus, with no fear of students 'listening in'. There is, however, no intention to encourage or allow discussion of any 'active' assessments. Of course the private nature of the List also ensures that subscribers will not be bombarded with 'junk mail' from advertisers.

The success of this venture very much depends on the users themselves, and how they feel able to contribute to the discussions and to support each other. If you are interested in joining, please do get in touch as described above.



DR FRANCES GARRAD-COLE • Senior Lecturer, Assessment Director, School of Psychology, Bangor University

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PUPILS WITH INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND FANTASTIC ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS?

The prevalence of anxiety in children and young people has doubled over the past 30 years (Nuffieldfoundation.org, 2014) and the growing number of anxious children may be a reflection of the changing nature of society and community. Fewer young people engage in face-to-face community activities, and even fewer do so in an inter-generational environment. There is an increase in use, and reliance upon, social media and electronic communication, which may underpin some of this change. Whilst it is important that our children are technologically literate, it appears that their ability (and more importantly) their confidence in public speaking is diminishing.

A fear of public speaking is extremely common in the UK, and represents the second most common phobia, after Arachnophobia (Nhs.uk, 2014; Anxietyuk.org.uk, 2014). Nevertheless, employers value effective communication as one of, if not the most important skills in the graduate workplace. Personnel interviewers report that as few as 60% of interviewees are able to sufficiently demonstrate this skill (Peterson, 1997). If an individual can, not only learn but, master this skill then there can be no doubt that they are placed at an advantage in the increasingly competitive job market.

Over more than a decade, the School of Psychology at Bangor University have been running and refining a scheme of Peer-led Oral Presentation skills Practice Sessions ('POPPS'), and recent research demonstrates a significant reduction in

anxiety towards public speaking over only 12 weeks of engagement in the POPPS scheme. These data are based on levels of trait anxiety (general levels of anxiety) and state anxiety (specifically towards public speaking) and, whilst trait anxiety remains constant over a 12-week period, state anxiety reduces dramatically. This reduction is simply as a result of exposure to, and practice in, oral presentation.

The scheme operates such that members attend weekly meetings where they may give a speech or are actively involved in the running of the session by fulfilling various roles, or they are audience members whose role it is to be engaged in the talk and give feedback. Enabling students to start with smaller roles and gradually build up their skills, means they grow in confidence and very quickly become truly proficient public speakers. The session is hosted by a student mentor, who is employed by the School and ensures the smooth running of the session and accurate record keeping. The effectiveness of this scheme is evidenced in our successes at conferences where Bangor Psychology students are awarded for their skills, and in the National Student Survey responses, which demonstrate that 92% of our graduates feel that their communication skills have improved (Unistats.direct.gov.uk, 2014). The weekly sessions also bring about a community atmosphere, which is much appreciated by the students in a large University school. The success of POPPS is now being shared across the University with four out of five colleges now either piloting or

implementing the scheme this year.

Whilst we are delighted that students at University are being given the chance to develop this important skill, we recognise that it is never too early to start building confidence in young people. As a result, Dr Garrad-Cole has adapted POPPS for use in secondary schools with children across years 11, 12 and 13 taking any subjects at school. By providing regular opportunities for young people to 'get up and speak', the scheme will facilitate confidence and provide a platform for young people to discuss interesting elements of their school subjects in an informal, mixed year-group session.

The proposed 'Bangor Oral presentation Scheme (BOPS)' will be piloted in Spring 2015 in the Bangor and North Wales area, but it is hoped that Schools across the UK would be interested in taking on the scheme. The scheme uses recent Psychology graduates who have been employed as mentors for one of the oral presentation schemes in Bangor University.

These student ambassadors have been trained, and have experience running such classes at University. These students are only too keen to continue mentoring groups, with passion and enthusiasm, since they miss all that POPPS has to offer once their degree is completed. Some of these graduates have already approached their previous secondary schools for the scheme. Is this you? Would you like to take part in this exciting new challenge? We may have a student ambassador returning to your area!

Participation in each level of the BOPS scheme would result in a certificate that can be added to the Record of Achievement.

We are also planning to host an annual, funded, BOPS conference at Bangor University for star pupils engaged in the scheme across the UK.

For further information contact:
f.g.cole@bangor.ac.uk



References

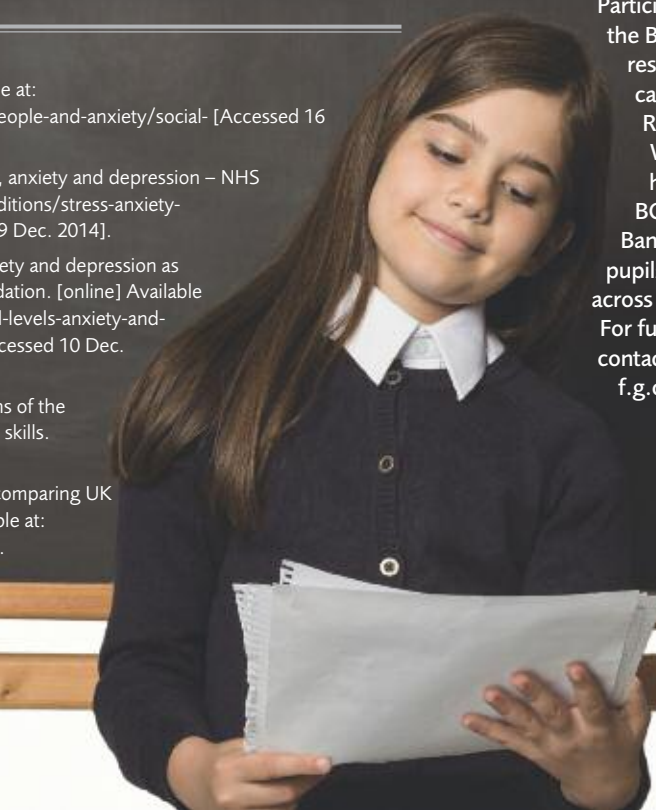
Anxietyuk.org.uk, (2014). Anxiety UK. [online] Available at: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/about-anxiety/young-people-and-anxiety/social-> [Accessed 16 Dec. 2014].

Nhs.uk, (2014). Coping with fears and phobias – Stress, anxiety and depression – NHS Choices. [online] Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/dealing-with-fears.aspx> [Accessed 09 Dec. 2014].

Nuffieldfoundation.org, (2014). Increased levels of anxiety and depression as teenage experience changes over time | Nuffield Foundation. [online] Available at: <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/increased-levels-anxiety-and-depression-teenage-experience-changes-over-time> [Accessed 10 Dec. 2014].

Peterson, M. (1997). Personnel interviewers' perceptions of the importance and adequacy of applicants' communication skills. *Communication Education*, 46(4), pp.287-291.

Unistats.direct.gov.uk, (2014). The official website for comparing UK higher education course data - Unistats. [online] Available at: <https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/> [Accessed 6 Nov. 2014].



CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND VALUES

(Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Wisdom & Knowledge

- Creativity, Curiosity, Open-Mindedness, Love of Learning, Perspective

Courage

- Bravery, Persistence, Integrity, Vitality

Humanity

- Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence

Justice

- Citizenship, Fairness, Leadership

Temperance

- Forgiveness and Mercy, Humility and Modesty, Prudence, Self-Control

Transcendence

- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, Gratitude, Hope, Humour, Spirituality

Teaching Positive Psychology

DR GRAHAM MITCHELL AND DR CATHERINE FRITZ •
Division of Psychology, The University of Northampton

This is a brief story about the development of Positive Psychology (PP) teaching in schools and colleges associated with the University of Northampton, and in the University itself.

PP is associated with well-being, thriving, achievement, human potential and optimal development. It is not only useful for treating mental illness, but places an emphasis on the good that Psychology can do for everyone.

For some time now, the University of Northampton has been involved in regular cross-sector Psychology meetings for A-level teachers and for University academics. These meetings, which take place in Milton Keynes and Northampton, frequently focus on aspects of PP. Shared interests in PP often drive the agenda in these meetings, and there is also an applied approach to discussions and presentations. PP approaches seem to find a ready home in any classroom, from Carol Dweck's work on mindset to Csikszentmihalyi's work on flow. It is usual for research papers on PP topics to be discussed and consideration given to how the emerging ideas can be put to good use to empower and to motivate students.

Schools and colleges teaching A-level

Psychology also bring student groups to the University for one-off sessions on resilience development and self-belief study. These visits have proven to be successful and well-received, and have provided a basis for longer term PP projects. Our own students also benefit from the optional PP modules that the University has gradually developed. This year, we have offered a new first year undergraduate module in PP. The core study area for this module is the 'Values in Action' catalogue of virtues and character strengths (Box 1). One of PP's central tenets is that well-being can best be achieved through the development of positive character strengths. This notion contrasts with more traditional approaches in Psychology that seek to target pathologies and deficits. This new module will also be used to platform our employability agenda for first year students.

This study of PP includes all major areas of Psychology and students will encounter a wide variety of topics from a PP perspective including: stress and resilience, health and happiness, work satisfaction, spirituality, relationships, and optimal performance and achievement in both physical and mental domains. Psychology at the University of Northampton already contained PP in both second and third undergraduate years. Although these module are voluntary ones, recruitment to these modules has been high we have over 120 students enrolled in the new first year one. In fact, the interest in this

area of Psychology has been so pleasing that we are beginning to develop post-graduate PP modules.

So what does all this show us? Here is an area of Psychology that is engaging and interesting. It has personal application, and is useful in the classroom and in life generally. It is not only fascinating, but also very useful. Maybe PP ought to have a stronger focus in A-level specifications. But until it does, teachers may find that fostering their own familiarity with the core PP concepts and principles will be useful in helping students to achieve their best.

If you are interested in joining our meetings and are located near to Northampton or Milton Keynes, please contact Graham at graham.mitchell@northampton.ac.uk



References and Reading

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. London: Harper Perennial.
- Dweck, C. S. (2000). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality and development*. Hove: Psychology Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P., and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Getting it right: how to write an effective essay



JUDITH ILES • Bourne Academy, Bourne, Lincs

It's that time of year when everyone's thoughts turn to the same thing... the impending exam in June! Without the safety net of a January exam it makes it even more important for students to get it right first time. Every year, as both a teacher and an examiner I see the same things; one of the most common mistakes and one that is easily rectified is the idea of depth vs breadth.

Students often panic before the exam and focus on learning every possible piece of empirical research when actually, the higher grade students are able to apply effectively, fewer studies but in greater detail. The key point to remember for the use of research studies is the ability to discuss the implications of this research and its impact on the question being asked.

Describing fewer studies in great detail or many studies in lesser detail will not significantly alter the mark and this is also applicable to Issues, Debates and Approaches (IDA) it's not necessarily the number of points that students include that will improve their answers but the way they are used. Simply listing each IDA throughout the essay will not suffice, students need to talk about the implications that their points have on the research.

Often I'm asked "How much do we need to write in 30 minutes" and the answer is always the same. You can only write about as much as you can fit in within the timeframe, it is quite possible to

write an A grade answer in 30 minutes, it's been done before and continues to be done at each exam season, students just need to focus on depth rather than breadth.

TOP TIPS FOR JUNE

- * Ensure you elaborate everything you say don't just state the research findings of a study but ensure you know and can explain the impact that it has.
- * Include Issues, Debates and Approaches throughout your answer don't just list them at the end.
- * Try to make your answer a rolling comparison integrate AO1, AO2 and AO3 points all the way through.
- * Focus on depth over breadth rather than trying to cram in as much as you can remember, focus on the way it is written and how it relates to the question being asked.
- * Work out exactly how much you can write in 30 minutes, that way you know your boundaries and can tailor your essay to your ability. And finally... (and probably most importantly!)
- * Practice exam style questions all the time try to have a practice answer written for each topic, that way if a question comes up you won't be struggling for what to write.

REVISING KEY CONCEPTS WITHOUT DYING OF BOREDOM!

Like most great lesson ideas, this isn't my original idea I pinched it from a 'guess the celebrity' game that I'd played as part of a training weekend for a youth group.

So what does guessing celebrities have to do with teaching psychology? Well, in the original game, there are three rounds. The game is set up by everyone picking a celebrity and writing his or her name on a slip of paper, which go into a box (hat, saucepan, whatever comes to hand...).

In the first round, participants take it in turns to pick out a slip, and then describe the celebrity without naming them. In the second round, the same idea but limited to three words.

And in the last round the same again, but no words just actions and mime!

Applying this to psychology, it makes a fun and entertaining way to revise key concepts, and can be adapted to a wide range of topics. I tend to use it as pre-exam revision, by which time the students should have quite a good grasp of key concepts already.... It works particularly well with research methods, where there are quite a lot of concepts to remember, and where students tend to find it quite dry and dull to revise.

In the class version, I write out the cards in advance, and have these ready to give to the students. Around 20 cards works well, working in groups of around 4-6. I explain

the rules to the learners, and we get the first round under way so far, so good – they explain the concept, theory or study without actually naming it (helping each other out if they get stuck at this stage).

The real entertainment starts when we reach round two three words to describe behaviourism? Or independent groups experimental design? The students start to find it challenging we get some very interesting three word descriptions, and they start to really get to grips with the key elements of complex concepts and ideas. The last round mime and actions is really just a bit of fun, but there are always plenty of laughs!

Pam Currie, Lecturer,
Kelvin College, Glasgow



DIFFERENTIATION IN THE PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM



LARA MESOUDI • Curriculum Leader for Psychology & Sociology at The Chase School

Some teachers turn their noses up or shudder at the thought of differentiation. It can sometimes be perceived as simply 'giving students different things to do'. But there is a lot more to differentiation than that and, if implemented appropriately, it can be an effective classroom strategy. Differentiation can be defined as "the differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning" (Petty, 2004).

However, most of the teachers I speak to have issues with giving students different work for fear of students realising they have the 'easier task' and consequently asking 'Miss why do I have this worksheet when he has a different one?' As a Sociology teacher as well, I am fully aware of labelling and the self fulfilling prophecy which can occur as a result of a teacher's low expectations. So how do we differentiate without hindering progress and instead challenge our students to achieve their potential?

Most of us will differentiate through outcome in our lessons. We won't expect every student to achieve the same grade or write the same paragraph. But sometimes our differentiation needs to be more visible than this.

The starting point for successful differentiation comes from knowing your students. If we intend to cater for all and challenge everyone in the class we need to know our student's ability. This is perhaps easier in sixth form than lower key stages as some of us see our students at least three times a week. I don't believe we should be teaching a differentiated lesson to jump through a hoop to impress Ofsted, but instead, we should be differentiating to help the students in our classes. As a result of this, I've trialled a range of differentiation strategies with my A level Psychology students and here are some which I've found effective and the students find both enjoyable and helpful.

There are some topics in Psychology which lend themselves to particular differentiated activities, as I've demonstrated below and hope you might find useful. But I don't believe we can differentiate using these strategies in every single lesson, mainly due to time restraints and lesson suitability. But if we combine these strategies occasionally with our consistent use of differentiated questioning and outcomes, then we are helping every student in our class progress and achieve their potential.

DIFFERENTIATE BY THE FEEDBACK:

When assessing students work, we all provide personalised feedback. When returning essays in class, give students time to read back through their essay and your comments. Then using your feedback they need to make an improvement to their work. It could be rewriting a paragraph; it could be adding key terminology or correcting spellings. Some schools refer to this as DIRT - directed improvement and reflection time. Every student will have their own target for improving their work provided by you so give them the time to act on this whilst it's fresh in their minds and you're there to support them.

DIFFERENTIATION THROUGH QUESTIONING:

Differentiation through questioning: Most teachers do this without even thinking. During a class discussion on a topic or recapping a previous lesson, direct the knowledge-based questions to lower ability students and the questions which require higher order thinking to the more able ones.

DIFFERENTIATION BY RESOURCE:

Despite questioning the effectiveness of distributing different tasks to students, as a starter activity it can provoke critical thinking and debate. Giving students different articles (based on difficulty) to read on a topic at the start of a lesson can be effective and articles often vary in terms of length, depth and literacy level. There's a wealth of credible news articles out there; in our department we've trialled this with articles on the effects of day care and the accuracy of eye witness testimony. Alternatively, this can work by showing students different images and asking them to consider how they relate to a topic.

THE THINKING DICE

are an excellent tool to have in your department to demonstrate differentiation. Each dice has a question prompt printed on each side, all based on Bloom's taxonomy. Each dice is based on a different Bloom skill, hence some are more challenging than others. Students need to be sat in ability groups and each group receives one or more dice. Their task is to produce questions on the set topic using the question starters on the dice. Once students have four/five questions, you decide which group they pass these onto in order to answer them. Again this should be based on ability. This has worked well for me on the topics of therapies for addiction and explanations for schizophrenia.

FOR HOMEWORK,

set each student a different question they need to research and find the answer to. Differentiate these questions by ability. Next lesson, the students move around the room and teach each other by explaining the answer to their question so the class have a full set of notes. I trialled this with a lesson on cognitive behavioural therapy. Once students had exchanged their answers I fielded questions to them on the therapy to check they understood their notes.

IF STUDENTS ARE ATTUNED

to their own ability then they can choose the task difficulty. I've tried this with questions ranging from straight forward knowledge to application and analysis. Students decide which questions to start at and work their way up. Alternatively for independent learning tasks, provide three different sources of information and students choose which one to make notes from. These could range from CGP guides to undergraduate Gross texts.



References

<http://geoffpetty.com/training-materials/differentiation/>

Year after year I have read examiners' reports and comments regarding the 'superficial', 'surface' and 'generic' application of evaluation and wondered how to improve the ability of students with this challenging but essential skill within our subject. After teaching Psychology for many years, this remained a definite area for development within my teaching toolkit. I have found myself taking many approaches and trying many new ideas, but this combination of strategies has been by far the most effective; both in terms of student progress and learning experiences within lessons and in improving exam results in PY4.

Teaching Evaluation and Meaningful Way

Last year, our school introduced a powerful concept called 'Lesson Study'. Teaching staff collaborate in trios to plan, deliver, observe and evaluate a series of lessons. Working with teachers of Music and History enabled me to take a completely fresh and creative approach to teaching evaluation skills and resulted in some original and effective teaching strategies which students engaged with on a profound level.

We decided to teach the evaluation first, before any new content for the unit had been explored, so that we could scaffold student learning of evaluation as a skill with the use of day to day experiences and previous learning before extending this to the new PY4 content.

Some lesson activities and Independent Study Tasks used are to the right.

This approach has genuinely improved the enjoyment of students when evaluating research and has made the content of their written analysis much more relevant and detailed. It is an approach that I am keen to maintain and develop further in my teaching this year.

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE EVALUATION TERMS

The first priority was to ensure that students had a detailed understanding of what the terms mean.

* Expert Evaluation Gurus

Each evaluation term was allocated to a different student, differentiated through ability and they created a glossary on a green cue card with as much detail as they could find about what the term means using the 'library' (three BOOKS MINIMUM from a guided selection). Success Criteria for the term included three sections; What is it? What parts can we break it into?, What about it would make a study good/bad? We studied a range of 15 terms including Determinism, Reductionism, Ethics, Androcentrism and Sampling.

* Transforming Abstract Terms to Images

Students completed an A3 grid with an image that represents their evaluation point and then as a class they shared explanation of their concepts and then allowed time for questions and others to create their own image to complete the grid. E.g. External Validity was represented by three images; a world for ecological, a stick man for population and a clock for time.

* Mark Scheme

Reference to the mark scheme allowed us to translate this into 'student speak' and discuss what the examiners really want to see in terms of evaluation. We did this alongside examples of paragraphs from previous student scripts to make it more concrete.

* The Help Box

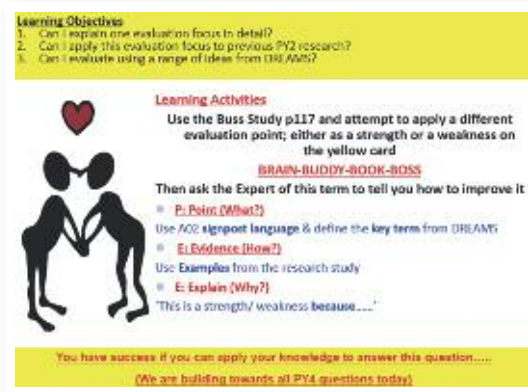
In the classroom, we constructed an evaluation help box which contained resources that were useful when evaluating; this included the green definition cue cards, example paragraphs, yellow exemplar Buss PEE cards and some textbook pages. This allowed students to use a 'three before me' approach when evaluating; 'Brain' (independence), 'Buddy' (other students), 'Book' (The Help Box) and then 'Boss' (me!).

* WIKI on the Virtual Learning Environment

Students contributed to creating an online WIKI of the evaluating terms by using and citing definitions for their term from different websites. This acted as the 'Help Box' when they were completing homework.

E.g. ETHNOCENTRISM; 1. The belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture. 2. A tendency to view alien groups or cultures from the perspective of one's own. Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary. 2. Ethnocentrism. A tendency or disposition to judge other ethnic groups, cultures, nations, or societies by the standards and customs of one's own, often accompanied by a dislike or misunderstanding of other such groups and a belief in the intrinsic superiority of one's own.
<http://www.psychologycs.com/ethnocentrism.htm>





in an Engaging



NICKI SMITH • Hayes Secondary School, Bromley

PART 2: APPLYING THE EVALUATION TERMS

The next priority was to ensure that students could apply these terms flexibly and in context.

* Dove Beauty Adverts

I then used some non-Psychological stimulus material for students to start practising using the terminology with. This consisted of some TV adverts by Dove where an artist drew women based on their own description and then compared it to an accurate portrait of them. This initiated some excellent debate and discussion about the methods he employed to 'investigate' self-image. E.g. ethical issues were considered in his approach to revealing their own insight into self-esteem.

* Application to AS Research

Students used the study by Buss, which they were already confident with, to apply their evaluation point, either as a strength or a weakness, to research on a yellow cue card. They were given the Point, Evidence, Explain structure to do this and the card acted as a model paragraph for their term in the help box. The card could even say that the term didn't apply to Buss and then explain why this is. E.g. Methodological issues with Buss concerning the use of a questionnaire with closed options and self-report.

PART 3: SELECTING APPROPRIATE EVALUATION TERMS

The final priority was to ensure that students could prioritise and vary the use of different terms.

* Ranking the Terms

Students worked in pairs at all stages to rank the evaluation points in terms of which are most relevant when evaluating various concepts; they could consider it either as a strength or a weakness. We started by doing this with the Dove clips and Buss study before moving on to new material which opened up interesting debate amongst the class as to why certain points were more suitable. E.g. With Buss they discarded the 'extrapolation' card and discussed whether 'validity' or 'reliability' was the larger issue with the study.

* Evaluation Tree

Another learning activity within the classroom is our evaluation tree; which works as a display but has removable leaves each with an evaluation term written on it. This helps students to organise and visualise how the evaluation terms are interconnected on different branches. It also allows them to physically come and select any number of leaves when given a concept to evaluate. Sometimes students come up and choose one leaf each and are asked to justify why they think that is the best leaf to select. This motivated them to avoid always using 'validity' and 'reliability' and to consider alternative ideas such as 'design', 'applicability', 'socio-political impact' and 'objectivity'.

We decided to teach the evaluation first, before any new content for the unit had been explored, so that we could scaffold student learning of evaluation as a skill with the use of day to day experiences and previous learning before extending this to the new PY4 content.



I LIKE TO MOVE IT



move it!

I recently read an article by a teacher who had shadowed one of her students through a typical school day. She attended lessons as if she were a student. One of the key points she made was how tired she felt by the end of that day. And surprisingly when she thought about why this was, it wasn't because she had been made to work particularly hard, or had learned so much about the world, but because she had been passive for pretty much the whole day. Although she had trudged from lesson to lesson, this was barely enough to keep her awake, as she attended lessons where it was expected for her to sit still and pay attention, while being spoken to, addressed, informed and ultimately 'taught' in the traditional manner of 'student sits in front of teacher and listens'.

Personally, I can recall being a student and desperately trying to keep myself from doing a 'nodding dog' impression while in lessons. Nowadays I am the same as I sit to watch TV of an evening, but the basic premise is the same. When you are sitting still, your body calms down. You begin to relax. Your parasympathetic nervous system is doing all it can to wind you down. And the more you sit, the more you want to sit. I am sure you are familiar with the notion, that the less physical movement you do, the less you feel like doing. So it is no wonder students get tired and sleepy sitting still all day long. If you are like me, you will be familiar with the sight of a room full of A-Level students sitting slumped over their desks, half asleep and in need of a good metaphorical poke in order to get them to do anything.

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with a traditional teacher led lesson, particularly if there is lots of discussion and effective

questioning (from both teacher and students) but sometimes it is good, if not necessary, to shake it up a bit and to provide a variety of different learning experiences, including ones that get students up and out of their seats. Having been trained as a primary school teacher, I was used to teaching in a more active way before I became an A-level teacher. It was necessary to plan lots of 'active' learning opportunities because, as I am sure you know, little children struggle to sit still for very long without becoming disruptive. Having made the move to A-Level teaching I found that 16-18 year olds weren't that different from six-eight year olds in some of the activities they enjoyed. They love cutting and sticking. They love using mini-whiteboards. They love playing games and so I try to include such activities in my planning. I do, however, use these types of activities sparingly, interspersed with traditional 'chalk and talk', as well as peer led lessons, independent research type lessons and straight forward reading and answering exam questions. I think the key is to mix it up, so that there is variety and interest, and so that students never really know what to expect. I also make sure I adapt activities for the different personalities I have in my classes. There is no way I would ever make somebody who is shy and self-conscious 'hot seat' just for the sake of being out of their comfort zone. Generally most of the active lessons I do are group activities, so nobody is made to be on the spot, unless they want to be. Anyway, here are a few examples you might adapt for your teaching, tried and tested with a wide awake 'thumbs up' from previously sleepy students.



JUNK MODELLING

As straight forward as it sounds (and as messy and noisy too). Give students a whole load of boxes, tubes, paper, card, yoghurt pots etc, some tape and scissors and get them to make a 3D model of an aspect of psychology you are covering e.g. the multi-store memory model. The model must be accurate and it must be labelled to include details of what the various components do. This can be adapted for other topics too, e.g. the body's response to stress.

ACTIVITY CAROUSEL

Set up a number of tables each with a different short activity that is relevant to the topic. E.g. psychodynamic approach to treating disorders. Students have to move around the classroom and have a set amount of time at each station to get each activity done. I have done this for the psychodynamic approach to treating mental disorders and activities included role playing the patient on the couch and therapist making interpretations, a game of word association (mallets Mallet), making or interpreting ink-blots, dream interpretation using a list of symbols and free association (creative writing). I have also used it to demonstrate different tasks used in primary schools when students are learning about Piaget and Vygotsky. I give students a record sheet, to write about the activity and what they have learned as they go.

SPEED DATING

Give each student a strength or a weakness to evaluate a topic or study you are studying. Arrange the students in two circles or rows facing each other in pairs. At the sound of a bell one person moves one place to the left. Ring the bell every minute or two. In the time allocated, each pairing must swap explain their strengths



or weaknesses to each other. Students are given a sheet to collect notes on each strength or weakness or they can highlight them as they go on a sheet that is already printed.

TREASURE HUNT

Laminate lots of notes, information and studies relevant to your topic in small bite-size chunks and number each one. Stick them all around the room/corridor/school/field if it is a sunny day (as applicable). Give students a question sheet with numbered questions that correspond to the laminated information and let them go find the answers.

ROLE PLAY/ RE-ENACTMENT OF STUDIES

Where-ever possible I try to re-enact or replicate the key studies that students need to learn. Students enjoy re-enacting Milgram's study of obedience in a dramatic capacity, having read about the study first. Sometimes I get students to video these re-enactments and then show the rest of the class. Another idea that works well, particularly for a revision activity is to get one student to 'hot seat' and take on the role of a psychologist, e.g. Milgram, and then the others act as 'press' and interview them and generally give them a hard time with regards to criticisms of the study.

It does take a bit of organisation and planning of resources to set such activities up. It also takes a bit of bravery sometimes it can go horribly wrong. I would say you have to go with the personalities of the students that you have. Some will take an idea and run with it while others may be so reluctant it is a total flop. Regardless, it is worth a try, especially if you feel you are in a bit of a rut and want to do something a bit different.

A GREEN FINGERED INVESTIGATION

As scientists, we are always interested in finding things out. So how about a Psychology Sunflower investigation? Remember the Blue Peter challenge to grow one? Right now we are waiting for the winter to give way, the days to get longer and sunshine to return. Why wait, why not grow your own sunshine? Grow your own sunflower.

Simply pop a seed into some moist compost, pop it onto a warm window sill, step back and see what happens. Pot it up as necessary, depending on the type of sunflower seed you have sown, you might end up with a Triffid! Once the risk of frost has passed, and this will vary on where you live, plant outside. Once plugged in, give it a name, and see your sunflower reach for the sky, i.e. a 'natural experiment', in more ways than one.

There is an increasing amount of research that suggests gardening has a positive effect on mental health. This might just indicate something between psychology, sunflowers and stressed out teachers.

"Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral on it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot".

Mark Twain.

This Psychology and Sunflower challenge is linked to the 'Sunflowers, Sanity and Psych' teachers' workshop scheduled for the Annual Conference in July. The workshop will consider how gardening and sowing seeds might be a useful way to strike a work-life balance. Would be lovely to hear and see how your sunflowers are doing at conference. Bring a photo with you! There will also be an opportunity to sow some sunflower seeds to take away.

Punam Farmah,
FoundationCampus Coventry





DR RAJSHREE TEWARI • Head of Psychology Department, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan's Vidyashram, Jaipur, India

I am sure my teacher friends will agree with me that our day in school is filled with teaching, checking, making notes and chasing the syllabus. It is an endless race against time, isn't it? There is hardly any scope or time for introspection. It is as if we are just flowing with the stream. In such a scenario, do you think, 'we' at the individual level can make any difference?

I can... if I really want

I think we can... if we really want! I did try and I am sharing my experience with you.

I teach grade 11 and 12. As any Indian knows, these are the classes which face a lot of tension and anxiety. Their board results, entrance exams, tuitions, parental expectations and the 'make or mar' kind of situation often puts students under deep mental stress. For instance, I remember one of my students, S, who was struggling to cope with depression. Ultimately, she had to drop out for a year in spite of psychological treatment. The face of yet another student, A, is also still very much clear in my mind. When I was teaching Schizophrenia, she had asked after the class, 'Madam, do you think I have Schizophrenia?' I could see clearly that the stress was indeed putting the mental health of students in danger.

It is not just about S or A, we often come across even academically good students breaking down or not performing well in their school exams. Some even have nervous breakdowns and in worst cases there have been student suicide cases too. In whichever corner of the world one may go, life is never easy for an adolescent. It is full of confusion, crisis and challenges.

But some students do manage to fight the pressure and do reasonably well. So what is it that separates them? Is it their hardiness, moderate anxiety, adjustment skills or supportive family background that is related to their mental health? This was one question that had bothered me for long; it was also very close to my heart. I

was exposed to the student's agony on a daily basis but had not been able to do much about it. So I decided to find out answer to this question by doing a small research project. I decided to choose hardiness and adjustment as determinants of mental health in secondary school students as my topic for the research. Positive results would mean we could intervene and help students who we feel are in need of our support.

Timely intervention may help the vulnerable students before the situation worsens for them. It is possible as hardiness is a life skill that can be cultivated. It is high time we realize that the world is not going to change for our children; they have to change for the world! Adjustment can also be ably supported through an enriched environment and effective counselling. The data thus can enhance our understanding of the student's problems and can prove to be a corner stone to prevent such cases in future. It will be useful the world over, as children are same everywhere.

The focus of my study was to find out and help the vulnerable group of 12th standard students. The sample size was 60 and their age range was 16 to 17 years and both the sexes were part of the sample. Random selection was done to ensure equal opportunity to every student. Apart from my personal interest, logistically it was suitable too. As any teacher would know incorporating a new thing along with our syllabus and timetable is a challenge. Since I teach these classes, I did not have to

arrange specific extra classes for the research. I could do it in my own periods. The planned schedule could thus be incorporated without much hassle. Once the sample was decided, the two main variables affecting mental health were chosen, Hardiness and Adjustment. These variables were chosen as there is ample scope of intervention in these two as against others like parental pressure or examination system. Then the operational design for the test was chosen. The study was planned in three phases.

1. Pre test Phase; Hardiness and adjustment were correlated with mental health of 60 students. This phase showed the kind of correlation these two variables have with the mental health (positive). It also gave us a vulnerable group of 12 students who had scored low on mental health. They were having problems and needed extra help.

2. Intervention; various techniques were used to improve adjustment level and hardiness of 12 vulnerable students.

3. Post test Phase: The mental health questionnaire was given again to see if there was any improvement in these 12 students. We have used standardized Psychometric tests like AISS (adjustment inventory for secondary students by Sinha), Hardiness short scale by McNeil and mental health questionnaire by Srivastav and Bhat. The results were analyzed and statistically scored. The 't' test and correlation will be used to interpret the results.

As a researcher I was fully aware that the



topic is sensitive in nature. Hence ethical issues concerning the study were also looked into with great care. Informed consent of the participants was taken and strict confidentiality was maintained. Intervention was also suggested to the parents first and then the school counsellor took it further with their consent.

Action Plan

The project commenced on 13 April 2010, with the general introduction of the project. Once the students became aware of the utility of the project, Hardiness and Adjustment Test was administered. On 20 April 2010, Mental Health Questionnaire was given. Students were enthusiastic to participate in something that was new and useful. Open discussion regarding their personal problems facilitated in building up the rapport. The results were scored, analyzed and interpreted during the summer vacations. The result analysis highlighted a significant correlation between Hardiness and Adjustment. The students with a low score on mental health were included in the research project. The focus was now shifted towards certain intervention techniques which would foster improvements in their hardiness as well as adjustment levels and eventually their mental health. On 3 July 2010, a new technique for managing stress i.e. Jacobson Progressive Relaxation Therapy was taught to them. Students were advised to adopt this technique in their daily life. Each new session devoted ten minutes for such

relaxation. On 6 July 2010, the chosen sample students were given their pre test results and an open discussion followed. It helped us to know their existing coping strategies. The merits and demerits of the existing strategies were discussed. Coping tests were also given. 13 July 2010 was a day devoted to Yoga, where Yogasanas like Shavasana and Pranayam were taught to get relief from stress. On 20 July 2010, role play was used to depict wrong coping techniques, for instance, a student who is unprepared for exam decides to remain absent to escape the test (Escapism) or a student who isn't interested in engineering but gives in to parental pressure (Lack of Assertiveness). Students not only enjoyed this session but understood the effectiveness of various coping techniques which were discussed earlier. On 27 July 2010, cognitive restructuring was done and students could easily comprehend that most of our problems arise due to cognitive triad which refers to wrong beliefs related to ourselves, others and our future, for example, I must be good at everything, all others must like me all the time, my future should always be bright. It is impossible to get these three right all the time. As a result, we feel stressed which consequently affects adjustment and health. This session facilitated in building positive self concept and confidence. It also helped them to accept themselves as they are and prepared them to have practical expectations. On 10 August 2010, second life skill i.e. time management was taught to them with a

special focus on their academic studies. PQRS method was discussed (preview, question, reading, self recitation and test). On 17 August 2010, four case studies in four groups of three students were discussed to review if they can apply the topics covered in previous sessions. This session was conducted along with school counselor Dr. Anushri Mathur. It helped us to know if they are progressing in the right direction. On 26 August 2010, third life skill i.e. positive interpersonal relationships were emphasized. Counselor discussed problems at the individual level. 7 September 2010 was for post intervention recap and review. This open house presented an opportunity for the students to share their experiences. On 14 September 2010, mental health questionnaire was given. The school term exams began in September. Students were busy with exams. This time was used to score, analyze and interpret the difference between the mental health scores in the pre test and post test i.e. before and after intervention. Individual access to the researcher continued in this period though formal sessions could not be arranged. On 12 October 2010, results were shared and feedback was received from the students. There was a significant difference between the pre test and post test. Positive spin off was shown on overall school adjustment too. Finally on 15 October 2010, the result was shared with the teachers with a slide presentation. They showed interest and wanted to be an active part of such endeavors in the future.

The school counsellor, Dr. Anushri Mathur was of great help. She conducted individual and group counselling sessions. Mr Girish Sharma our school yoga teacher explained Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga which provides holistic and integrated methods of relaxation. All the 12th standard teachers and participant students gave their own inputs which have helped subsequent implementation of the plan.

The participants and the data had to be handled with great sensitivity and maturity. Once the vulnerable group was zeroed down, it was the student's choice whether he/she wanted to participate in the project. After student's voluntary consent, permissions were obtained from all parents of students who were involved in the project. All the parents willingly gave their consent and were happy to know that school is going an extra mile to help their wards.

Confidentiality and discretion were key elements for data collection. The number of vulnerable participants was 12 out of the total sample of 60. It was this group of 12 students that needed special, urgent and focused help. Diluting it would have refuted the very base of this research.

The project began by giving tests to all the psychology students. So there was equality of access. The main thing emphasised to this group was that personality development is an ongoing process and we are in this group, not because we lack anything but because we want to achieve optimum growth... a goal... we teachers are also aiming for ...hence this project!

This approach made them more comfortable. With each successful intervention, their motivation was visibly improving.

The learning outcomes were evaluated as per the action plan. The pre-test phase involved giving Hardiness test, Adjustment test and mental health questionnaire to all the 60 students. It helped in two ways.

1. To see the relationship that Hardiness and Adjustment has with Mental health.
2. To get the vulnerable group of students who had scored low on these variables.

Analysis of Data: [Pre test Phase]

't' test and correlation has been applied to analyze the data. The correlation was calculated between the following.

Hardiness as determinant of mental health in senior secondary students.

Adjustment as determinant of mental health in senior secondary students.

Hardiness and adjustment as determinants of mental health in senior secondary students.

The correlation between hardiness and mental health is .01, .05 i.e.

positive and significant.

Similarly, adjustment is also

found to be positively correlated with mental health i.e. .01, .05. Both the variables together are also positively correlated with mental health. This validates our hypothesis that if we use intervention techniques to improve hardiness and adjustment skills, mental health will also show improvement.

The study helped us to zero down on the students who were found to be vulnerable. The primary goal then was to relieve the symptoms and assist them with achieving a level of adaptation that was comparable to their level of functioning. Realistic short term goals were made at the start of the therapy.

Analysis of the data: [Post test Phase]

The difference between the pre test and post test means and standard deviations on six variables of mental health were calculated. With the help of these, SED was calculated and the 't' value was taken out to see if intervention results in improved mental health of the vulnerable group.

Total pretest mean is 26.57 while total post test mean is 18.54. t value is 1.53.

The difference between the mental healths was significant at 0.05 levels. It shows that intervention has had positive effect on mental health. The feedback from the other 12th standard teachers and participants themselves showed a spin off in other areas too. Their confidence level and attendance in school had improved. The adjustment levels also showed positive tilt. By the time this final report is made, our pre-board results are out and researcher was immensely happy to note that all the 12 students have shown improvement in their results and more important, they are happy with themselves.

This project has been a truly rewarding and enriching experience. It has changed my perspective about my role in the educational system. Generally, teachers



blame the education system, competitions, and parents for the student's stress. The usual attitude is, how can 'we....being just teachers' make a difference? Aren't we burdened with the syllabus and lot many other things which consumes most of our time? Hence, even though student's problem was something that was close to my heart, I could only empathize and always felt, 'how can I alone make any difference?' 'But with this project, I realized that if I sincerely want, 'I CAN'. These positive results have certainly motivated me. I intend to use it in my board class every year. I also want to share it with as many teachers as possible. The successful implementation of the project has filled me with confidence and enthusiasm to try out new things, experiment and break new grounds. I now feel ready to take the initiative rather than just follow the beaten path.

Even if I could make a difference to some students in my own class, what mattered was "I could". Imagine if all teachers decide to help their own class, many students would be helped. Even if we manage to stop one nervous breakdown, one suicide, one adjustment problem each, we would actually be doing a great service to humanity. I am sure you want to be part of this change, don't you? Or do you think that such problems will vanish with some magic? Come on dear friends, from all over the globe... let us join hands and be the magic ourselves.



Appendix

Adjustment Inventory for senior secondary students by Sinha

Mental Health Questionnaire by O.N. Srivastav and V.K. Bhat

Practical Exercises in Psychology By Dash, Mishra, Nanda and Jena

Psychology-NCERT book for 12th grade Chapter 3, Meeting life challenges

Short Hardiness Scale by Mcneil

REM sleep in infants: a new idea

EVIE BENTLEY • sussexsciencetutor.co.uk

How do we learn that our bodies and limbs are ours, and how do we come to know where the bits of us are spatially? This knowledge must come before we can learn the basic motor skills such as needed for reaching and grasping, and oddly enough sleep research has provided an interesting new idea about this learning.

Why do we sleep, why do we dream? Knowledge about sleeping, "perchance to dream", greatly increased last century and as a result there are the well-known (to us as psychologists and psychology teachers) theories. The Restoration idea has always appealed to me because it seems completely reasonable that after a day of living our bodies and brains need time to recover and replenish. Whether this is physical recovery (and, indeed, growth hormone which is needed for growth and repair is released in deep sleep) or regeneration of neurochemicals. Both before and in the early months after birth we grow at a very fast rate. An Evolutionary theory has suggested we play out or practice in REM sleep tactics and strategies for staying alive, and perhaps this could explain some nightmares if our dream actions are not being successful. A different evolutionary approach suggests sleep is a time for conserving energy and staying safe. Yet more ideas focus on a link between sleep and memory/learning, a time when new memories can be consolidated if useful or pruned away if not.

It's been known for many years that infants and even fetus' show REM sleep and its associated brain activity, and surely almost everyone has wondered about this since for us, adults, REM sleep is associated with imaginative dreaming. However, if REM sleep

is truly linked to dreaming will we ever know if fetus' dream, and what they dream about, as they certainly show REM sleep? Newborn babies seem to dream about feeding they make the suckling movements with the mouths during sleep. As far as I am aware, all babies do this, which to me is a sign of what is in their experience rather than some Freudian signal.

However, a new idea has been proposed by a research team from the University of Iowa. They looked at what happens when limbs make tiny movements, twitches, in REM sleep. We are possibly most aware of these movements in pet dogs, the "chasing rabbits" scenario, though these small movements occur in all baby mammals that have been studied. In this recent research using neonate rats the team studied brain activity during REM sleep (during the twitching) and compared this with activity from similar movements when awake. Though the movements were similar the activity in the brain was clearly different, the REM twitches producing a large amount of neural activity whilst the awake movements did not.

The explanation of these new findings is based on a system in the brain, which filters incoming information about the body's movements. When awake, the suggestion is that input, as a result of our own movements, is filtered out by what is called corollary discharge. The latter is split-second input to the brain, shown in insects as well as mammals, which allows the individual to recognise and filter out self-generated sensations and thus distinguish these from the input from the outside world. The team suggest that in the absence of corollary

discharge the twitches of neonates enables them to learn about their limbs and how to control them; I wonder if this might even start in the womb. Tiriac, one of the authors of the study, says, "But (neonate) twitches seem to be different in that the brain is unaware that they are self-generated. And this difference between sleep and wake movements may be critical for how twitches, which are most frequent in early infancy, contribute to brain development." Following the initial results many follow-up experiments were done which showed that sleep twitching in newborn baby rats is a unique movement because it is processed in the brain without corollary discharge. And the conclusion which follows is that these twitches therefore activate the brain freely and enable the baby animals to learn about the structure and the functions of their limbs as the twitching stimulate the formation of new brain circuits.

Obviously this is a very new idea, and obviously the research needs replication and development. A third 'obviously' is that information from baby rats cannot be assumed to apply to other animals such as ourselves. But because this is such a new idea, the discovery of the previously unknown shutting down of the corollary discharge system, it is particularly interesting and thought-provoking.



References

Tiriac, A., Del Rio-Bermudez, C., and Mark S. Blumberg, M. Self-Generated Movements with "Unexpected" Sensory Consequences. *Current Biology*, 2014; 24 (18): 2136 DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2014.07.053 accessed on 30.ix.14

COMPARISON OF THE NEW A-LEVELS IN PSYCHOLOGY



ANN SKINNER

Apologies to the readers if a lot of this is already familiar but I thought it would be useful to put as much as possible down on paper.

Everyone probably knows that the new system is to offer a linear assessment, which will examine the whole course at the end of two years of study. If a student or a centre wishes to enter for an exam at the end of one year, the boards are offering an AS exam on half of the content BUT the marks for this will not count towards the final A level grade and ALL the material will be examined in the linear exams. In this article I have focused on the A level courses.

All boards have created their specs so that the two-year students and the one-year students can be taught side by side. Decisions as to entry therefore do not need to be set in stone at the outset. However, exam practice might be an issue since the two-year students will probably be faced with more demanding questions in their terminal exams than the one year students. They will also be competing with more mature students.

All four boards are offering just one specification. So, how are you going to choose a spec?

The good news is that generally all the boards have tried to maintain as much as possible the same approach as their old specs. If you have been happy with the board you have been using then carry on and you will see a lot of similarity. However, there have been several major changes basically demanded by the government and a need to make specs more relevant to the modern psychological world. What follows is a very basic comparison of the offerings.

All boards have produced their draft specifications and are now up on their websites. These are slowly being accredited by OFQUAL as and when each has been shown to meet new stringent requirements of assessment. Also specimen assessment materials called SAMs have been produced and are on the web sites. It must be noted that these have been intensely vetted by OFQUAL, checking that they meet the new requirements of assessments as explained below.

Mathematics and practical skills

This might be the biggest challenge for students and teachers alike, but it cannot be ignored any longer. Psychology has battled for

decades to get recognition of its standing in the world of science, and its study has to involve mathematical analysis of data if conclusions are going to be valid. The government has stipulated that 10% of the assessment must have a mathematical element, and this must be at least at higher tier GCSE. It has also specified what counts as mathematics and all boards have had to follow this guidance and all the topics MUST be examined over the lifetime of the qualification.

(See the document www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303026/A_level_science_subject_content-.pdf Appendix 6 is the mathematical requirement and pg. 38 onwards covers the details for Psychology details. Note that the bold items are to be examined at A level only and not at AS).

So, candidates must expect to be asked to carry out calculations but not to remember formulae of inferential statistical tests, these will be provided in the exams, Pearson Edexcel have included a formula sheet for every exam by routine and in their SAMs it can be seen how a calculation might be set giving extra support in the question.

Another area that needs considering, is where the common research skills are to be taught and each spec has approached this differently.

The choice then comes down to where the maths and research skills are going to be taught in the spec and where they are going to occur in the assessment. AQA, OCR and WJEC(Eduqas) have put all the data analysis mainly in one section, whereas Pearson (Edexcel) have assigned aspects of it to topics in the spec where it would be appropriate to teach it. Pearson has also stipulated practical methodologies in relevant topics. See below for tables comparing the four specs.

How are practicals assessed in the A level?

AQA	OCR	Pearson (Edexcel)	WJEC(Eduqas)
No compulsory practicals stated just directed to do some along the way They are in Paper 2, section C, but may also appear as relevant in other sections	There is a direction to carry out small scale practicals along the way. Research methods are in paper 1 and also core studies on paper 2.	Practicals are assigned to specific topic areas where they are relevant and assessed on any exam paper, within topics as relevant. In addition, the focus of paper 3 is skills and data	Two practicals have to be carried out as stated in the spec and will be examined on paper 2.
How are quantitative skills assessed in the A level papers?			
Mainly Section C paper 2, which is devoted to research methods, but could appear anywhere.	All in Paper 1 where the focus is research methods	Assessed on any exam paper within the topic as detailed in the spec. In addition, the focus of paper 3 is skills and data.	All in paper two, which covers all the maths requirements and the research methods.



Contemporary studies

There has been a desperate need to bring psychology specs up to date and include more contemporary studies and the different specs have all tried to do this but in different ways as follows.

How the studies are organised in the content

AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC(Eduqas)
The basic approaches are covered via specified topics. No specified studies are required in detail	The approaches are covered via specified studies. There are four for each approach at A level and two at AS. Half are contemporary and half classic.	The basic approaches are covered via specified topics. Each one lists a classic and a contemporary study and which skills should be explored in that topic.	The basic approaches are covered by teaching - Assumptions - therapy, - a classic study - contemporary debate

Skills

People might not have picked up on the fact that the government have insisted upon a more stringent and common skills assessment. Documents have been published setting out how much of the assessment should be on pure recall, on applying knowledge to new situations and evaluating evidence and improving methodology. This again has been applied by OFQUAL very stringently in the submitted sample assessment materials (SAMS) of all the boards. However, they do offer different exam structure and question types as in the tables following.

Topics offered

AQA	OCR	Pearson Edexcel	WJEC (Eduqas)
Social influence; obedience and conformity Memory; multi-store, working memory, forgetting, eye witness testimony Attachment Schaffer, Lorenz, Harlow, Ainsworth, Bowlby Psychopathology; definitions and treatments Biopsychology; nervous and endocrine system,	Research methods Psychological themes through core studies Social; obedience Cognitive; memory Developmental; aggression Biological; regions of brain Individual differences; phobias and autism Perspectives and debates with ref to each approach	Social; obedience and prejudice Cognitive; memory, working/multi-store/long-term/reconstructive Biological; nervous system, brain, aggression Learning theory; conditioning, social learning theory Research methods are assigned to topics as are classical and contemporary studies	Biological; evolutionary, brain, neurotransmitters Psychodynamic; childhood, unconscious mind, tripartite personality Behavioural; blank slate, conditioning, Cognitive; computer analogy, internal mental process, schemas Positive; free will, goodness and excellence, the good life
Psychopathology; definitions and treatments Biopsychology; nervous and endocrine system, the brain, biological rhythms Research methods Options one from each group of three: - relationships/ gender/cognition & development - schizophrenia/ eating behaviour/ stress - aggression /forensic/addiction	Issues in mental health History, medical model and alternatives. Options two from: child/ criminal/ environmental/ sports and exercise psychology	Clinical Psychology; definitions, schizophrenia and one other disorder. Options one from: criminal/child/health Research methods are assigned to topics as are classical and contemporary studies	Research methods Options three from: addictive/ autistic spectrum/ bullying/ criminal behaviours/ schizophrenia/ stress

A level paper structures

AQA	OCR	Pearson Edexcel	WJEC (Eduqas)
All sections on all papers have multiple choice qs, short answer qs and extended writing. Each section is 24 marks except paper 2 section C which is 48 marks Paper 1 Introductory topics in Psychology A, Social Influence B Memory C Attachment D Psychopathology A to C is AS content D is AS and A content Paper 2 Psychology in Context A Approaches in Psychology B Biopsychology C Research Methods Paper3 Issues and Options in Psychology A Issues and Debates B,C,D Option 1/2/3 Each option has three topics of which one has to be chosen	Paper 1 Research methods A 20 Multi-choice qs B Qs on a novel source, re-planning, design and evaluation of the research C Data analysis of novel data using descriptive and/or inferential statistics Paper 2 Themes through Core Studies A core studies' themes B areas, perspectives and debates C practical applications, applying knowledge and understanding to a novel source Paper 3 Applied Psychology A Issues in Mental Health Range of compulsory question types B Options Choose two options out of four and answer all qs on them. 3 parts to each option totalling 35 mks	Paper 1 Foundations in Psychology A Social Psychology B Cognitive C Biological D Learning theories Mixed questions, 70 mks for A-D E Issues and debates Two extended response questions, 20 mks Paper 2, Applications of Psychology A Clinical Psychology Mixed questions, 54 mks, including a 20 mk essay. B One from three options, criminal, child or health. Mixed qs 36 mks Paper 3 Psychological skills in the real world A Research Methods Mixed qs, 24 mks B Studies from topics 1-4. Two extended response questions, 24 mks C Issues and debates in Psychology. Two extended response qs, 32 mks	Paper 1 Past to Present Range of qs based on five approaches, classic evidence and a contemporary debate Paper2 Investigating Behaviour A, Principles of Research qs on how research is carried out B Personal Investigations, qs on two investigations specified on the spec. C Novel Scenarios, qs on an unseen piece of research Paper 3 Implications in the real world A, Applications 3 qs out of a choice of six B, Controversies One q out of a choice of two

So to sum up

You are not going to choose on the level of maths in the assessment as all have to cover the same demands, nor on the amount of research methods or demands of the questions for the same reasons.

You are going to ask yourself how you would like to teach and which options you prefer. So look carefully at the tables showing these and that might help you decide. Look at whether the contemporary studies and practical activities are specified or not and ask yourself what you would prefer?

I am sure there will be much discussion going on and I advise you to keep your ears and eyes open particularly as to what members are saying on the website. Happy choosing!!

Editor's note:

At the time of press, some of the specifications are still awaiting accreditation by OFQUAL.

ROASTING SOME PSYCHOLOGY C

As winter draws on (sorry, really, really sorry) I thought it might be time to roast some old psychology chestnuts and get our teeth into them. Is psychology any more prone than other subjects to perpetuating old stories as reality I wonder? Anyway, here are six I have encountered recently. Am I wrong to portray these as old chestnuts? I am certainly guilty of passing them off to my students as true in the past.

Kitty Genovese

The story around Kitty usually spins into 38 people witnessed her being attacked from their apartment windows by a man who stabbed her to death, returning to continue his attack on three occasions over a period of 30 minutes. It was 3.00am and she was on her way home from work. She cried out for help and the attacker ran off twice but nobody went to her aid and nobody even called the police. She died in the stairwell of her apartment block after the third attack. The incident took place in 1964 in New York. This is usually portrayed as a shocking example of bystander apathy and an indictment of the callousness of us human beings.

The truth? Certainly this poor woman was stabbed to death and the details of the attack are probably reasonably accurate but what about the description of the apathy? In his 2014 book, Cook points out that most of the accounts of this murder were based on reports in the New York Times and other popular newspapers and were sensationalised, as so many newspaper reports are. In fact, he claims, there were not 38 'witnesses'. There were 38 police records of interviews with 49 people; 16 of these people could be called 'eyewitnesses'. Some of these 16 did hear a woman shouting and looked out of their windows but they could not see the incident. Others reported seeing a woman getting up off the ground and a man walking away and so assumed the incident was over. This is far from the notion that 38 people watched Kitty being stabbed to death and we need to revise our versions passed on to our students.

Teachers keen to question the heteronormativity of psychology might also like to mention that Kitty was bar manager at the local lesbian bar and was returning home that night to her apartment shared with her lesbian partner. Not that that would have featured in the NY Times in 1964, or in psychology textbooks.

Zimbardo's Stanford University Prison Study

Most accounts of this study describe a mock prison constructed in the basement of a Stanford University building. Volunteers were randomly divided into 'prisoners' and 'guards' and asked to enact everyday prison life. Clothing appropriate to each role was provided; for example prisoner and guard uniforms, sunglasses for guards, nylon caps for prisoners to simulate shaved heads. Prisoners wore numbers and were known by these instead of names. As time went on, the guards became more and more sadistic in their treatment of the prisoners. The study was

scheduled to last for two weeks but had to be called off after six days because of the psychological and physical damage experienced by the prisoners at the hands of the guards. Again, we tend to conclude that human beings are such awful creatures that, left to our own devices, we degenerate into beasts.

However, recent criticisms of this work lead us to question the validity of the data as a study of deindividuation. While it may be a reasonably accurate account of events, we have to question whether we can come to any conclusions on the basis of psychology and the psychology of deindividuation in particular.

For example, Zimbardo himself says he took on the role of prison superintendent so much that he forgot he was conducting a study:

"To my surprise, I got really angry at him. Here I had a prison break on my hands. The security of my men and the stability of my prison was at stake, and now, I had to deal with this bleeding-heart, liberal, academic, effete dingdong who was concerned about the independent variable! It wasn't until much later that I realized how far into my prison role I was at that point that I was thinking like a prison superintendent rather than a research psychologist."

Some writers say that only one third of the guards acted sadistically, that people who volunteered for this study were more likely than normal to act sadistically and that Zimbardo himself encouraged the 'guards' to act in such a way.

Carnahan and McFarland published two advertisements. One invited male participants to join 'a psychological study of prison life'; the other invited participants for 'a psychological study'. The 30 applicants to the 'study of prison life' scored significantly higher on measures of aggression, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism, social dominance and lower on measures of altruism and empathy, than the 61 volunteers for the 'psychological study'. This illustrates the power of self-selection prompted by apparently confounding variables.

Whilst this might be an interesting account of men behaving badly, it can hardly be seen as a well-controlled psychology study. Indeed, Griggs recommends that this study be placed in the research methods section of textbooks, not the social psychology section, where the experiment's flaws can be used as an introduction to issues such as ecological validity, demand characteristics, ethics and conflicting results.

Aversion Therapy

Students learn that aversion therapy has a role to play in treating unwanted behaviours. This is fine when the unwanted behaviour is displayed by an adult who agrees it is unwanted. After all, adult alcoholics can be conscious that the ill effects of their habit are best avoided. Even in their ill state, they can give informed consent to aversion therapy treatments such as the use of emetics. However, when does aversion therapy become torture? When used with people with learning difficulties and especially children

OLD HESTNUTS



GEOFFREY SHOESMITH

with learning difficulties this approach becomes questionable.

In June 2012, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Torture approached the US government with a formal complaint against a school for students with special needs in Boston that uses electric shock as aversion therapy. He said he was 'very concerned' about the use of electric shocks applied to autistic children through pads attached to their skin for misdemeanors such as swearing. In April, 2014, the US Food and Drug Administration recommended a ban on the use of electric shock devices to control the behaviour of children with disabilities.

Chromosomal causes of aggression

We think there is a possibility of aggression being the result of abnormal chromosomes but this seems to be a good example of a story running away with itself. Roughly 1 in 1,000 human males is born with an extra Y chromosome, making 47 chromosomes in all. This condition is referred to as 47,XXY. In the mid-1960s a group of men with this condition was found in an Edinburgh hospital. The researchers who investigated these men initially suggested that they might have been put into hospital because of aggressive behaviour but they had no evidence for this and when they observed the men they found they were no more aggressive than others. Unfortunately, by the time the researchers published their findings the idea that they were aggressive had been repeated in many publications and this sometimes still happens even nowadays. These men tend to be taller than normal so perhaps their height influenced the original perception of them as more aggressive.

Other studies into chromosome abnormalities have come to the same conclusion. For example, some women are born with only one sex chromosome, an X chromosome. They are designated XO by scientists. We might expect these women to be less aggressive if aggression were linked to chromosomes but in fact a 1981 study found that this was not the case.

The difference between verbal and non-verbal communication

There's a whole hotchpotch of definitions out there. Here is one I think is accurate but I am sure others will chip in with suggestions if they think not. Don't confuse the words 'verbal' and 'vocal'. Communication involves the transfer of meaning from one mind to another.

Verbal communication involves using words to do this. Words can be vocal, as in spoken language, or written, as in this article, or in the form of braille, sign language, semaphore, Morse code and probably lots of other ways. The key here is the use of words no matter what medium is used to create the words. So, yes, this article is an example of verbal communication. Sound, in itself, is not verbal communication. Paralinguistics are not verbal communication because tone of voice, for example, does not use words.

Non-verbal communication involves communicating without

using words. It can be vocal, like the tone of voice used, or non-vocal, like body posture, hand gesture or eye contact. Grunts, gasps of delight and snorts are not words (well, at least, I don't think so) and so are not examples of verbal communication but examples of non-verbal communication.

Does anybody have an Antisocial Personality Disorder?

Like me, you may be teaching that this personality disorder exists. There are case studies that illustrate the condition and it seems quite real. You, like me, may be telling your students that three or more characteristics from a list qualifies you for APD. Reminds me of three strikes and you're out.

I think chestnuts like this need special handling. It is so easy to allow students to fall into worries about friends and relatives who 'may have APD' or, worse, let them think they know something about a friend that the friend doesn't know him or herself. So to temper this definition, let's make sure we let our students know that the BPS has very important, published reservations about personality disorder and other mental disorder definitions, particularly over the DSM-5 version. Their reservations are too detailed and extensive to reproduce here but you can read more in The Psychologist 5th November 2010 or at this link if you have access to it //digest.bps.org.uk/search?q=+dsm+5

It is perhaps sufficient to say the BPS points out how difficult it is to distinguish between 'clinically significant' symptoms and 'mild distress', between 'pathological' and 'normal', that what counts as dysfunctional is subjective and context-bound and that there are many grey areas when it comes to defining mental illness.

Pass the nutcrackers

Well there you have it; half a dozen psychology nuts roasted and served while still hot. Maybe you know of more. It is not always easy to know what to believe; whether an account is accurate or just an old chestnut but I think the six stories above go beyond mere 'evaluation', beyond examining records and data. They warn us about the care we must take with our students; not so much ensuring they know what is in the textbooks but more ensuring they know what might not be there.



References

- 1 Cook, K. (2014) *Kitty Genovese: The Murder, The Bystanders, The Crime That Changed America*, New York, Norton & Co. Inc.
- 2 Retrieved from www.prisonexp.org/psychology/27 – 3 November 2014
- 3 Carnahan, T. & McFarland S. (2007). Revisiting the Standard Prison Experiment: Could Participant Self-Selection Have Led to Cruelty? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2007, 33, 603-614.
- 4 Griggs, R. (2014). Coverage of the Standard Prison Experiment in Introductory Psychology Textbooks Teaching of Psychology, 41 (3), 195-203.

Existential Psychology

EARLY INFLUENCE

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

It is sometimes wise to remember that psychology evolved as a subject matter in its own right from that of philosophy. Soren Kierkegaard, an eminent 19th century religious philosopher, with his radical new approach in philosophy to mankind, is created as being the father of Existentialism. He is famous for his critique of systematic rational philosophy, particularly Hegelianism, on the ground that actual life cannot be contained within an abstract and conceptual system. Hegel believed that the basis of human cognition changed from one generation to the next. There were therefore no "eternal truths", no timeless reason. The only fixed point philosophy can hold on to is history itself. He had a sharp eye for the significance of the individual, and stated that we are more than children of our time. He also stated that every single one of us is a unique individual who only lives once. Kierkegaard also believed that it was necessary for each individual to make a fully conscious, responsible choice among the alternatives that life offers, which became the fundamental in all Existential writings and thought.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

A French philosopher, playwright and novelist and an internationally known figure in contemporary intellectual life, he was the leading French exponent of Existentialism, a philosophical attitude that emphasizes the freedom and importance of individual human beings. With Sartre, the power of the subject, the self-conscious individual, comes to the fore, an emphasis that has influenced recent generations of writers all over the world; for he, more than any other philosopher, has drawn attention to individual freedom and creativity. Sartre revealed himself as a master of outstanding talent. He places human consciousness, or NO-THINGNESS, in opposition to being or THINGNESS. Consciousness is not-matter and by the same token escapes all determinism. The message, with all the

implications it contains, is a hopeful one; yet the incessant reminder that human endeavour is, and remains, useless makes the book tragic as well (see; Sartre, 1943). Influenced by the writings of Freud, he felt that much could be learnt by the illuminations of the dark recesses of the human mind to explore childhood and family relations. However, whereas Freud believed that behaviour is largely motivated by unconscious thoughts, to the existentialists it is largely conscious. Indeed, it is people's propensity for consciousness that necessitates them formulating their lives as a series of decisions of choices.

Existential Psychology

In relation to modern day psychology, existentialism remains a school of thought that holds the view that human beings are at all times faced with the dilemma of making a choice of what actions to pursue when all of the information relevant to a decision is not available. Therefore, at any time many possible alternatives are possible and can determine a rational decision. The existentialists believe that each individual forms an identity by choosing one specific course of action rather than others. Therefore it deals with the study of the present and behaviour that occurs at any given time. For example, I may choose to go to watch the football match or stay at home. Likewise, I might set fire to my house, or commit murder. This endless list of alternatives can result to an incredible amount of freedom and self-determination, which may lead to anxiety, defined as an inability to cope with so many possible alternatives at any one time. The existentialist also notes that the individual's aims are never completely fulfilled. No action leads to complete self-satisfaction. Inner peace is therefore an ideal that is sought but never obtained, because as one redefines oneself constantly, all of one's goals keep changing. Therefore each moment brings new challenges and more decisions. Probably the best examples in

psychology relate to the works of the Scottish Psychiatrist R.D. Laing, when applying these principles to that of mental illness, in relation to the use of the term schizophrenia. He gives an example in the following extract from his book "Knots" which offers remarkable insights into the ways that, individuals behave to one another;

Throughout all of Laing's writings, he attacks scientific modes of thought and practice in relation to coming to terms with a deeper understanding of schizophrenia through the use of language. Laing maintains that; 'A scientist has human as well as scientific problems, not all of which can be solved scientifically. Many scientists glide in and out of science in the course of a day without too many culture shocks. Whether one finds, in one's mind or heart, the passage back and forth smooth or not, outside science, and all around, the world is wild. Inside also, in the depths of our minds and hearts, we are wild. Outside equations and correlations are intentions and desires. Duties and obligations, freedom and destiny, fascination and enchantment, do not go away because they are not hard data. The scientific method cannot grasp them. Why should we expect it to? And if we do not, how strange if we expect scientists, and scientists expect themselves, to be able to tell us about what, they tell us, they despair or disdain even to want to try to know anything about. What use is control, when we want to see what comes into view without control? What use is the uncontrolled except as something to control? What happens when scientific man meets ordinary man, in our ordinary world? Can he recognise himself? Can he recognise ordinary us?'

Is this approach still relevant today?

Although most of the views of Laing have been rejected by modern day psychiatry, this approach is still used today in relation to Psychoanalysis and aspects of CBT



TREVOR DUNN BA MSC MA(CANTAB) CPSYCHOL CSCI AFBPSS FHEA FRSA •
 teaches Psychology in Cambridge, and is a doctoral researcher at Darwin
 College, Cambridge University. (tpd@cantab.net)

ES

(Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and also in Counselling Psychology. Like the philosophers before, the aim is to continue to search for meaning and understanding of the complex condition of human behaviour. Through the continued advancement of neuropsychology and brain scanning & imagery techniques, scientists continue to put forward theories, and it's only those theories that survive the onslaught – the ones that can't (yet) be proven wrong that we stick with. May (1958) notes that one of the central contributions of existential thought is cutting below the cleavage between subject and object. Thus, the ghost of subjectivism as an isolated ego looking out upon an external world is dismissed as a partial appreciation of human existence. With psychology firmly established as a science, and measurement of human behaviour based upon hypothesis testing, certain aspects of psychology (such as humanistic, psychodynamic & existential explanations) are sadly pushed aside because they can't always be applied and tested using modern day scientific methods. Is this approach still relevant today? Yes, because we still continue to try both to understand and explain human behaviour. Therefore the role of Existential psychologists is to try to help people cope with the complex number of alternatives that always exist, and to map out courses of action for dealing with an ever-changing environment, and long may this continue.

*There must be something the matter
 with him
 because he would not be acting as he
 does
 unless there was
 therefore he is acting as he is
 because there is something the matter
 with him
 He does not think there is anything the
 matter with him
 Because
 one of the things that is the matter
 with him
 is that he does not think that there is
 anything
 the matter with him
 therefore
 we have to help him realise that,
 the fact that he does think there is
 anything
 the matter with him
 is the one thing that is
 the matter with him*



References

- Honderich, T. (1999) *The Philosophers*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Laing, R.D. (1982) *The Voice of Experience*. Experience, Science and Psychiatry. Penguin Books, London.
- Laing, R.D. (1970) *Knots*. Penguin books, London.
- Laing, R.D. & Esterson, A. (1964) *Sanity, Madness and the Family*. Pelican Books, London.
- May, R. (1958) The origins and significance of the existential movement in psychology. In R. May, E. Angel, & H.F. Ellenberger (Eds.). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Sartre, J.P. (1943) *Being and Nothingness*. Methuen & Co Ltd, London.

A SENSE OF COLOUR



HANNAH BALDWIN • Heathfield Community College, Year 12 Student

Synaesthesia is a neurological phenomenon that affects a small percentage of the population. Unusual neuronal wiring in the brain means that when one sense is activated, it triggers another unrelated sense at the same time. The second sense is triggered unconsciously and the associations between certain stimuli and the secondary sense are consistent 70-100% of the time for an individual. However, the experience is different for each synesthete.

The most common sub-types include colour-grapheme (letters and numbers produce colours and simple patterns) and colour-auditory (auditory input produces colours, textures and shapes) eg certain pitches or instruments may have different colours. A less common type is lexical gustatory synaesthesia (also known as word taste) eg people's names taste of a particular food. According to a study by the University of Edinburgh about 4% of the population in the UK have this condition.

There are only two known cases where people appear to have acquired synaesthesia after a brain injury. Both of these people had damage to the thalamus of their brains. One of these is a man from Toronto, who suffered a stroke in the thalamus of the brain. Nine months after his stroke he noticed that certain senses seemed to have become confused. The patient said that words written in a certain shade of blue evoked a strong feeling of disgust, whereas high pitched brass instruments caused a feeling of ecstasy and

light blue flashes in his peripheral vision.

This case was described in the journal of neurology by Dr. Schweizer who looked into this case of acquired synaesthesia. He had the patient listen to the James Bond theme and a euphonium solo while in a functional MRI. The results were then compared to six normal men of a similar age.

The areas of the brain that light up in the man with synaesthesia were different from the areas that normally light up when someone listens to music. This didn't happen when he listened to other types of music.

Dr. Schweizer also had the patient and control group look at words presented in black, yellow and blue while in the MRI. For the patient words in the colour yellow triggered a feeling of mild disgust and with blue this feeling was more intense, the colour black created no emotional response. When he read the yellow words, parts of the patient's brain that process sensory information and emotional stimuli lit

up and this got more intense when the letters were blue and the feeling of disgust was heightened. In the control group the brain activity was the same for all the colours.

The doctor concluded that the patient's synaesthesia is the result of his brain trying to repair itself after the stroke.

Synaesthesia allows a person to perceive the world in a way that many people will never get to experience. It is a fascinating condition that is still being researched by psychologists and neurologists so they can gain a better understanding of the many different types of synaesthesia.



References

www.bu.edu/synesthesia/faq/
www.digest.bps.org.uk/
www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-21060207
synaesthesia.com/en/Information/kinder/
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/07/130730101744.htm

The Association for the Teaching of Psychology Officers and Committee

Helene Ansell (Chair)

Issues and Lobbying
helene.ansell@btinternet.com
07454 282638

Laura Quaife (Vice Chair)

Website Team
Ljvincent22@hotmail.com

Morag Williamson (Secretary)

ATP Scotland representative
EFPTA representative for ATPS
moragwill@aol.com
07718 647487

Deb Gajic (Treasurer)

d.gajic@sky.com
02476 372847
07920 056937

Dorothy Coombs

EFPTA representative
BPS Liaison (Education and Public Engagement Board)
OCR Forum
Editor ATP Today
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com
07954 372 340
01287 636502

Clare Deavall

Membership (Recruitment and Support for NQTs)
c.m.deavall@btinternet.com

Helpline

The ATP runs a telephone and email Helpline service for Members. Please contact Dorothy Coombs who will try to answer your query or refer you to someone who can.

01287 636502
07954 372 340
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com

PLEASE MAKE SURE WE HAVE THE CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS FOR YOU.

Helen Gibb

Conference Exhibition Organiser
helenjg@gmail.com
07939 116518

Helen Kitching

Ex Officio Conference Organiser
BPS Liaison SCOPTE/DARTP
helenkitching@gmail.com
07766 257543

Andy McCarthy

Helpline: Research Methods and Statistics
amac54@btinternet.com

Jock McGinty

CPD and NSLC Links
mcginty@watfordboys.herts.sch.uk

Harriet Riley-Ennis

Magazine Team
ennis@boothamschool.com
07531 911665

Ann Skinner

Membership Team
ASE and ASAB liaison
annskinner@blueyonder.co.uk

Wendy Wood

Membership Team
Conference Bookings
wendywood@blueyonder.co.uk
0191 265 0304
07947 606119

Writing Articles for ATP Today

What kind of articles are we looking for?

We are looking for a variety of articles such as:

- Teaching & learning articles
- Lesson suggestions (activities and suggestions that have worked well for you)
- Resources that can be used by teachers or students (worksheets etc)
- Psychology research
- Current research by University Departments
- Reviews of books
- Articles of interest including current teaching issues such as transition from pre-tertiary to HE

Who can write for the ATP?

Anyone can write for the ATP. We particularly welcome articles from teachers, students, researchers, university departments, university lecturers and PGCE students.

How long should my article be?

Your article can be anything from a half to three pages of A4. Articles should be submitted in Arial font size 12.

Can I submit pictures?

Yes. We welcome photos to be included in our articles. If you want to submit them (once you have checked copyright) please attach them to your email separately and do not embed them into the article. All photos need to be taken in the highest resolution setting on your camera possible and in jpeg format.

ADVERTISEMENTS

What kinds of advertisement is the ATP looking for?

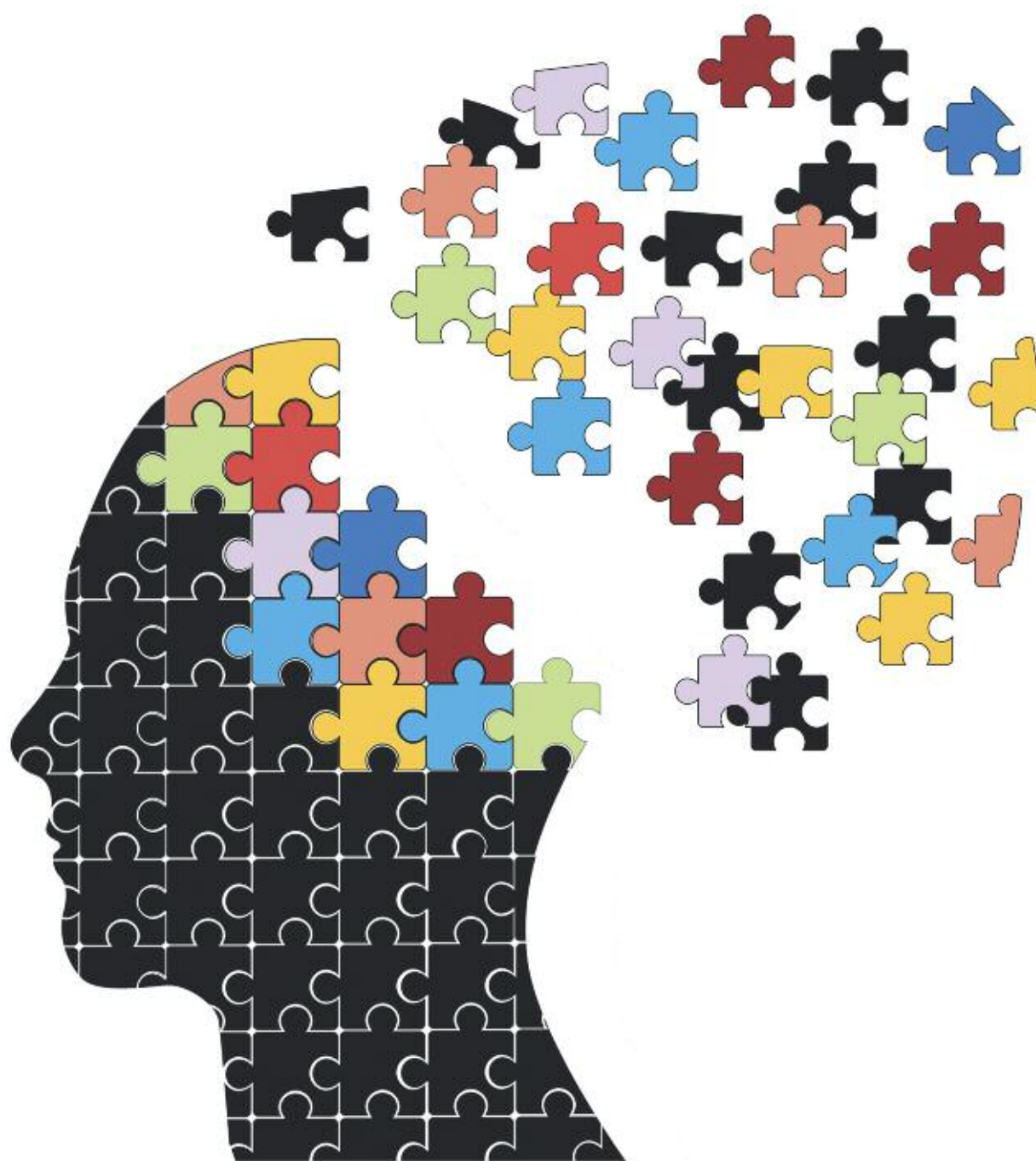
Here at the ATP, we pride ourselves on helping our members to find out about the highest quality resources and support available in the psychology teaching world. We are therefore keen to attract advertisements from companies/organisations that can offer goods and/or services to help us to do this, including:

- Teaching resources
- Trips and conferences
- CPD opportunities
- Exam boards
- University information

If you wish to invite members to a future event, issue a call for papers, or other items that you think may provide a service to our members, we may be able to waive some or all of the fees for advertising. This decision will be made at the discretion of the editor. Please contact us for more information.

If you would like to submit an article, need any clarification about your article, or are interested in advertising, then please do not hesitate to contact the editor. Email: dorothycoombs21@gmail.com

Resources that bring it all together



Uniview
WORLDWIDE

One stop online shop for Psychology teaching resources
www.uniview.co.uk 0151 625 3453