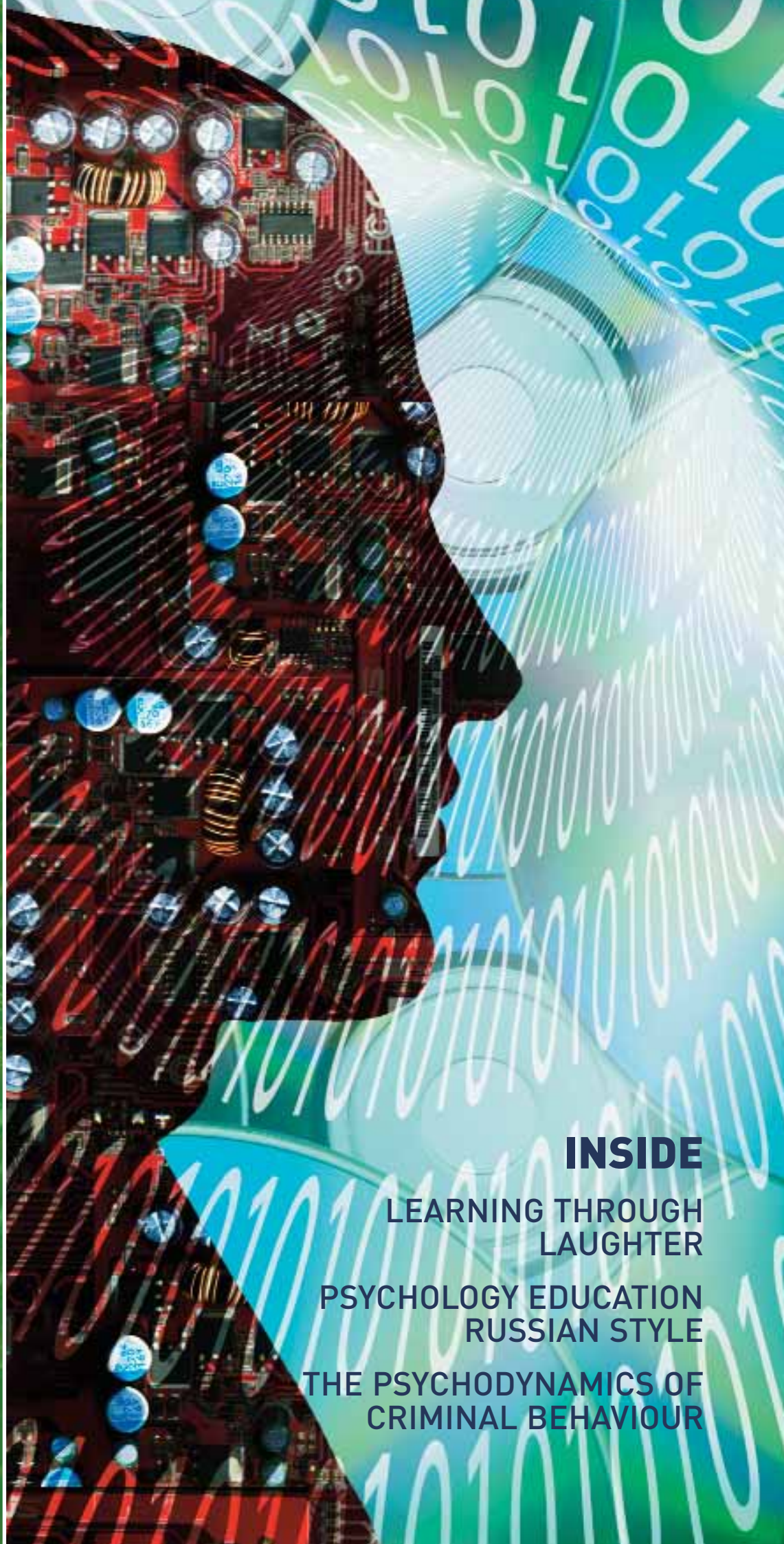


ATP TODAY

October 2011



The Magazine of the Association for the Teaching of Psychology



INSIDE

LEARNING THROUGH
LAUGHTER

PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION
RUSSIAN STYLE

THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF
CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

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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.

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Please send correspondence, and submissions, as Word documents. Photographs should be supplied as jpegs and as separate files not embedded into word documents.
Laura Rudd
Psychology Department
Franklin College
Chelmsford Avenue
Grimsby DN34 5BY
or by e-mail to lrdudd@prioryacademies.co.uk

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to a new academic year. I hope that you have been able to enjoy a relaxing summer holiday, always so well deserved after the 'long haul' of the previous three terms. I am in the delightful position of not having to 'go back to work' as I decided to retire

from teaching after 35 years of continuous service. I have not, however, retired from the wider world of learning and teaching psychology as I will continue to serve on the ATP committee as Vice Chair and on the board of the EFPTA as Vice President. I am looking forward to having more time to devote to issues such as promoting the value of teaching psychology at pre-degree level and I am joining the OCR's Psychology Consultative Forum to contribute to a discussion of a wide range of issues relating to curriculum and assessment.

This is my first (and probably my last!) attempt at editing a magazine and it has been rather like ironing... once you stop procrastinating and just get on with it you can sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour! I have tried to organise it into logical sections but as you will see there is a certain amount of 'poetic licence'. I was particularly keen to include a European flavour this time as I feel that we have made unimaginable progress in our level of activity. You can read about research projects that have been conducted and even take part in one that is on-going. There is exciting news from Brussels, as you will discover in the report of the recent EFPA meeting.

The 2012 ATP Conference will be held at Aston University and the next EFPTA Conference will take place in Copenhagen in April 2012. You will find details of both in the Conference Focus.

Dorothy Coombs
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com



FROM THE CHAIR

I can't believe how quickly the start of a new academic year has come around! I hope all of your students got the results they deserved and you're feeling rested after a good holiday and ready for the challenge of another year.

For those of you who attended the ATP Annual Conference at Hertfordshire, I don't need to tell you what a fabulous success it was. Elizabeth Loftus was wonderful and big thanks go to Cara Flanagan for organising our Keynote speaker. Once again Phil Banyard did an amazing job of organising what was to be his last conference. For those of you who couldn't attend you missed a treat so do try and persuade your managers to let you come next year. We do realise that finances are tight and have now incorporated a daily rate, as well as the full residential package, to facilitate attendance. Next year's conference will be at Aston University in Birmingham and we will also be organising one-day CPD events locally. In order to ensure that you hear about these events, please send me your up-to-date email contacts and also check the websites for the latest news: www.theatp.org and www.atpconference.org.uk

It's 'all change' on the ATP Committee; we said goodbye to Gill Bunting and Emma Shakespeare and thank them for all their hard work over the years. New committee members are: Karen Duffy, Helen Gibb, Helen Kitching and Heather Taylor, all keen and eager to serve ATP members, and with specific skills which will help the organisation to evolve and grow. Three of our committee members are moving to new challenges this year; Laura Rudd, our magazine editor, is becoming an Assistant Head of a Boarding House in Lincolnshire, Jackie Moody is off to teach at St George's International School in Luxembourg and Julie Hulme has secured a position with the Higher Education Academy (HEA). We wish them all well in their new positions.

This year the ATP committee will be working towards finalising a new constitution, to be launched at our AGM in July 2012. This will enable us to pursue charitable status.

All the committee are keen to do their best to serve the interests of the membership so please let us know of any suggestions you may have that would help us to achieve this. Remember there is strength in numbers and the ATP is here to represent the interests of psychology teachers throughout the UK.

Deb Gajic
d.gajic@sky.com





MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

PAYMENT: Full Members

Paypal and standing order are our preferred payment methods for all new and existing members, as they enable us to keep our running costs down.

If new members, or paypal members, want to pay by standing order they will need to email me for a form. Although we are trying to phase out cheque payments, it is still possible to pay by cheque for the time being:- please email/post to me.

The annual membership fee is £25.00 by Paypal and Standing Order, £30.00 for cheque payment (to reflect the extra administration costs involved).

PAYMENT: Students

INCREASE TO £10.00 from January 2011.

The student membership fee is £10.00. To qualify for student membership you must be on a full-time recognised PGCE/PG course for teaching psychology.

Paypal Difficulties

We've had some hiccups with the new system of Paypal annual renewal payments.

If your card details stay the same, Paypal will remind you that your annual subscription is due, ask if you want to make the payment, and then they will renew your subscription automatically.

However, if you've changed your card details, for any reason, Paypal cannot make a subscription payment until you have reauthorized them to do so with new card details. This means re-registering on the site as a new member and going through the full Paypal payment system again. Apologies for this, but it is a problem with the Paypal system which is out of our control.

Alternatively, you could take out a standing order to pay your subscription. Please email me for a form.

Accessing The Website

Please visit the ATP website www.theatp.org to keep up to date with current events. To access the entire site you will need to register as a member. To register the invitation code is 'atpmember'. You will then be sent a password which you can change into something more memorable.

Membership Numbers

Each member has a membership number. It is not possible to access this on the website, sorry. However, your membership number will be with your postage details on the front of the magazine envelope, and, also, on new member welcome emails and renewal emails.

Email Address and Change of Details

Please make sure the details we have about you are correct, in particular please make sure (send me an email) we have an up-to-date email address for you since this is the easiest way of contacting you if we need to. If you move house or work and your details change, please let me know.

In particular, we have no emails for many long-term standing order members: please ensure we get your email address.

New Members

PLEASE ENCOURAGE OTHERS YOU KNOW TO JOIN

In order to improve the services to our members, we would like our membership to grow. If you know any psychology teachers – colleagues and friends, who may want to join, please encourage them to join and give them our website address: www.theatp.org.uk

Membership Queries

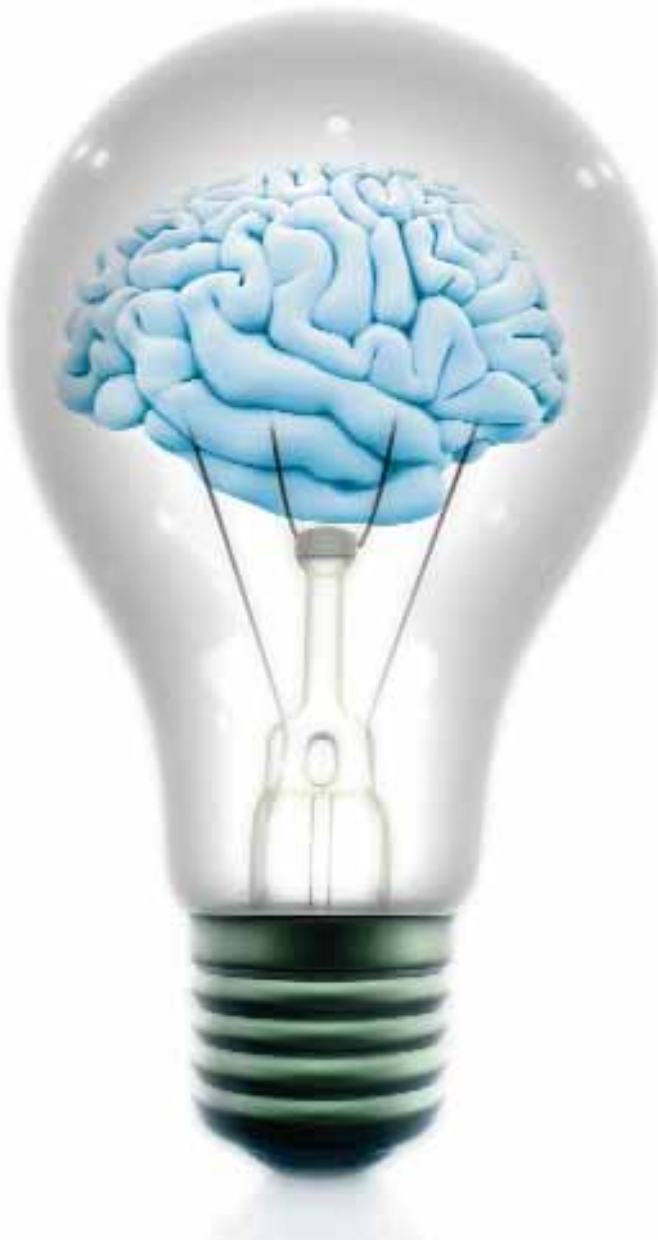
If you need to speak to me/contact me regarding any other membership query, please ring me or email.

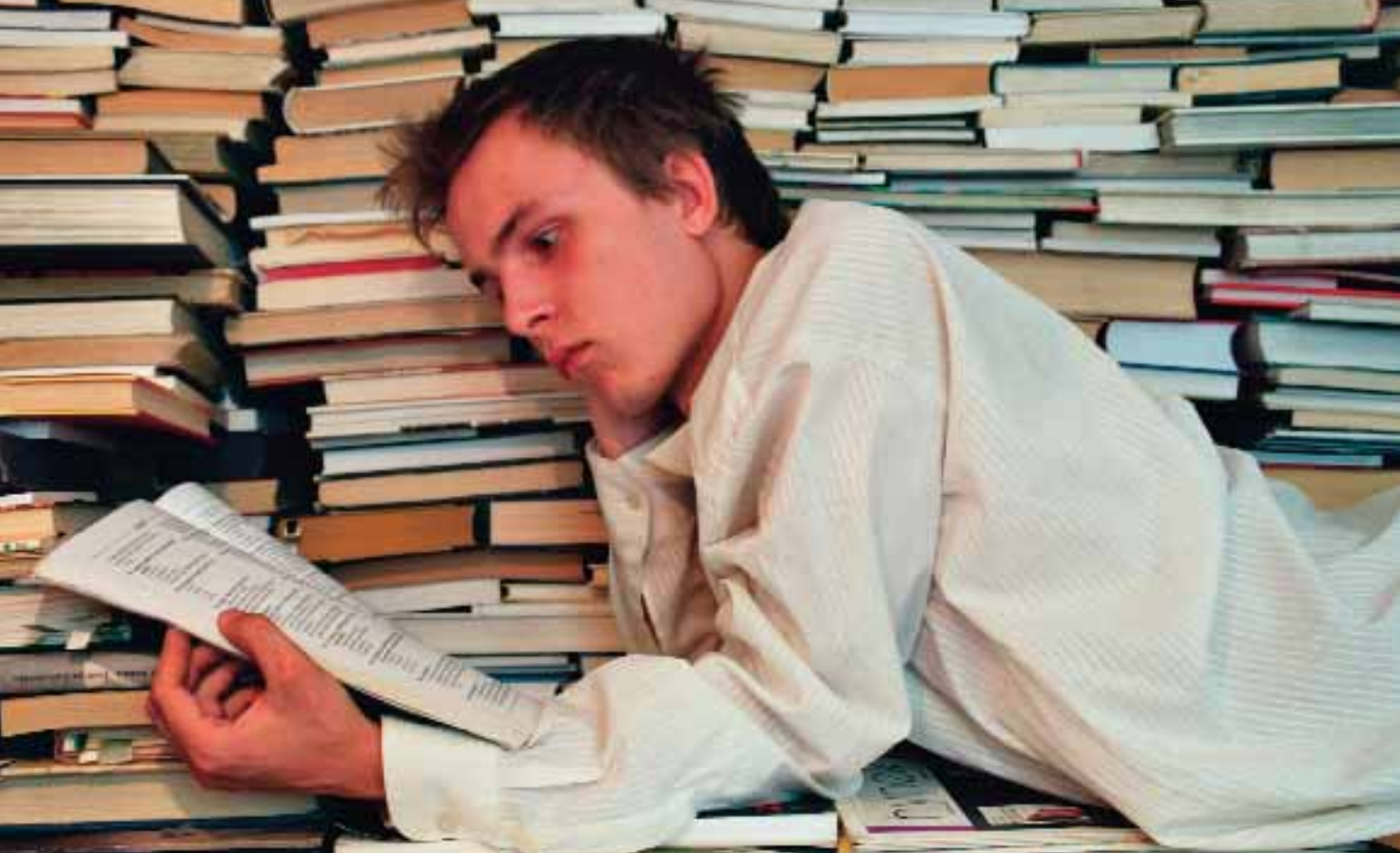
Wendy Wood, Membership secretary
membership@theatp.org
wendywood@blueyonder.co.uk

40, Rothbury Terrace

Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5XH

Tel: 0191 2650304





BRING BACK COURSEWORK?

No thanks, but let's replace it with something better.

Morag Williamson

Mention the words 'bring back coursework' to any A-level Psychology teacher with more than a couple of years' experience under their belt and, as I have discovered, you are likely to raise a few hackles.

Readers with long memories may recall that in the ATP Newsletter a few years ago I railed against the abandonment of A-level Psychology coursework by the QCA and exam boards in the 2008 curriculum revision. Mine was very much a minority view which was drowned out by the huge collective sigh of relief from teachers on being freed from the enormous burden of organising students' submissions, marking them, and the associated administration.

But it was only the A-level courses that dropped coursework; most other pre-tertiary psychology courses in the UK retain their assessed practical component, and arguments in favour of practical

research skills for A-level are now re-emerging. During the ATP conference in July 2011, at a debate convened by the BPS Division of Teachers and Researchers in Psychology (DTRP), I put the case for the re-introduction of assessed practical research skills in A-level Psychology – it is outlined below.

Firstly, we need to move away from two unhelpful conceptions:

1. The term 'coursework':

This is imprecise, and carries negative associations for those of us who have struggled under its yoke in the past. A better term – if a

IF WE CAN SHAKE OFF THE SHACKLES OF THE OLD NOTION OF 'COURSEWORK', AND IN PARTICULAR ITS INTERNAL ASSESSMENT BY TEACHERS, THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF ASSESSED PRACTICAL RESEARCH SKILLS INTO A-LEVEL SPECIFICATIONS COULD PROMOTE INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE APPROACHES.

bit of a mouthful – is 'assessed practical research skills' (or APRS), which allows for a variety of possible activities rather than the traditional single 'coursework' report.

2. The assumption that student work will be marked internally by their teachers/lecturers in the centres:

This was the traditional marking process for A-level 'coursework'. Although centres' marking was sampled and moderated by the boards, having teachers assess their own students' work was not the most effective means of achieving objectivity and standardisation of assessment. It was also an enormous addition to teachers' workload, often not taken into account in their timetabling by managers. If APRS are re-introduced – and I believe they should be – they MUST be assessed externally by the exam board, in the same way as exam scripts are marked. In the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the SQA Scottish Higher, practical research skills are, and have always been, marked externally – why not at A-level?

Having established these two key points, I see the main reasons for conducting APRS with psychology students as follows:

- Research is central to the discipline of psychology, therefore practical research skills are an essential component of any psychology course; there is consensus on this point, from academic and professional psychologists.
- Research skills have become even more important as the scientific status of psychology has grown in recent years. It is ironic, indeed absurd, that coursework was dropped at the same time as the introduction of the 'How Science Works' agenda. Without research skills, any introductory psychology course does not adequately reflect the scientific nature of the discipline.
- The educational value and enjoyment of research skills in the classroom is undisputed amongst teachers and students: hands-on research activities can facilitate development of a whole range of skills, not just research skills as such.
- Currently the only form of assessment in A-level Psychology is the traditional examination. This narrow approach limits validity and reliability, and neglects widely-agreed principles of modern assessment practice, such as: the need for a variety of modes of assessment, personalisation, 'authenticity' of assessment, alignment of teaching and assessment, involvement of students in negotiation of learning objectives / assessment criteria (CIEA, 2010; DCSF, 2008; Mueller, 2008; Segers, Dochy and Cascallar, 2003). APRS would tick most of those boxes.

- In the eyes of university admissions tutors for psychology, lack of evidence of research skills experience means that the perceived value of an applicant's A-level Psychology is reduced, and compares unfavourably with IB and Higher Psychology.

But surely good teachers are continuing to conduct practical research work with students? Yes, of course many are doing so, and at least one A-level exam board 'requires' practical activities. But the key issue is this: if it is not an assessment requirement, there is no guarantee that such practical activity will be delivered.

According to Mansell, James & ARG (2010), 'If the test is not measuring what matters in the curriculum, important untested aspects are likely to be downplayed in teaching' (p.15). The only way to ensure that all students do get the opportunity to do practical research is to make it an assessed component of a course; currently exam boards do test knowledge of research methods, but this is not the same thing as hands-on research skills. The boards claim that students who have not actually carried out any practical research – possibly because of workload pressures on the teacher – will not be able to do as well as those who have. This is likely to be true, but it is not an argument for keeping the status quo: the concern here is that it is clearly possible for students to get A- or AS-level Psychology without doing any practical research. We have no idea how many students miss out, but my view is that no student should be deprived of that experience.

Sometimes we teachers are accused of 'teaching to the test' – of course we do! Our managers, students, parents, media – all would be down on us like a ton of bricks if we did not prepare students appropriately for the assessments set. The point is that the 'test' should be of such quality that it facilitates good learning and teaching; indeed, 'tests have enormous power in steering learning processes' (Segers et al, 2003, p.4). For example, for an exam containing mainly predictable questions, all the teacher needs to do to ensure high grades is make the students rote-learn model answers. In other words, poor quality assessment leads to poor quality teaching and learning, and it is therefore the exam boards' responsibility to provide a course and assessment framework that allows teachers to deliver an effective learning experience.

True, 'coursework' always entailed certain problems: malpractice, variation between teachers in levels of support/feedback, ethical infringements and so on. Other concerns are the cost of having practical work externally marked, and variable teacher competence in delivering research skills. None of these problems is insuperable; they can and should be tackled. Certainly, none of them, individually or collectively, justifies abandonment of APRS.

If we can shake off the shackles of the old notion of 'coursework', and in particular its internal assessment by teachers, the re-introduction of assessed practical research skills into A-level specifications could promote innovative and flexible approaches. For example, the current Edexcel model, where students are expected to carry out a number of studies using a variety of methods and statistical tests, could lend itself to external assessment, ie a number of sections of reports of different practicals could be submitted instead of one big report.

Various alternative forms of research reporting could be offered, eg by means of a PowerPoint presentation, or a research poster. As well as 'product' (ie research report) the 'process' could be assessed directly, in the form of research logs, lab books, observation, audio or video recording. The traditional format of a single research study plus report could still be an option. There are many possibilities!

Let's not bring back 'coursework' – but let's bring in new, exciting models of externally assessed, practical research skills, and in doing so, help restore the scientific credibility of A-level Psychology. Despite well-known constraints, there are numerous interesting studies that students can replicate, or design from scratch; we psychology educators are daft if we do not provide – and give credit for – these fabulous learning experiences that our gem of a subject offers.

About the author

Morag Williamson teaches Scottish Higher Psychology at West Lothian College, Livingston, and is a former SQA Principal Assessor for Higher Psychology. She also teaches on Psychology degree programmes at Edinburgh Napier University, and previously taught A-level and GCSE Psychology at Stafford College for many years.

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THINK PSYCHOLOGY THINK BANGOR

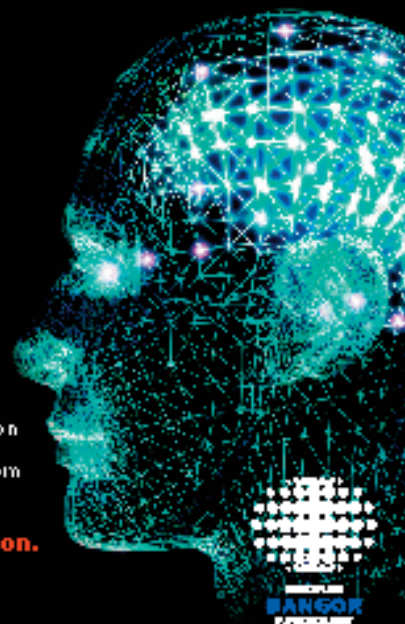


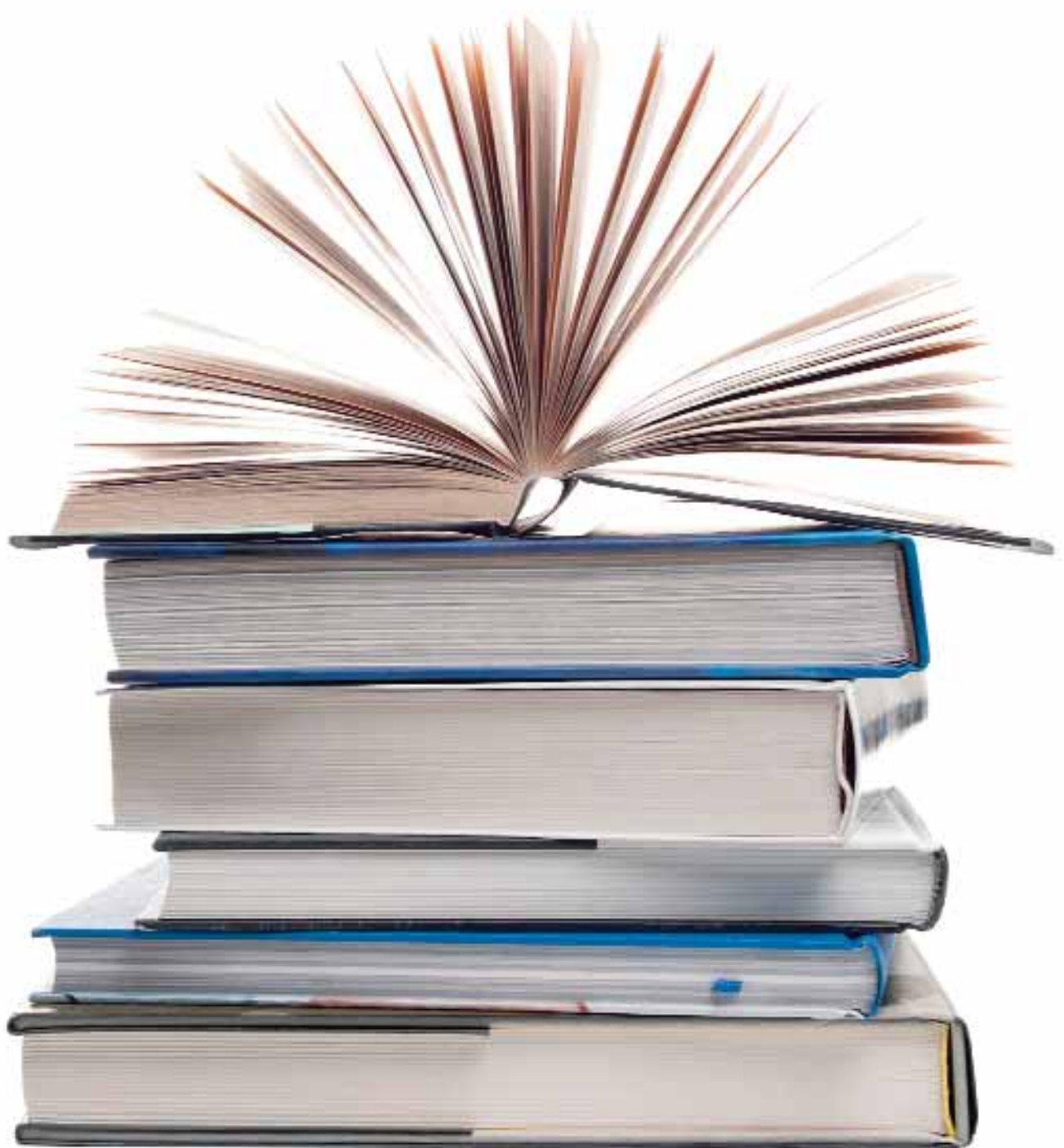
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OUTSTANDING TEACHING IN PSYCHOLOGY

What makes an
'outstanding' psychology lesson?

Well, if I knew the definitive answer to that question I could make a lot of money! Unfortunately, as we teachers know all too well, an outstanding judgement can be subjective, but I'll do my best to give you some pointers and general advice to ensure that your lessons are at least good, and hopefully outstanding, when you are next observed.

There is no secret to outstanding teaching: it requires hard work and commitment. Failure to prepare is preparing to fail. However, don't be too hard on yourself; no one can be outstanding every day, in every lesson. But, you do want to be outstanding when you're being observed. First things first, know the specification and know your students! One size doesn't fit all. What can be an outstanding lesson with one group of students could well be unsatisfactory with another group.

Planning should be flexible and adapted to the needs of students. Plan student activities, rather than teacher input. Aim for 80% student, 20% teacher. Take into account interests and abilities of your students, as well as physical constraints such as room size, access to equipment, etc. Make sure you use your institution's lesson plan proforma, if they have one. There is nothing more annoying, as an observer, to be given a scrappy piece of paper, it gives a really bad first impression. Also, look at your institution's observation schedule; it will give you an insight into what the observer is looking for.

According to OFSTED, in an Outstanding lesson:

The pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise skills exceptionally well. Pupils demonstrate excellent concentration and are rarely off task, even in extended periods without direction from an adult. They have developed resilience when tackling challenging activities in a range of subjects. Their keenness and commitment to succeed and ability to grasp opportunities to extend and improve their learning are exceptional. Progress is at least good and is exemplary in some.

This is a little vague! It is this sentence that I have the most objection to: 'Pupils demonstrate excellent concentration and are rarely off task, even in extended periods without direction from an adult'.

Can we really expect students to experience a whole hour of what Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, terms 'flow experience', an experience of total immersion and energised focus? We all know that students can manage 20 minutes, maximum, of concentration, so an hour is totally unrealistic, unless we are constantly changing activities.

At The Polesworth School our observation schedule takes a tick box approach. Each of the fifteen criteria below is assessed as: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or outstanding. Whichever of these categories has the most ticks determines the overall grading.

1. Planning has clear learning objectives and outcomes (measurable).
2. Range of teaching strategies.
3. Materials & resources.
4. Teacher focus on learning.
5. Activities matched to objectives and outcomes.
6. Subject and pedagogical knowledge.
7. Differentiation.
8. Teaching assistants.
9. Student focus on learning.
10. Questioning.
11. Pace.
12. Plenary.
13. Behaviour management.
14. ICT.
15. Assessment.

Obviously, the teaching assistant box will be rarely ticked in a psychology lesson and ICT might not necessarily be relevant in every lesson.

Different institutions will have different priorities, and it does seem that some educational strategies and priorities go in and out of fashion. At The Polesworth School, current priorities are differentiated objectives and assessment. An outstanding lesson should have very clear and measurable learning objectives and outcomes. These should be differentiated. One of the easiest ways to do this is to break each objective down into three: All students will... Most students will... Some students will..., etc. But, it is vital that the objectives are measurable and at the end of the lesson you can clearly demonstrate that students have achieved the learning objectives.

Assessment for Learning (AFL) has for some years been a 'buzz phrase' in education, but there are signs that it is beginning to fall out of favour. However, I think we are stuck with it for a little while longer and regardless of AFL, an outstanding lesson should have assessment opportunities built in. An effective way to demonstrate this is through peer and self-assessment, as well as teacher questioning. However, it is vital that you ensure that your classroom is a safe and secure environment for students to do this. This will only happen through clear ground rules and frequent practice. Peer and self-assessment can also be useful as a means of ensuring that students are familiar with mark schemes which can only benefit their overall examination performance.

In summary, an outstanding lesson should (I'm sure this is not a definitive list!):

- Be engaging, interesting and informative
- Have clear learning objectives
- Have students on task
- Have clear assessment opportunities linked to lesson outcomes
- Make good use of resources
- Provide a range of activities
- Involve good classroom management
- Be student centred, not teacher led
- Involve differentiation etc....

We are lucky in Psychology to have an intrinsically interesting subject with lots of opportunities for activities which inspire students. If you're lacking inspiration Network! There are loads of inspirational teachers out there, who are very generous with both their ideas and resources. Make sure you give both yourself and the subject the opportunity to shine next time you are observed.

A final point, when I first began studying Psychology, as a harassed mother of two young children, I was inspired by Melanie Klein's concept of 'good enough mothering', it really saved my conscience. I now extend the same concept to my teaching, I'm happy if it's good enough, and occasionally outstanding!

Deb Gajic,
Chair of the ATP
Head of Psychology at The Polesworth School



Learning Through Laughter

'A child's greatest achievements are possible in play, achievements that will tomorrow become his basic level of real action and morality. It is the essence of play that a new relation is created... between situations in thought and real situations.'

Lev Vygotsky

Testing Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory in 2011

Lev Vygotsky... for some his lofty Russian name may not easily roll off the tongue, but for those well read in Educational Psychology, his name is pronounced with ease and authority. We humbly aim to be Vygotsky's apprentices, with his work paramount to our understanding of cognitive development. We have learnt much from his simple explanations of the development of children's ability to think, to reason and to learn. Following his ideas that most learning occurs in action we, as teachers, thought it would be interesting to test, empirically, how applicable Vygotsky's theory is in formal education today. To do this we focused on the two foundational aspects of his learning theory.

Firstly Vygotsky demonstrates that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) states: 'Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside

the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.' (p57).

The second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD): a level of development attained when children engage in social behaviour. Effective development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. It is the range of skill that can be developed with guidance from an adult, through peer support or help from anyone who has a slightly higher level of ability than the learner. With this help, the learner achieves more than he or she does by working alone.

It follows then that to test these theories in the current education system, we need to create a situation where students can learn through social interaction in the classroom, as well as provide the opportunity for students to scaffold each other's learning through the ZPD. Although this is done in our everyday teaching we

wanted to create a situation, or a resource to demonstrate that students are in fact the best teachers for each other and that the best type of learning occurs in situations where students do not even realise they are learning. But how could we achieve this?

What about a competitive game? Sure, we acknowledge that the idea of using game-based learning is hardly new. Throughout the last 50 years we can track a constant, yet inconsistent, interest in the area. However, despite this interest there is still an apparent lack of game-based learning integrated in formal education. So, armed with OFSTED's criteria for an outstanding lesson, the sheer desire for students to have fun whilst learning and Vygotsky's core theories, we decided to create a board game. And so the SELAH revision game was invented and here's how it all fits together.

What are SELAH games?

Selah games are 'infectious' word-based board games where teams of unlimited numbers can battle it out to give the correct definition of key terms within each subject. The Hebrew word 'Selah' means 'to pause and think about what has been said before'. It is a pregnant pause as students think about and explain the definitions of words and key terms to each other. The motto of the game is 'learning through laughter' as we believe that much learning takes place accidentally when students are having fun.

The games are played in the classroom for revision, and are ideal for a starter, a plenary or even the whole lesson. Each game box includes a board, topic cards, a timer, pawns and most importantly a booklet of definitions for all the key terms included. In groups, each student has one minute to explain the key terms on a card to his team by describing the terms according to the subject's definition of the key term. The teammates have to shout out and guess the key terms described while the other students in the class listen to the descriptions and are not allowed to interfere. The pawn representing the team is moved along the board according to how many key terms were guessed correctly. If there is a disagreement about definitions, the teacher or students refer to the definitions booklet, where each definition is sourced from the main textbooks for each specification. The first team to the finish wins.

How do the SELAH games use Vygotsky's theory?

The Selah Board game provides the opportunity for social interaction as students play and compete in teams while 'accidentally learning' as they explain key terms and concepts to each other from the curriculum. Playing the game provides the platform for scaffolding as one learner, through the verbal explanation of another, moves from his current ability level to his potential ability level. Students explaining the words to each other aid this movement through the ZPD.

As Vygotsky's theory shows, the best teachers are the ones who understand where the current level of attainment is at, but are essentially slightly more knowledgeable in a specific area. It follows then that students are often the best teachers for each other and can facilitate this movement through the ZPD through actively playing the game. If a student does not know a key term, his peer can explain it to him using words that he understands. That same child can then explain that key term afterwards demonstrating Vygotsky's notion that 'what a child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development, and leads it.'

We can conclude that Vygotsky's theory of Cognitive Development is fundamental for teaching and learning today. Based on his theory, the SELAH game creates an environment to

allow students to have fun, compete, debate, learn kinaesthetically, self-assess, scaffold each other and take responsibility for their own learning in an interactive environment. Vygotsky states: 'It is through others that we become ourselves'. We acknowledge that when students play the SELAH game in the classroom they should increase their knowledge and understanding of key concepts in examination subjects thereby increasing their grades. Ultimately the question is not whether Vygotsky's theory is still applicable, but the degree to which we can embrace his concepts about the progression of one's cognitive development, because it is this understanding that enables us, as teachers, to better cater for the unique needs of each student.

C Van Niekerk

To order or find out more about SELAH games for Psychology, visit www.selaheducation.com or email: admin@selah.co.uk

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Playing the game in lessons helps teachers achieve Level 1 OFSTED Grading in the following ways:

- it enables teachers to plan lessons that invariably capture the interest of learners, are inclusive of all learners, and feature debate between learners and between learners and the teacher
- the Selah Board game enables teachers to have a rapport with learners – high-quality dialogue and questioning, guiding learning, with attention to individuals and groups
- the Selah Board game allows for teachers to monitor learners' progress to evaluate quickly how well the students are learning so that they can change the approach during the lesson if necessary, and provide detailed feedback about areas or topics where students have misunderstood and the teachers can then target learning gaps in individual learners to ensure further progress and understanding
- it allows teachers to demonstrate the ability to apply their own depth of subject knowledge to support learners in acquiring understanding and skills, often showing understanding through application of a range of different approaches such as students teaching each other, teacher-led revision and students debating to ensure that all learners make the expected progress
- the teacher can demonstrate flexibility and adaptability by changing the pace, approach and teaching method in response to what learners say and do during the Selah Board game activity
- it allows the teacher to take risks when trying to make teaching interesting, and they are able to deal with the unexpected and 'seize the moment'. Fortunately there is the Selah key terms/definition booklet, which is the teacher's saving grace if there are any words or key phrases that he/she has forgotten
- it gives teachers the opportunity to inspire and communicate their enthusiasm to learners, to demonstrate their intrinsic passion for learning and to show off their innovative and creative thinking.



Psychology Education RUSSIAN STYLE

In Rostov-on-Don, in southern Russia, schools don't just teach psychology, they build their whole curriculum on psychological principles.

The 'Don School of Psychology' is an educational model that is based on the work of the pedagogical psychologist, Professor Eugene Ivanovich Rogov, of the Education Faculty of the Southern Federal University in Rostov-on-Don, in partnership with other universities in the region and local schools. Its central idea is the 'psychologisation' of the educational process, which entails the application of psychological concepts and techniques throughout the learning and teaching experience. It is a student-centred approach – in the truest sense of that term – as it is strongly influenced by the humanistic perspective.

Each child's experience of school, from start to finish, is carefully managed with psychological and psychosocial processes to the fore: personality and learning style profiles are created, and used as tools for monitoring progress and for informing progression choices (in education and careers); teaching methods and schedules are tailored to learners' needs. Clearly, there is a strong focus on 'personal development'; the Don model refers to this as 'personality-oriented' education.

As far as actual classes are concerned, 'psychologisation' characterises both content and delivery, and is an ongoing process that is achieved 'from the ground up' through the collaboration of groups of teaching staff, rather than being imposed top-down. Self-evaluation by teachers is required. Concepts of cognition, emotion and social behaviour permeate classroom teaching methods, and teachers are expected to have skills such as conflict resolution and stress management; a prerequisite being that teachers themselves receive a thorough education in psychology, both in initial training and in continuing professional development.

What 'psychology' do children actually learn, in terms of content of lessons? As soon as they start primary school at age six or seven, children are trained in 'psychological competence', for example: becoming aware of their different senses, their own thinking, their language and communication, their creativity, their emotions, their personality. They develop awareness of self and others, interpersonal skills, and an understanding of their relationships with family and peers. Empathy, respect for others, equality, acceptance of other cultures, and observance of rights and duties are the key values that are promoted. Strategies for coping with adversity, preventing negative thoughts and actions, and dealing with interpersonal conflicts are just some of the practical psychosocial skills that children acquire in the classroom. The need to self-regulate, or self-manage, is emphasised, alongside the

ability to function effectively in the social and cultural environment.

All children experience this kind of learning: a structured syllabus for 'psychological competence' covers the whole age range from Year 1 (age 6-7) to Year 11 (age 16-17), such that the content and delivery methods are appropriate for the developmental stage of the various age groups. Often the psychological content will be integrated into whatever class activity is taking place, whether it be a music lesson, art, maths, IT or learning a foreign language. Older age groups study psychology in formats that are more akin to psychology classes in western European countries, but with a strong emphasis on understanding and dealing with real-life issues, such as violence in the adolescent's environment.

Teachers see the development of psychological competence as the central element of the child's socialisation, and the essential basis for successful growth into adulthood; indeed, the process is referred to as 'professionalisation', even in relation to the youngest schoolchildren – a notion that may seem strange through western eyes!

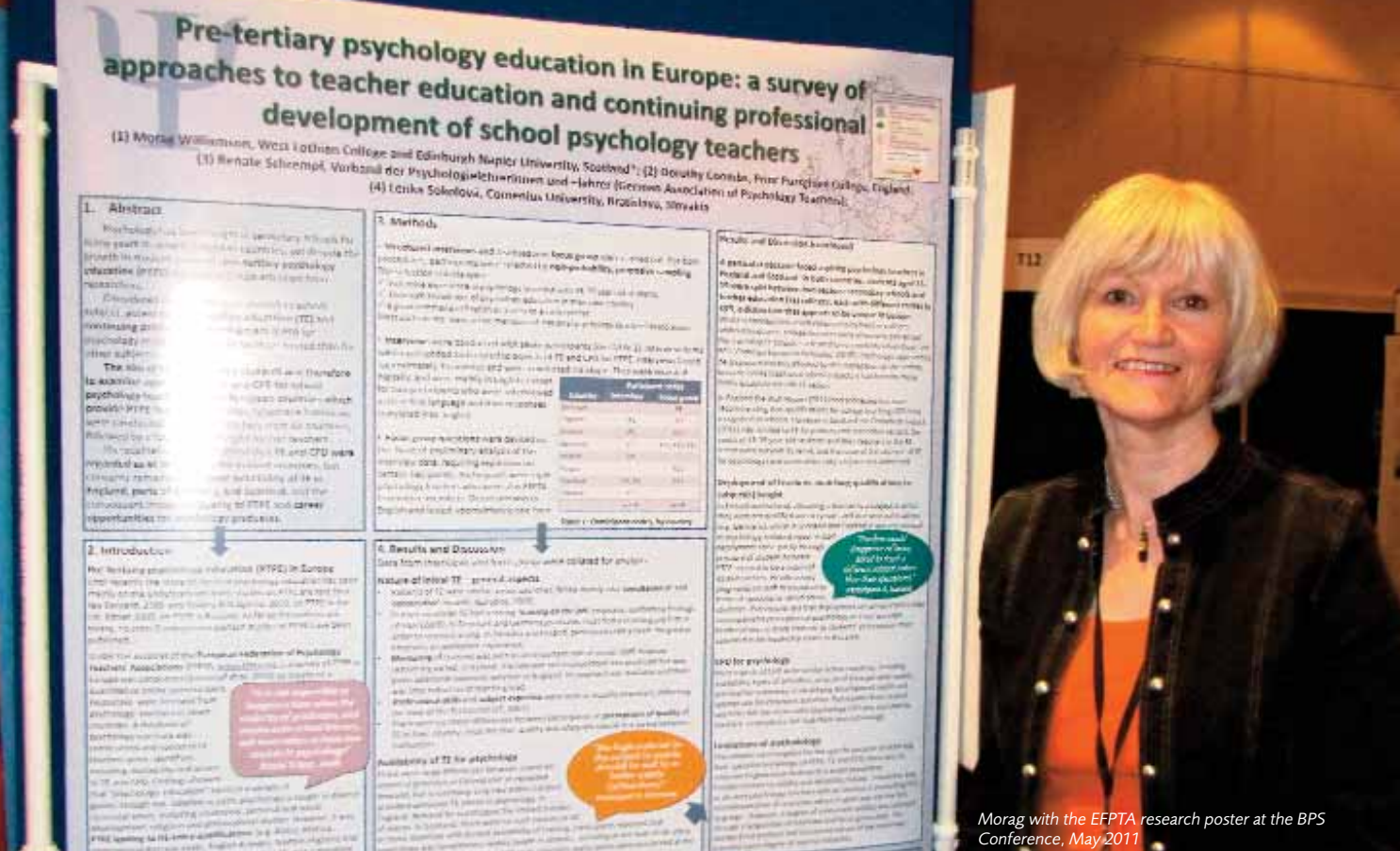
Finally, there is another important theme – maybe the most important one – underpinning 'psychologisation': the better the young person's understanding of the multifaceted human environment in which they find themselves, the better equipped they will be to adapt and survive, and hopefully thrive. From this angle, psychologisation of the school curriculum for all children and young people may be seen as a preventive or protective measure, even perhaps a 'public health' measure, making full use of psychological knowledge to enable youngsters to make good decisions and avoid maladaptive choices, in the face of the many pressures, threats and challenges of their 21st century world.

About the author: Raisa Chumicheva is Director of the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology at the Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don. She is a member of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations and is a regular contributor at EFPTA events.

Raisa Chumicheva, Director of the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology, Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don
ipprgpu@mail.ru

Further information on psychology teaching in Russia, including a presentation on one school's experience of the 'Don School of Psychology': www.efpta.org/home/

Information on the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology, Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don:
www.sfedu.ru/00_eng/main_context.shtml?str/s_ped2_f9



Morag with the EFPTA research poster at the BPS Conference, May 2011

TEACHER-TRAINING FOR PRE-TERTIARY PSYCHOLOGY AN UPDATE

Morag Williamson

Many of us have had negative experiences of trying to obtain qualified teacher status (QTS) in psychology; in England, lobbying by ATP and BPS a few years ago led to increased provision, but gains were short-lived, and the number of teacher-training places for psychology (secondary) has recently been cut again. In Scotland, there are no teacher-training courses at all for psychology (secondary). In England, some graduates and teachers have embarked on a PGCE course which they had been led to believe would qualify them to teach in schools, only to find they were awarded QTLS rather than QTS, and have therefore had difficulty gaining employment in schools, or, if they have been employed in a school it is on a lower rate of pay than a QTS teacher.

Reasons for this absurd situation – and it IS absurd, given the popularity and scientific status of our subject – are complex, and the issue was investigated, in eight European countries, by the EFPTA* research team earlier this year. You may recall that the June 2011 issue of *ATP Today* reported the findings, and the research was presented at a poster session at the 2011 BPS Annual Conference in Glasgow. You will find the poster in this issue, reproduced as the centre spread.

In summary, it was found that teacher-training provision for psychology in Scotland and England is poorer than almost all other European countries that offer psychology in schools – a situation that should cause government education departments some embarrassment. These research findings are informing the ongoing campaign by the ATP and BPS to improve provision.

An apparently separate issue that bedevils us psychology teachers is the accusation, spread by some parts of the media, of psychology A-level as 'easy', a 'soft option'; as Matt Jarvis writes in the September 2011 issue of *The Psychologist*, the debate over the rigour of psychology A-level has recently reared its ugly head again. Poor public perception of psychology is, in fact, closely related to the teacher-training issue: even some headteachers see no harm in allocating psychology classes to a teacher with no qualifications in the subject, so is it any wonder that teacher-training in psychology is not seen as an urgent need?

Finally, it is very important to remember that our efforts to improve teacher-training provision do NOT constitute an attack on existing psychology teachers who are not psychology-trained; the ATP supports all psychology teachers, regardless of their qualifications. However, looking to the future, by improving teacher-training provision we will secure a better supply of qualified psychology teachers overall, which in turn will enhance the quality and perceived status of pre-tertiary psychology education; it will also provide more career opportunities both for current psychology teachers and for new psychology graduates.

*For more information on the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA), see www.efpta.org

Morag Williamson is ATP Secretary and ATP Scotland representative to EFPTA.

Pre-tertiary psychology education in Europe: a survey and continuing professional development

(1) Morag Williamson, West Lothian College and Edinburgh Napier University

(3) Renate Schrempf, Verband der Psychologielehrerinnen und -lehrer (German Association of Psychology Teachers)

1. Abstract

Psychology has been taught in secondary schools for many years in several European countries, yet despite the growth in student numbers, pre-tertiary psychology education (PTPE) has received little attention from researchers. Considered a non-traditional secondary school subject, there are concerns that access to initial teacher education (TE) and continuing professional development (CPD) for psychology teachers is more limited than for other subjects.

The aim of this exploratory research was to examine approaches to TE and CPD for school psychology teachers in eight European countries which provide PTPE for 15-19 year-olds. Telephone interviews were conducted with seven teachers from six countries, followed by a focus group of eight further teachers. The qualitative data suggested that TE and CPD for psychology teachers were regarded as at least adequate in most countries, but concerns remain over poor availability of TE in England, parts of Germany, and Scotland, and its impact on quality of PTPE and career opportunities for psychology graduates.

2. Introduction

Pre-tertiary psychology education (PTPE) in Europe

Until recently the research focus of psychology education has been mainly on the undergraduate level; publications on PTPE are rare (but see Banyard, 2008, and Rowley & Dalgarino, 2010, on PTPE in the UK; Küller, 2009, on PTPE in Europe). As far as the authors are aware, no cross-European comparison studies of PTPE have been published.

Under the auspices of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA, www.efpta.org), a survey of PTPE in Europe was conducted (Schrempf et al, 2010) by means of a quantitative online questionnaire. Responses were received from psychology teachers in seven countries. A database of psychology curricula was constructed and concerns of teachers were identified, including availability and access to TE and CPD. Findings showed that "psychology education" exists in a variety of guises; though not labelled as such, psychology is taught in diverse curricular areas, including citizenship, personal and social development, religious and philosophical studies. However, it was PTPE leading to HE-entry qualifications (e.g. Abitur, Matura, International Baccalaureate, English A levels, Scottish Highers) that had given rise to the main concerns regarding TE, and is therefore the focus of the current study.

Teacher education (TE) & continuing professional development (CPD) in Europe

Two models of TE for qualified teacher status (QTS) in Europe have been identified: simultaneous and consecutive (Eurydice, 2002); a further distinction is made by Ostinielli (2009), into "English" and "Nordic" models. The Council of the European Union (EU) has engaged in efforts to improve the quality of TE in Member States, in nine agreed areas including teachers' specialist subject knowledge and pedagogical skills (European Commission [EC], 2007). Two major reports have been published on TE and CPD in the EU: see Eurydice (2009) and FICR (2009). The EC's "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences & Qualifications" (2010) assert a range of standards or benchmarks for teachers' development needs that should be met by both initial TE and CPD.

Teacher education for PTPE in Europe

In spite of this recent focus on TE, the subject specialism element has received little emphasis. As a non-traditional subject, psychology tends to have a low profile amongst school leaders and teacher educators. Poor availability of TE courses, and negative perceptions of the subject as 'dumbed down' or 'easy to teach' (Smith, 2010), can lead to non-specialists being assigned to teach psychology. The issue has prompted action by psychology teachers' associations (e.g. ATPS, 2010) and professional psychologists' associations. In this context, the current small-scale action research project was conducted by the EFPTA research team, all PTPE practitioners, as a follow-up to the 2010 survey. The aim was to investigate and compare psychology teachers' knowledge, experiences and perceptions of TE and CPD for PTPE in a range of European countries, and to interpret these in relation to current European benchmarking on TE.

3. Methods

• **Structured interviews** and a subsequent **focus group** were carried out using non-probability, purposive sampling. The selection criteria were: experienced teachers, thorough knowledge of psychology education in their country, and a good command of English or access to an interpreter. Most participants were active members of their national psychology teachers' associations.

• **Interviews** were conducted with seven participants (see table 1 for details). Interviews were open ended and related to aspects of TE and CPD for PTPE, lasted approximately 45 minutes and were conducted via Skype. They were conducted digitally, and were mainly in English, except for two participants who were interviewed in their first language and their responses translated.

• **Focus group questions** were devised on the basis of preliminary interview data, requiring expansion on certain key points. Participants were psychology teachers who were also EFPTA board members. Discussion was in English and lasted approximately one hour.



Trainee German psychology teachers with their mentor in an English 6th form college (EFPTA exchange, 2007)

4. Results and Discussion

Data from interviews and focus group were collated and analysed.

Nature of initial TE – general aspects

- Patterns of TE were similar across countries, falling mainly into two categories: 'training on the job' and 'pre-employment training'.
- In most countries TE had a strong 'training on the job' emphasis. In Germany graduates must find a teaching job first in order to receive their TE, for greater emphasis on workplace experience.
- **Mentoring** of trainees was seen as an important role of senior teachers, incorporated into workload but was given additional payment in some countries. There was little reduction of teaching load.
- **Professional skills** and **subject expertise** were seen as equally important.
- There were no major differences between participants' in terms of perceived quality was adequate overall but varied between institutions.

Availability of TE for psychology

There were large differences between countries: extent of provision varied. In Finland met or exceeded demand, but in Germany, only two states provided adequate TE places in psychology. In England, demand exceeded the limited number of places. In Scotland, there were no such countries with limited availability of training, participants reported that psychology was nevertheless widely taught in schools, including at the level of initial teacher education. In some countries, participants were concerned at the reduced career opportunities for psychology graduates.

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* Email address for correspondence: renate.schrempf@efpta.org

Survey of approaches to teacher education

University, Scotland*; (2) Dorothy Coombs, Prior Pursglove College, England; (3) Lenka Sokolová, Department of Psychology Teachers); (4) Lenka Sokolová, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia



Country	Participant codes	
	Interview	Focus group

Country	Participant codes	
	Interview	Focus group
Denmark		P8
England	P1	P9
Finland	P2	P10
Germany	P3	P11, P12, P13
Ireland	P4	-
Norway	-	P14
Scotland	P5, P6	P15
Sweden	P7	-
	n = 7	n = 8

Table 1: Participant codes, by country

Presentation by German High school
psychology students
(EFPTA Conference, Dortmund, 2006)



or analysis.

into 'simultaneous' and 'consecutive' models (Lurydice, 2002). emphasis, confirming findings of H&ER (2009). In Denmark and to access training; in Slovakia and Finland, participants felt a need

Senior staff, however, resourcing varied: In Iceland, the role was not available, whereas in England, no payment was available and there

perceptions of quality of TE in their country; most felt that

Participant 3, Germany

"the high interest in the subject by pupils should be met by a better supply [of teachers]"
Participant 3, Germany

FIER, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä (2009). *Teacher Education Curricula in the EU*. Tender no. FAC/10/2007.

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Q: [How do I find my account number?](#)

Results and Discussion (continued)

A particular obstacle faced aspiring psychology teachers in England and Scotland. In both countries, students aged 15-19 were split between two sectors: secondary schools and further education (FE) colleges, each with different routes to QTS, a distinction that appears to be unique in Europe. Whilst schoolteachers could obtain employment in colleges without hindrance, college lecturers were effectively prevented from working in schools – a restriction on mobility which flouts the EC's 'Common European Principles' (2011). Psychology appeared to be disproportionately affected by this segregation of the sectors, because unlike traditional school subjects it had become more firmly established in FE.

In England the Wolf Report (2011) had addressed this issue, recommending that qualifications for college teaching (QTLS) be recognised in schools. However in Scotland the Donaldson Report (2011) was limited to TC for primary and secondary sectors; the needs of 15-19 year-old students and their teachers in the FE sector were outwith its remit, and the issue of the absence of TC for psychology (and some other subjects) was not addressed.

Deployment of teachers: matching qualifications to subject(s) taught

In Finland and Iceland, allocating a teacher to a subject in which they were not qualified was very rare, and was unusual in others (e.g. Germany), whilst in Scotland and England it was not unusual. In psychology, reduced rigour in staff deployment arose partly through pressure of student demand: PTPE seemed to be a victim of its own success. Headteachers' judgments on staff deployment in terms of specialisms varied across countries. Participants felt that deployment of non-specialists often accompanied a perception of psychology as 'easy' amongst headteachers, in sharp contrast to students' perceptions: there appeared to be leadership issues in this area.

"Teachers would disapprove of being asked to teach a different subject (other than their specialism)" Participant 4, Iceland

CPD for psychology

Most aspects of CPD were similar across countries, including availability, types of providers, amount of time per year, quality, and teacher autonomy in identifying development needs and appropriate development activities. Participants from several countries felt the most useful psychology CPD was provided by teachers' associations, but that there was not enough.

Limitations of methodology

The samples were targeted for the specific purpose of obtaining their specialist knowledge of PEP, IL and CPD; there was no intention to generalise findings to a wider population. Possible threats to validity and reliability include: researcher bias, as all were psychology teachers with an interest in promoting PEP; misinterpretation of responses where English was not the first language. However, a degree of concurrent validity was achieved through triangulation of interview and focus group data. The standardised protocol and structured nature of the interviews provided some degree of internal reliability.

5. Conclusions

This small-scale initial exploration of an as yet under-researched topic has shown many areas of similarity, as well as some major differences in TE and CPD for PTPE in Europe. There was greater variation, and concern, over initial TE:

- poor access to TE for PTPE in some countries:
 - England – limited TE student places; QIS for FE sector not valid for schools
 - Germany – not available in all Länder
 - Scotland – no TE courses; QIS for FE sector not valid for schools
- deployment of non-specialist staff to teach psychology in the 15-19 age band, suggesting that the relevance of teachers' specialist subject expertise for their students' learning is undervalued by school leaders (England, Scotland)

These findings carry clear implications for practice: the major obstacles to TE for psychology in England and Scotland must be addressed, in order to enhance the quality of PTPE, and psychology graduates' career opportunities, to the levels that obtain in other European countries and in other subjects.

Possibilities for future research: status of psychology v. other school subjects; PTPE for younger learners and embedding in school curriculum; students' perceptions of PTPE; psychology-specific pedagogical skills; PTPE curricula, and how they are determined.

WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY?

A European research project to investigate students' motivation for, and perceived outcomes of, studying psychology.

Motivation towards study is a frequent educational and psychological theme. Many surveys have been published on the motivation for studying science, physical education or foreign languages. Psychology as a non-traditional and voluntary or optional school subject is often perceived as easy to study and teach, and in some countries does not always enjoy support from education authorities (Williamson et al, 2011). On the other hand psychology in many countries is one of the most popular subjects at school and university and there are many different psychology courses available from secondary level in Europe (Schrempf et al, 2010). That is why we find the issue of motivation and perceived outcomes of studying psychology rather complex. The motivation may vary from considering psychology courses to be easier than others to deeper intrinsic motivation for understanding human behaviour (Jarvis, 2006). This situation led us to design an international collaboration project which aims to compare students' motivation for studying psychology in the cross-cultural context, to promote the idea of teaching psychology, to support cooperation among psychology teachers and students in Europe and to share good practice in psychology teaching.

Our survey is carried out in cooperation with the European Federation of Psychology Teachers Associations (EFPTA) and Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. Our aim is to obtain data on motivation and perceived outcomes of studying psychology among pre-university and university psychology students. Data collection and analysis will be a part of students' projects carried out by students of psychology teacher-training at Comenius University and participating psychology teachers and students from other European countries. We hope that the survey data will be useful for further international cooperation in psychology teaching. There are several ways in which you can be involved in the project:

1. Electronic questionnaire – students may fill in two electronic questionnaires available online:
Perceived outcomes – direct link:
www.iankety.sk/dotaznik/244175365/
Motivation – direct link:
www.iankety.sk/dotaznik/244091691/
(Password to enter both questionnaires is 'efpta')
2. Individual quantitative studies – if you would like to have your own study with individual results, we may provide you with a printable version of the questionnaires and instructions for administration so you or your students can run your own small projects. In this case we would be happy if you could send us filled-in questionnaires or Excel data to be added to our data.
3. Individual qualitative studies – if you prefer qualitative methodology, we may provide you with a set of questions for a focus group. Again we would be happy if you could send us your transcription or report from focus group(s) for cross-cultural comparison.

We hope that our survey will help us to answer following questions:

- Why do students choose to study psychology?
- Are there any gender differences in motivation for studying

psychology and perceived outcomes of psychology studies?

- Are there any differences in motivation for studying psychology across Europe?
- Does the educational system and the status of psychology as a school subject influence motivation for studying psychology?
- How do curricular goals meet students' expectations?
- Do the perceived outcomes of studying psychology meet the European Parliament's and Council's recommendations on key competences (2006)?

In further international discussion the results may open the door to research on curricular goals and objectives of psychology as a school subject, subject-specific competences and skills of psychology teachers as well as the role of psychology in developing key competences in secondary school students.

To date we have about two hundred respondents and ten participating researchers (pre-university psychology teachers and students) from Slovakia, Great Britain, Iceland and Spain. We would still like to invite psychology students or teachers to join the project, either as participants or as researchers. The research results will be published at EFPTA events and web pages by the end of 2012.

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Contacts

For participation in the survey please contact:

Lenka Sokolová: sokolova24@gmail.com
European Federation of Psychology Teachers Associations,
www.efpta.org

EFPTA research team

Morag Williamson, West Lothian College, and Edinburgh Napier University (Scotland)

Dorothy Coombs, Vice President of EFPTA (England)

Renate Schrempf, President of EFPTA, Verband der Psychologielehrerinnen und -lehrer, Germany

Lenka Sokolová, Faculty of Education, Comenius University in



NINE SEAHORSES – A PLEA FOR SANITY IN THREE PARTS

Seahorse Sam

Published by Seahorse Press Ltd 2011

ISBN 978-0-9567142-0-6

£21.75

When I received an email advertising this publication I was intrigued by the title, so I requested a copy from the author (no, not Seahorse Sam himself but Martin Neiland) who is a psychologist with a wealth of experience of teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as being central in implementing policy in mental health domains such as dual diagnosis (where a mental disorder and substance abuse occur together). The intrigue continued when I took the book from the envelope. It is probably the heaviest book of its size I have encountered and this is because the glossy paper is of very high quality and there are 311 pages. The font varies but it is never 'conventional', giving the impression that it has been typed on an old fashioned typewriter and the list of contents is so extensive that virtually every page is listed several times.

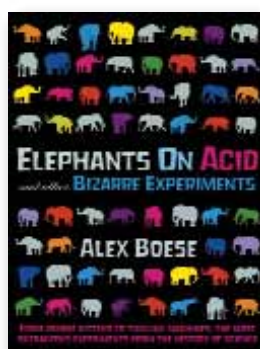
The foreword is written by Professor Geoffrey Hall from York University and in it he expresses his concern that very few of the students he has taught seem to be interested in the 'Big Questions' that make psychology so fascinating. He places the blame for this on teachers (I would disagree as I think it is the fault of exam boards who divide the subject up into chunks for convenience and to make examining easier). Whoever is to blame for this it is certainly true!

So what is the book about? Well I believe it aims to be provocative and to challenge virtually everything from the spiritual to the scientific. It claims to be about a personal and collective sanity and propounds what the author calls an ecumenical 'moral psychology'. He rejects the extremist views (he calls 'polarisation') in debates such as the extent to which humans have free-will and how far we can explain our behaviour in purely scientific terms. In the first part he has identified almost every person, event and theory in both ancient and modern history that has had any relevance to academic psychology. In the second he takes 'a tour of modern psychotherapy' and this is the part I found to be most accessible, though still very challenging to read. Part three is 'The Story of Seahorse Sam' in which a sensitive seahorse (Sam) meets the creepy 'Clipboard Clive' who is meant to represent the way that our cultural learning can be detrimental to our mental well-being.

Throughout the book there are over 90 illustrations, each one having relevance to something in the text at that point (though it is

challenging in itself to make the connection at times) and over 20 figures and tables ranging from a basic explanation of Pavlovian conditioning to a summary of integrated developmental 'moral psychology'. There are over 100 references, reflecting just how far Martin Neiland has tried to address the 'Big Questions' in psychology. Should you decide to accept the challenge and read this book, I would recommend that you start at page 16 after reading the foreword and the notes on the back cover. Then dip into different chapters rather than attempting to read it in the usual sequential way. You will find some particularly good stuff in Chapter 7 of part two, 'Sanity and Contemporary psychotherapy' and in Chapter 6 you will recognise the list of individuals from recent times who have endured enormous pressure and yet whose sanity remained intact. This illustrates the potential we may have to determine our own psychological well-being, particularly if we are helped along the way by what the author calls 'competent coxswains'.

Dorothy Coombs
Vice Chair



ELEPHANTS ON ACID AND OTHER BIZARRE EXPERIMENTS

Alex Boese

ISBN 978-0-33-5-664-9

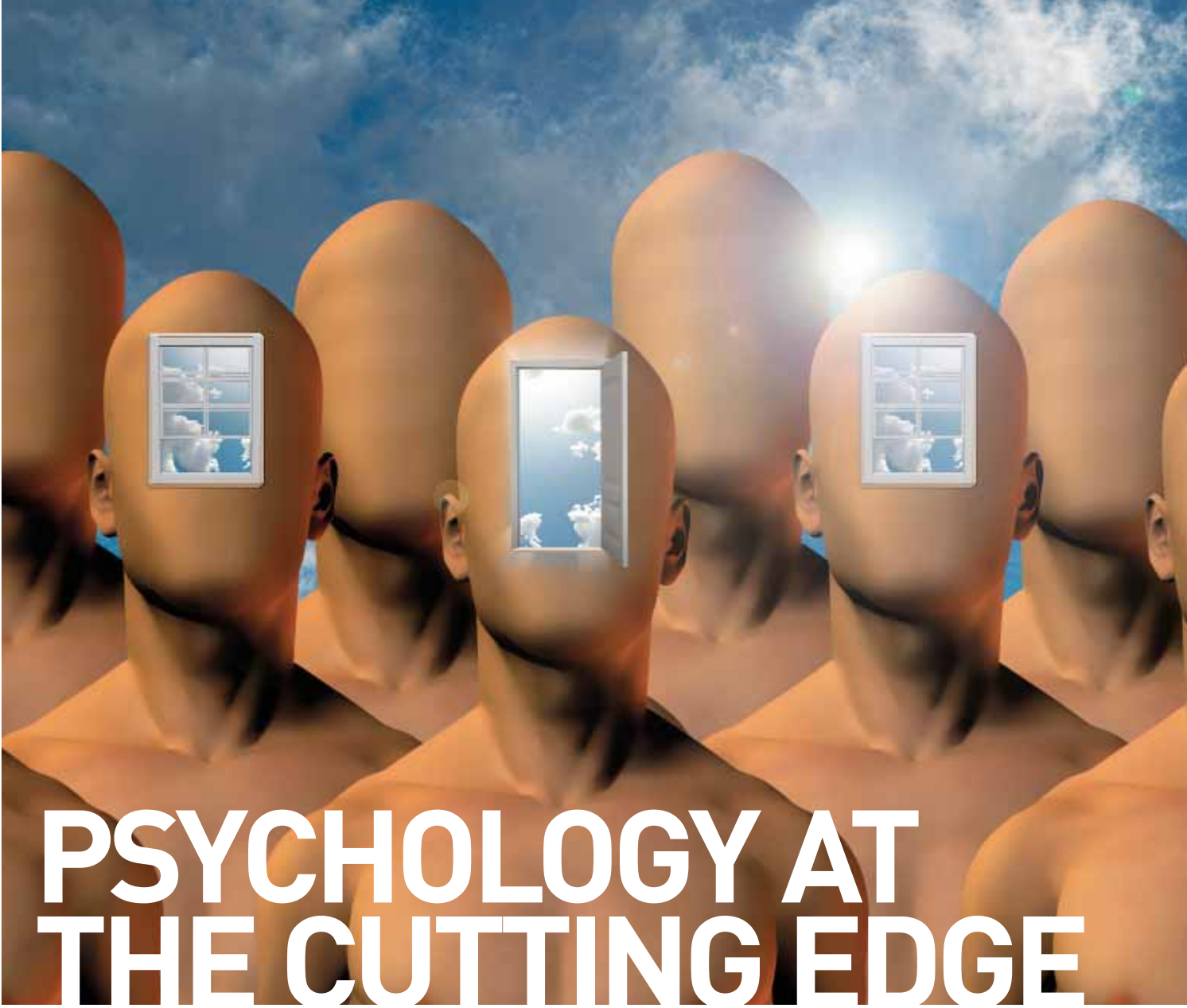
£8.99

This is a very 'easy read' and I read it on a train journey from Birmingham to Newcastle. Although it is very basic and could be classified as 'psychology-light', I really enjoyed it and I'm definitely going to get my school library to stock a few copies and will recommend it to year 9 or 11 students as an introduction to psychology.

It contains all the 'classics' such as Milgram, Zimbardo, Latane & Darley etc, and some weird and wonderful stuff too. If you ever wondered where the chief examiners find some of their strange examples for research methods papers, look no further – the tickling example used in the OCR AS research methods paper is in this book! (Note from the editor: I know the book was recommended at a recent OCR CPD event so look out for more like that on G541.) I loved the author's method of grouping studies together. Chapters include: 'Frankenstein's Lab', 'Mating Behaviour', 'Toilet Reading', 'Making Mr Hyde' and 'The End' (devoted to the psychology of death).

If you're looking for a book that will stimulate your students' interest in psychology, while still being easy to read, I'd fully recommend it.

Deb Gajic, ATP Chair



PSYCHOLOGY AT THE CUTTING EDGE

A one-day conference for A-level students

One of the highlights of our last academic year was the psychology conference which we ran in March. Here are summaries of two presentations written by year 12 students. The first is a summary of a presentation by Dr Warren Mansell, from Manchester University, whose topic was the 'five big blunders of psychology' and how they can be addressed by Perceptual Control Theory (PCT).

Teaching a New Generation about Psychology: How not to repeat the mistakes of the last 100 years

Dr Mansell started the talk by easing the minds of many who were considering taking psychology as a degree, by simply stating 'learning psychology is fun'. Unlike other sciences, it is about emotions and feelings and still has lots of challenges.' Continuing, he identified the 'five big blunders of psychology'. These included the problem of 'isolation' and the problem with 'Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics'. He provided explanations of each and why they were a

hindrance to the progression of psychology. Here is an example of the first point – Isolation. Prior to the 19th century psychology was a part of philosophy and closely linked to physiology and psychiatry, but then it emerged as a discipline of its own. Isolation is a problem because 'the mind is what the brain does' – how can the methods we use be questioned without philosophy and physiology? So Dr Mansell argued that we need to work together with physiologists and philosophers in order to progress.

In relation to the problem with statistics, Dr Mansell explained

that psychology studies often find statistically significant results, by having very large sample sizes, but the actual effects themselves are rather weak. So they may be statistically significant, but have limited real world importance. Dr Mansell claimed that we should focus on investigating factors that have large effects in the real world.

After these blunders in psychology were explained, the talk came to Perceptual Control Theory. This theory states that "Living organisms control their input, not their output". It meant that we have our own intentions and wishes and our actions are determined by them, not by other people or other factors. Following this he used an example called the Rubber Band demonstration, in which a volunteer was selected and stood at the front of the conference. Two rubber bands were knotted together with a pen in each loop against the whiteboard, one for the volunteer and one for Dr Mansell. Dr Mansell asked the rhetorical question "Can you understand what people are trying to do by simply observing?" and to further his point, he whispered an instruction to the volunteer. He told the audience that they were to guess the intentions of the volunteer. To the audience, it simply looked like Dr Mansell and the volunteer were simply doodling and going against each other's actions of the rubber band and when questioned, the audience could not provide the correct answer. It turned out, the knot between the bands had to be kept over a dot on a whiteboard, and the aim of drawing apparently in random directions was to keep the knot over the dot. This proved that you cannot guess people's intentions by simply observing. (You can see the Rubber Band demonstration by on the following website – www.pctweb.org/)

Perceptual Control Theory is taught only at Manchester University but is evident in today's world – from sociology and modelling behaviour of crowds, to designing helicopter interfaces. The theory was well received by students at Manchester and also by those within the conference. Dr Mansell left many people with new ideas.

Matt Price – Year 12

The second summary is of a presentation given jointly by three ex-students of Harrogate Grammar School, who had all gone on to study psychology at university.

Doing a Psychology Degree: What it's really like?

I found the work the students described, and the enjoyment they were having, very inspiring. Sabrina Pearson was in her first of four years at Kent University studying Applied Psychology. The aspect of the university course she felt most beneficial was the work placement year that takes place in the course. This provides students with an opportunity to discover new places, meet new people and gain skills and knowledge for a further career in psychology. This kind of degree is popular as most employees like to hire people with experience within that course. A lot of work placements offer the students with work once they have graduated from the university. This means that more students are likely to have jobs and gives them a goal to strive for.

Richard Doherty was in his second year in Bangor University studying a very similar course. He described the university as having many aspects which were highly enjoyable, such as the nightlife and the amount of things to do throughout Bangor. It has a fantastic coastline and it is highly recommended if you enjoy sport. The facilities at the university are also outstanding. They have a large variety of facilities, including a large library. Richard showed us that although the course is essential, when choosing a

university you must make sure that you will enjoy exploring the surroundings and the student experience.

Grace Dunlop was in her third, and final, year at Northumbria studying psychology with joint honours in sport science. She had recently been working on her dissertation, which was the most important assignment throughout her years at the university. To complete this work, the student must design a study and collect data. It is very important that the work must be passed through an ethics board to make sure that everyone will be treated equally, fairly and that no harm will come to them whilst participating in the study. Grace's presentation was fascinating as she talked us through her dissertation and each step she made to come to her final ideas. She decided to study mental imagery and how it affects sport in the modern world. She found that the idea of picturing yourself doing something could actually enhance the chances of you doing it. For instance the golfer Jack Nicklaus uses mental imagery to enhance his performance. He imagines the ball at the finish and this can change the way he performs and thinks about each movement. She conducted an experiment on mental imagery and golf on 18 novice golfers and 18 expert golfers and found that mental imagery significantly decreased the distance of the ball from the hole.

Grace's work was fascinating and showed how psychology can open doors to many careers. With a joint honours degree you can relate psychology to another subject of your choice. There is so much opportunity to study the exciting aspects of psychology and there are so many different aspects that can be studied. I am convinced that psychology would be a great subject to do at university and I will definitely to continue to look for university courses that suit my hobbies and interests.

Emma Fraser – Year 12

In addition, Dr Brian Lovell (Northumbria University) gave us an insight into the operations of the undergraduate ethics committee prior to us discussing an ethics proposal. Then Dr Amanda Waterman (University of Leeds) gave a presentation on the development of children's memory and what implications this had for eye witness testimony. Finally, students were able to discover what neuroscience tells us about the 'learning brain' from Dr Jonathan Sharples (University of York). As a teacher I was struck by the research that Dr Sharples described, showing the powerful effect of 'testing yourself' on learning. In this study participants learned lists of Swahili and English word pairs (Karpicke and Roediger, 2008). After that students were divided into different groups. Some were repeatedly tested on their memory for the word pairs, other students were given repeated opportunities to study the words again and another group neither studied nor tested themselves again. They were all given a final test a week later. Repeated testing had by far the biggest effect on learning, whereas repeated study appeared to have very little impact. These results suggest that students should be encouraged to 'test themselves' as a central part of their revision.

Dr Emma Dunmore
Head of Psychology
Harrogate Grammar School

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ATP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012

The ATP annual conference will be held on 6-8 July 2012 at Aston University, Birmingham (see – www.atpconference.org.uk)

At the Conference there are lectures, workshops and seminars, meetings with examiners and opportunities to put queries to them and to make useful contacts. It is also great fun and a fantastic CPD opportunity.

The conference is for teachers of psychology and will offer updating sessions on psychology, presentations and workshops on teaching and learning, and opportunities to share good practice.

It is the 'Number One' CPD event for teachers of psychology in the UK. See the website for feedback from previous conferences.

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"How science works has never seemed such fun!"

"It was a wonderful conference and my students and I are buzzing! It is what education should be about – broadening horizons and motivating the desire to learn. Everyone painted Science as exciting, which it is although the message gets lost in schools sometimes."

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- Nottingham Playhouse, Tuesday 15 November
- Edinburgh Corn Exchange, Thursday 24 November
- London Friends Meeting House, Friday 25 November

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THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Trevor P Dunn (Chartered Psychologist)

Perhaps no one person in the field of psychology has contributed so much in terms of controversy as Sigmund Freud and the psychoanalytic arena. One thing that's for certain is that Freud altered people's views of themselves in the twentieth century.

Like no other psychologist before him, Freud seemed to explain the whole concept of understanding human development and behaviour. So, how does this approach operate, and can it contribute towards an understanding of crime? The first thing that should be stated is that as such there is no psychodynamic theory of crime. Instead what we are presented with are a number of ideas and concepts based upon the contributions of Freudian ideas that have been either re-structured or re-formulated to suggest that psychodynamic principles can inform our understanding of the origins of criminal behaviour.

In the preface to his text 'The Roots of Crime', Edward Glover states:

'But even if our current calendar of crimes were to become obsolete, there is every likelihood that its place would be taken by a new set of misdemeanours; such is the strength of the unconscious 'need for crime' and of the social compulsion to punish infractions of social codes'. He continues, 'The history of civilisation is, after all, the history of guilt'. Furthermore he feels that... 'whilst the existence and power of unconscious motives are disregarded then we cannot learn any more about crime than an apparent common sense dictates. Therefore, society gets the crime it 'deserves' (Glover, 1959). The reasons stem from his views that the so-called 'normal' baby is to all senses a 'born criminal'. You only have to look at its early behaviour patterns to see signs of egocentric, greedy, dirty, destructive and violent temper behavioural patterns. With this in mind, Glover feels that a great proportion enter adulthood being 'backward' in mental development although not 'certifiable' as 'mental defectives'. Therefore crime is one of the results of unsuccessful socialisation...

When trying to place meaning to the criminal act, the psychodynamic viewpoint focuses on the consequences of a state of mind which is influenced by unconscious processes and unconscious fantasy which interact with the individual's conscious thought. Taken a step further, it is held that crime is a 'man-made' construct and that we all commit crimes (either consciously or unconsciously), but we do not necessarily enact them. The general premise is that the formative years in which the child experiences trauma or abuse associated with such factors as 'attachment', affect the later well-being of the individual (Cordess & Williams, 1966).

What is certain is that we all engage in fantasy behaviour from time to time, perhaps more so in childhood and adolescence. Freud claims this is due to the interplay between the 'pleasure principle', which desires a direct and instant discharge of impulses – and the 'reality principle' – which tries to modify and oppose such discharge (Freud, 1911). This becomes a question of 'conflict' and so having a fully developed 'reality principle' enables us to make moral conscious choices about whether to engage in criminal acts or not, but perhaps more than this, we recognise the consequences should we choose to ignore unconscious strivings. This could account for the adult criminal psychopath for whom the results of their behaviours provides 'pleasure'. Freud, however, was adamant when he said that 'in the case of young children and delinquents, and as a rule, criminals dominated by their instincts, the psychoanalytic method must be adopted to meet the need' (Freud, 1925). In Freud's (1916) published note on 'Criminality from a Sense of Guilt' he maintains that an excess of unconscious guilt due to repressed infantile wishes can result in outbreaks of anti-social behaviour which in turn lead to penal sanctions. Therefore an exaggerated unconscious infantile morality can lead to adult crime. Whilst talking about patients' misdeeds committed whilst undergoing treatment, he states that: 'Analytic work then brought the surprising discovery that such deeds were done principally because they were forbidden, and because their execution was accompanied by mental relief for their doer... Paradoxical as it may sound, I must maintain that the sense of guilt was present before the misdeed, that it did not arise from it, but conversely – the misdeed arose from the sense of guilt'. Further support comes from Alexander and Healy (1935) who maintained that the offender is someone who is unable to progress from the stage of the 'pleasure principle' in infancy and so seeks instant gratification, even in adulthood. Hence, this would explain stealing which offers instant reward for the offender.

Melanie Klein – Love, Guilt and Reparation and other works 1921-1945

One thing that all psychoanalysts agree on is that within the adult we find traces of their early childhood development. With this in mind, it is no wonder that there is such conflict within the world today. This is largely due to the amount of repressions that we

possess which are directed towards our most unsocial tendencies. Klein maintains that it is possible to analyse the workings of the child's inner psychic world at a very early age, in contrast to Freudian ideas. This is obtained by observing the child's Free Play experiences. Klein places great emphasis on the child's inability to distinguish between their own ego and the outside world. Children experience not only sexual impulses and anxiety, but also great disappointment. Through the use of play Klein observed the child acting instead of speaking which is the usual procedure in adult analysis. The child's thought processes are literally 'acted out' and Klein feels that in child analysis the child is able to experience high anxiety and fixations in a much better way than the adult who only offers past experiences from childhood as reconstructed accounts of events which, in many cases, have been questioned with regards to their truth and actuality and in some cases have been claimed to represent 'false memory syndrome'. Having said this, Klein states that the principles of analysis with children or adults remain the same, namely, consistent interpretation, gradual resolution of the resistance, steady reference back of the transference, whether positive or negative, to earlier situations. She states that: 'Thus it would seem that in people in whom the early anxiety-situations are too powerful and who have retained the defensive mechanisms belonging to that early stage, fear of the super-ego, if for external or intra-psychic reasons it oversteps certain bounds, will compel them to destroy their object and will form the basis for the development of criminal type behaviour' (Klein, 1932). Klein also claims that the qualitative changes of the super-ego, which are initiated by the accentuation of genital impulses and object relations, influence the relation of the super-ego to the ego and precipitate a sense of guilt. Should such feelings of guilt become too overpowering their effect will once more be felt by the ego as anxiety. If this line of thought is correct, then it would be not a deficiency in the super-ego but a qualitative difference in it that gives rise to a lack of social feeling in certain individuals, including criminals and so-called 'asocial' persons. Klein, like Freud, maintains that the basis of all perversions have their origin in the early development of the child. Fantasies of father, or himself, ripping up the mother, beating, scratching her, cutting her into pieces, are some instances of childish conception of intercourse. I will refer here to the fact that fantasies of this nature are sometimes carried into action by criminals, to mention Jack the Ripper as a case in point. This is because the adult, like the child he was, is entirely dominated by impulses.

In 'On Criminality' (1934) Klein writes: 'One of the great problems about criminals which has always made them incomprehensible to the rest of the world, is their lack of natural human good feelings; but this lack is only apparent. When in analysis one reaches the deepest conflicts from which hate and anxiety spring, one also finds there is love as well. Love is not absent in the criminal, but is hidden and buried in such a way that nothing but analysis can bring it to light; since the hatred persecuting object was originally to the tiny baby the object of all its love and libido, the criminal is now in the position of hating and persecuting his own loved object; as this is an intolerable position all memory and consciousness of any love for any object must be suppressed. If there is nothing in the world but enemies, and that is how the criminal feels, his fate and destructiveness are, in his view, to a great extent justified – an attitude which relieves some of his unconscious feelings of guilt'.

One knows how difficult it is to approach the adult criminal and to cure him, but experience shows that one can approach and cure



both criminal and psychotic children. It seems therefore, that the best remedy against delinquency would be to analyse children who show signs of abnormality in the one direction or the other.

Conclusion

The main problems with Klein's approach are these: can unconscious unresolved conflicts be inferred from observed child behaviour? And if so, can we conclude that these conflicts, if untreated through psychoanalysis, actually cause criminal behaviour?

Basically, because the hypotheses presented by the psychodynamic approach are difficult to test with any rigour, not just in relation to criminal behaviour but indeed all behaviour, the future looks bleak for further progress being made. Most modern day psychodynamic approaches centre upon treatment of adult criminals and tend to relate the criminal act back to early childhood influences and experiences. Klein's position was to attempt to prevent the criminal act arising in the first place.

td301@cam.co.uk

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WHY ARE YOU ANXIOUS? IS IT BECAUSE YOU ARE FEMALE?

Evie Bentley, Advisor for Psychology,
West Sussex Adult and Community Learning

Anxiety is common, it's present in all populations and cultures and it affects all of us – for some lucky people this happens infrequently and in others it can be the everyday state. However, in Western culture it seems that anxiety in adulthood is far more a female than a male thing. One question here is whether this is nature or nurture; does being female in some genetic way predispose these people to be more anxious, or is being male linked with experiencing or admitting less anxiety?

First of all it should be clear what is meant, psychologically, by 'anxiety'. It's a response to danger or threat, real or imaginary, and can actually be adaptive as it can motivate people to avoid or deactivate the perceived cause. This had clear advantages for our long-ago ancestors, the hunter-gatherers, as well as for other animals and ourselves. However, this every day or normal anxiety can spiral out of all proportion to the danger/threat, and so many people suffer from anxiety disorders which can interfere seriously with their daily lives. Disorders classified (DSM-IV and ICD-10) as such include panic attacks, phobias, social anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Fortunately, these disorders are usually treatable with good results for the sufferer.

Now back to the sex-linked data. Oliver James (2010) has looked at studies in the UK and USA and concludes from these that women are twice as likely as men to suffer from anxiety and anxiety disorders. However, there does seem to be a cultural difference between these two western industrialised societies. Data from our own Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that whilst women are more likely to report suffering from excessive anxiety this is a very small difference, being 5% of women compared to 4% of men. Of course, as we know so well, the number of people of either sex appearing in this sort of data is probably not at all the same as the number actually experiencing the problem. But as currently this is the only accessible reliable data, it is what I am addressing.

There is some biological research which supports a small biological difference between males and females with regard to anxiety. Yes, it is based on rat experiments, and there are the pro- and anti-Skinner type arguments on such, but most of what is known neurophysiologically about the brain and anxiety/fear comes from rodent experiments. Kabbaj's team at Florida State University has found that a protective effect of testosterone is to stimulate medial pre-frontal cortex cell receptors so a gene called 'zif268' is activated. This zif gene has a known function in memory, learning, addiction, stress and anxiety level reduction. It is also known that men have more zif than women, and that when activated the zif gene starts a neurochemical cascade effect which could be what protects from anxiety, since blocking the expression of zif in the male rats resulted in increased anxiety behaviours. These ideas are supported by a study of men receiving testosterone replacement therapy because of low testosterone levels. The participants reported less nervousness ie anxiety – but then this might well be caused by knowing their male hormone levels were on the up!

Women do have testosterone, but only low levels, secreted by the adrenal glands, so this could tie in with a female vulnerability to anxiety. On the other hand, in Western culture does a learned link between being female and being anxious seem very likely? Michelle Craske, Head of the UCLA Anxiety Disorders Research Center, points out that for a few months following birth boys are much more emotionally needy, but by two years old girls are

slightly more likely to show negative feelings. She says that research shows close similarity between anxiety levels in boys and girls up to about age 11, puberty. But by age 15 girls are six times more likely than boys to have serious anxiety issues. This could support the nature argument, puberty in boys = testosterone. But it could also be the effect of nurture. We tend to treat girls and boys differently from a very early age. For example, when a little girl is hurt or has a shock such as falling over she is more likely to be comforted, rewarded in fact for being vulnerable. But when a small boy falls over he is more likely to be encouraged not to make a fuss and be rewarded for being 'a man' with a hidden message that because of being male admitting to feeling upset isn't acceptable. The learned associations and the reinforcements in the two sexes are different but equally powerful. So the suggestion is that girls, having learned that negative emotions bring comfort, react to unpleasant situations later on with anxiety even if these feelings are not rewarded – their brains have been re-wired. A further point is that parents also tend to shelter their daughters from unpleasantness and so deprive their girls from learning useful, positive coping schemata. The lack of effective coping strategies could be an important factor in adult female anxiety since whilst most boys have been encouraged to tackle problems head on but calmly and logically, most girls have not. In a way this is quite encouraging – in spite of the differences in testosterone and if we could change women's anxiety-proneness as the wiring of the brain is soft-wiring not hard. If we believe that parenting can have this effect then there is the possibility that we could, albeit slowly, start to change how we think and behave with our daughters. Comfort and reassurance, emotion-focused support, need not be abandoned but modified so that these are part of a message that also features problem-focused coping strategies and skills for both our girls and our boys. For those of us past childhood we can focus on the fact that what has been learned can with motivation and effort be unlearned, and replaced by adaptive learning – now that sounds like CBT worth doing.

Eviepsych1@gmail.com

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ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Now that post-16 curriculum structures in England, Wales and Northern Ireland acknowledge psychology to be a science (notwithstanding the allied discussion that learners should consider), the Research Methods aspects of A-level are couched as 'How Science Works'. This reminds us that psychology is not the only post-16 subject addressing these aspects – its sister sciences share this Assessment Objective. What's more, though most of our students are new to psychology when they start A-level, they are certainly not new to How Science Works: national curriculum core science at Key Stage 4 has plenty of it!

It's a frequently-heard complaint that some of our A-level students don't appear to join us with much prior knowledge or understanding of research methods. Given that they will certainly have encountered How Science Works in GCSE Science, something funny is going on. There are several possible hypotheses, which can be summarised as:

1. They weren't taught it
2. They didn't learn it
3. They forgot it
4. They know it but don't transfer their learning

There may be room for improvement in the teaching of GCSE science (and of course its primary purpose is not to support A-level psychology). But nonetheless, the first two hypotheses seem unlikely to be generally true. They might apply to specific skills or students. On the other hand, hypotheses 3 and 4 have a lot going for them. We know that transition points in students' learning are often characterised by performance dips, and there has been much analysis of this phenomenon in primary-to-secondary transition.

Our new students are experiencing multiple transitions: between key stages and subjects, and often between institutions. They may be particularly vulnerable to performance dips. It seems to me that there is mileage for psychology teachers in being sensitive to this, and in applying our own disciplinary knowledge and understanding (alongside established good practice) to supporting transition. Lots of this good practice is based on sound psychology, such as schemata, interference, contextual recall cues, etc, etc. Perhaps we could explore in more detail what students have learned before and how we might support transition to build on this?

Jeremy Airey
National Science Learning Centre



GREATER PRACTITIONER AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DESIGN OF PSYCHOLOGY COURSES?

Dissatisfaction with pre-tertiary psychology specifications, including A-level, Scottish Highers, IB, GCSE, etc, seems to be ever-present. If we're not happy with one spec we can change to another (in England at any rate), but that involves much hassle, and though some aspects may be better, some may be worse. Every spec has at least some redeeming features, so we often just put up with content and assessment issues; maybe we'll complain about them on the Psychexchange forum, or raise them in an examiners' session at ATP Conference, but learned helplessness may set in.

In the UK, for all external qualifications in all subjects, course specs are determined top-down by a regulatory body and an awarding body. In England, politicians may exert control even over assessment details, but not in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. At any rate, we teachers have little or no control over the curriculum for high-stakes assessment, though at times of curriculum revision we may (or may not) be invited to take part in a 'consultation with stakeholders'. However, consultation can take many forms: How broad and thorough is it? How widely publicised? Are the findings acted upon or is the 'consultation' simply a cynical public relations exercise? In particular, when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of subject-specific content and assessment, how are crucial design decisions made, and what is the expertise of those making them? Those of you who are senior examiners may be involved in curriculum revisions and thus have inside knowledge, but exam boards vary in this respect; for example, in Scotland senior examiners have had little formal involvement in the current 'Curriculum for Excellence' process. Claims of transparency and quality assurance tend to be ubiquitous but hard to verify.

It doesn't have to be this way. In Denmark and Finland, teachers' associations are key partners alongside government education departments, awarding bodies and other stakeholders, in curriculum development processes. In Iceland and the USA, schools have a high degree of autonomy in setting their own courses and assessments, even at A-level equivalent standard. The expertise of well-qualified practitioners is respected and trusted. Why don't we follow educational models of those Scandinavian countries which score consistently highly in international comparisons?

Here in the UK there are some recent signs of an increased openness in curriculum development: OCR has set up a Consultative Forum on the forthcoming curriculum revision in England; the journal 'Psychology Teaching Review' has recently run a whole series of articles on psychology education in schools and colleges; the BPS Division of Teachers and Researchers in Psychology hosted a debate at the ATP Conference in July. Are these moves just glorified talking shops, or are we seeing a genuine shift towards greater practitioner and student involvement in the design of psychology courses? If we felt some sense of ownership, I believe ideas would flow freely. Could we come up with something better than existing specs? Whose curriculum is it anyway?

Morag Williamson
West Lothian College

The Association for the Teaching of Psychology Officers and Committee

Deb Gajic (Chair)

Head of Psychology
The Polesworth School
Dordon Road
Dordon
Tamworth
Staffs B78 1QT
01827 702205
d.gajic@sky.com

Dorothy Coombs (Vice Chair)

24 Whinchat Tail
Guisborough
Cleveland TS14 8PW
01287 636502
07954 372 340
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com

Morag Williamson (Secretary)

West Lothian College
Almondvale Crescent
Livingston
West Lothian EH54 7EP
07718 647487
moragwill@aol.com

Janet Brennan (Treasurer)

7 Clairville Gardens
Hanwell
London W7 3HZ
0208 579 7885
janet.brennan@btopenworld.com

Karen J Duffy

Senior Lecturer Psychology and
Social Sciences with Citizenship
Education
Institute of Education
799 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M20 2RR
0161 247 2333
k.j.duffy@mmu.ac.uk

Helen Gibb

The Blandford School
Milldown Road
Blandford Forum
Dorset DT11 7SQ
hgibb@blandfordschool.org.uk

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.

Dorothy Coombs (EFPTA)

24 Whinchat Tail
Guisborough
Cleveland TS14 8PW
01287 636502
07954 372 340
dorothycoombs21@gmail.com

Julie Hulme

dr.j.hulme@hotmail.co.uk

Helen Kitching

Psychology Dept, Tyler 212
Sussex Downs College
Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne
East Sussex BN21 2UN
helen.kitching@sussexdowns.ac.uk

Jackie Moody

St Georges International School
11 Rue des Peupliers
L-2328 Luxembourg
jaxamo@yahoo.co.uk
Tel +352 423224

Laura Rudd

lrudd@prioryacademies.co.uk

Jeff Standen

57 London Road
Boston
Lincolnshire PE21 7RB
01205 355795
contact@jeffstanden.net

Heather Taylor

Asst. Manager of Life Sciences
Prior Pursglove College
6 Church Walk
Guisborough
Cleveland TS14 6BU
h.taylor@prior.pursglove.ac.uk

Gail Ward

Head of Psychology
Durham Gilesgate 6th Form Centre
Providence Row, The Sands
Durham DH1 1SG
0191 384 7505
gail.ward@dgcsc.org.uk

Wendy Wood

40 Rothbury Terrace
Heaton
Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5XH
0191 265 0304
membership@theatp.org

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 (Exam and non-exam texts welcome)
- Articles of interest including current teaching issues

Who can write for the ATP?

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

How long should my article be?

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

Can I submit pictures?

Yes. We welcome photos to be used for the articles. If you want to submit them, once you have checked copyright, please attach them to your e-mail 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 offering our Members the highest quality resources and facilities available in the Psychology teaching world. This is the same for advertisements.

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

What constitutes an advertisement?

If you wish to invite Members to an upcoming 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 on your article or are interested in advertising then please do not hesitate to contact the editor via email on lrudd@prioryacademies.co.uk

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