

# ATP TODAY

The Magazine of the Association  
for the Teaching of Psychology

OCTOBER 2024

[www.theatp.uk](http://www.theatp.uk)

Front Cover Image:  
ATP International Teachers'  
41st Anniversary Conference.  
Image courtesy of: **Helen Kitching**

## ATP Conference 2024 Review

Highlights from the 2024 ATP conference  
and looking forward to 2025.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Making Meaning  
in Psychology -  
Advanced Organisers

Work experience  
opportunities for  
6th form students



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 or the publisher.**

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

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) is a regulation by which the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission intend to strengthen and unify data protection for all individuals within the European Union (EU). In line with this directive the ATP would like to remind you of our data protection policy.

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# From the chair

Dear readers, welcome to the October issue of ATP Today magazine. I hope you thoroughly enjoyed your summer holidays and have settled back into a happy and productive Autumn term. I'm writing this in August, whilst taking a break from adapting GCSE Psychology resources to be delivered as a computer-based course. The main thing I love about this is reducing the potentially wasted time in writing out dates and titles by providing OneNote lesson resources, and avoiding having to decipher illegible writing. However, I'm a sucker for a good PowerPoint presentation so I find that I am producing multiple resources for the same lesson; a PowerPoint to deliver the lesson content and Class Notebook (OneNote) to complete the tasks along with quizzes, etc. which is arguably not an efficient use of time outside

of lessons. Ah, the duality of saving time by spending time.

The ATP International Conference was held at University of Lincoln this year and what a lovely venue it was. I particularly enjoyed the first keynote delivered by Julie Hulme and workshops by Lucia Berridge and Helen Kitching. Resources for many of the keynotes and workshops are available on our website [www.theatp.uk](http://www.theatp.uk). Our 2025 conference is going to be hosted by the University of Warwick and further information is available in this magazine as well as on the website. I look forward to meeting more of you at conference next year.

**Amy Halsall**  
[chair@theatp.uk](mailto:chair@theatp.uk)



Our 2025 conference is going to be hosted by the University of Warwick and further information is available in this magazine as well as on the website.

# From the editors

We are delighted to welcome you to the October 2024 edition! We were invited to join the editing team at this year's ATP conference in Lincoln, and, excited by the event, we quickly agreed. It felt fitting to work together since we became friends at the 2023 ATP conference, where we attended so many of the same workshops that we adopted a 'divide and conquer' approach—splitting up and sharing notes to maximize our learning. We did the same this year, and both took so much from the 2024 conference that we are going to apply to our own practice. We hope you enjoy the conference summary in this edition. For those of you who are yet to attend a conference, it really is the CPD with the best value for money; two days of workshops, keynote speakers and networking, costing less than other one-day courses available. To help secure your school's agreement to attend, consider linking your Performance Management targets to the relevant workshops offered at the conference, such as those on Ofsted training, Research Methods teaching and practice, and effective marking strategies.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all the contributors for this edition of the ATP Today magazine, we could not have made this magazine without you! In particular, we are excited to announce a new three-part Teaching and Learning series by Paul Cline and Mike Hobbiss on 'Making Meaning in Psychology'. The first article, on Advance Organisers, is featured in

this edition, with future articles on Prerequisite knowledge checking and Effective explanations to follow. We found their workshop at the conference very insightful and useful for our own teaching practice, and we are confident that you will gain the same from their articles.

We've included a feature on work experience opportunities for Psychology students, formatted for easy sharing. You'll also find practical strategies in Helene Ansell's article on raising 'Psychology's profile in schools' and Michelle Satchwell's 'TeachMeet with a twist' full of ideas for you to use in your schools. The student contributions, from questioning reality to comparing dolphins in captivity with humans in lockdown, are sure to be as thought-provoking for you as they were for us.

Finally, we would like to thank the extended magazine editorial team for their support as we navigated editing our first edition of ATP Today. In particular, Laura Quaife has been so helpful and supportive, and we would not have been able to create this edition without her!

Warm regards,  
**Bea Townsend and Lucia Berridge**  
ATP Today Editors



# SCoPESC Update

It is an honour and delight to speak to you all as the newly appointed SCoPESC Chair.

SCoPESC is the Standing Committee on Psychology Education in Colleges and Schools, composed of school and college teachers, representatives from the awarding bodies, academics from universities, representatives from the BPS Education & Training Board (ETB), representatives from the ATP, and others interested in psychology education.

We champion your interests in many ways. For example, we represent you at DART-P committee meetings, engage in education consultations (e.g. the 2012 Chicheley Hall 'the future of A-Levels' consultation), and build relationships with individuals and organisations at networking events, such as the 2024 ATP conference, the 2024 European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA) and the 2024 DART-P conference.

## Our aims are as follows:

- To maintain and grow our BPS Psychology Teachers' Toolkit.
- To foster a positive working relationship within the BPS.
- To champion the work of Psychology teachers and encourage those that wish to become Chartered Psychologists.
- To represent School and College teachers at DART-P committee meetings.
- To identify the current needs of pre-tertiary psychology teachers and develop meaningful support and professional development to meet these needs.
- To promote knowledge and skills rooted in psychological theory and evidence to enhance the effectiveness of teachers' support for students in terms of wellbeing (mental health) and study skills.

In the past year, there has been a series of activities going on at SCoPESC! Firstly, Deb Gajic and her team have uploaded another set of resources to the Teachers' toolkit in July; understanding ASC, posters on choosing non-parametric test and parametric tests, motivation boosters and adaptive teaching for EAL learners. Secondly, Claire Barker and I ran a breakout session about how to become a Chartered Psychologist and become more involved with DART-P and SCoPESC at the 2024 ATP Conference (it was a pleasure to talk to those of you who visited us at our exhibition stand). Thirdly, we met monthly to discuss and design new projects (keep an eye on social media and future issues of this magazine for further details). We have written articles for the EFPTA blog and the DART-P newsletter about how the ATP, BPS and SCoPESC successfully collaborate to support us and our students.

We are a core membership but are keen to welcome new members, especially current pre-university psychology teachers, to represent those who teach psychology and those who teach as non-specialists.

Feel free to contact me if you would like to join SCoPESC or contribute to the Teachers' toolkit. My contact details are on the back page of the magazine.



**Lyndsey Hayes**  
Chair



the british  
psychological society  
promoting excellence in psychology



# ATP and DART-P

How the ATP works with the British Psychological Society's Division of Academics, Researchers, and Teachers in Psychology



**Anna Law**

DART-P Communications Lead

Our name is a bit of a mouthful, which is why we are more commonly known as DART-P! We are one of the current 11 Divisions within the BPS. Most divisions are for people who put psychology theory into practice in one of the applied fields, such as Clinical or Forensic, but our division is for those of us who have made a career out of teaching psychology, at whatever level. The ATP works closely with DART-P to maximise the benefits for teachers working in schools and colleges. The DART-P committee is made up of members who have been elected or co-opted to organise the activities of the Division including our annual conference, our annual CPD day, our online members' networking events, our newsletter, and our very own journal Psychology Teaching Review. For teachers in schools and colleges, we have a dedicated standing committee known as SCoPESC. Our website hosts the popular Psychology Teacher's Toolkit which was created in partnership with the ATP.

Although DART-P and the ATP already have a very good working relationship, a members forum at our June 2024 DART-P conference identified that a greater focus on pre-tertiary education should be a future priority. We are therefore keen to find new ways to collaborate in the future.

We introduced a pre-tertiary version of our Psychology Teacher of the Year Award. In the inaugural round of that award in 2023, Lucinda Powell of 'Psychology in the Classroom' podcast fame won a £1000 personal prize, a year's free membership of DART-P, and free registration for our 2024 conference. We know this is only the start of an amazing series of school and college teachers showcasing their work via this award.

In summary, DART-P is intended to work for psychology teachers in schools and colleges, as much as it does for psychology teachers in universities. If you are already a graduate member of the BPS, you can become a full member of DART-P for an extra £15 per year. Alternatively, ATP members can become an e-subscriber to the BPS by using the discount code ATPESUB, and then a general member of DART-P for an extra £15 per year. We welcome and encourage more pre-tertiary teachers to join us, to become active in our committee, and to help shape our ongoing activity.

If you are keen to know more, or have suggestions for future DART-P activities, please check out our website or email [anna.law@uws.ac.uk](mailto:anna.law@uws.ac.uk) or Lyndsey Hayes (Chair of SCoPESC and member of the ATP committee).



The DART-P website  
(see Awards section for details about the Psychology Teacher of the Year award)



The Psychology Teaching Review website



Psychology Teacher's Toolkit



# How to raise the profile of Psychology in your School or College

As Psychology teachers we are always trying to raise the profile of our subject. At most schools, Psychology is only taught as an A level option, and students and teachers alike may not realize the value that Psychology has to offer. Through increasing the profile of Psychology, colleagues will realise the value and importance of Psychology as a subject that is closely linked to several other disciplines. It will also increase your uptake at A level, as students are able to make a fully informed decision to study Psychology, and understand its applicability to everyday life. Here are several things you can do to raise the profile of Psychology.

**1 Invisible Teaching** – Often we forget that teaching in the classroom is not all that we do. The power of ‘invisible teaching’ is immense. Try taking your personality outside of the classroom and into the whole school. For example, walking in the corridors – smiling at students and having random awesome conversations, participating in and/or organising clubs and extra-curricular activities. Either way, how you interact with students outside of the classroom makes a significant impact.

**2 Strategic Plan/Vision** – Another way to ensure that Psychology is integrated within the school system is to work with senior leadership in strategic

plans and long-term visions for the school. Examine how and where Psychology can be integrated into these, for example, altruism can be integrated into Service-learning groups or clubs or charities or student leadership groups. You might also be able to offer to lead CPD sessions which are relevant to psychology and offer research backed insights into teaching and learning.

**3 Student Leadership Team** – Mental Health Awareness in the UK is big now. You can work with the student leadership team to create awareness assemblies or activities in your pastoral groups.

**4 PSHE** – Collaborate with your pastoral groups for all year groups to incorporate key elements in the PSHE curriculum, for example, stress management, depression, mental health and wellbeing.

**5 Cross Curricular Links with other departments** – The beauty of Psychology is that it encompasses a variety of skills from a range of subjects, for example, maths and statistics, history, biology – the brain and neuroscience. Find out when relevant topics are taught in other departments and see if you collaborate and join in with team teaching e.g., dissections of sheep brains in biology, statistics in maths or geography.

**6 Taster sessions and Open Days** – Ask for the assistance of your current students to help create an innovative presentation on what they have learnt, or conducting an experiment from one of the topics taught, for example, Asch and conformity lines. Ask prospective students and parents to participate in these experiments. Equally, show case work which hooks prospective students, for example, creative videos on topics within the subject. If you only currently offer 6th form psychology courses, offer to do assemblies on Psychology themes to raise your profile in lower school and engage student interest.

**7 Embed the school’s values in your scheme of work** – Showcase this to staff and management by indicating what Psychology is doing and how the values of the school are being incorporated into the teaching of learning of Psychology.

**8 Get Staff to participate in your students’ experiments** – This will give everyone (importantly – grab the headteacher and management) a feel of what the subject is about.

**9 Involvement with your school’s Parent Group** – Often, parents have no idea what Psychology entails or have misconceptions that it is a ‘Mickey Mouse’ subject. This may be a misconception from what they have read or watched on social media or films about psychology. Engaging with parent groups is a fantastic opportunity to have dialogue with parents and challenge these misconceptions. Furthermore, parents are a great resource to raise profile of certain events within school. Ask for their assistance, for example, on Mental Health Awareness activities.

**10 Collaborate with your school counsellor or designated safeguarding team** – This is incredibly important for when you are teaching topics, for example, depression, anxiety or phobias. These people need to know when these topics are taught so that better provisions can be made for students e.g., mental health and attachment can be triggering for some students. Equally, should issues arise with your students are aware that there is a safe environment and professionals who can help.



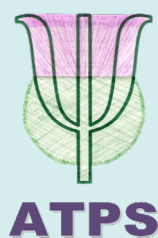
**Helene Ansell**  
CPsychol, AFBPsS

# ATPS Update

**Mairi Rice - ATPS**

The 2024 Psychology results were published on Tuesday 6th August alongside all other subjects. After a rise in entries in 2022, it has been noted that the number of entries for both National 5 and Higher have dropped again this year, although percentages of grades seem relatively steady.

The ATPS hopes that students and staff are happy with the results gained this year. Please do contact us if you have any points you wish to raise so that we can move forward with in regards to our contact with the SQA on behalf of our members.



## Percentages of grades since 2018

| Higher |         |          |           |         |
|--------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Year   | Entries | No Award | A-C Grade | Grade A |
| 2024   | 2495    | 13.0%    | 69.4%     | 21.6%   |
| 2023   | 2930    | 17.2%    | 70.3%     | 33.3%   |
| 2022   | 3160    | 16.4%    | 68.6%     | 26%     |
| 2021   | 3010    | 8.6%     | 85.3%     | 49.4%   |
| 2020   | 3105    | 9.1%     | 82.6%     | 33%     |
| 2019   | 3410    | 35.4%    | 44.6%     | 11.5%   |
| 2018   | 3495    | 29.1%    | 57.6%     | 13.4%   |

| National 5 |         |          |           |         |
|------------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Year       | Entries | No Award | A-C Grade | Grade A |
| 2024       | 1090    | 13.5%    | 75.4%     | 41.5%   |
| 2023       | 1135    | 19.2%    | 69.3%     | 35.8%   |
| 2022       | 1005    | 11.2%    | 80.1%     | 50.3%   |
| 2021       | 970     | 8.6%     | 84.9%     | 50.4%   |
| 2020       | 890     | 4.8%     | 88.8%     | 41.6%   |
| 2019       | 990     | 25.8%    | 58%       | 24.5%   |
| 2018       | 775     | 21.5%    | 64.6%     | 31.5%   |

The ATPS team are making plans for the coming months, including a CLPL event. We are looking at which issues teachers want us to prioritise. Please do get in touch if you wish us to cover anything in particular.

ATPS representative to EFPTA, Mairi Rice, will take part in EFPTA Board meetings this autumn when planning will start for the 2026 conference.

The ATP Conference in Lincoln in July featured a workshop on AI by ATPS member Mairi Rice. Artificial Intelligence has rapidly become an integral part of modern society, influencing everything from daily life to global industries. With this growing impact, understanding the psychology behind AI and its societal implications is critical. This was the focus of the workshop, "Unveiling the Mind of AI: Exploring the Psychology of Artificial Intelligence".

Thank you to Helen for organizing another amazing conference. Please do read all about the event in this edition, and hopefully more ATPS members will be inspired to participate in future conferences. The event not only offered a platform for sharing knowledge but also provided valuable networking opportunities.

# EFPTA Update

## EFPTA Conference April 2024, Helsinki

We were delighted to hold our 2024 conference in Helsinki! This was our first in-person conference since before the pandemic. It was a really special one too, as we celebrated our 20th anniversary in the very city where we established the Federation in 2004. The conference theme was "The Age of Psychology: Teaching Psychology in the Modern World"; our keynotes Prof Markus Jokela of the University of Helsinki, and Dr Karen Marangio of Monash University, Australia, delivered fascinating lectures on this theme. We welcomed 90 participants of no fewer than 17 different nationalities. We have now returned to our normal pattern of biennial conferences, so the next one will be in spring 2026 – watch this space for more details of date and location



## EFPTA Conference April 2024, Helsinki

Following EFPTA's wonderful International Conference and 20th Anniversary celebrations in Helsinki 2024 the EFPTA board will meet in Utrecht in 15-16 November to begin planning the next biennial conference and continue with our work connecting pre-university teachers across Europe. Many thanks to Dominique Warmerdam for organising this event. Any ATP member is welcome to attend as a guest (please arrange in advance with the Secretary, [info@efpta.org](mailto:info@efpta.org)). Come and meet the EFPTA team and find out more!

We will welcome Board representative for Iceland Harpa Hafsteinsdottir (former President of EFPTA and ATP stalwart) as our new Treasurer supported by the legendary Wolfgang Augustin outgoing. We will also welcome Board rep for Scotland Mairi Rice as Vice President to Mette Eggersten.

## International Congress of Psychology 2024, July, Prague

At this major international psychology conference, former EFPTA President and member for Slovakia, Lenka Sokolová, presented in two symposia on different aspects of psychology education. Both contributions involved collaboration with other European bodies that promote psychology education – the European Society for Psychology Learning and Teaching (ESPLAT), and the Board of Educational Affairs of EFPA.

## Building links with the American Psychological Association's Division 52 International

In early 2024, an international meeting of psychology educators from 12 countries around the world was organised by the APA Div. 52. EFPTA representatives were invited and Morag Williamson and Lenka Sokolová took part (online) in the hybrid event. They gave a presentation and answered questions about EFPTA and psychology education in schools in Europe. These international links were further developed in early August, when Lenka contributed to a hybrid roundtable as part of the Div. 52 conference "Psychology Global Dialogues – Diálogos Globales" Div. 52 conference "Psychology Global Dialogues – Diálogos Globales". The event gathered international leaders of nine societies from the US, Europe and Latin-America, to discuss "How to build a Global Perspective in Psychology".

## Support for psychology teachers via collaboration with the British Psychological Society

On its website the BPS hosts resources for psychology teachers and students in the form of the Teachers' Toolkit. These resources for learning and teaching have been developed through collaboration with the UK psychology teachers' association (and EFPTA member), the ATP. The Toolkit is free for teachers and students everywhere, not just the UK!

At the ATP Conference in Lincoln this year I mentioned our EFPTA Collaborative projects encouraging shared blogging and I would like to thank to Lyndsey Hayes (BPS DARTP SCOPESC Chair) for her contribution - see [www.EFPTA.org](http://www.EFPTA.org). I encourage you too to contribute with your thoughts and ideas - send them to us! Email me now at [harriet.ennis@boothamschool.com](mailto:harriet.ennis@boothamschool.com)

**Newsflash** - read the latest EFPTA blog by Julie Hulme - Psychology? It's a Mickey Mouse subject - isn't it? Which includes details of the International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (ICUPO) project.



This is the link to conference reports and updates, [www.efpta.org](http://www.efpta.org)



Use the QR code to view this article in full online with all the relevant hyperlinks



Utrecht is where the EFPTA board will meet in November to plan the next biennial conference

Utrecht images courtesy of: **Katka Machovcova**



## Finally I wish to promote CONNEXT!

Let's join up classrooms across Europe. This idea was received with enthusiasm at the ATP Conference and so I hope to send out a Google form (or similar) to help teachers within the UK and across the world find a shared time to schedule a zoom call (or similar) between their classrooms. Please email me at [harriet.ennis@boothamschool.co.uk](mailto:harriet.ennis@boothamschool.co.uk) and I will help connect you and your students!



## Harriet Ennis

ATP is EFPTA Representative for England and Wales.

## Mairi Rice

ATPS is our EFPTA Representative for Scotland.



# ATP International Teachers' Conference 2024 Review

We were very fortunate to be able to hold the 2024 Conference at the University of Lincoln having been let down by another university at the last minute. I was particularly impressed by the staff who were so helpful – even going to the effort of decorating a TaskMaster chair for me! I hope you enjoyed the entertainment as much as Lucia and I enjoyed hosting it. The University of Lincoln Psychology department was really great in sponsoring the Friday lunch and providing us with an engaging keynote speaker and some fascinating workshops. I would also like to give a big shout out to Associate Prof. Patrick Hylton for all his support.

Our keynote speakers, Professor Julie Hulme and Professor Amanda Roberts both presented really interesting, thought-provoking talks and I am extremely grateful to Dr Chris Nicholson who stepped in at the last moment when unfortunately, Professor Mark Forshaw ended up in hospital and unable to attend.

I am ever grateful for the wide range of workshops that delegates and staff from the University of Lincoln offered – there really was something for everyone and hopefully you all went away with some nuggets of great ideas or advice that you can implement into your teaching for this academic year. Please do contact me if you are interested in running a workshop for us next year in Warwick ([helenjkitching@gmail.com](mailto:helenjkitching@gmail.com)).

I am looking forward to 2025, when we return to Warwick University. It is extremely difficult to find suitable universities – more than you could imagine, so when we find a great venue, we will return to it; thankfully with closer accommodation and better parking this time! I also work very hard to negotiate the best price so that we can keep the conference as affordable as possible. We offer a two-day all-inclusive conference for the price that some companies offer for a one-day course. For 2025, I was able to knock thousands off the contract so that we are able to offer the all-inclusive and day conference at the same prices as 2024.



**Helen J. Kitching,**

CPsychol, FBPSS, BSc,  
MSc, PGCE, QTLS

ATP Conference Organiser



**BOOKINGS NOW  
OPEN FOR THE 2025  
ATP CONFERENCE**



Follow us on social media for the latest conference updates, all the best for the new academic year on behalf of the whole committee.

All images courtesy of: **Helen Kitching**



Following the recent ATP Teachers' Conference, we reached out to several attendees to gather their thoughts on the event. Their feedback offers a glimpse into the conference's dynamic atmosphere, the valuable insights shared, and the lasting impact on their teaching practices. Here, we share reflections from three delegates who attended the conference.

### Purvi Gandhi

Meeting fellow educators and learning from their experiences was a highlight; the exchange of ideas and the discussions on best practices in teaching psychology were truly invaluable. I have so many brilliant ideas and resources for jazzing up my teaching in September.

I was delighted to meet Rosie McGinley from AQA and Nicola Heath from OCR. Our conversations about the potential for closer collaboration to integrate mental health more deeply into teaching practices were very promising. I look forward to exploring these opportunities further and working together to make mental health a core component of our curriculums.

Overall, I am thankful for the connections made, the knowledge gained, and the opportunity to contribute to this vibrant community. Thank you to everyone who made this event so memorable, and I am already looking forward to next year's conference!



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### Kev Welsh

The ATP Conference once again exceeded all expectations, offering a perfect blend of expert insights, vibrant camaraderie, and unparalleled learning opportunities. As this was my first conference attending as a Director of Sixth Form, I was looking forward on understanding how Psychology teaching can have transferrable learning for all sixth form students.

The conference featured a fantastic line-up of speakers, each bringing unique perspectives and deep expertise in their respective fields. I attended the 'Reframing Failure' workshop with Lucinda Powell and noted how this could be used in my classroom and throughout sixth form, to help build resilience. There were some great nuggets of knowledge I will be applying in my sixth form!

Helen Kitching delivered a workshop on how to stretch and challenge students by using the latest research and reading beyond the specification. What was great were the suggestions on how they could do this independently, which would also strengthen their applications for jobs, apprenticeships, and UCAS. A fantastic OFSTED deep dives talk provided vital reminders and a great insight into how an outstanding head of department should prepare; something which I will be encouraging across all subjects in sixth form. And the wonderful Deb Gajic, put on a fabulous workshop on getting those A/A\* grades in Psychology and how these skills can be transferred across different subjects.

One of the standout aspects of the conference was the sense of camaraderie that permeated the event. From the networking sessions to the more informal gatherings, there was a genuine sense of community among the participants. Whether during coffee breaks or workshops, attendees exchanged ideas, experiences, and insights, fostering an environment of



The conference featured a fantastic line-up of speakers, each bringing unique perspectives and deep expertise in their respective fields.

mutual respect and collaboration. This sense of togetherness was one of the highlights, making it easy for newcomers and seasoned professionals alike to connect and build lasting relationships.

The learning opportunities provided by the conference were truly exceptional. With a diverse range of sessions, there was something for everyone. Attendees had the chance to delve into complex topics, explore new methodologies, and gain practical tools that they could immediately apply in their work and for me, to my sixth form.

Overall, the ATP Psychology Conference was a well-organised, content-rich event that offered not just knowledge, but also a strong sense of community and professional growth. I highly recommend it to anyone in the field of psychology looking to expand their horizons, connect with peers, and stay at the forefront of their profession.



## Dani Bryton

This conference was by far my favourite to date, largely due to the workshops on offer. Despite the fun and two very late nights following the Fringe event and Gala dinner, I gained more from the workshops and keynote speakers than ever before and I've already identified many ideas to embed within my practice.

Julie Hulme's opening keynote helped me pinpoint key areas for my department's professional development, especially by incorporating insights from the ICUPS' gains in teaching psychology in higher education. These insights can be easily applied across all my social science subjects, making them highly relevant for my team's development.

The 'Making Meaning' workshop by Mike Hobiss and Paul Cline was my favourite, and the one I took the most from. Anyone familiar with Tom Sherrington or Rosenshine's principles knows that prior knowledge is key when exploring new topics with students. However, the approach Mike and Paul took – using an advance organiser to “provide a bigger picture to help make sense of new information” – really resonated with me.

While visual maps aren't new, using them at the start of a topic is something I hope will boost my A Level results and give me a good head start with my new GCSE cohort.

I've planned several 'Visual Advanced Organisers' for my first term of teaching, combining them with ideas from Lucia Berridge's workshop on Ofsted Deep Dives. This includes providing an overview of each topic to students at the start through a topic intent, alongside key information from the specification so students understand why we're studying each theory and study. I also plan to offer a key term list at the start of each topic, organised by order of introduction rather than alphabetically. I've never required students to use glossaries, though I have suggested them to students struggling with key terms. After this session, I now understand why glossaries haven't previously been effective when used: the alphabetical order doesn't make sense. Order of appearance key terms will now be standard at the beginning of each new topic, alongside synonyms and space for images to aid understanding.

I have spent weeks of my summer holidays revitalising my curriculum

resources with ideas from the conference, and I'm eager to start the new year with fresh resources. In my 14 years in education, I've never felt this motivated during a summer holiday, and I have the ATP Conference in Lincoln and my wonderful colleagues to thank for this!



In my 14 years in education, I've never felt this motivated during a summer holiday, and I have the ATP Conference in Lincoln and my wonderful colleagues to thank for this!

Prof. Kimberley Wade

Prof. Simon Baron-Cohen

Prof. Mark Forshaw

"The best value CPD course I've been on"  
ATP conference 2024 delegate

## ATP INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

**You are invited to be a part of something extraordinary!**  
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**ATP**  
For the Teacher by the Teacher



# Making Meaning in A level Psychology



**Paul Cline**  
Psychology Teacher and  
Director of Teaching and  
Learning  
**Mike Hobbiss**  
Head of Psychology

Students typically start Psychology courses with a very low level of prior knowledge, something which is a strong predictor of future learning (e.g. Witherby & Carpenter, 2021).

Prior knowledge acts like a kind of 'mental velcro' which makes new information stick more easily. We also know that students can't simply attempt to memorise the entire specification or every past exam paper mark scheme (although this doesn't stop some of them trying!); they need to learn the content in a meaningful way that allows them to be flexible with their knowledge. One of the best ways for us to help them make meaning is by ensuring that we bridge the gap between new information and prior knowledge. We'll consider how we can do this using a few different classroom tools and strategies in series of articles exploring:

1. Advance organisers
2. Prerequisite knowledge checking (retrieval practice)
3. Effective Explanations

## PART 1

### Advance Organisers

One of the challenges many students face is in the organisation of their knowledge. Put simply, they don't know what goes where. This manifests itself in common errors like writing about the wrong content for an exam question, and makes synoptic thinking much more challenging because the connections between different areas of content just aren't there.

Advance organisers<sup>1</sup> are a tool to help activate the relevant cognitive structures in learners before they encounter some new information with the intention of making assimilation of that new information with prior knowledge easier. To illustrate, consider this passage from a classic study in cognitive psychology:

*The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange items into different groups. Of course one pile may be sufficient depending upon how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step; otherwise, you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the*

*short run, this may not seem important but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be made as well. At first, the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then, one never can tell. After the procedure is completed one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.*

(From Bransford & Johnson, 1972, p722)

If you've not come across this example before then have a moment to guess what the passage is talking about.

Now imagine a student who has never had to do any laundry (assuming you guessed it, right?) encountering this passage and trying to make sense of it. However, as soon as you know it's about washing clothes then it all makes perfect sense. In Bransford & Johnson's (1972) study, some participants were told what the passage was about before reading it, and some after. Those who'd had their 'schema activated',

who knew it was about washing clothes before they started reading, significantly outperformed the other group on both comprehension and recall questions.

This is a good example of a very simple advance organiser that activates appropriate prior knowledge before attempting to assimilate new information. Of course, in this instance, the participants already must have had some knowledge of washing clothes to be activated (not a given with psychology students, from our experience!) This illustrates the challenge of starting from a typically low base of prior knowledge when learning psychology in schools. However, the general principle still applies that providing the appropriate mental framework and activating relevant prior knowledge will make learning easier.

### Types of advance organiser

The example above is an **expository advance organiser** in that it explains or describes what the learning is going to be about. These can be little more than a verbal statement from the teacher (e.g. “Today we’re going to learn about the different ways in which researchers obtain the participants for their studies; this is called sampling”) or more formally written as the learning objectives or enquiry question for the lesson (eg “How reliable are

eyewitnesses to a crime?”).

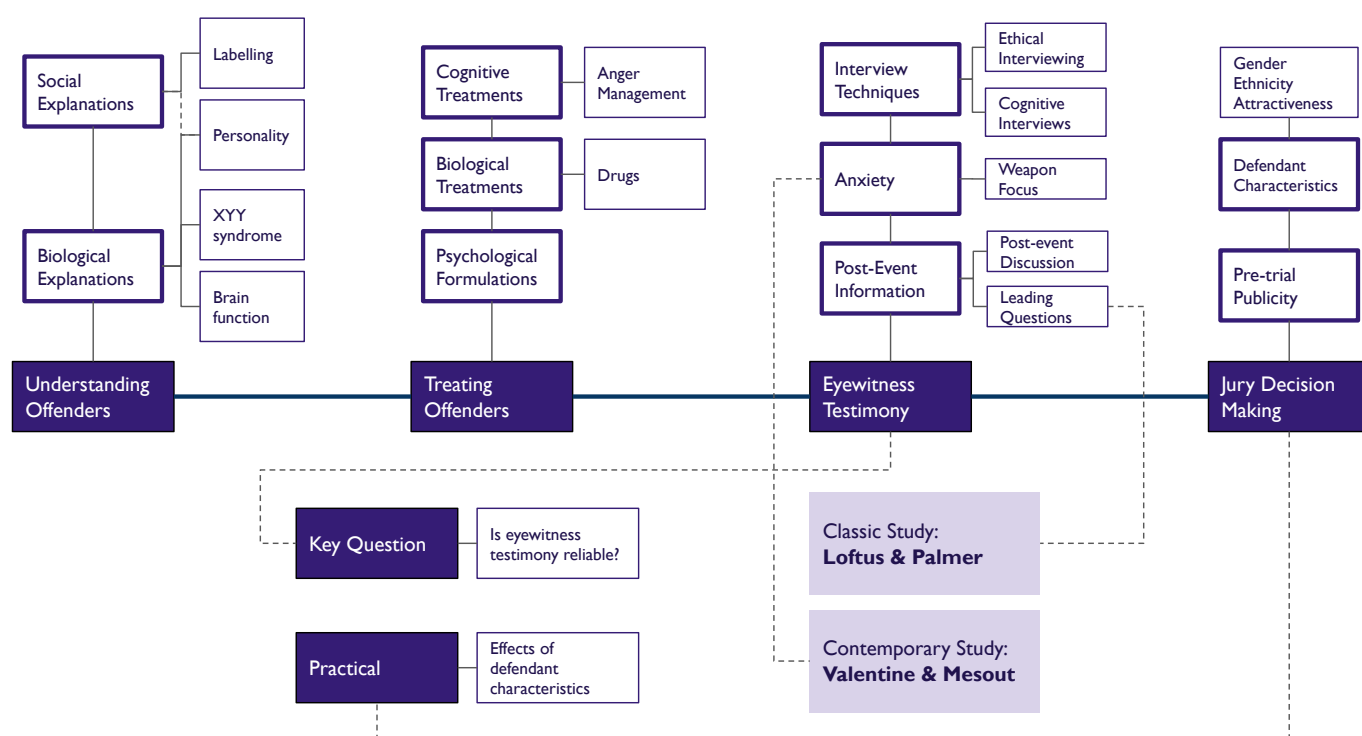
**Graphic advance organisers** can be useful because they can portray the relationship between ideas and the organisation of different concepts more effectively than verbal or written statements (e.g. Caviglioli, 2019, Mayer, 2024). Graphic advance organisers may be particularly helpful in showing students where the current lesson fits within the bigger picture and allowing for links to be drawn between topics.

Students would be introduced to this in their first lesson of the unit, although initially this would be presented on screen using animation to gradually build up the complete organiser help to control the amount of information students are being asked to process at once to help manage cognitive load. This is then presented at regular points during lessons and students also have a copy at the front of their unit booklet for reference. This is used to help place the current topic in the wider context and to see how it fits with what has already been learned or what is yet to be learned. (“Last time we looked at biological treatments for offenders, today we’re going to consider an alternative type of treatment – cognitive behavioural therapy.”)

This also offers a good opportunity for some retrieval practice which can also be used to both activate and check

prior knowledge before teaching any new content. It can be used to set up expectations for the next lesson and may offer opportunities for students to make some predictions about what is coming next. Finally, it can help give students a nice sense of progress through the topic which can help to maintain momentum and motivation.

**Comparative advance organisers** are used when introducing new content that is similar to something previously learned and likely to cause confusion between the two sets of ideas. The comparative advance organiser is a way of reactivating the relevant information from the previously learned material in order to highlight similarities to and differences from the new information. This makes it less likely that the two ideas become merged in students’ minds to the point that they are no longer dissociable. For example, students learning about explanations of prejudice often get confused between Realistic Conflict Theory (RCT, Sherif, 1966) and Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner 1979) because central to both theories is the idea of in-groups negatively discriminating towards out-groups. Therefore when introducing the second theory (SIT) we would need to highlight this overlap – reactivating relevant prior knowledge of RCT – before



## PAPER 2: CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

Here is an example of a graphic advance organiser created for the Criminal Psychology unit from the Edexcel A level specification

emphasising the key difference between the two. A simple graphic comparative advance organiser might look like this:

|            | Realistic Conflict Theory                                          | Social Identity Theory                                                                     |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Similarity | Suggests prejudice arises between in-groups and out-groups         |                                                                                            |
| Difference | Says prejudice only occurs when there is competition between IG/OG | Says prejudice can arise simply due to the existence of IG/OG without need for competition |

The teacher might start this lesson sequence with some retrieval questions about RCT in order to draw out two key ideas: 1) That the concept of in-groups and out-groups is central to RCT and 2) that one of the key flaws in the theory was that it couldn't explain prejudice in the absence of apparent competition between groups; this would then lead into a discussion on Social

Identity Theory. We might find something similar useful for helping students distinguish between behaviourist theories (eg classical vs operant conditioning), models of memory (eg MSM vs WMM) or different types of treatment (eg cognitive behavioural therapy for schizophrenia vs depression).

There is evidence to support the effectiveness of advance organisers in helping students learn (Cottingham, 2023) although no one form of advance organiser is necessarily better than another. As long as they are presented in advance of the material to be learned, avoid too much detail, are appropriate for the learners they are intended for (based on their prior knowledge and ability) and provide a bridge between what they already know and are about to learn. We think, therefore, that they are an effective way to help students make meaning in Psychology.

Next time we'll consider how to make those connections stronger by exploring how we identify and check relevant prior knowledge before teaching new information.

Look out for the review of our new book "How to Teach Psychology: An evidence

informed approach" in the February edition of ATP today magazine (published May 2025)

1. Advance organisers (AOs) are not to be confused with knowledge organisers (KOs). AOs are specifically designed to provide an organisational framework for material that is being learned to help students assimilate new information into existing schemas; they should not contain lots of detail. KOs are about providing a comprehensive resource that details the core knowledge to be learned in a topic/unit.

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# Brain Teaser

**Congratulations to Danny Galbraith for winning our sixth prize puzzle competition** by correctly completing the nonogram. There was only 1 entry, so do make sure to enter this competition as you have a very good chance of winning.

For this edition's brain teaser, you need to complete the sudoku grids so that each row, column and 3x3 box only contains one each of the numbers 1-9.

Entries should be emailed to **chair@theatp.uk** with the subject heading: 'Prize Puzzle 7' with your name and address and a clear image of the correctly completed puzzle.

**The deadline for the competition is 1st December 2024 and the winner will receive a £10 Amazon voucher. Only current ATP members are eligible.**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 3 | 4 |   | 7 | 8 |   |   | 2 |
|   | 7 | 2 | 1 |   |   | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 1 | 9 |   | 3 | 4 | 2 |   |   | 7 |
| 8 |   |   |   | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
|   | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 |   | 7 |   | 1 |
| 7 |   | 3 | 9 |   | 4 | 8 |   | 6 |
|   | 6 | 1 |   | 3 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 4 |
| 2 |   | 7 | 4 | 1 |   |   | 3 |   |
|   | 4 |   |   | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 |   |



# ATP TeachMeet with a Twist



**Michelle Satchwell**  
Head of Department for  
Psychology and Sociology

At the ATP conference, we were unable to carry out the Teach Meet session, so instead we did this on the Facebook group #ATPconf2024. Teachers posted their teacher ideas via the comments and others voted for their favourite idea by liking the comment. Read below for some inspiration for your classroom and ideas you can take away and implement straight away. Thank you to all those who got involved.

## Wilmari Kleyhans Villa

### Marker Pen Relay

Write an acronym on the board and pass the first student the board pen to take a guess. Then pass the board pen on to the next student to guess, and so on. Other top tips include using Blooket for Psychology mini tests, starters, or plenaries, Kahoot for revision, and writing on desks with whiteboard pens to mind map a topic.

## Lyndsey Hayes

### Application Question or Levels of Explanation Essay Planning

Use a physical whiteboard, paper, or an online writing whiteboard app. On one page, present an Issues and Debates question stem

(or a real-life one from the news, or make one up). Have students write down possible reasons for the behaviour in the stem as a thought shower. Label these reasons according to the type of explanation they represent (e.g., inherited from parent). Lastly, on another blank page, have the students categorise these explanations under different levels of explanation, providing reasons for each categorisation.

## Melissa Deal

### Dragon's Den

The "dragons" must come up with challenge points or questions, thinking about the limitations of whatever approach is being pitched. The student or group pitching needs to be prepared for these challenges by having counterarguments ready. If you are conducting this online, you could record the session or use an AI transcript generator so students can refer to the discussion to aid them in their essays. This task is also useful for exploring explanations or treatments in Psychopathology, as it helps students think critically about AO3 points and develop their arguments.

## Ed King

### Research Methods Focus of Key Studies

Take key studies from the curriculum and group them based on the research method used (e.g., case studies, laboratory

experiments, field experiments, etc.). Students can then compare the types of information that are similar and different based on these research methods. The aim is to enhance their understanding and application in study design for research methods papers.

## Lucinda Powell

### Washing Line Debates

Create some clean approaches "laundry" (e.g., tops, trousers, dresses, etc.) and a PowerPoint slide of a washing line. At either end of the washing line, label the positions of the debates (e.g., not socially sensitive versus socially sensitive). Students must peg their "laundry" along the washing line, but where to put the Psychodynamic pants?

Try these ideas out in your classroom and see the difference they can make. Thanks to all those who contributed and voted for these creative strategies. If you have a winning idea, please email it in, or post it on our social media page, and yours may feature in the next edition of ATP Today.

|                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Outline + evaluate MSN |                         |
| sp. At. SM. can        | [3] Kf. but...          |
| unitary - passive      | simplicistic            |
| in sequence            | comp to winn            |
| DRR CCD                | static v active         |
| written in 1 min       | Added during discussion |

## And the idea with the most likes was...

## Lucia Berridge

### One Minute Essays

Put an essay question on the board as the pre-starter—this could be from an interleaved topic (e.g., Outline and evaluate the Working Memory Model). Students 'mind dump' their answer for one minute. Then, proceed with your proper lesson starter for the current topic you are teaching (e.g., Schizophrenia). About 5 or 10 minutes later, after the proper starter, give students another minute to add to their pre-starter essays. If they cannot add any more details, tell them to use the time to plan the structure. As a class, go through what should have been included in the essay plan. By the end of the activity, students will have a plan of what to include in the essay that they can take home. The 5/10-minute break

between the two one-minute phases allows the subconscious to work on the information, so they always have more to write in the second minute. I use this to demonstrate that they should look through the paper in the real exam and mind dump the essays. This also helps them see how many essays there are, leading to better final answers than the usual "write everything you know as soon as it comes into your head" essay structure.

Honestly, it's been a game changer for my students' essays. Every fortnight, they have to write a full essay (in class and under timed conditions) based on one of the One Minute Essay plans we created over that fortnight (I choose which one). The students have really advanced their essay writing as a result of this.



**Lucia Berridge  
and Bea Townsend**

# Unlocking the Future

## Work Experience Ideas for Psychology Students

Helping students secure psychology-related work experience not only prepares students for future careers, but also boosts school ratings as it aligns with Ofsted's focus on career readiness and meets the Gatsby Benchmark.

For A-Level psychology students, finding placements can be difficult due to age restrictions, as many opportunities in this field require students to be over 18. Despite these challenges, with thoughtful guidance and creative alternatives, students can still gain meaningful insights into psychological practices, research, and related fields. These experiences are invaluable, helping students solidify their interest in psychology, strengthen university applications, and develop essential skills while exploring potential career paths in various psychological disciplines.

### Here are some work experience suggestions that can provide students with exposure to the field of psychology:

#### Schools with Special Education Needs (SEN) Departments

Primary schools often welcome work experience students, making SEN departments accessible. Students can observe how psychology supports special needs students, including IEPs, behavioural strategies, and inclusive education, providing direct insight into psychology's impact on learning and development. The Outcomes First Group have explicitly said that they want to offer placements and work experience to pre-university students if you email the contact details on the website. They have a number of specialist education centres across the country for children with additional needs, principally Autistic children.

#### Educational Psychology Services

Use your school's SEN department connections to secure placements with local educational psychologists. These opportunities let students observe how psychological assessments and interventions support children with learning difficulties and

behavioural issues, offering practical insights into educational psychology.

#### Human Resources Departments

Approach local businesses or organisations, highlighting students' interest in organisational psychology to gain insight into Human resources (HR). This experience can provide insights into how psychology is used to improve organisational culture, enhance employee satisfaction, and manage workplace challenges.

#### Non-Profit Organisations Focused on Mental Health or Education

Students can approach mental health organisations (e.g. **Mind**, **CAHMS**), or Support charities (e.g. **Barnardos**, **NSPCC**, **Childline**) emphasising their interest in advocacy and community outreach as a way to gain experience. Volunteering with these organisations can provide students with exposure to both psychological support services and community outreach initiatives and would help students understand the broader societal impact of mental health issues and the role of psychology in advocacy and public health. **Do It Life** and **Vinspired** are online databases of social impact volunteering opportunities with numerous different companies. Students can sign up and see the opportunities available in their area for under-18's. **The Royal Voluntary Service** welcomes pre-university volunteers, offering roles like community companions, retail shop assistants, hospital café staff, and trolley service helpers. These activities provide valuable experience for personal statements, supporting people in need.

#### University Psychology Departments

Contact your local university's psychology department to inquire about research assistant roles, especially for summer placements. These opportunities often involve data collection, observing experiments, and literature reviews. This experience is particularly beneficial for students interested in pursuing a future in psychological research or academia.

#### Forensic Psychology Settings

Contact local courts or forensic units, expressing an interest in the psychological aspects of criminal justice. Observing forensic psychologists who work with offenders or in court settings can provide insights into how psychological assessments are used in legal contexts, and the challenges of working with criminal populations.

## Examples of impactful work experience from a couple of our former students

To illustrate the range of work experiences available, and to evidence its value, here are a few examples from former students of ours who successfully linked their placements to their passion for psychology:

### Working in a Primary School

“Working in a primary school was an eye-opening experience that really confirmed my interest in psychology. I saw child development theories come to life, especially in how kids learn, socialise, and handle their emotions. It also linked directly to what I studied in Paper 3’s unit on Cognition and Development, as I observed first-hand how concepts like Piaget’s stages of development played out in real settings. Interacting with students who had different needs showed me how educational and developmental psychology work in real life. This hands-on experience made me even more sure about wanting to study psychology in college.

### Experiencing a Mortuary

“I was lucky enough to get work experience in a mortuary for a week. It might not be everyone’s ideal placement, but I found it incredible and it really deepened my understanding of psychology, especially around grief, trauma, and how we deal with death. It also connected to what I had studied in Forensics, Biopsychology, as well as my A Level Biology course. Holding the brain of a deceased woman was the most surreal experience I’ve ever had—it wasn’t just about its 1.3kg weight but realising that I held the woman’s entire memories, personality and life was both intense and overwhelming, reminding me of the fragility and complexity of human existence.”

### Volunteering in a care home

“I volunteered in a local dementia care home as an Activities Assistant and organised activities for the elderly, making sure they were appropriate for those both with and without dementia. I found this experience invaluable when applying to do Psychology at university, as I really understood how damage to the brain presents itself in people and how their conditions deteriorated over time to match this brain damage. It also further increased my interest in neuropsychology as I was desperate to understand more about exactly what was causing these diseases, and it inspired me to choose the Neuropsychology of Ageing and Dementia module that I later studied at university.”

### Hippotherapy – physiotherapy and counselling on horses

“Some work experience I found really useful for Psychology was when I volunteered at a Saturday hippotherapy clinic. Hippotherapy is a type of physiotherapy where people with serious disabilities such as cerebral palsy or acquired brain injury ride horses with assistance as the movement of a horse can be beneficial in improving their motor function as well as improve their self-esteem and interpersonal skills. As I was a keen horse rider growing up, this combined both of my interests: horses and Psychology. It was particularly useful for the biopsychology and cognition and development units in the A level, as I could see how brain damage to particular areas affected their functioning in very specific ways.”

### Visiting a crown court in the public gallery- open to anyone of any age-group

“Visiting the court to witness the trials and sentencing of several individuals allowed me to understand the potential applications of the psychological theories that we had learnt about in the forensic psychology and memory topics in school and how this affects a person going through the criminal justice system. It opened my eyes to how diverse the field of psychology can be and made me more confident that I wanted to become a forensic psychologist.”

### Alternatives to Traditional Work Experience

Not all students may have access to traditional work experience opportunities, but there are still ways to gain valuable insights into psychology.

Online courses, particularly **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**, e.g. **FutureLearn** can be a great alternative. Courses related to counselling, developmental psychology, or

other specialised areas can provide students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are highly relevant to their studies. Summer programs provide an intensive way to deepen understanding and make productive use of the break.

Additionally, virtual work experience, available through remote internships offered by various organisations, allows students to gain practical skills from home. By searching online platforms and psychology-related websites, students can still gain valuable experience in the field, even with the limitations of age or location. **Springpod** offers several (free) virtual work experience courses related to Psychology that are 6-10 hours in length.



### Guiding Students Toward Success

As teachers of psychology, it is our responsibility to help students identify and pursue work experience opportunities that will enhance their understanding of the subject and support their academic and career goals. Whether through traditional placements, volunteering, or online learning, these experiences are invaluable in shaping the future psychologists of tomorrow. By encouraging students to explore various facets of psychology through work experience, we not only help them build their personal statements but also foster a deeper passion for the field, ultimately guiding them toward success in their academic and professional endeavours.

## The following suggestions are more difficult to obtain experience under the age of 18 years, but areas to get placements could also include:

### Occupational Therapy Departments

Reach out to hospitals or rehabilitation centres, emphasizing your interest in how psychology supports recovery and adaptation.

### Mental Health Clinics

Contact clinics directly, expressing a strong interest in mental health care and patient support, while acknowledging confidentiality concerns.

### Counselling Centres

Explore local counselling centres, demonstrating your passion for understanding family dynamics and youth mental health.

### Social Services and Community Care Organisations

Reach out to social service agencies, showing an eagerness to learn about supporting vulnerable populations.

# Perception: The Subtle Influence of the Unseen

Perception is often regarded as a simple concept. It's how we view the world – how we observe, and form judgements based on what we see, hear and touch. We rely on these senses to navigate us through life. We trust them to provide us with an understanding of how to function within society.

But what if the reality we live in isn't quite as 'real' as we thought?

In our world today, 63.7% of the population uses social media. That's 5.17 billion people. (DataReportal, 2023). Most of these individuals would likely claim that they have a solid grasp on their reality, believing it is unaffected by social media. Yet, in the US alone, 32% of adolescents, the prime consumer of these platforms, say that social media has a mostly negative effect on people their age, with 9% saying it has negatively affected them personally (Vogels and Gelles-Watnick, 2023). So, what is it that makes social media adversely affect people's mental health?

At first glance, social media appears to be a wonder – a collection of apps that let individuals create and share videos, browse content, comment on and like posts and upload snapshots of their lives to a global audience. However, a closer examination of these platforms reveals a more unsettling reality. By understanding how the algorithms of these apps work through their manipulation of an individual user's pages, it is possible to begin to realise how social media subtly alters our perception of everyday life.

Algorithms are designed to capture the attention of users by displaying personalised content that aligns with the

individuals existing interests and beliefs. Apps such as Instagram® and TikTok® have a main page where people can access photos and videos that pique their interest which is fittingly named the 'For You' page (Bhandari and Bimo, 2022). Research has found that the algorithm creates a 'feedback loop' where users are repeatedly exposed to similar content, thus illustrating that social media distorts their perception of reality by reducing their exposure to more diverse perspectives (Bail et al, 2018). Consequently, this distortion can lead users to develop emotional attachments to these platforms, which can negatively impact self-esteem, and further contribute to an increase in anxiety and symptoms of depression, particularly amongst adolescents (Woods and Scott, 2016). This creates a dilemma for the social media tool that is often celebrated for its global connection, as its narrowing of perspectives can, in actuality, foster division and close-mindedness.

In order to further demonstrate the influence of social media on individuals' everyday lives, recent research by Kalogeropoulos (2019) found that 57% of Generation Z individuals (1997–2012) turn to social media as their primary source of news, compared to 43% of Generation Y (1982–1994). This highlights how the younger generation, having grown up with social media at their fingertips, allow it to have a greater influence on their worldviews compared to that of those who had limited access to technology during their youth. Subsequently, this constant exposure to social media indeed shapes their beliefs and attitudes, but many believe it is not entirely beneficial. Hence, statistically, 38% of teenagers in the US are overwhelmed by the drama on social media with 23% saying it makes them feel worse about their own lives (Vogels and Gelles-Watnick, 2023). As a result, the line between reality and fantasy becomes increasingly blurred by the falsehoods circulating around social media. This reality blurring diminishes self-confidence and increases mental distress. Research indicates that one factor of this mental distress manifests through many individuals exhibiting symptoms of body dysmorphia that intensifies with

prolonged exposure to social media platforms (Fardouly and Vartanian, 2016). Subsequently, it becomes more difficult for younger generations to navigate the world and define their own personal reality.

From this research, it can be concluded that social media usage is altering individuals' ability to perceive the world around them. The bombardment of curated content shapes both their sense of self and their well-being, thus highlighting the need for greater awareness and understanding of social media's impact on perception and mental health.

Considering this, it is crucial to remember that perception sculpts our reality and serves as the foundation for life's unique experiences. Yet, fully understanding perception and distinguishing between what is real and what is mere illusion remains a challenge we have yet to conquer. Perhaps, in the end, seeing isn't always believing.

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**Millie Smith**  
Ilkley Grammar School,  
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# Unravelling the Psychology of Indian Independence: The Dynamics of Social Influence



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The struggle for Indian independence was not merely a political upheaval; it was a profound testament to the intricate workings of social influence on a grand scale. From the grassroots movements to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, psychological principles underpinned every aspect of the freedom struggle. Delving into the realm of psychology unveils the underlying mechanisms through which social influence shaped the course of Indian history, leaving an enduring legacy of collective action and resilience.

At the heart of the Indian independence movement lay a strong sense of social identity—a collective consciousness that transcended individual differences. Social identity theory posits that people categorise themselves into social groups and derive a sense of self-esteem from their membership within these groups. In the context of Indian independence, the notion of a unified Indian identity (the ‘in group’) emerged as a powerful force, galvanising millions to rally against colonial oppression. The shared identity of being Indian fostered a sense of solidarity and cohesion among diverse communities, driving collective action towards a common goal; to resist the rule of the British Raj (the ‘out group’).

Normative social influence refers to the tendency of individuals to conform to societal norms and expectations in order to gain acceptance and approval from others. Throughout the independence movement, social influencers like Mahatma Gandhi strategically leveraged normative influence

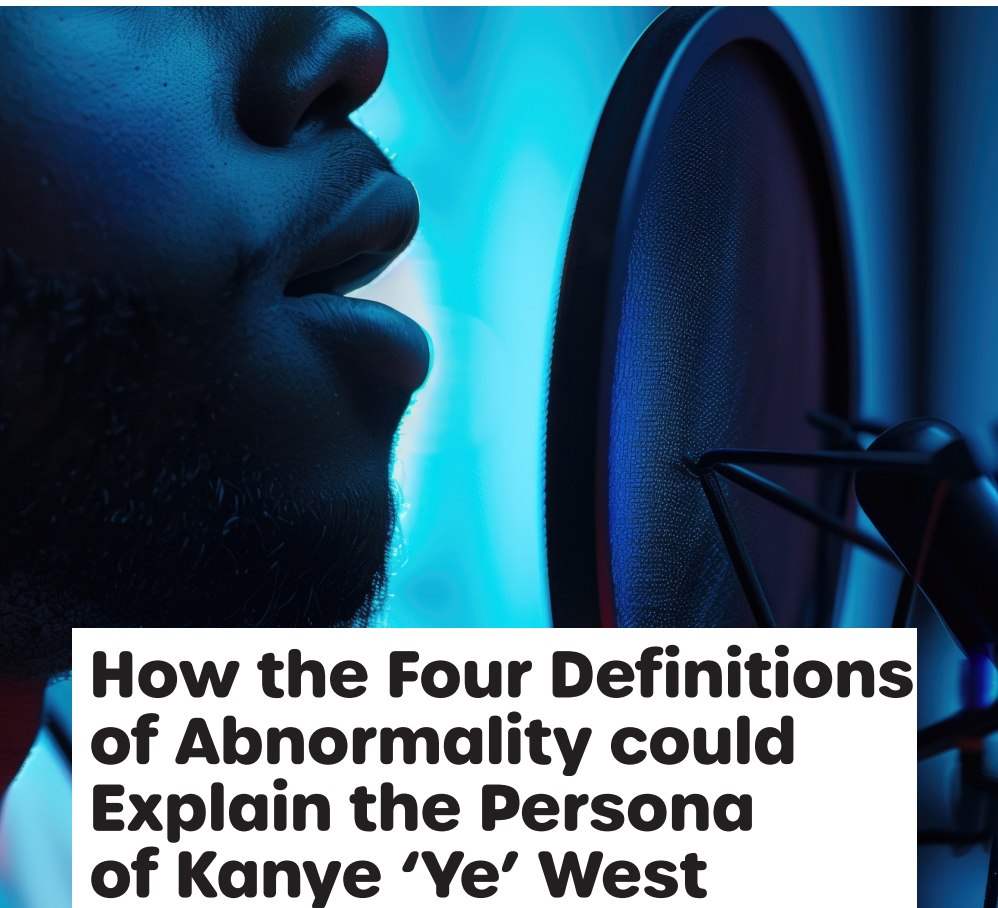
to mobilise support for civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. Gandhi’s emphasis on moral principles and ethical conduct appealed to people’s innate desire to adhere to social norms, along with his image being one of similarity to theirs, inspired mass participation in acts of protest and defiance against British rule. Additionally, social proof, a concept popularised by psychologist Robert Cialdini, highlights the tendency of individuals to look to others for cues on how to behave in ambiguous situations. In the context of Indian independence, the widespread adoption of nonviolent protest tactics served as a powerful form of social proof. As more people embraced Gandhi’s principles of Satyagraha and civil disobedience, others were emboldened to follow suit, creating a ripple or snowball effect of defiance that reverberated across the nation. This was kickstarted by the resistor’s desires to go against British rule upon learning more about Gandhi’s cause, exemplifying the effects of information influence. The sheer momentum of collective action also reinforced the legitimacy and

efficacy of nonviolent resistance as a potent tool for social change.

Psychological principles such as cognitive dissonance played a pivotal role in sustaining the momentum of the independence movement. As individuals engaged in acts of civil disobedience and faced oppression from colonial authorities, demonstrating social heroism, they experienced cognitive dissonance—the psychological discomfort that arises from holding contradictory beliefs or engaging in behaviours that conflict with one’s values. To resolve this dissonance, individuals often increased their commitment to the cause of independence, reinforcing their dedication to the struggle and inspiring others to join their ranks. Moreover, social learning theory posits that people acquire new behaviours and attitudes through observation and imitation of others. Throughout the independence movement, ordinary individuals emerged as influential leaders, embodying the principles of courage, resilience, and self-sacrifice as disobedient role models. By witnessing the actions of these social influencers, others were empowered to challenge the status quo and assert their rights in the face of adversity. The diffusion of leadership and responsibility empowered individuals from all walks of life to become agents of change, amplifying the impact of social influence on the trajectory of Indian history.

To conclude, the quest for Indian independence stands as a compelling case study in the power of social influence to shape collective action and catalyse transformative change. From the formation of a shared social identity to the strategic deployment of normative influence and social proof, psychological principles permeated every facet of the freedom struggle. As India commemorates its hard-fought independence, it is essential to recognize the profound psychological dynamics that underpinned this historic movement, serving as a testament to the enduring legacy of social influence in shaping the course of human events.





## How the Four Definitions of Abnormality could Explain the Persona of Kanye 'Ye' West

Kanye West's behaviour and public persona could be considered statistically infrequent in comparison to the general population. His unconventional statements, creative ventures, and outspoken nature set him apart from the typical behaviour of the general population. His outspokenness also extends beyond music and fashion into the realm of cultural and political commentary. His willingness to challenge mainstream narratives and provoke thought has earned him both praise and criticism. Kanye's expressed views could therefore be considered as more extreme than most of the general population. For example, Kanye praised Hitler and the Nazis in 2022. The small percentage of other groups and individuals who express similar views are considered to be potential risks to society as these views are very extreme and have sometimes led to anti-social behaviour.

In addition, he often defies societal expectations and norms, both in his personal life and his art. His behaviour sometimes challenges established norms of behaviour and etiquette. For example, Kanye stormed onto the stage and ranted about how Beyoncé was more deserving of the trophy during Taylor Swift's (2009) MTV Video Music awards acceptance speech for the best female video. This went against the norms of listening and allowing others to speak

(interruptions usually occur before or after acceptance speeches).

Despite his immense success, Kanye has exhibited behaviours that some might argue interfere with his ability to function adequately in certain situations. This could include controversies, public outbursts, and unconventional career moves. From a traditional perspective, Kanye's behaviour might also deviate from what is considered ideal mental health. His public struggles with mental health issues, such as bipolar disorder, have been well-documented and suggest that he is not meeting the criteria of self-actualisation (his controversial comments on a range of political, cultural and social issues have decreased his popularity and hindered his success), does not have an accurate perception of reality (in July 2020, he announced he was going to run for the US presidency as a member of 'the Birthday Party' with guidance from Elon Musk-this can also be viewed as a grandiose delusion as Kim Kardashian refuted this claim shortly afterwards) and has not achieved environmental mastery (he first became controversial after his divorce from Kim Kardashian and could not handle the fact that she was with another man).

Kanye has also spoken openly about his struggles with mental health, including depression. His lyrics often contain themes of

sadness, isolation, and existential struggles. His public outbursts and erratic behaviour could also be indicative of underlying emotional distress. Kanye has experienced significant trauma and loss throughout his life, including the sudden death of his mother, Donda West, in 2007. This tragic event had a profound impact on him and is reflected in his music and public statements. Trauma and loss can contribute to mental health challenges, such as depression and anxiety.

While Kanye has not been officially diagnosed with OCD, he has displayed obsessive tendencies, particularly in his attention to detail and perfectionism in his music and fashion projects. His relentless work ethic and desire for perfection could be interpreted as compulsive behaviours. Additionally, his tendencies to fixate on certain topics or ideas, as seen in his public rants, may reflect compulsive tendencies. He has also openly discussed his diagnosis of bipolar disorder, which involves alternating periods of manic and depressive episodes. During manic episodes, individuals may experience heightened energy, impulsivity, grandiosity, and a decreased need for sleep. Kanye's manic episodes have been evident in his rapid speech, impulsive behaviour, and grandiose ideas, such as his presidential aspirations.

Despite his controversies and struggles, Kanye is widely recognized as a creative genius in the music and fashion industries. His innovative approach to music production, boundary-pushing fashion designs, and willingness to experiment with different genres have cemented his status as an influential figure in pop culture.

Overall, Kanye West's complex persona encompasses a wide range of psychological, emotional, and creative elements. While he has faced numerous challenges and controversies, his impact on music, fashion, and culture is undeniable. Understanding the various facets of his personality can provide insight into the complexities of fame, creativity, and mental health in the public eye.



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# What Lessons can be Applied from Psychological Studies of Dolphin Captivity Following the Covid-19 Lockdowns?

Lockdown highlighted some unexpected parallels between humans and dolphins. Depriving highly intelligent mammals of social interactions, a stimulating environment and restricting their movements in confined spaces, suddenly became an uncomfortable shared experience for both dolphins and humans.

Dolphins are well-known for their high intelligence and social structures, with complex behavioural patterns related to their environment in the open sea. When dolphins are removed from their natural environment it can cause a series of psychological issues. Similarly, humans were forced to deal with new psychological challenges when lockdown restrictions forced them out of their 'natural environment' and into their homes.

A study published by Brauer et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of dolphins having social interactions and forming social bonds with one another for their overall well-being. This is why dolphins kept in isolated captivity will express depressive behaviour.

This link between social isolation and depressive behaviour was also seen in human behaviour during lockdown. The reduction of social interactions directly caused people to feel an increased sense of loneliness. A study by Lim et al. (2022) found that because restrictions had 'disrupted our social interactions, behaviours, and routines' it brought about high rates of social anxiety for most people. As a result, they concluded that 'Mental health practitioners are likely to see higher levels of social anxiety in vulnerable communities even as social restrictions ease.'

Another ethical issue raised around keeping dolphins in captivity is the lack of stimulation and opportunity for natural behaviours. In their natural environment, dolphins exhibit behaviours such as hunting, exploration and playing with other dolphins (Kucacz et al., 2014). The rich mental and physical stimulation that dolphins experience in open waters simply cannot be replicated in a captive environment such as an aquarium. Without this stimulation, Ugaz et al. (2012) found dolphins have higher levels of stress (measured through cortisol levels in their

blood) and this results in maladaptive behaviours such as grinding their teeth, swimming in repetitive circles, and even self-mutilation. Again, there were striking similarities experienced by humans during lockdown. Many people reported a lack of physical and mental stimulation as they were unable to leave the house.

A published article by Coleman and Novak (2017) outlines the psychological benefits of engaging in cognitive, physical, visual, and auditory stimulation in improving our mental well-being. It showed a direct link between varied environments, preventing boredom and enhancing well-being.

As well as our stimuli being restricted during lockdown, as was our space. Studies such as the one published by Kulcar et al. (2022) showed the impact on students' mental health because of being confined for a prolonged period at university during the pandemic.

Although this can also be related to dolphins in captivity, one key detail that differentiates humans and dolphins in this scenario was the fact that the students in the study were able to cope better with this limited space as they were able to interact with their friends and family. Unfortunately, dolphins in captivity are starved of this social opportunity and therefore would not be able to cope by simply chatting to their friends or family over facetime or a Zoom call.

Our psychological experience of lockdown has given us a fresh perspective on the ethics of keeping dolphins in captivity. It also raises the question, why should dolphins be in captivity, if we found it so hard ourselves? Although there is clear evidence for the psychological harm of captivity, it may also be necessary for conservation or rehabilitation of injured dolphins. Again, interesting parallels can be drawn to our lockdown experience. It was necessary to have lockdown restrictions during the pandemic so that the spread of Covid-19 could be controlled.

Therefore, if the argument that isolation and captivity are sometimes necessary is accepted, how can we improve the mental health of captive dolphins and mitigate the

psychological harm of it?

The importance of social interaction must also not be understated. Makecha + Highfill (2018) has shown the psychological benefits of keeping dolphins in pairs or larger social units, allowing them to play together and form bonds with one another. For humans, this is a crucial learning point, particularly when helping the vulnerable people adjust to a post-lockdown era.

In conclusion, there are valuable lessons to be learned from the shared psychological challenges that humans and dolphins face in captivity and lockdown. Comparing the two experiences provides an impactful insight into the importance of enriching environments, ensuring social connections and providing unrestricted space in order to prevent depressive behaviours and social anxiety, for dolphins and humans alike.

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# The Femme Fatale: Why do women murder and what's gone wrong when they do?

In 2021 the Ministry of Justice released a report on women and the criminal justice system, in which they stated that only 4% of inmates are female. Furthermore, only around 10% of murders in the UK were committed by women.

One key factor which is vital in understanding these anomalous cases is the biological differences between men, women and murderers. Typically, female brains are biologically opposed to impulsive crimes and decisions. For example, one difference between the male and female brain is the amygdala, the part of the brain which controls emotion, fear and motivation. An overactive amygdala outweighs the logical parts of your brain with panic and fear, in turn increasing aggression and irrationality. However, the female amygdala is, on average, smaller and less active than males, leading to less aggressive behaviour.

However, in 1990 the American serial killer Eileen Wuornos contradicted this preconception. Wuornos murdered seven males in the space of a year leaving the world wondering, why? Investigations show that her crimes may have been a result of her abnormal brain makeup. Wuornos met the criteria for borderline personality disorder (BPD). People with BPD struggle to regulate their emotions and experience intense emotion for an extensive period of time. In women, BPD leads to an increased connection between the cingulate cortex

(processing social information) and the amygdala. This implies that Wuornos' response to social stimuli could have stimulated her amygdala promoting higher levels of aggression, which is atypical for the average female and might explain her criminal behaviour.

It's equally important to acknowledge the effect of socialisation on an individual. Socialisation is the process in which people learn norms and customs which are crucial to a functioning society. One view put forward by Frances Heidensohn (1985), says that women are more 'controlled' throughout their lives and as a result are less likely to commit crimes. For example, due to societal threats, girls often have stricter rules and curfews growing up. They are also raised to be caregivers to prepare them for life as mothers. As a result, this socialisation should eliminate opportunity for crime. At the core of our society, we depend on matriarchal figures to care, love and raise our children. This deep-rooted ideology engrains itself into the female subconscious and creates expectations of what women should be. What happens when women feel these requirements aren't met?

In 2023 Lucy Letby was sentenced to a whole life sentence after she murdered seven babies when working as a neonatal nurse. In her trial Letby's private notes were presented in which she stated "I killed them on purpose because I'm not good enough to care for them, I will never marry or have children, I will never know what it's like to have a family." Without excusing her crimes, it could be argued that her belief that she did not meet social norms may have propelled her into a cycle of attention seeking behaviours and as a result criminal behaviour.

Childhood trauma also plays a large role in criminal development. As children our brains are the most susceptible to learning as we have more synaptic connections to build, making us more impressionable. Sigmund Freud focussed on the importance of childhood development. He founded psychodynamic theory and suggested the idea that parent-child relationships are particularly important as they set a template for our adult relationships. Furthermore, this approach suggests that childhood abuse subconsciously manifests itself into the minds of individuals. In the book 'Serial Killers' Joel Norris argues that "Parents who abuse their children, instil in them an almost instinctive reliance upon violence as a first resort to any challenge."

A prime example of the repressed effects of childhood trauma is Myra Hindley and the case of the 'Moors Murders'. Hindley along with her accomplice Ian Brady sexually assaulted and murdered five children. From a young age Hindley sustained sexual and physical abuse from her father. The repeated abuse may have instilled aggression within her character, which was further engrained when she met Brady who also abused her in the same ways. It could be suggested that Hindley subconsciously normalised violence and took the opportunity to inflict such abuse onto others as an escape from her own.

Whilst it is factually proven that these cases are anomalies in our society. It is crucial to consider the root causes of such individuals. There is certainly no single motive behind female murderers, it's important to highlight the abnormalities in female biology, the perception of not meeting matriarchal expectations and the entrenched effects of childhood trauma in hopes to prevent the future of female crime.



**Millie Morris**

L6th at Churcher's College

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# Book Reviews

## Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole: Extraordinary Journeys into the Human Brain

**Authors:** Allan Ropper and Brian Burrell

It sounds obvious given the title, but this book really does take you through a journey into the human mind. Allan Ropper is a leading US neurologist and through his experiences and the words of his co-author Brian Burrell, you feel like you are being brought along on the journey with him, trying to decipher what each individual person is suffering from (or not as is sometimes the case!), and what the best course of action is for that individual.

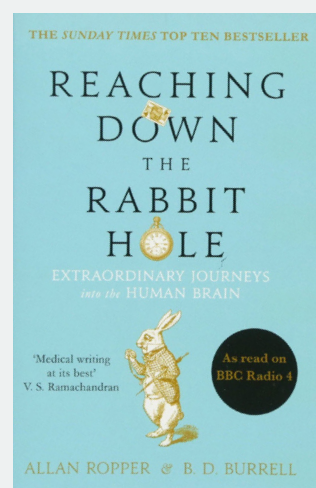
What is so interesting about the brain is that it is unique and complex, and Ropper shows this so effectively. The humanity of each individual shines through each case that we learn about, and Ropper demonstrates throughout the book how no two cases are the same, even if they may be suffering from the same condition. He is also very clear about his own humanity and fallibility, admitting when he has made mistakes and misread the oftentimes confusing symptoms. At other times, we are simply lucky to gain an insight into his thought process in the many cases where he has got the prognosis correct, making you feel like you are watching him solve the

puzzle in front of your eyes as you read each chapter.

Ropper and Burrell also weave together several different stories into each chapter very effectively. At the start of each chapter you are introduced to a single story, before the chapter appears to suddenly switch direction to a seemingly unrelated and different story. However, by the end of each chapter the authors manage to tie together all these stories, demonstrating a lesson that Ropper has learnt in the process of these several encounters. Each chapter ends with a 'moral of the story', and even though you anticipate it after the first few chapters, you are still delightfully surprised when everything comes together to illustrate his latest nugget of wisdom at the end of the chapter.

When reading this book, I kept drawing parallels between "Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole" and "The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat" by Oliver Sacks, except I found this significantly easier to understand as a non-neurologist. You still learn about bizarre examples of human experience, and complex medical terminology is used throughout, but it is

explained afterwards in simple language. Regardless of whether the reader has heard of Guillain-Barre syndrome or the pleomorphism of nuclei before or not, non-specialists are still able to gain full understanding and meaning from the book. I would thoroughly recommend to anyone who is interested in learning about strange and bizarre conditions of the brain.



**Book review**  
Bea Townsend

## Oxford Revise: AQA A Level Psychology

This AQA Psychology A-Level Revision Guide is a valuable resource for students preparing for their exams; it gives a comprehensive coverage of the AQA syllabus ensuring that no topic is left out.

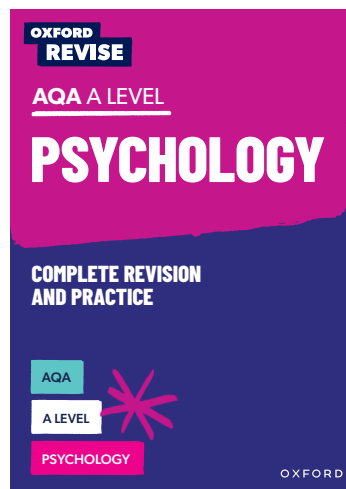
The book is broken down into distinct sections: **Knowledge**, **Retrieval**, and **Practice**. The Retrieval sections include low-stakes questions designed to reinforce learning, with a clever strategy of encouraging students to cover the answers before attempting the questions. This method promotes active recall, a highly effective revision technique that students can replicate in their own study sessions. Additionally, the retrieval tasks frequently refer back to previous pages, re-asking questions on earlier topics to embed long-term memory retention. This constant revisiting of material is an

excellent way to keep earlier topics fresh and ensures that students don't lose sight of what they've previously learned.

The **Practice** sections are also well-designed, offering exam-style questions that align closely with the AQA exam board's format. This allows students to test their understanding under conditions that mirror the actual exam, helping to build confidence and familiarity with the types of questions they will face.

The guide's layout is another highlight. It is simple, with a clean design featuring coloured text boxes that break up the information effectively, making it less daunting for students to tackle. A weakness is that it has only a few infographics which is useful for students who benefit from visual learning aids. Despite this, its clear structure, emphasis

on active recall, and practice make it a useful resource.



**Book review**  
Sarah Moseley

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