

**PSYPAG**

Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group

**Quarterly**

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**Advice on beating PhD stress**

**Limitations of videogame research**

**The changing  
concept of  
masculinity**



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# Editorial

Charlotte McLeod

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**W**ELCOME to the 78th edition of the *PsyPAG Quarterly*. There have been many developments since the PsyPAG committee welcomed its new members. For instance, the website ([www.psyag.co.uk](http://www.psyag.co.uk)) has been updated and the annual conference venue has been confirmed. One development on the website is the forum. This is a useful resource for all psychology postgraduates. It is a great place to visit if you need guidance, simply post your query on that page. Furthermore, we have a new section on the website that allows you to post a book review. If you have read something that was inspiring and you wish to inform others, send in a short description of the book and it will be placed here. In reference to the 2011 PsyPAG annual conference, the venue has been confirmed; Bangor University will be the host this year, and the winner of the National Psychology Postgraduate Teaching Award will get free admission to this conference. The National Psychology Postgraduate Teaching Award is a joint award supported by PsyPAG and Postgraduates who Teach Network (PGwT). This event provides valuable opportunities for postgraduate to network with each other and to gain an insight into what others are currently researching.

This edition also provides a snapshot of what is being researched by our readers and what topics are of interest. There is a diversity of articles that are intriguing. The first has been written by several students who are affiliated with the University of Plymouth and the University of Bristol. This article delineates a novel approach to exploring the interaction between temperature and weight perception. Furthermore, 'Heavier, or just colder? A new approach to perception research' presents preliminary findings on this relationship. This well-written piece discusses a phenom-

enon that occurs frequently, but it something that many are unaware of. This is followed by an article by Andrew Clements from Bedfordshire University which will be of interest to those just starting a PhD or who are suffering from PhD-related stress. It outlines common reasons why PhD students might become stressed and offers advice on how to circumvent these. I suspect this will be a very useful article for many readers. The next piece offers something slightly different. It examines the traditional concept of masculinity and whether it has been replaced or developed. This brings forth a discussion on the concept of masculinity that certainly has changed in the last decade or so. Following this is a comment from the Psychology for Women Section, in response to Professor Zucker's invitation to be a keynote speaker at the Division of Clinical Psychology Annual Conference. For those who are interested in research on videogames, the following article focuses on video games and the problems associated with current research in this area. This is followed by an article that discusses situated cognition and the extended mind in terms of technological developments. This explores some the philosophical underpinnings to how we conceptualise cognition, and how technology affects this. Following this is a discussion on latent cognition and the Likert Scale, written by Christina Richards. Annalies Vredeveldt has written the next piece which looks at psychology and the law. This discusses the benefits of the European Association of Psychology and Law. This society will be of interest to those readers with an interest in this area. An article by Nicola Stock who works at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) in Bristol is next. This personal account reflects upon the process of acquiring a research associate role and a

description of what CAR does. The penultimate article unpicks the concept of masculinity, but within the context of the trapped Chilean miners. This is a very interesting article that explores the issues that arise out of real world disasters. The final contribution is a book review by James A. Grange.

The editing team would like to thank all of the authors for their submissions and we invite others to contribute. We welcome arti-

cles that discuss research, book reviews, conference reviews, personal accounts or guidance. As long as the article is consistent with the aims of PsyPAG and is of interest to our readers, we will be happy to review it. We look forward to reading your articles in the future!

**Charlotte McLeod**

*On behalf of the editorial team, Julie Port, Emily Collins, Claire Miller.*

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## Chair's Column

Sarah Wood

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I said at the start of my last column, in December, that PsyPAG wanted to increase the involvement of our members in what we do, and we were doing this by increasing our social media presence and introducing on our online forum. Hopefully you feel that there are now more opportunities to get involved in our work. This has been our way of increasing our engagement with psychology postgraduates. Over the last year, engagement and specifically, public engagement, has been a consideration for many universities, funding bodies and politicians, which can be demonstrated by a range of initiatives. A UK-wide partnership into public engagement has been developed by a group of universities, headed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE); the Wellcome Trust offers over £3 million each year for public engagement funding and the British Psychological Society (BPS) runs an annual public engagement grants scheme. So there is financial backing for public engagement and the term is certainly getting a lot of publicity but what exactly is it?

The NCCPE defines it simply as the many ways in which higher education institutions (HEIs) and their staff and students can connect and share their work with the

public, with the end result being that HEIs can increase their relevance to and impact on society. While a simple definition, it appears that public engagement is an all-encompassing term, and any level of interaction with the public could be seen as engagement – from big public lectures to online consultation. The Society says that its grants are available to undertake activities that will engage the public with psychology and in the past couple of years this has included funding a psychology ‘Happy New You’ supplement with *Top Santé* magazine and supporting the establishment of a ‘men’s allotment group’, aimed at improving the mental health of isolated men. Again, there is a wide variety in the type of projects that come under the heading of public engagement. So, engaging the public can be done through many methods, but who exactly do these bodies mean when they say public?

Every single one of us is a member of the public but we come from different backgrounds, have different life experiences, interests and economic circumstances, and as such it doesn’t seem to make sense to view the ‘public’ as a single entity. Therefore anyone who is thinking about conducting public engagement needs to clearly define who their target audience is when planning

their engagement activities. Closely linked to this is to what you want to achieve through the activity – do you want to get your research findings to a broader audience, or maybe get a community involved with a research project. As well as identifying an audience that you want to engage with you need to consider if they want to engage with you. Public engagement has to be two way, and to engage you need to have something to say or do that is of interest. The key here is that good public engagement will only happen if there is good preparation ahead of the event. When planning a new research project, public engagement should be a consideration from the beginning, as opposed to an add-on after completion. In planning and delivering public engagement there are many issues to consider, but why should psychologists go through this process of engagement?

At our conference in Sheffield last year, Chantelle Bailey, one of the presentation award winners and now a PsyPAG committee member (representative for the South West of England Branch and the Publications and Communications Board), presented research from her Masters degree looking at the public image of psychology. Chantelle's research was heartening in that she found that the general public have a positive position of the discipline. However, what was worrying was that there was still a lack of knowledge and understanding of what the discipline is and does. Also those members of the public who had come into contact with psychology previously, either through their own studies or friends and family, had a more favourable impression than those with little contact. Therefore we need to engage the public with psychology to increase not only their positive attitudes to us as a discipline but more importantly their knowledge and understanding of what we do. After all, our research is about people, so we should inform them of what we are finding. The NCCPE describes three key reasons as to why we need to engage with the public: it brings benefits to universities and to the public;

fundors and policy makers expect universities to be doing it; and it helps universities adapt to a changing society. Universities are under pressure from many external factors and need to demonstrate their benefits; public engagement is one way this can be done, demonstrating accountability, transparency and relevance.

This has been a very brief look into public engagement and some of the issues surrounding it. PsyPAG would like to know your thoughts about public engagement, and if you have been involved with any events or have had any training in this area. The committee have had some discussions about how their own universities are approaching it, without there being any consensus. What is clear, is that for all of us, public engagement is going to be a key aspect of our work in the future.

As always I would like to close my column by reminding you of what PsyPAG can offer you. The next deadline for our conference bursaries (up to £300 for an international conference and £100 for a domestic conference, up to £40 for travel) is 10 June. So if you are planning on attending a conference soon and concerned with how you are going to fund it, then please apply. We also have our awards, the National Psychology Postgraduate Teaching Award (in conjunction with the PGwT), the Rising Researcher Award and the Outstanding Masters Award. If you have a friend who you think might be worthy of such an award, why not point them in our direction. Or if you would like to consider hosting a workshop is of relevance to postgraduates – maybe something looking at public engagement – we have funding available for that too! See [www.psyag.co.uk](http://www.psyag.co.uk) for more details about all these schemes.

Finally, our 26th annual conference at Bangor University is fast approaching (July 6–8). Please have a look on our website for more details. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

**Sarah Wood**  
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# Heavier, or just colder? A new approach to perception research

Benjamin G. Sanders, Daniel Zahra,  
Craig Hedge & John Summerscales

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*Why do cold objects feel heavier than warmer ones? Psychology has long had an interest in perception; how the external world is perceived by the individual and processed by the cognitive system, and much research has been conducted on this particular peculiarity. This article aims to explain a new way of investigating the interaction of temperature and weight perception, and present some preliminary data in support of using a new material, an epoxy-resin carbon-fibre composite cylinder. The cylinder had different thermal conductivities depending on its orientation, and thus allows mass and actual weight to be more easily and closely controlled than in previous research on the relationship between temperature and perceived weight; something we hope will be of use to those in the field of haptic perception, and of interest to those in related fields.*

**P**ERCEPTUAL illusions can be highly informative in understanding the psychological mechanisms that allow humans to adaptively perceive, internally represent and behaviourally respond to the properties of their environment (Gregory, 2005; Shepard, 1990). One such illusion derives from the fact that perception of weight in a given object is normally based on its size and shape. The Size-Weight Illusion (SWI) is a powerful cognitive illusion in which objects that are objectively equal in weight but differ in size and volume are perceived to be different in mass (Jones, 1986). This illusion seems to be based on the expectancy that larger objects are heavier than smaller objects of similar material and on associated motor output and muscle preparation (Dijker, 2008). This was demonstrated, for example, by Wagman et al. (2007) who showed that when given boxes of identical size and weight containing either feathers or lead, blindfolded participants reported that the box of lead felt heavier; a result that the authors concluded reflects sensitivity to differences in mass distribution.

A related phenomenon is the observation that colder objects are perceived as heavier than warmer ones. This influence of temperature on perceived weight was first

described by Weber in 1846, otherwise known as ‘Weber’s Deception’, and according to Cahusac (2002; Cahusac & Noyce, 2007) it is readily demonstrable using large heavy coins (e.g. £2 Sterling coins) at 0 and 37°C placed on the forehead of a supine participant. Astoundingly, the study revealed that the single freezing coin appeared to be twice the weight of the warmer coins.

The human skin not only forms a protective barrier around the body, but provides sensitive thermosensory information. This in turn provides the capability to detect and respond to potentially noxious thermal stimuli (Schepers & Ringkamp, 2009), and produces afferent signals which aid the identification of objects and materials through touch (metals are easily differentiated from wood as metals feel much colder; Cahusac, 2002). Distinct sensations are induced when thermal stimuli are applied to the skin. Mild changes in skin temperature are perceived as cool or warm; however, the induced sensations adapt quickly. When thermal stimuli are applied to the skin which is beyond the adaptive temperature range, non-adaptive sensations are induced. Decreasing sensations outside the adaptive range could change from cool, cold, icy to painful and

increasing sensations could change from warm, hot to painful (Schepers & Ringkamp, 2009). Not only do these changes of temperature change the psychological, subjective interpretation of these thermal sensations, but they also affect judgements of other qualities, such as weight (Cahusac, 2002).

This study aims to provide further evidence that temperature can psychologically influence the perception of weight through the use of a novel composite cylindrical object with differing, orientation-dependent thermal conductivities.

### **The composite cylinder**

Psychophysical experiments have adopted a range of materials and test items over the years, mostly developed by psychologists. However, drawing on the expertise of colleagues in the engineering faculty, we had a unique opportunity to develop a custom-built tool for the job of investigating this unusual temperature-weight illusion.

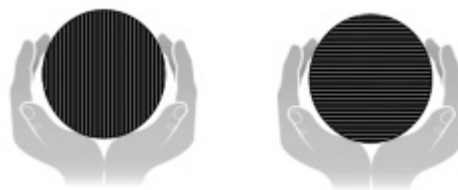
In terms of the physical and psychological properties of interest here, simply put, we designed a cylindrical block for participants to hold. The structure of the cylinder was such that the carbon fibres that composed it ran in the same direction. Under normal circumstances the block will be at ambient temperature ( $\sim 20^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) while the hands of the participant will be at body temperature ( $\sim 37^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). When the fibres run between the two palms, the block conducts heat away from the hands and hence feels cool. In contrast, when the fibres run parallel to the palms, the cylinder acts as an insulator and feels relatively warm. This enables the thermal conductivity of the cylinder to be exploited, and hence the perceived temperature to be manipulated, without the possibility of a change in weight distribution, mass, or visible distinctiveness; the fibre direction is not visible without close inspection.

For those more technically minded, the block was manufactured from a pre-impregnated unidirectional carbon fibre in a Shell DX210 epoxy resin system to a nominal fibre

volume fraction of 60 per cent. This was formed by hot-compression moulding in a 102mm square by 76mm deep steel mould at a temperature of  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$  and a pressure of  $\sim 5.3$  MPa. The composite block was then machined in a lathe with a high-speed steel cutting tool and finished with a silicon carbide grinding wheel to final dimensions of 95mm diameter and 76mm deep. The principal thermal conductivities of the composite block are  $\sim 50$  W/mK parallel to the fibres and  $\sim 1\text{-}2$  W/mK perpendicular to the fibres.

### **Pre-testing cylinder properties**

In a preliminary experiment, the cylinder was presented to 60 individuals (52 males, 8 females) in order to establish that there was in fact a perceived difference in temperature and weight between holding the cylinder with the carbon fibres running parallel to the palms and perpendicular to the palms; depicted in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1:** Parallel (A) and Perpendicular (B) conditions showing fibre direction.

Participants were seated in a standard office chair. They were handed the cylinder to hold in the ‘perpendicular’ orientation. They were required to hold it whilst keeping their elbows against the back of the chair, such that all participants had the same posture, and any differences perceived would not be due to differential muscle strain. After holding the cylinder in this orientation for ten seconds, the cylinder was removed, rotated to the ‘parallel’ orientation outside of the participants’ vision, and then handed back to them to hold for a further ten seconds. Initially, there were two vision conditions (blindfolded and non-

blindfolded); however, no statistically significant difference was found between the two vision conditions, and so the following results have been collapsed across conditions.

Finally, participants were asked whether they noticed any difference in any properties between the first and second cylinders they held. Participants were not cued in any way to focus on particular properties, but were asked the direction of any perceived changes.

Based on the assumption that when the fibres are perpendicular, heat will be conducted and the cylinder will feel colder, and that the fibres will act as insulation when they are parallel, thus making the block feel warmer, it would be expected that perceived temperature would vary with perceived weight; specifically, that the colder orientation would feel heavier than the warmer orientation (Wagman et al., 2007).

Interestingly, participants reported the same set of property categories, primarily focusing on temperature and weight. The majority of participants reported the cylinder to feel colder (40 per cent), or colder and heavier (47 per cent), in the perpendicular than parallel condition. The remainder reported heavier only (5 per cent), no difference (5 per cent), or uncertainty (3 per cent). A Chi-squared test showed that the distributions of category responses was significantly different from what would be expected if the cylinder orientation had no effect,  $\chi^2(4, N=60)=55.167, p<.001$ .

### **Experiment One: Ruling out presentation-order as an explanation**

Following the pre-test which established an effect of orientation on temperature and weight, the first experiment was designed to replicate the findings whilst controlling presentation order to eliminate the possibility of any time-order bias.

*Participants:* Participants in experiment one were 60 (26 male, 34 female) volunteers

recruited from amongst staff and students at the University of Plymouth. All participants were in good health and reported no deficits in the use of their arms, hands and fingers which may have impaired their ability to judge weights and temperatures.

*Procedure:* The procedure for experiment one was identical to that of the pre-test, except that the order the two orientations were presented in was counterbalanced between participants and the response options were restricted to focus on weight.

*Results:* In the 'warm-cold' presentation order, significantly more participants reported the cold orientation to be heavier than the warm orientation ( $N=28$  vs  $2$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=30)=23.516, p<.001$ . Similarly, in the 'cold-warm' (perpendicular-parallel) presentation order, significantly more participants reported the cold orientation to be heavier than the warm orientation ( $N=26$  vs  $4$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=30)=16.133, p<.001$ . No significant difference was found between the distributions within each presentation order. Taking this lack of difference as support for excluding order effects, a Mann-Whitney U-test comparing number of cold-heavier with warm-heavier judgments found that in the cold orientation, participants were significantly more likely to report that the cylinder felt heavier,  $U(N=60)=90.00, p<.001$ .

### **Experiment Two: Quantifying these effects**

The aim of this final exploratory study was to replicate the findings of the previous experiments, whilst also quantifying the differences in subjective weight estimates between the warm and cold orientations.

*Participants:* Participants were 60 (33 male, 27 female) volunteers from the University of Plymouth. All participants were in good health and reported with no deficits in the use of their arms, hands and fingers.

*Procedure:* The cylinder was the same as used previously. Unlike the previous experiments

in which only nominal responses were recorded, experiment two adopted an arbitrary unit method of quantifying perceived differences in weight. Participants were presented the cylinder twice, in either the same or different orientations.

Participants were then asked to assume the temperature of the first cylinder as 100 'units', and provide an estimate of the temperature of the second cylinder relative to the first. They were then asked to assume the first cylinder weighed 100 'units' and asked to provide an estimate of how many units they thought the second cylinder weighed, thus providing an interval measure of perceived difference in temperature and weight between the warm and cold orientations.

Presentation order was varied between warm-cold, cold-warm, or, in the interests of providing a control, warm-warm or cold-cold. All participants were required to wear an opaque eye-mask to increase the sensation of being given two separate cylinders and eliminate any additional cues which may be used in evaluation.

### Temperature and weight

The change in temperature ratings between the first and second cylinder were statistically significant in the Warm-Cold,  $F(1,14)=9.699$ ,  $p=.008$ ,  $d=1.137$ , and Cold-Warm conditions,  $F(1,14)=15.682$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $d=1.446$ . In both cases, the effects were in the direction predicted, with the cold cylinder being rated colder than the warm cylinder. No statistically significant differences were found between ratings in either control condition.

Taking the weight of the first cylinder to be 100 units, the change in weight when in the warm-cold orientation presentation order was statistically significant,  $F(1,14)=12.270$ ,  $p=.004$ ,  $d=1.279$ , as was the change in the cold-warm presentation order,  $F(1,14)=25.799$ ,  $p<.001$ ; the cold orientation being reported as heavier in both conditions. The effects of presentation order on both temperature and weight are shown below in Figure 2.

Furthermore, the relationship between perceived temperature and weight seems to be roughly linear,  $r(60)=-.545$ ,  $p<.001$ , with

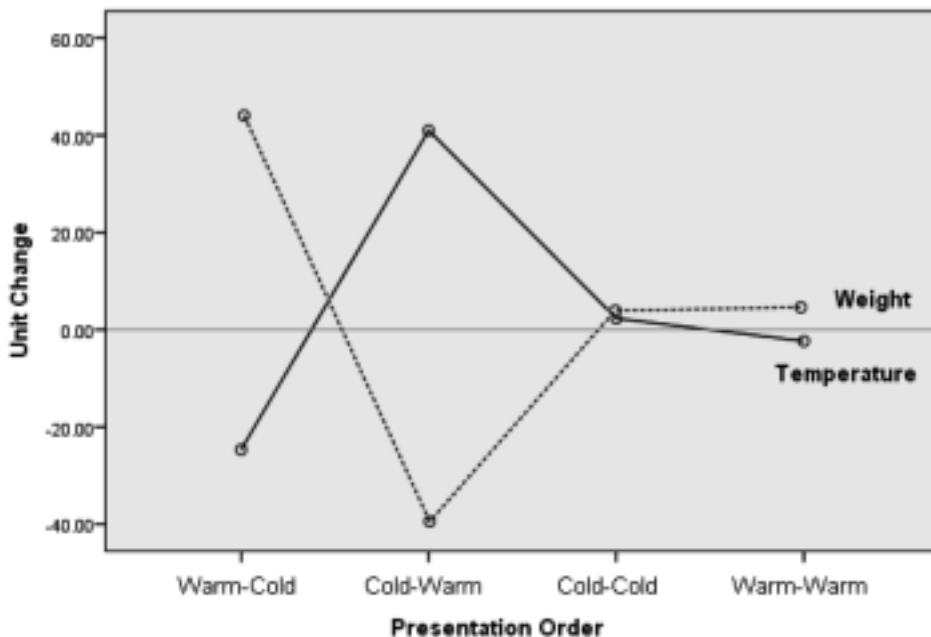


Figure 2: Changes in weight and temperature estimates relative to the first cylinder presented (100 units), by presentation order

perceived temperature being highly predictive of perceived weight,  $\beta = -.545$ ,  $t(60) = -4.954$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $R^2 = .285$ ,  $F(1,59) = 24.546$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### Colder is heavier

That the pattern of results replicated across all the studies reported here provides strong support for the robustness of this effect; colder objects are consistently perceived as heavier than warmer objects (Wagman et al., 2007). In addition to this, however, the current studies show that the effect is independent of any visual cues, as the patterns were identical between blindfolded and unblindfolded groups to the extent that we were able to collapse across conditions. Of most importance in these exploratory studies however is that changes in the object can be ruled out as explanations of this effect; the object was identical – to the point of being the very same object – in both warm and cold conditions, and its mass and weight distribution were uniform as no external heat source was used, unlike in previous research.

The consistently large size of the effects found here are also of interest, suggesting that the interactive effect of perceived weight and temperature is not only a replicable phenomenon, but also one that could have considerable implications. In relation to the carbon-fibre cylinder used in the current study, the consistent patterns and large effect sizes support the use of such

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compounds as reliable tools in next investigating why these and other psychophysical phenomena occur.

Although presented here as an interesting yet useful curio from the workbench of engineers, kidnapped for testing by psychologists, we'd love to hear from any academic or commercial psychophysics researchers out there who would be interested in utilising the new tool for work related to haptic perception or developing possible applications of the research outlined here.

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# Stress, support and you

Andrew Clements

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**M**ANY of the people reading this article have probably suffered, or are suffering, from stress related to their academic studies, whether it be a taught course or a programme of research. Some of the luckier readers may even have finished, or are about to finish, their current greatest source of stress.

Earlier this year I began working on an article about stress and PhDs. In performing a literature review, I found... not a lot. Very few articles looked at this specific issue. Kearns, Gardiner and Marshall (2008) emphasised the ways in which PhD students handicap themselves. They identified a number of self-sabotaging acts: over committing (taking on too much responsibility or too many tasks), busyness (being preoccupied with many less important tasks), perfectionism, procrastination, disorganisation, not putting in sufficient effort, and working in debilitating circumstances (such as in a distracting environment). The paper reports on a workshop intervention aimed at changing the behaviour of PhD students, which appeared to show positive results by improving organisation, more time spent on the PhD, more realistic self-expectations, and a better ability to seek help.

Pychyl and Little (1998) studied subjective wellbeing in relation to personal goals in doctoral students. Following an analysis of interviews with 19 doctoral candidates, they identified 11 context-specific dimensions: time pressure, time conflict, procrastination, anxiety, guilt, financial stress, uncertainty, social support, passion, commitment and positive effects on mood. Pychyl and Little (1998) report that time emerged as the core category of the analysis, which came to encompass the categories of inadequacy of time, time conflict, and time pressure.

Finances can also be a problem for post-graduate students. Those who are self-funded often must take on part-time work, which can distract from studies. Those who receive a studentship, meanwhile, often find that their funding has a time constraint, which may not respect the likely duration of a PhD. Research conducted in the field of work-related stress has found that stressors such as time pressure, workload, and finances can compromise psychological health (Daniels et al., 2004). There is also evidence that stress can lead to the down-regulation of the immune system leading to physical health problems (Herbert & Cohen, 1993; O'Leary, 1990). Stress may be linked to the immune system through the activation of neuroendocrine systems or through behavioural mechanisms (e.g. engaging in unhealthy behaviours as a result of stress, such as comfort eating, smoking, etc.; Herbert & Cohen, 1993).

Research conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on completion rates of PhDs by full-time and part-time students (HEFCE 2005; 2007) shows that approximately one quarter of full-time PhD students are currently failing to complete their PhD within seven years. Just under half of those part-time students beginning in 1996-1997 completed within ten years (HEFCE, 2007). The research also found that higher completion rates were associated with students with financial backing (such as from Research Councils), international students, younger students, and students following programmes in the 'natural sciences.' Significant variations between institutions were also found. So far, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no research to examine what role stress might play as a

mediating factor.

Social support has long been associated with reduced stress and enhanced wellbeing. Viswesvaran et. (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of 68 studies on the role of social support in the process of work stress. Their results suggested that social support reduced the strains experienced, mitigated perceived stressors, and moderated the stressor-strain relationship. Thus, making social support a priority for PhD students, and helping them identify sources of support within and external to the university may do much to promote more positive outcomes.

Daniels and Guppy (1997) found that wellbeing was positively related to subsequent social support. In other words, exhibiting signs of distress may reduce the chances that you will receive social support. One explanation provided is that individuals are more likely to help those who are perceived as being able to reciprocate later on. Like the old adage about bank loans being given once you can prove that you do not need it, perhaps we are more inclined to support those who do not require our support.

Many people are also reluctant to seek help, due to the stigma of help-seeking (e.g. Vogel & Wade, 2009). Consequently, more may need to be done to encourage help-seeking in PhD students and to reduce the stigma associated with asking for assistance. It may not be enough to look for those who appear troubled, because those worried about how they will be perceived may make efforts to appear calm and happy.

The most obvious source of support for PhD students is from the supervisory team. However, supervisors have other demands on their time, and most PhD students will only have periodic meetings with their supervisors. Not all supervisors may be well equipped to deliver emotional support, or

even see their role as including the delivery of emotional support. Furthermore, not all PhD students will have the benefit of a positive relationship with their supervisors.

However, there are other avenues of support for postgraduate psychology students. Many universities deliver student seminars, and may support social occasions for postgraduate students. If your university does not have a support group for research students, you may be able to begin one by building up contacts at training workshops. In addition, PsyPAG itself can be used a source of support. PsyPAG aims to support you, with training workshops, bursaries, and an annual conference. We also sit as representatives on committees in order to promote awareness of postgraduate student issues.

The *PsyPAG Quarterly* is a part of this, as we would encourage you to use the quarterly as a support for yourself. The Lonely Brains column (available on the PsyPAG website, as well as in the *Quarterly*) can provide you with a means of communicating your interests to other postgraduate students, and can assist you in networking. Similarly, publishing an article about your research in the *Quarterly* can provide you with early experience of the process of writing and publishing. This will serve you in good stead when the time comes for you to publish your results in a peer-reviewed journal.

Your supervisors and fellow students can be a tremendous source of support during the difficult times. You can also keep yourself in good health by ensuring that you get adequate sleep, eat healthily and engage in regular exercise. However, please do not neglect to take advantage of PsyPAG!

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## Lonely Brains

*This section is available for you if you're looking for help with a problem (be it on statistics, methodology, or issues relating to being a postgraduate) or want to meet others in your field. Please submit approximately 200 to 300 words including your contact details and an outline of your research interests or problem.*

*It is also on our website, so you don't have to wait until the next issue of the PsyPAG Quarterly to have your details or question published. Go to: [www.psypag.co.uk/resources/lonely-brains](http://www.psypag.co.uk/resources/lonely-brains).*

### **Dave Hambrook**

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I'm just entering into the third year of my doctorate in clinical psychology at Royal Holloway, University of London. My research is focusing on emotional processing in anorexia nervosa. I am piloting the use of performance test of emotional intelligence in people with anorexia, which has not been attempted before. My research interests lie mainly in the applied clinical arena (eating disorders, body dysmorphic disorder, psychosis, paediatric clinical health psychology, clinical neuropsychology of emotional disorders and autism). I am also very much interested in LGBT psychology.

### **Russell Delderfield**

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I'm currently two years into a part-time PhD which looks at UK males' experiences of disordered eating and am interested in talking to other PG researchers dealing with eating disorders, body image and counselling and psychotherapeutic approaches for males, too. I am doing a largely exploratory bricolaged project and am working with men's written accounts but in a non-narrative way.

I have just 'recovered' from a major setback in my work and would also be interested in finding out other PGs experiences of how they overcame issues and got themselves back on track.

# Are conventional masculinities being superseded or modernised?

Matthew Hall

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**T**ODAY, as never before, there are a plethora of men's beautification products, ranging from simple shaving and hair styling products to moisturisers and even cosmetics. In 2010 the market for men's grooming products accounted for a record £868 million, a 20 per cent growth rate in the market since 2005 (Mintel, 2010). Even with the current economic climate, analysts are forecasting a modest 5 per cent growth rate in the market with revenue still reaching £920 million in the coming year (Mintel, 2010). Moreover, Superdrug, the UK's second largest health and beauty retail chain, suggest that men are now dedicating '83 minutes of every day to their personal grooming, which includes cleansing, toning and moisturising, shaving, styling hair and choosing clothes', which is apparently four minutes longer than the average woman's daily beautification regime (Superdrug, 2010).

Men's grooming and presentation practices are, of course, nothing new and can be dated back to the Victorian era and before, but the beauty regimes performed by these men were relatively invisible as due to societal perceptions linking femininity to consumption and masculinity to production (Osgerby, 2003). Moore (1989) observed that in the 1980s, consumption patterns began to be redefined as an activity that is suitable for men. Various explanations have been put forward to account for this, crediting the gay movement (Simpson, 1994, 2002), feminism (Collier, 1992/1993), late capitalist consumer society (Featherstone, 1991) and the style press (Gill et al., 2005). But what is without doubt is that men are now confronted on a daily basis, as never before, with stylised images of other men

(models and celebrities) on advertisements, in the style press and on TV and in film.

The British columnist Mark Simpson in his now well-cited article 'Here Come the Mirror Men' (*The Independent*, 1994) labelled these 'new, narcissistic, media-saturated, self-conscious' men as 'metrosexuals' (Simpson, 2004). The emergence of the metrosexual and the increasing exposure of men's bodies, along with other social factors such as changing work patterns and ever decreasing levels of manual labour in the West, have lead some men at least to 're-evaluate their appearance, re-position themselves as consumers of fashion and style products, and ultimately re-construct their idea of what it is to be male' (Harrison, 2008: 56).

Such forays into hitherto feminine identity territory have led some to wonder if conventional or hegemonic (Connell, 1995) forms of masculinity have been, or are, being superseded or modernised (MacInnes, 2001) since these new developments appear to be producing interesting places of slippage in traditional standards and notions of gender binaries (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Current research has uncovered that men who engage in regular health and beauty practices beyond simply shaving and washing with a bar of soap, risked appearing vain and being charged with effeminacy or homosexuality (Hall, 2009; Hall & Gough, in press). Even so, a failure to look after oneself was also construed as a loss of self-respect. Interestingly though, those men who openly admitted to having an extensive daily beautification regime still felt the need to reframe their typically feminised activities in more conventional heterosexual masculine ways such as for sexual prowess.

Other research investigating men taking up feminised positions and practices report similar findings. For example, Simpson (2005) interviewed men working in employment areas traditionally seen as feminine (e.g. nursing and hairdressing). These men also reported challenges to their sexual orientation and manliness. Yet these men also appeared to reframe some aspects of their job in more conventionally masculine ways, citing skill acquisition and progression into management. In the realm of beautification products, Harrison (2008) found that advertisers of men's makeup reframed typically feminised products such as mascara and eyeliner in more masculine ways (e.g. 'manscara', 'guy-liner'). Indeed, one only has to gaze along the retail shelves of

grooming products to notice that advertisers need to state 'for men' or 'pour homme' in order for men to consume these products.

The evidence discussed suggests that some men are now orienting towards contemporary identities and practices associated with femininity. These men seem to walk a fine line between being castigated as less masculine for rejecting some traditional notions of masculinity, whilst also invoking other traditional masculinised ideals. So despite the rumours of demise, it would seem that hegemonic masculinities still wield power.

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# Professor Zucker's invitation as a keynote speaker to the Division of Clinical Psychology Annual Conference: A response

## BPS Psychology of Women Section

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The Division of Clinical Psychology annual conference (1–3 December 2010) invited Professor Zucker as a keynote speaker. Professor Zucker is considered an authoritative figure in the controversial diagnosis and 'treatment' of children with 'Gender Identity Disorder' (GID). He is also the Chair for the American Psychiatric Association's Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders Work Group for the DSM 5, which has proposed contentious revisions such as the inclusion of 'Paraphilic Coercive Disorder' (PCD).

Professor Zucker considers a diagnosis of GID when a child displays 'gender incongruence' such as rejecting toys or clothes considered to be associated with their gender (e.g. a girl's rejection of feminine clothes).

PCD is proposed as an addition, the diagnosis being suggested when an individual has 'sought sexual stimulation from forcing sex on three or more non-consenting persons on separate occasions'. There are concerns that this pathologises rape, as well as the potential for misuse in the legal system.

Zucker's invitation as a keynote speaker has presented concerns regarding the DCP and BPS' position on GID and the other issues raised.

Below is a copy of a statement by the Society's Psychology of Women Section.

**T**HE Division of Clinical Psychology invited Professor Kenneth Zucker from Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) as a keynote for its annual conference in December 2010. Professor Zucker is considered an authoritative figure in the controversial diagnosis and 'treatment' of children with 'Gender Identity Disorder' (Hill et al., 2006). He is also the Chair for the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders Work Group for the DSM-5 ([www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org)), which has proposed several highly contentious revisions including the introduction of 'Paraphilic Coercive Disorder' (PCD).

### **Gender Identity Disorder (GID)**

Professor Zucker considers a diagnosis of

GID when a child displays 'gender incongruence' that can present itself as a rejection of 'culturally stereotypical' feminine or masculine toys, clothes or activities ([www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org)). A girl's rejection of 'feminine' clothes is a common cause for referral to Zucker's GID clinic (Zucker & Bradley, 2004). However, there has been much feminist critique into the pathologisation of women who challenge stereotypical gender roles as well as the negative impact that these gender roles can have on women's well-being (Friedan, 1963; Ussher, 1991; Jimenez, 1997). However, Zucker argues that gender role conformity is 'healthy and good' (Langer & Martin, 2004). Furthermore, Zucker (1999) encourages treatment even when children show no distress regarding their 'gender incongruence'; while others

have argued that the distress is often experienced by the parents (Wren, 2002). Zucker and Bradley (2004) concur that parents play an important role in the development of GID and they argue that parental reinforcement or tolerance of gender incongruent behaviour exacerbates the 'problem'. Zucker and Bradley (2004) also argue that maternal psychopathology is an important factor. The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) summarised Zucker's work and states that '...these children are also frequently in homes where the maternal psychopathology is evident and that these children develop separation anxiety because of a mother who is emotionally unavailable' (York, 2008, para. 2). Whereas Zucker and Bradley (2004) cite Stoller (1985), 'The more mother and the less father, the more femininity' (p. 610). Therefore, not only is female behaviour pathologised, it is construed as playing an important role in the development of male pathology also. This constructs female behaviour not only as 'abnormal' but as almost 'toxic' to males.

There has been much criticism regarding this diagnosis in the 30 years since its introduction to the DSM (e.g. Burke, 1996; Isay, 1997; Wilson, 2000; Wren, 2002; Menvielle & Tuerk, 2002; Hird, 2003; Langer & Martin, 2004; Lev, 2005; Bryant, 2008; Hegarty, 2009), particularly related to the oversimplified gender dichotomy as well as the disregard of changes to socially accepted gender roles over time (Hill et al., 2005). There have also been criticisms about the lack of consideration to gender diversity across cultures (Langer & Martin, 2004). However, Zucker has demonstrated dichotomist views on race in his statement, 'Suppose you were a clinician and a four-year-old black kid came into your office and said he wanted to be white. Would you go with that? ... I don't think we would' (Burlington, 2008, para. 5). This construction again assumes an underlying difference between being 'black' and being 'white', an essentialist view challenged by feminists (e.g. Hooks, 1990). However,

others have suggested that his 'treatment' of children with a diagnosis of GID could be theoretically similar to 'bleaching black children's skin in order to improve their social life among white children' (Pleak, 1999, cited in Langer & Martin, 2004, p.14). Langer and Martin (2004) argue that the 'treatment' shouldn't be with the child, but with the parents or groups who do not accept the diverse presentations of gender. They argue that this would be more successful at reducing the social ostracism that Zucker argues is the reason for his 'treatment.'

### **Homosexuality and GID**

Zucker and Bradley (2004) emphasise an association between GID and homosexuality. They argue that homosexuality is a common 'psychosexual outcome' of childhood GID and that adult females with this diagnosis '...are invariably attracted sexually to biological females' (Zucker & Bradley, 1999, p.372). This association with homosexuality has resulted in much criticism regarding GID as a tactic to reinstate homosexuality as a mental illness, after its removal from the DSM in 1973 (Burke, 1996). There have also been criticisms that GID 'treatment' is an attempt to prevent homosexuality in adulthood (e.g. Bartlett et al., 2000). Zucker and Bradley (1995) are cautious of this association, although they do state that clinical intervention for pragmatic rather than religious reasons is sensible, '...given that most parents, not surprisingly, prefer their children not to develop a homosexual orientation' (p.269) and that, '...a homosexual lifestyle in a basically unaccepting culture simply creates unnecessary social difficulties' (p.268). Zucker and Bradley (1995, p.267) cite Green (1987) who argues that, 'The right of parents to oversee the development of children is a long-established principle. Who is to dictate that parents may not try to raise their children in a manner that maximises the possibility of a heterosexual outcome?' However, the APA released a statement in 2000 against the use of repara-

tive or conversion therapies for sexual orientation due to their harmful or negative consequences (APA, 2000). Furthermore, there is research describing cases where 'treatments' for GID have also been harmful (e.g. Burke, 1996), while there is a lack of research describing the successful 'treatment' of GID (Zucker, 2001 cited in Zucker & Bradley, 2004). Therefore, ethically, this 'treatment' should not be implemented. Langer and Martin (2004) state that, 'Because the DSM does not consider homosexuality to be a mental disorder, there is no psychiatrically-sound rationale for preventing children from becoming homosexual' (p.14).

### **Transsexualism and GID**

Transsexualism is also portrayed as a common 'problem' or manifestation of GID (Hird, 2003) and despite the requirement of an adult GID diagnosis to justify available 'treatment' (Park & Manzon-Santos, 2000), there are concerns regarding the pathologisation of transsexualism and the overinclusiveness and ambiguity of the diagnostic criteria (Winters, 2007). Others argue that the GID diagnosis oversimplifies gender by constructing it as a binary of masculinity and femininity rather than a spectrum of possible gender variations (GID Reform Advocates, n.d.). Winters (2005) argues that this pathologisation of transsexualism exacerbates the stigma faced by gender-variant, gender-nonconforming, transgender, and transsexual people and highlights the similarity between these current perceptions of gender incongruence with perceptions of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals prior to the declassification of homosexuality. Although, Winters (2000) encourages GID reform rather than declassification to make 'treatment' available to those who choose it.

Although Zucker argues that the ethics for 'treating' GID to prevent homosexuality and transsexualism is to reduce the likelihood that these children will not be socially ostracized, he overlooks his own role in this segregation. To identify GID as pathological and

to state that the prevention of homosexuality and transsexualism are 'benefits' only encourages social exclusion to these groups, especially when Zucker has such an influential position. Furthermore, to challenge the 'tolerance' shown by parents to gender-incongruent behaviours as a part of 'treatment' (Zucker & Bradley, 2004) is directly opposed to this therapeutic aim as it creates social ostracism and eradicates the acceptance that could reduce social exclusion to these groups. By narrowing the concept of 'normal' in relation to gender increases the amount of gender diversity that can be considered 'abnormal'. Challenging intolerance to gender diversity, homosexuality and transsexualism is as important now as it was in 1973, particularly in relation to homophobic bullying and suicide risk of LGBT young people (Rivers, 2001; Walker, 2001).

### **Paraphilic Coercive Disorder (PCD)**

Zucker was appointed the Chair of the APA's workgroup on Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders for the development of the fifth version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). This Work Group is proposing the addition of 'Paraphilic Coercive Disorder', which requires that the individual "...has sought sexual stimulation from forcing sex on three or more nonconsenting persons on separate occasions" ([www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org)). This disorder has also received much criticism (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2005; Franklin, 2009; Clavant, 2010) and there are grave concerns over its potential misuse within the legal system (Moser, 2009; Miller, 2010; Frances, 2010). The Work Group proposed this disorder for the DSM-III and DSM-IV but due to criticisms from feminists and health professionals it was rejected (Miller, 2010; Frances, 2010). Some have argued that the entire paraphilias section is 'so severely flawed' that it should be removed (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2005, p.92).

Concerns regarding this disorder include its pathologisation of rape, which removes responsibility from the individual (Clavant,

2010; Frances, 2010) as well as normalising what the DSM-5 refers to as 'situational or opportunistic' rapes ([www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org)). In stating that the individual needs to have raped three or more times implies that they need to have raped more than what could be considered a part of normative sexual behaviour. While many feminists would agree that sexual coercion is a part of normative sexual behaviour (Kelly, 1987; Gavey, 2005) the emphasis on an individualistic and medical explanation of rape neglects to consider a variety of cultural and social factors (Brownmiller, 1971; Sanday, 1981; Walby, Hay & Soothill, 1983; Walker, 1997; Gavey, 2005; Anderson & Doherty, 2008). It also neglects to challenge the coercion within normative heterosexual relations. In choosing not to pathologise all sexual coercion the Work Group excuses/condones some forms of rape. This medicalised construction of rape builds on evolutionary theory, which argues that, '...sexual coercion can increase a man's Darwinian fitness' (Quinsey, 2010) and colludes with the male sex drive discourse (Holloway, 1984) when arguing that rape is a result of failed 'inhibitory processes' (Thornton, 2010). It also venerates the coital

imperative and pathologises homosexuality by arguing that sexual behaviours that are 'reproductively irrelevant' could be a symptom of pathology (Quinsey, 2009).

## Conclusions

The appointment of Professor Zucker as the Chair of the APA's Work Group on Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders for the DSM-5 has resulted in an angry and concerned response from a variety of LGBT groups (such as Choe, 2008; [www.queerty.com](http://www.queerty.com), 2009; [www.tsroadmap.com](http://www.tsroadmap.com), 2010). Online petitions requesting that he be removed from the Work Group has gained over 9,500 supporters before closing ('Objection to DSM-V Committee Members on Gender Identity Disorders', [www.thepetitionsite.com](http://www.thepetitionsite.com), 2010) and organisations have released formal statements criticising the APA's decision (such as Burleton, 2008). Zucker's invitation to the DCP's annual conference has also sparked concerns regarding the message this sends regarding the DCP and the Society's position on GID, its 'treatment', homosexuality, transsexualism and the controversial DSM-5 revisions.

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## Dates for your diary

Event	Date	Where	Web address
London and Home Counties' Branch Psychology For All Event	26 March 2011	London: University of Westminster	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/lhc/forthcoming_events_lhc.cfm">http://www.bps.org.uk/lhc/forthcoming_events_lhc.cfm</a>
Psychotherapy Section Annual Conference 2011	28-29 March 2011	Van Mildert College, The University of Durham	
BPS History & Philosophy of Psychology Section Annual Conference 2011	19-21 April 2011	University of Oxford: Lady Margaret Hall	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/history/events/events_home.cfm">http://www.bps.org.uk/history/events/events_home.cfm</a>
BPS Annual Conference 2011	4-6 May 2011	Glasgow: Marriot Hotel	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2011/Psychology%20of%20Women%20Section">http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2011/Psychology of Women Section</a>
Annual Conference 2011	13 -15 July 2011	Cumberland Lodge, Berkshire, SL4 2HP	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/pows">www.bps.org.uk/pows</a>

# The methodological mayhem of experimental videogame research

Linda K. Kaye

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**I**N RECENT YEARS, research on videogames has tended to focus on the negative effects of violent game content on aggression-related variables (see Anderson et al., 2010). A large majority of this research has been experimental, and has claimed causal links between violent content exposure and increases in aggressive thoughts, feelings and behaviour (e.g. Anderson & Carnagey, 2009), and desensitisation to real life violence (Carnagey, Anderson & Bushman, 2007). A large proportion of experimental videogame research compares participants' aggression scores between conditions of violent and non-violent videogames. Typically, participants are randomly assigned to play either a violent or non-violent videogame for approximately 15 minutes, and asked to complete post-test measures of aggression. Self-reported aggression measures such as the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) and the State Hostility Scale (Anderson, Deuser & DeNeve, 1995) have been typical choices of written measures of aggression. In addition, physical aggression measures are commonly used within experimental videogame research. One such measure includes the modified Taylor Competitive Reaction Time Test (TCRTT; Anderson & Dill, 2000; Anderson & Murphy, 2003), which requires participants to administer noise blasts to a confederate. Greater intensity and/or duration of noise blasts have been suggested to represent higher levels of aggressive behaviour (Anderson & Dill, 2000). The general trends in experimental gaming research show that levels of aggression are higher for participants in the violent compared to non-violent game conditions, although some studies have not

replicated this trend (Ivory & Kalyanaraman, 2007; Ferguson et al., 2008).

Despite the fact that there is substantial research examining the effects of violent videogames on aggression-related outcomes, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from these effects, due to a number of methodological drawbacks within much experimental gaming research. This article will discuss these limitations in further detail.

## Sampling

Although convenience sampling is common in psychological research, it is not necessarily suitable for research on videogames. Convenience samples of undergraduate psychological students are not representative of gamers, thus limiting generalisability of the research to real-life situations. The issues associated with convenience sampling in videogame research are particularly noteworthy when considering the conclusions proposed by Anderson and Bushman (2001). They conducted a meta-analysis on violent videogame exposure and aggression and concluded that there is clear evidence that violent videogame exposure increases levels of aggression in young adults and children. Further to this, they implicate violent videogame use as a public-health risk to children and youths. Although these claims are based both on experimental and non-experimental studies, it is of concern that the majority of these studies failed to state participants' prior videogame experience. Indeed, the majority of the experimental studies in the meta-analysis were conducted using undergraduate psychology students. Further to this, potential covariates such as time spent gaming and videogame

experience were not measured and these are likely to be significantly different between these two populations and this has implications for gaming experiences.

A further discrepancy between the sampling population and real world gamers is gender. Undergraduate students, particularly psychology students, tend to be female. This is in contrast to gamers who tend to be male (Griffiths, Davies & Chappell, 2003; Williams, Yee & Caplan, 2008). This gender difference is important as males and females experience games differently. Males, for example, tend to focus on the competitive and mastery aspects of games, compared to females who focus more on cooperation and communication in games (Kafia, 1996).

Another point that is related to unrepresentative sampling is that undergraduate psychology students are not necessarily familiar with videogame technology. In lab-based studies where participants are required to play a videogame for a predetermined time, unfamiliarity with games technology could result in unrepresentative gameplay experiences. This could lead to negative consequences through the frustrations of mastering the controls and lack of progression in the game. If this is what participants experience, then this may not adequately reflect the experiences of gamers, consequently this method may lack validity. Experimental gaming research therefore requires the use of regular videogamers as participants, to better represent true-to-life gaming experiences and increase external validity.

### **Gameplay period**

Validity may be undermined further due to the short time periods many experiments impose on participants to play the violent or non-violent videogames. The average time period in most studies is approximately 15 minutes, which does not necessarily represent a true-to-life gameplay experience. It is interesting to note that Ferguson et al.'s (2008) study, which used a significantly longer time period of 45 minutes, did not

observe any significant differences in aggressive behaviour between violent and non-violent videogame conditions for either self-report or behavioural measures. This implies that videogame research could benefit from extended gameplay periods, to allow more realistic and ecologically valid gaming experiences.

### **Social contexts**

A further limitation of experimental research for studying the effects of gaming, is that there is little scope for examining potential social factors. Social contexts (e.g. online or offline) and types of social play (cooperative or competitive) are strong determinants of the gaming experience, and can determine the nature of the outcomes following gameplay. In addition, within social gaming, other players' actions can influence the nature of the gaming experience (Kaye & Bryce, submitted). That is, if team-players perform badly, then this is more likely to have negative consequences for player mood than if they perform well. Existing research has failed to examine these factors within an experimental context, namely due to the difficulties of manipulating and controlling these factors in the laboratory. A consideration of other methodologies is therefore justified for future research to examine these issues to a greater extent.

### **Conclusion**

Experimental videogame studies should aim to use regular gamers as participants to overcome the practical issues of unfamiliarity with videogame technology, and to account for the intrinsic motivations for gaming which cannot easily be established when using convenience sampling. Extending gameplay periods in the lab is also required in order for research to represent more ecologically valid gaming periods. It is likely that longer time periods will facilitate more enjoyable 'flow' states which cannot necessarily be experienced in limited periods of time.

To study the effects of videogames, it is necessary to consider the context of gameplay (e.g. social gameplay, educational contexts). The context in which gaming occurs is crucial for understanding gamers' experiences, and can offer greater insight into the associated psychological consequences. Further, understanding gaming motivations is particularly useful for researchers, as these can reveal the factors which are important for gamers to continue playing, and are the fundamental components in determining the nature of the

gaming experience. Experimental and questionnaire-based studies can address these issues to some extent, but there is a great need for qualitative research methodology to 'hear the voices' of gamers to better understand the constituting factors for meaningful gameplay experiences.

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# Why we should study... technology and situated cognition

Simon Knight

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ONLINE readership of newspapers has increased dramatically and many readers – whether professionally or through personal interest – also read some of the increasing range of scientific blogs. Tools such as Google Reader make articles easy to follow by using the site RSS feed. RSS feeds create an ‘inbox’ where your subscribed articles will be collected together. Twitter has become increasingly popular to share stories ([www.twitter.com/mindhacks](http://www.twitter.com/mindhacks) for psychology) alongside Delicious, which is a ‘social bookmark sharing website’, this allows you to collect together bookmarks and tag them with keywords. These feeds can be useful for teaching, or sharing information with students or colleagues. Furthermore, they also provide frequent updates of interesting research, often simplifying concepts or discussing them in novel and applied ways.

Within a recent trend, two particularly interesting articles were published over the summer. First, the head of Ofqual, Isabel Nisbet, was quoted in the *Guardian* stating that she thought paper-and-pen school exams would shortly be replaced with wholly computerised exams (Shepherd, 2010). The other article was titled: *Cellphones do the remembering for us* and was published in the *New York Times* (Nir, 2010). This pointed out that fewer people could remember phone numbers, even of family, since the proliferation of mobile phone phonebook use. Not so long ago, people needed to remember phone numbers by heart; now it is common for mobile phone users to be unable to recall many numbers, including their own.

## Educational assessment

The *Guardian* article stated ‘The era of the pen-and-paper exam is drawing to a close because teenagers are more comfortable typing answers on a keyboard than writing them down, the government’s exams regulator says.’ This is specifically because ‘there was now an issue of validity’ with traditional paper exams because pupils no longer wrote things to assist with learning.

A position relevant to the scientifically minded psychologist comes from Andrew Davis (Davis, 1998a), who has written extensively on the validity of exams in general and has called this assumption into question from the position of philosophy of education. The two major issues in this instance seem to be:

- 1) *External validity*: If pupils don’t use a pen and paper frequently outside the classroom, then assessing them using these methods may not be illuminating in terms of their abilities in the real world.
- 2) *Internal validity*: Pupils no longer use pen and paper as part of their cognitive apparatus to ‘assist with learning’, so when we assess them using this method, we are giving them something alien to work with and their abilities are unlikely to be reflected using these means.

On the first issue of external validity, tests already given to pupils reflect very little of their ‘real world’ ability (Davis, 1998b). External validity is not something most exams strive for. In fact, abstraction from the ‘real world’ seems to be held as a gold standard for exams.

Secondly, when considering internal validity, we question the realism of using any

one tool (pen and paper, keyboard, etc.) rather than having access to the plethora of tools available. Even if we wish to restrict these tools somewhat, we already accept that in some exams calculators, annotated anthologies, maps and source texts are not only allowed, but fundamental to performance. The issue of validity already exists; why do we assess pupil abilities in abstraction from the tools they ordinarily use to express those abilities? These tools include group work, independent research, ICT tools and other subject specific equipment, and so on.

### **Situated cognition and assessment**

More interestingly though, the assumption in Nisbet's statement regarding the validity of pen and paper testing is an assumption of either situated (see, for example, Robbins & Aydede, 2008) or extended (Clark & Chalmers, 2002) cognition. Broadly, this is an assumption that the cognitive tools, including physical artefacts at our disposal, are fundamental to that cognition. In situated cognition this is because our cognition occurs alongside, but is separate from, the tool. In extended cognition, the tool literally constitutes a part of cognition; it is considered part of the extended mind. For example, a well-timed question can scaffold or support a child's thinking; this would be part of the environment supporting the child's cognition in situated cognition. The extended mind approach would argue the question formed a constitutive part of the cognition itself. Thus Clark and Chalmers (2002) have described Otto, a man with Alzheimer's, who uses a reliably available notebook to remember the route to the museum. This, they claim, is a constituent part of Otto's extended mind and is functionally equivalent to an internal component. So the situated extended distinction is between supporting cognition and constituting it; either way, the artefact is fundamental to the cognition. While the positions are arguably philosophical in nature, its implications for psychology are obvious in terms of what we understand cognition to

be. Furthermore, there are implications in how we conceptualise memory, which might be radically different given these distinctions. In fact, the more radical extended position has been discussed in the context of biologically dominated psychiatry. (See Ward, 2009; Drayson, 2009; and in particular Bray, 2008. See Kono, 2010, for a more general link to psychology.)

In the context of assessment, Nisbet's comment was interesting because it seemed to commit to the idea that pen and paper once, but no longer, literally supports the thinking of the child. Thus, the pen and paper is not simply a tool with which the child expresses thoughts, but rather forms part of their cognitive apparatus. The process is not merely about expression, in terms of bringing thoughts from mind to paper, but also creation and assisting in the process of thinking. Nisbet's concern is twofold:

- 1) Children no longer use pen and paper in classrooms and at home to help them 'think out' their problems, therefore the pen and paper is unlikely to form part of a child's cognitive apparatus now.
- 2) By giving children tests using pen and paper, we are asking them to perform tasks using cognitive tools they are not familiar with; this raises issues of internal validity for our tests if, in fact, children are failing to display their true cognitive skill as a result of using these unfamiliar tools.

By understanding the epistemic assumptions and the conceptual steps in the argument, we can start to question them. This is a simple example for which we could create simple experiments in which some complete tasks using pen and paper and computers. Indeed, such experiments have been done, for example Horkay et al. (2006) and Puhan et al. (2007), both of whom delivered the same test in both paper and computerised format, both finding that, at least for students more familiar with computer based assessments, results tend to be better in this mode. This is contrary to what one might

initially suspect, that regardless of mode of assessment, language would be the crucial 'extension' utilised. Recently we have seen a number of news articles on whether the internet or technology is changing the way we think; important work is being done in psychology to tackle these questions (Chen, 2010). Furthermore, we must ensure we are at the forefront of these discussions and that evidence is used appropriately in the press.

The extended mind argument has some strong philosophical support; however, the assumption in this instance is that a change of material in examinations automatically leads to a change of skill isn't clear cut. There are serious questions about the nature of exams, and whether we ought to allow more cognitive tools to be used, including research materials. However, language seems to be the fundamental tool for both pen and paper and typing. It may be that externalising, using pen and paper or PC, is crucial to helping us create, rather than simple express, our thoughts. The qualitative differences in written work from children using pen and paper versus a PC is something that ought to be investigated. By understanding what facets of the shift in modality are most important, we might be able to mediate their effects to continue to use the arguably more practical, and cheaper, pen and paper assessment methods.

A fundamental shift in the nature of exams, from abstract tightly controlled assessments to something more situated and

inclusive, might be desirable. However, Nisbet's implication seems to be that a simple shift from pen and paper to ICT should do; this might address another commentary, that left-handers might do better on oral exams due to their poor handwriting (Blake, 2010), but it is still crucial that we investigate these differences including pragmatic issues of handwriting and the like.

The assessment expert Professor Dylan Wiliam's response to Nisbet was two-fold. Pragmatic reasons (such as we don't have enough PCs) and conceptual (the skills are different). While certainly the former is sound, it isn't clear that we know whether the latter is accurate. Certainly, some on-screen exams patently do use different skills, because they were set up to. Indeed, when writing, there are subtle differences – cut and paste, formatting to aid structuring the argument and so on – but whether these change the nature of the skill or mediate traditional skills isn't clear; psychology and education departments are in a prime position to research this. Our job should be not only to carry out this research, but to ensure it gets publicised so that it is clear to experts, professionals and the media.

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# A note on latent cognition and the Likert Scale: A brief theoretical model

Christina Richards

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THE LIKERT SCALE (Likert, 1932) is a graduated scale in which a participant answers a given question by ticking a box along that scale which corresponds best to their answer. The question may, for example, be posed as a statement such as 'I like to listen to classical music'. The person filling in the scale would select the answer that best reflects their degree of agreement to that statement ranging from a negative response such as 'strongly disagree' (the person does not like classical music), to a positive response such as 'strongly agree' (the person does like classical music). If a neutral option is available such as 'neither agree nor disagree' the scale may consist of five points or occasionally, for finer gradations of opinion, seven points. Occasionally 'forced choice' scales are used which have an even number of points and do not have a neutral position. This means that participants are required to take a position, in this instance for or against classical music.

The Likert Scale is used in many applications within the social sciences, including clinical applications such as the Short Form-12 (SF-12) health survey and the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE) outcome measure. Consequently the assumptions implicit in the design of the scale are of great importance, not only with regards to social sciences research, but with regards to the evaluation of the effectiveness of clinical interventions. There are known problems associated with the design of the scale, however, such as the assumption that it has an interval nature wherein the scale points are equidistant from one another. In addition, the participant is unable to define a response smaller than a scale marker

(Coolican, 1994) and it is unclear whether scores in the centre of the distribution, such as 'neither agree nor disagree' represent neutrality (e.g. I don't feel strongly about classical music) or ambivalence (e.g. I really love some classical music and really hate the rest) (Ibid). Oppenheim (1992) points to the fact that in a test which uses several Likert Scale questions the same overall scores may be accrued through different combinations of responses (e.g. strong opinions in both directions, or relatively neutral responses all the way down). It is to these known problems that this note seeks to add.

The problem inherent in the Likert Scale which I would like to highlight is as follows: If an experimental design requires a participant to make a second rating on the same scale item and so to move from one Likert Scale point to another (for example, when evaluating an intervention to see if there has been a degree of change, as in the clinical outcome measures above; or upon repeat testing in reliability analysis) then, as demonstrated below, a single scale point may not be able to represent the degree of cognitive shift that has actually taken place.

I propose that the cognitive change required to create the represented single point change may be called 'latent cognition' which is derived from the physical sciences term 'latent heat'. Latent (from the Latin *latere* – to lie hidden) heat is the extra energy required for a phase change (Perrot, 1998), that is, to change the state of a substance upon heating. Thus when ice is heated, while the heat applied may remain constant, extra energy must be supplied (the same amount of heat for more time) to change it from ice to water (from a solid to a

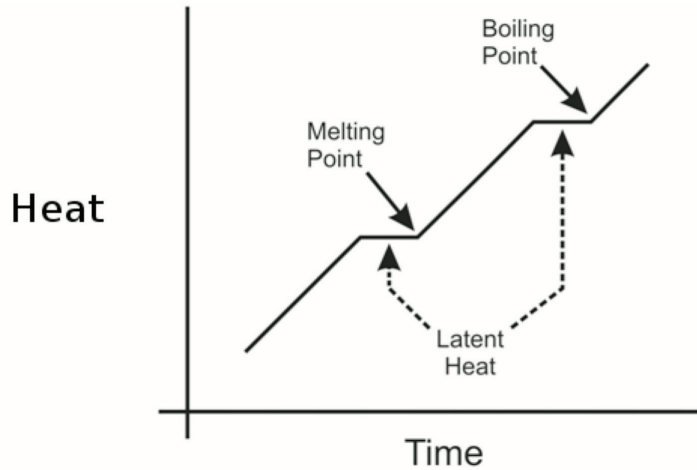


Figure 1: Time taken for H2O to change temperature and state, given application of constant energy

liquid), and again from water to steam (from a liquid to a gas). Consequently the energy input graph is not linear, but stepped in nature (see Figure 1).

Similarly to latent heat in the physical sciences a stepped nature of change may occur, but not be seen, in the change over time of Likert Scale responses. Note that, while the change in cognition may be linear, it is the scale response that is stepped because some of the change in the cognition of the participant will not be captured due to the discrete, yet contiguous nature of the scale.

In Figure 2 we can see a change of one Likert Scale point from -1 (Disagree) to 0 (Neither agree nor disagree) as we might in any repeat analysis.

However, if we decimalise the scale the range of the minimum shift required to show

a change in response can be seen to be from as little as 0.2 Scale points to 1.4 scale points, while still selecting the nearest (integer) scale point marker of -1 or 0 (See Figure 3).

If the scale has been validated using participants that make a 0.2 point shift from -0.6 to -0.4 representing the same one point change on the original Likert scale as the participant in the example shown in Figure 2, the change would be five times smaller than that of, for example, a client filling in the scale who changes from -1.4 to -0.4, yet is represented in the same manner on the original five point Likert Scale. The extra 0.8 point shift made by the client that was required to show a change on the scale is represented in the same manner on the original five point Likert Scale. The extra 0.8 point shift made by the client that was required to show a change on the scale is represented in the same manner on the original five point Likert Scale. The extra 0.8 point shift made by the client that was required to show a change on the scale is represented in the same manner on the original five point Likert Scale. The extra 0.8 point shift made by the client that was required to show a change on the scale is represented in the same manner on the original five point Likert Scale.

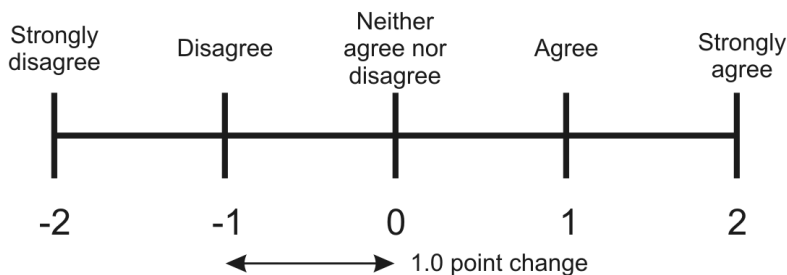


Figure 2: Standard cognition change of one point recorded by a Likert Scale

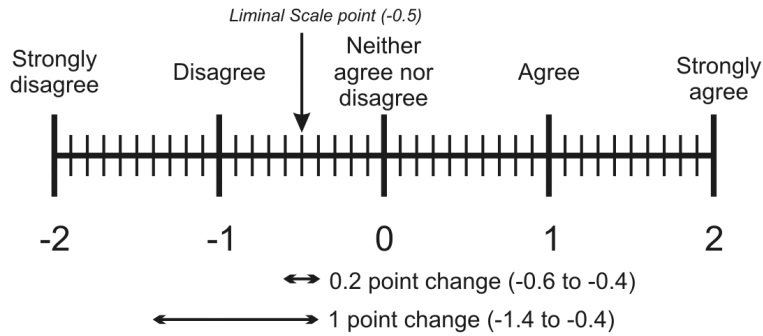


Figure 3: Actual cognition change

sciences example above. Thus in both cases what is assumed to be a linear increase of heat or scale response, hides a stepped state change.

The stepped nature in both cases is a function of the medium; the melting and vaporising point of point of water in the physical sciences example, and the contiguous nature of the Likert scale in the social sciences.

This problem of latent cognition may be ameliorated to some extent within quantitative psychology by utilising finer scales, for example seven point scales to increase reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Another option may be to use a visual analogue scale (McCormack, Horne & Sheather, 1988) in which the experimenter invites the partici-

pant to mark along a line, and then measures that line to the mark in order to determine the score. However, this is time intensive and even for fine variations still has the problem of providing interval or ordinal level data, usually millimetres. The problem is, to some extent, insoluble.

Perhaps then, as is so often the case, the confounding variance that remains must be accounted for in the analysis, rather than in the methodology; something we would often do well to remember as we derive our clinical implications or statistical 'answers' with little thought for what a move from -1 (Disagree) to 0 (Neither agree nor disagree) actually means. This concerns both the mathematics behind the scale design and application, and also, in a more phenomenological sense,

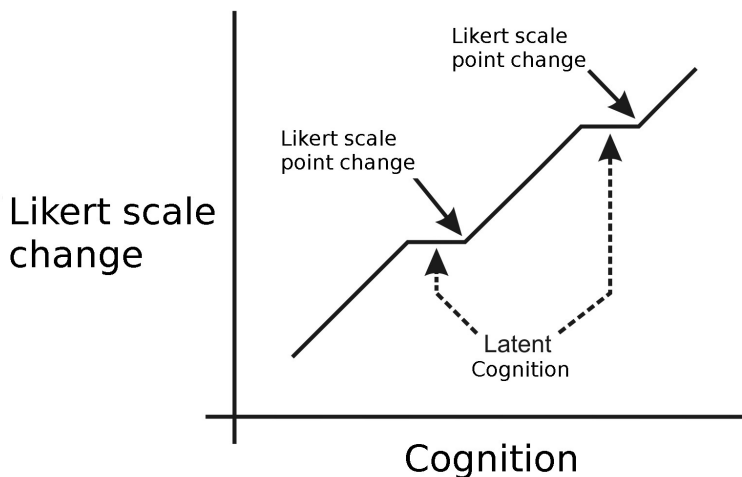


Figure 4: Cognition change as evidenced by Likert scale point change

what the answer means for the person involved. Clinically, there may have been a great deal of cognitive change effected by a client that represents a real shift and accomplishment; but the single scale point change may not be representative of that in clinical audit, or, as is sometimes sadly the case, when clinicians make treatment decisions. It behoves us then, as clinicians and researchers, to understand the limitations of

Likert Scale changes and to adjust our research and practice accordingly, perhaps by attending to qualitative phenomenology as well as refined quantitative measures.

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	Annual Conference 2011	4–6 May	Marriott Hotel, Glasgow	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2011">www.bps.org.uk/ac2011</a>
	Student Members Group	6 May	Marriott Hotel, Glasgow	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/smg2011">www.bps.org.uk/smg2011</a>
	Division of Counselling Psychology	14–16 July	Thistle Hotel, Bristol	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dcop2011">www.bps.org.uk/dcop2011</a>
	DCP Faculty for Learning Disabilities	1–3 September	Palace Hotel, Manchester	<a href="http://www.mhid2011.congress.co.uk">www.mhid2011.congress.co.uk</a>
Division of Health Psychology Annual Conf	14–16 September	Southampton University	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dhp2011">www.bps.org.uk/dhp2011</a>	

# Where psychology meets law

Annalies Vredeveltdt

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**S**HOULD we believe everything an eyewitness says? How can you tell whether a person is lying? Can we let a person out of prison or will they reoffend? Do newspaper articles about high-profile criminal cases bias jury decisions? These are some of the questions being asked (and sometimes answered) in the field of psychology and law. In this article, I would like to tell you about the student society of the European Association of Psychology and Law (EAPL-S): what we do, what we can do for you, and what it is like to be involved in a student society. I end with a sneak peak into some of the interesting research being conducted in the field of psychology and law.

One of the main events organised by our parent organisation are the annual conferences on psychology and law, which are attended by many legal psychologists from Europe and beyond. The most recent EAPL conference was held in Gothenburg, and I was able to attend thanks to PsyPAG's bursary support. The student society of the EAPL was founded only a few years ago, with the goals of informing new students interested in psychology and law, supporting current students in the field, and building bridges between students and professionals. We organise student events at European, American, and Australian psychology and law conferences, such as breakfast, wine minglers, and pub nights. But the EAPL-S is also active during the rest of the year. We have representatives in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, North America, Australia, Mexico and Russia, and this allows us to organise social and academic events all over the world.

If you are interested in psychology and law, there are a number of ways in which we can help you. First of all, being students

ourselves, we know that it can be difficult sometimes to attend conferences because the fees, travel, and accommodation costs tend to add up. Therefore, we give out awards to help students attend EAPL conferences. During the last conference, we gave out three travel awards (worth €150 each) to the student who travelled the furthest distance, the student with the best paper proposal, and the student with the highest grades. In addition, we gave out three awards (worth €200, €150 and €100) to students who presented posters. If you want to be eligible to win one of these awards next year, see [www.eaplstudent.com](http://www.eaplstudent.com) closer to the time of the conference, which takes place in March 2011. Another way in which we might be able to help you is by putting you into contact with people at institutions where you might want to pursue a degree, go on a study visit, organise a meeting, etc. We have a broad network of mentors who are experts in the field and who have agreed to advise students who contact them via our student society. If you want to know more about our mentoring scheme or if you have any other questions for us, please contact us at [eaplstudent@gmail.com](mailto:eaplstudent@gmail.com).

I have been the vice-president of the student society for almost two years now, and have not regretted my involvement. Doing a PhD is generally a relatively solitary activity, which can be isolating at times. Being involved with the student society has been a great way of breaking that isolation from time to time. First of all, working with the board and representatives of the student society has been a great pleasure. For me, having good friends who are also interested in the same things is a unique experience in itself. In addition, I have really enjoyed meeting new people at the events we have

organised. I have also very much liked being able to help students who are thinking of going into the field of psychology and law. Finally, as vice-president of the student society I have been able to attend the Executive Board meetings of our parent organisation, and these have given me much more insight into the workings of the EAPL. All in all, I highly recommend getting involved in a student society. We were lucky that the EAPL was extremely supportive of our efforts to increase student involvement. If you are thinking about setting up a student society of your own, I would suggest talking to existing organisations in your field. Chances are that they will be more than willing to help you.

Even if you are not working in the field of psychology and law, I hope that the questions at the start of this article have sparked some interest in the topic. To give you just a small glimpse of the type of research being conducted in this field, I would like to tell you about a few interesting studies in my research area, namely, eyewitness memory. So, should we believe everything an eyewitness says? From the way this question is phrased it seems rather obvious that the answer should be no. But just how much do witnesses remember about a witnessed event? It should come as no surprise that people tend to forget details over time (see Schacter, 1999; or the intriguing study concerning the memory of concentration camp survivors after 40 years by Wagenaar & Groeneweg, 1990). What is less intuitive, however, is that people can come to remember details that were never present at the witnessed event. The classic example of this phenomenon is the study by Loftus et al. (1978). After viewing a traffic accident, witnesses were exposed to misleading information. In a later interview, over half of the witnesses incorrectly remembered seeing a yield sign rather than a stop sign, which could have shifted the blame for the accident. Even more striking, Crombag et al. (1996) asked 193 Dutch people about a particularly well-known plane crash in the Netherlands, which caused a lot of deaths.

When asked whether they had seen the video of the crash, 55 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had seen the video. In fact, no video of the crash ever existed.

These studies show that we should not simply accept everything a witness says. Fortunately, a number of interview methods have been developed by legal psychologists, which have been proven to help witnesses remember more. My own PhD research concerns one such method in particular, namely, closing your eyes. In a series of studies, I have found that witnesses remember substantially more about a witnessed event if they close their eyes during the interview. Moreover, these additional details are not accompanied by an increase in false details of the kind described in aforementioned studies. So, next time you are trying to remember something, I would advise you to close your eyes. If you are interested in this type of research, I hope you will consider attending the next EAPL conference, which will feature a lot of high quality research on this topic and many more. The next conference will be combined with the American and Australian psychology and law organisations, so you will get three for the price of one. One final selling point: the conference will take place in sunny Miami. I hope to see you there!

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# Appearance matters – and so does research: Reflections on becoming a researcher

Nicola Stock

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It is 2003. I am sitting in a GCSE maths lesson squirming under the close scrutiny of my classmates as I try desperately to solve the bewildering equation in front of me. My teacher, exasperated, hovers above me impatiently. ‘But I don’t know the answer!’ I insist as I stare up at him blankly. ‘Yes you DO!’ he cries, virtually jumping up and down and pulling out what little hair he has left. ‘It’s EASY!’

Six years later, after deciding that an MSc in research methods would be of significant value in my pursuit of a career in psychology, I am faced with the same dilemma. My Advanced Statistics lecturer bounces around the room enthusiastically, becoming even more excited with the emergence of yet another mathematical symbol that I can’t translate, whilst I wonder why on earth I paid good money to subject myself to this again.

Thankfully, through sheer stubborn determination, I graduated from my MSc course in November 2009 and was lucky enough to be taken on as a Research Associate at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) at the University of the West of England.

Since 1998, CAR has strived to ‘make a real difference to the lives of the many hundreds of thousands of people with appearance-related concerns, both in the United Kingdom and across the world’. Under the co-direction of Professor Nichola Rumsey and Dr Diana Harcourt, CAR continues to achieve this by acting ‘as a focus and centre of excellence for psychological and interdisciplinary research in appearance, disfigurement and related studies’.

Earning my place at CAR was a lot to do with being in the right place at the right time, but it was also about being proactive and willing to forfeit some spare time to volunteer on a regular basis. Volunteering can be tricky. On the one hand you want to take advantage of the opportunity, but you also need to balance it alongside your studies, paid work and any other commitments you may have. The last thing you want to do is to burn bridges by being unreliable. You also need to be prepared to take on some of the less desirable tasks, such as data entry and photocopying... and be grateful! Your work will hopefully pay off and you never know where it might lead. Be trustworthy, enthusiastic and willing to learn and develop, and you’re on to something.

To demonstrate my commitment and interest further, I conducted my MSc dissertation research in an appearance-related area. My study focused on the psychological effects of a single exercise session on body image in women, a thus-far neglected research subject. Body image concern is termed ‘normative’ within the general population and its consequences can be severe. Physical activity is known to promote physical and psychological wellbeing, but less is known about its effect on body image specifically and how this relates to instigation and adherence to exercise. Knowing more about this relationship may allow us to tailor exercise sessions in a way that promotes a positive, healthy body image.

Finding yourself a paid job in research is one thing, keeping it is another! Almost all research relies on fixed-term funding, often

from charitable organisations, and money for planned pursuits and ongoing expansion continues to be a major challenge. You should be prepared for short-term employment contracts and permanent uncertainty. Having said this, reliance on funding can keep your energy up and your ideas fresh. Competing for grants means you are never complacent and also gives you some understanding of the competitive world you are entering into.

By working at CAR, I am able to relate my existing academic knowledge and clinical experience to various applied settings, whilst continually expanding and developing my personal and professional skills. For me, life as a researcher is never short of opportunities. I am constantly challenged and almost always feel out of my comfort zone, but thanks to the unwavering support of the CAR team, this is always a positive and exciting experience. I am involved at every stage of the research process, from literature reviewing, to analysis, to dissemination, all the while safe in the knowledge that my work will not only benefit me professionally, but that it will be utilised in a practical and relevant way to make an important difference to others. As part of my role, I am currently leading the evaluation of a school-based intervention, designed by the charity Changing Faces and funded by the Department for Education, to improve attitudes and reduce discrimination towards individuals with a facial disfigurement. Following the dissemination of the research findings, a teachers' resource pack will be published, which aims to promote socially inclusive behaviours towards people who have a visible difference.

I have also been lucky enough to work in the South West Cleft Unit based at Frenchay Hospital in Bristol. Here, patients with cleft

lip and/or palate (CLP) and their families are able to visit specialists concerning every aspect of their treatment under one roof. Being born with CLP does not inevitably lead to psychosocial difficulties, but it is important to acknowledge the potentially elevated risk and provide appropriate support. The team offer advice during transitional stages, such as changing schools, as well as help with self-esteem, peer relationships and decisions surrounding treatment.

After less than a year at CAR, I have been entrusted with a wealth of responsibility, all of which I am left to manage in the way of my choosing. I am able to pursue my own interests and explore new territory. I have access to enough books and journal articles to satisfy my inner geek three times over, and I have been fortunate enough to be involved in CAR's biennial conference, Appearance Matters™. CAR has good connections both within and outside of the university, which has allowed me to meet and work alongside some of the best in the business. I continue to be star-struck on an almost weekly basis.

So, if like me, you bury your face in your hands at the mention of a hierarchical regression, and have never before considered the possibility of a career in psychological research, think again. And as for stats... Thank God for Andy Field.

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- To find out more about the Centre for Appearance Research and its past and current projects, or for sources of appearance-related support, visit: <http://hls.uwe.ac.uk/research/car.aspx>.

# The Chilean escape: What does this event tell us about male health and identity in the 21st century?

Michael Richards

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**T**HE BIGGEST HEADLINE in 2010 concerned the entrapment of 33 miners who were underground when part of the San Jose mine in Chile's Atacama desert collapsed. Seventeen days after the accident, rescuers found a note from the miners attached to a probe, saying that the men were still alive in the mine. Subsequently, all the men survived and memorable images were transmitted around the world of each one greeting their loved ones in emotional, heartfelt embraces.

After the euphoria of rescue, potential book sales, films, record deals and millions of pounds being swapped between hands, what will the miner's state of mind be? Psychologists will no doubt see it has an opportunity to write about the psychological implications through explanations relevant to neuropsychology, cognitive functioning and social conformity. Similarly, I have a perspective on this, relevant to my work with men in deprived areas, concerning their health and identity in society today.

This article will describe what can be learned about male identity and its implications on society today in relation to the 'Chilean miracle' as well as consider the state of men's health and how traditional male identities relate to this.

## **Male identity in the UK**

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, men were economically linked to being the breadwinner for the family, which personified their 'masculinity'. Men represented particular idiosyncrasies that 'made them men', for example, Levant (1995)

described traditional masculine norms as 'avoidance of femininity; restricted emotions; sex disconnected from intimacy; pursuit of achievement and status; self reliance; strength and aggression and homophobia'. Similarly, the working class men who emerged from the Chilean mine were personified as traditional men and breadwinners for their families by the media. For example, through interviews with family members you got a taste for the miners' day-to-day life.

However, since the 1930s this position has progressively become more difficult (Wetherall & Edley, 1999) because of, for example, the decline of traditional manual industries and the rise in female empowerment in attaining careers and delaying making families, which arguably prevent the traditional role of the breadwinner being fulfilled from a male perspective. This has mostly occurred in developed Western countries. Poverty in particular disempowers men, which contradicts the attributes associated with male identity such as being powerful and in control (Ruxton, 2002). This dissonance leads to emotional distress, low self esteem and damaging consequences towards their mental and physical health (Baker, 2001).

The 1980s saw some technological and societal changes that influenced the traditional concept of masculinity. The emergence of computer technology replaced the roles traditionally held by males in the workplace. Furthermore the media image of 'masculinity' diversified and the concept of the 'new man' emerged (Messner, 1993).

The 'new man' identity allows traditional behaviours associated with women to be socially acceptable for males to perform. For example, this new form of 'masculinity' permitted males to cry in public, cook at home, look after children and embrace emotions. Further to this, the concept of the 'metrosexual' (Simpson, 1994) amplified itself in the media, highlighting the importance of fashion for men. This term suggests that personal appearance is more important than ever before for men. The image of a 'metrosexual' can be seen in the appearance of David Beckham, Bono and George Clooney and can be compared to attributes stereotypically associated with gay men, a traditional concept rejected by traditional masculine ideals. The paradox between traditional masculinity and 'male metrosexuality' is challenging for men, particularly from deprived backgrounds. They do not know if they should be one or the other, which can only affect their mental and physical wellbeing and health in a negative way (Richards, 2010).

### **Men's health in the UK**

These changes undermine traditional masculinity identity and appear to be still relevant to today's men in how they are viewed and how they view themselves (Lawthom et al., 2010). This can be reflected in the poor state of men's health in the UK today, particularly for young men and older men over 60. Men's health is a problem in different ways, for example the average UK male life expectancy at birth is currently 75.3 years, two in every five drink too much alcohol and one in three younger men use illegal drugs (Men's Health Forum, 2010). In addition, there are three times more suicides among males compared to females, particularly amongst young men (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Men in routine and manual jobs are more likely to smoke and have chronic health problems than other men. Moreover, men in the north of the UK are generally less healthy than men in the south. For instance, men from

Manchester and Blackpool have the shortest life expectancy (Office for National Statistics, 2003).

These statistics can relate to the working class men who went into the mine in Chile, but what was being celebrated in terms of the emotion, love and embraces that touched the world's heart, is not normally seen being celebrated in the media or in society in general. Working class men in the UK are never celebrated as 'working class heroes', in quite the same way as the Chilean escape, unless there is an exciting story to tell, like being stuck in a mine.

### **Explanations for poor male health**

There are many explanations for poor male health including the suggestion that men are less willing than women to seek support in situations in which they need help, for example, not visiting the doctor (Rule & Gandy, 1994). Men may not have enough knowledge about symptoms to relate them to their experience and do not have the vocabulary to express concern. This could be through a lack of education at school or home (Prostrate Cancer Charity, 2009), which can be related to the fact that working class males are failing at all levels of education compared to females (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007). Furthermore, many men feel embarrassed despite the seriousness of more intimate health concerns such as testicular cancer (Everyman, 2010). Even though men are at greater risk for all leading causes of death, they are consistently less likely than women to perceive themselves as being at risk for health problems (Boehm et al., 1993). Would the miners emerging from the ground have sought medical care if it was not 'forced' on them when they came out of the mine? In addition, men's beliefs about manhood also influence their health. It seems that men who endorse dominant norms of masculinity adopt poorer health behaviours and have greater health risks than their peers who endorse less traditional norms (Holmes, 1995).

So what can we learn from the 'Chilean

escape' about men and masculinity? The most important lesson that can be learned about male identity here is that traditional male identity is not just about control, risk taking and being powerful with limited emotions, but in fact these idiosyncrasies come hand in hand with expressing emotion, loving their families and children and wanting a simple life, which most people crave in life. It is fair to say that: 'Gender politics is not just about standing up for

women. It is about interrogating masculinity and the specifics of male experience, as well as femininity and female experience ... gender is constructed not natural or god given' (Coote, 2000).

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# Book Review

## **How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing,** by

*Paul J. Silvia, PhD*

Published by the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC

**Reviewed by James A. Grange**

**Y**OU ARE NOT ALONE. PhD students consistently find it hard to gather motivation to write their thesis, and who could blame them? The blank white screen of ‘Chapter 1’ on your laptop is burning you a new retina, you are in your fourth – and typically unfunded – year of study, and the ever increasing competition to find post-doc employment is thrusting your head deeper into the sand. Are you in this situation? The time to act is NOW. Are you in your first year and want to avoid this situation? The time to act is NOW. What can you do? Buy – and I mean go and order it right this minute – Paul Silvia’s *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*.

As psychologists, we are professional researchers, professional teachers, professional coffee drinkers, and – yes, you guessed it – professional writers. All of our ‘professionals’ are fun, except for the last. Apart from a special few, most of us find academic writing hard and drier than the Sahara. Silvia’s book won’t make writing fun, but it will help to get it done.

The book is small, weighing in at 149 pages which can be read in an afternoon, but crammed full of useful tips into getting you to write productively. The secret? Make a writing schedule, and stick to it. Simple, eh? ‘Oh, but I suffer from writer’s block (insert alternative excuse for not writing), so it’s not as simple as that!’ Wrong! In Chapter 2, Silvia destroys many barriers to writing, leaving you with no reasonable excuse. My favourite is his destruction of the excuse that some people believe they can’t find time to write. Do you *find* time to teach? No! You have a teaching schedule, and you stick to it.

Do the same with writing; introduce a writing schedule into your working week: this is the take-home message of the book, and a powerful one at that.

Chapter 3 introduces some motivational tools that might be familiar: setting goals, organising your writing priorities, and monitoring your progress. For the über-geeks among us, Silvia provides us with an SPSS spreadsheet and syntax analysis to show your writing trends; such analysis shows that I have met 91 per cent of my writing schedules in 2010 thus far, averaging 962 words every time I sit down to write. This analysis isn’t just to be geeky; monitoring your writing habits in this way makes you more aware of your progress, and highlights your weaknesses (most of my unmet writing schedules fell on a Monday! Hmm...).

Chapter 4 provides tips for forming an ‘agraphia’ group among your colleagues – basically an ‘AA’ for those who wish to write more. I have not used this model in my own writing, but at my new faculty position I would be tempted to introduce it. This chapter is the only negative of the book; it felt more like a space-filler than an integral component of a successful writing plan. But many graduate students may benefit from introducing a writing group among their cohort.

This dip in tempo is soon compensated for by Chapter 5 where we really get into the nitty-gritty of writing: writing style. Silvia notes that academic writing is often weak, plagued by poor grammar and flabby sentences. His solution to these problems are introduced, including correct punctuation, use of em-dashes – useful for enclosing a parenthetical statement within a sentence – avoiding passive sentences, and so on. The most important advice here is to “write first, revise later” (Silvia, 2007; p.75). All too often, writers will attempt to construct a perfect first draft. Such perfectionism with every sentence soon descends

into inefficiency. (As Winston Churchill once said, 'Perfectionism is spelled P.A.R.A.L.Y.S.I.S'). Get words on the page; editing is what the second draft is for.

The final two chapters of substance deal with writing journal articles and writing books. Journal writing can be an intimidating experience for the newcomer, but Silvia provides excellent advice for the construction of each segment of your article. (I have used his formula for how to structure an introduction on my last two papers.) Silvia takes the reader comprehensively through the submission process, providing reassurance for inevitable rejections. Paper rejections hurt (until I read Silvia's advice I was under the impression that I was the only researcher that had frequent rejections), but you must be able to overcome the sting of rejection and tackle your revisions. Such subheadings in the chapter as 'What if [the reviewers] reject my paper?' and 'What if [the reviewers] make me change everything?' provide a map with which to traverse your revisions. One piece of advice I would add for any PhD student is to submit your work to a journal early into your degree; regardless of the outcome, you will gain critical feedback from experts in your field and such feedback will be priceless for your viva!

Silvia's advice will help you on your way to frequent and smooth submissions.

The chapter on writing books may seem irrelevant, but the message is the same as with any writing: make a schedule and stick to it. Silvia discusses many aspects of book writing – finding a co-author, planning your book, and how to find a publisher, etc. The counsel in this chapter was so convincing that I have set myself the task to one day write a book – that day will come when task-switching and reaction time research is in vogue!

In conclusion, this book is a fantastic guide on how to be a more efficient writer. Silvia writes in a light-hearted and incredibly engaging manner. Although aimed at early-career academics, the advice within is just as relevant to fledgling PhD or MSc students. So stop reading, order this book, and get writing!

#### **The author**

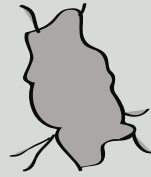
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## Psychology of Women Section

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Communications Officer webmaster@psypag.co.uk	Hester Duffy hester.duffy@gmail.com	2012
Information Officer info@psypag.co.uk	Jenna Condie J.Condie@pgr.salford.ac.uk	2012
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## About PsyPAG

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**PsyPAG** is a national organisation for all psychology postgraduates based at UK Institutions. Funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society, PsyPAG is run on a voluntary basis by postgraduates for postgraduates.

Its aims are to provide support for postgraduate students in the UK, to act as a vehicle for communication between postgraduates, and to represent postgraduates within the British Psychological Society. It also fulfills the vital role of bringing together postgraduates from around the country.

- PsyPAG has no official membership scheme; anyone involved in postgraduate study in psychology at a UK Institution is automatically a member.
- PsyPAG runs an annual workshop and conference and also produces a quarterly journal, which is delivered free of charge to all postgraduate psychology departments in the UK.
- PsyPAG is run by an elected committee, which any postgraduate student can be voted on to. Elections are held at the PsyPAG Annual Conference each year.
- The committee includes representatives for each Sub-Division within the British Psychological Society, their role being to represent postgraduate interests and problems within that division or the British Psychological Society generally. We also liaise with the Student Members Group of the British Psychological Society to raise awareness of post-graduate issues in the undergraduate community.
- Committee members also include Practitioners-in-Training who are represented by PsyPAG.

### Mailing List

PsyPAG maintains a JISCmail list open to ALL psychology postgraduate students. To join, visit [www.psypag.co.uk](http://www.psypag.co.uk) and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or direct: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?subed1=psych-postgrads&a=1](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?subed1=psych-postgrads&a=1).

This list is a fantastic resource for support and advice regarding your research, statistical advice or postgraduate issues.

### Social Networking

You can also follow PsyPAG on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/PsyPAG>) and add us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/?ref=home#%21/pages/psypag/130589426953875?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#%21/pages/psypag/130589426953875?ref=ts).

Again, this information is provided at [www.psypag.co.uk](http://www.psypag.co.uk).

[www.psypag.co.uk](http://www.psypag.co.uk)

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