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Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group

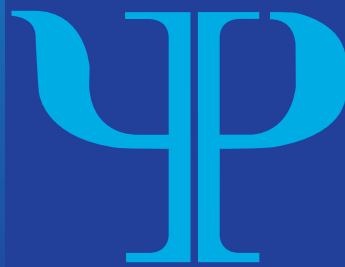
Quarterly

Issue 85 December 2012

Unravelling the benefits of knitting

Tips on Blogging

False Memory Illusions



Also in this issue:

Reflections on conducting empirical research

Conference and workshop reviews



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Editorial

Blaire Morgan

WELCOME to the 85th edition of the *PsyPAG Quarterly*. We hope that the great variety of reviews and research-based articles in this issue will make for an interesting and informative read.

In the first article of this issue, Rhian Worth considers whether there is a beneficial aspect to forgetting which allows for unwanted information to be forgotten and important memories to be recalled. To follow this, Jennifer Paterson provides the first conference review of this issue with her article on the Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference in San Diego. She describes the themes covered and the sessions that were on offer, alongside information on the venue itself and what she took from the experience.

Israel Berger offers an interesting piece on informed consent from youths within the area of clinical research. He discusses the complexities behind informed consent and what this means for researchers, offers practical advice and poses important questions to the reader. This is followed by Carmen Lefevre's interesting conference review on the European Human Behaviour and Evolution Society 2012 conference in Durham, which brings together the areas of Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology. We then turn to Rosemary Kingston's fascinating piece on the benefits of knitting. This insightful article attempts to uncover whether knitting has a positive influence on psychological functioning, for example, improving one's mood or mental health. Perhaps one or two of you may be persuaded to give knitting a go yourselves!

Jayanthiny Kangatharan then reviews the Acoustics 2012 Congress which took place in Nantes in France. She talks about her first time at an international conference and her experience with presenting research orally for the first time in public.

Alice Davies' article takes a reflective view on conducting empirical research. She discusses her own experience of conducting empirical work using interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Lauren Kita then reviews the Psychology of Women's Section's 2012 conference which tackled issues such as feminism and the media and feminism and sport.

The next piece is a fascinating look at blogging presented by Andrew Dunn. He talks about his own experience with blogging and offers some insightful advice and information to those who are blogging novices.

The Sleep 2012 review, by Erica Kucharczyk, details some interesting workshops that were available and the recent advances that have been made in the area of sleep and insomnia research. To follow this, Samantha Rowbotham talks about her second time at the International Society for Gesture Studies conference which was held in Sweden this year. She explains why, with the vast array of talks and workshops and excellent social programme on offer, she is all set to attend again next year as well.

Next, Sarah Garner offers an interesting piece on false memories. Sarah explores whether false memories have an adaptive function that help aid survival.

PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team

2012–2013

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In the final article of this issue, Helen Owton details the diverse keynote lectures and the variety of approaches and methods covered within the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference, highlighting why these annual conferences are a great opportunity for postgraduate researchers.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles and invite you to get in touch if you would like to contribute to future editions of the *PsyPAG Quarterly*. This publication is distributed to all postgraduate institutions in the UK and is a great way of communicating your research with other psychologists. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Chair's Column

Fleur-Michelle Coiffait

FIRSTLY, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome any of our readers who have recently embarked upon their postgraduate journey at the beginning of this academic year! Congratulations on entering the postgraduate world and I do hope that you are now settled in and feel equipped to embark on your studies.

All readers – both new and returning postgraduates – will have hopefully received an email from your department providing you with information about PsyPAG and what we offer to you as psychology postgraduates. If you did not receive any information from your institution about us or you are aware of departments with psychology postgraduates that were not included, do contact me at chair@psypag.co.uk as we are very keen to have a link with all departments hosting psychology postgraduates and we realise that not everyone is based in a traditional psychology department.

As I write this, it seems all of a sudden the nights have drawn in and got colder and we are fast approaching the end of 2012. This time of year always leads me to reflect on the year so far and what may lie ahead for the coming months. This year PsyPAG has been involved in a wide range of activities aimed at supporting the development of postgraduates and ensuring their interests are considered and represented across the British Psychological Society's member networks and the Health and Care Professions Council (formerly the HPC).

In this time of austerity where we have recently witnessed the closure of the Higher Education Academy Psychology Network and cutbacks to other sources of support for students, it is more important than ever that as an organisation we continue to be the voice and advocates of psychology postgraduates. This ensures that the impact of any

changes on postgraduates are considered and that supporting the next generation of psychologists and researchers remains a priority of the British Psychological Society's member networks.

It is not all doom and gloom though. You may have seen a review of our annual conference held in July that was published in the September edition of *The Psychologist*. Managing Editor Dr Jon Sutton remarked on the drive and professionalism of psychology postgraduates that he had witnessed, despite the challenges we face as early career researchers and practitioners embarking on our voyage on stormy seas. As psychologists, we are well placed to rise to these challenges and to help others do so through our research, teaching, supervision, applied practice and consultation.

I see a core part of being a psychologist as being able to assess a situation and think about factors that may predispose or precipitate different outcomes, in addition to being able to identify protective and perpetuating factors. We do this every day in our capacities as researchers, teachers, practitioners, supervisors, advisors and as learners ourselves. As these skills are central to what we do, we can redefine challenge as an opportunity to reflect on and refine our roles, aims, goals and achievements.

Furthermore, in line with the old adage 'strength in numbers', we recognise as psychologists the importance of working in teams, collaboration and supporting others. A big part of PsyPAG's remit involves facilitating networking opportunities amongst psychology postgraduates and with colleagues at different stages of their career. This enables support networks to flourish, professional networks to develop and postgraduates to be involved in the bigger picture.

We encourage you to seek out opportunities to share with and learn from one another. I have met friends for life at PsyPAG conferences and events whom I have collaborated with and who have strengthened my professional networks. More importantly, it is these fellow postgraduates who have provided invaluable support and understanding during the highs and lows of my journey so far. Why not follow us on Twitter and take part in the weekly #PhDchat discussion or become a fan of our Facebook page?

We also urge you to take advantage of the chance to network at the various events PsyPAG offers throughout the year that are free to postgraduates. You can apply for one of our bursaries for financial support to attend other workshops and conferences, more information about all of the events and bursaries we offer can be found at www.psympag.co.uk. If you have an idea for a particular workshop that you would like to see or host, we have four rounds of applications for workshop bursaries per year and we encourage you to apply at www.psympag.co.uk/resources/workshops/

I am always interested to hear from postgraduates who have suggestions, ideas or feedback on how PsyPAG can better support psychology postgraduates in the UK, so please feel free to get in touch with me at chair@psypag.co.uk

Finally, I would like to thank the PsyPAG Committee for their ongoing hard work on behalf of UK psychology postgraduates and the British Psychological Society's Research Board for their continued support.

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Is there a beneficial aspect to forgetting? Inhibitory and non-inhibitory theories

Rhian Worth

FORGETTING often occurs in everyday life; and is something everyone experiences from time to time, for example, forgetting where the car keys are. Forgetting can have negative consequences (e.g. forgetting where the car keys are could make you late for a meeting). Given this information, it is somewhat understandable that forgetting is seen as an inconvenience or a hindrance. Early theories of forgetting suggest that memories become weaker as they become older (e.g. the trace decay theory). More recently, however, the view of forgetting is beginning to change, with a suggestion that there may also be a beneficial aspect to forgetting. Specifically that the retrieval of memories can be helped by a mechanism that reduces the competition between memories, through ‘temporarily forgetting’ related but unwanted information. This could be beneficial as it may not be possible for us to remember all the information we know. If all this information was active it may flood our minds, causing memory to be more error prone than it currently is (Anderson, 2003).

When we attempt to retrieve a desired memory, general cues are often used to activate the desired memory (Anderson, 2003). When this happens related but unwanted memories are also activated (Anderson, Bjork & Bjork, 1994). For example, if the target memory was where the car is parked, memories of where the car was parked on previous occasions may also be activated. Therefore, there is a need for a mechanism that allows the target memory to be recalled, quickly and efficiently, and allows the other information, which is related to the target memory but is currently unwanted to be

‘temporarily forgotten’. This would suggest that forgetting can be beneficial. The forgetting of related but unwanted information is known as the retrieval-induced forgetting effect.

Retrieval-Induced Forgetting (RIF)

In order to study RIF items are used which place related but unwanted information in competition with desired memories during retrieval. A Retrieval Practice Paradigm (see Figure 1) is used to do this and involves three stages: a Study phase, Retrieval Practice phase, and a Recall phase. In the Study phase participants are given a list of category-exemplar words (e.g. FRUIT-apple; FRUIT-banana; BIRD-robin; and BIRD-blackbird) to study. This is followed by a Retrieval Practice phase during which participants practice half of the items from half of the categories (e.g. FRUIT-apple) (e.g. through completing a word stem completion task, for example, FRUIT-a).

RIF studies typically report two key findings:

1. Memory performance for the practiced items (Rp+ items e.g. FRUIT- apple, FRUIT- banana) is better than memory for unpractised items from an unpractised category (Nrp items, e.g. BIRD-robin, BIRD-blackbird). This is a retrieval practice effect.
2. Memory performance for the unpractised items from the practiced category (Rp- items, e.g. FRUIT-guava, FRUIT-kiwi) is worse than memory performance for the Nrp items. This impairment in memory performance for the Rp- items is known as the RIF effect (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Retrieval Practice Paradigm.

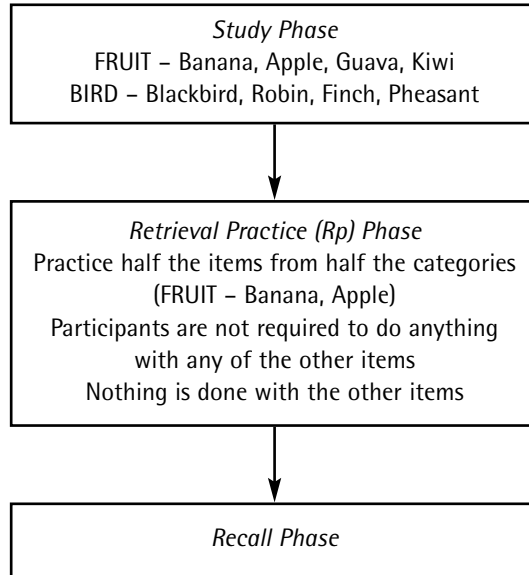
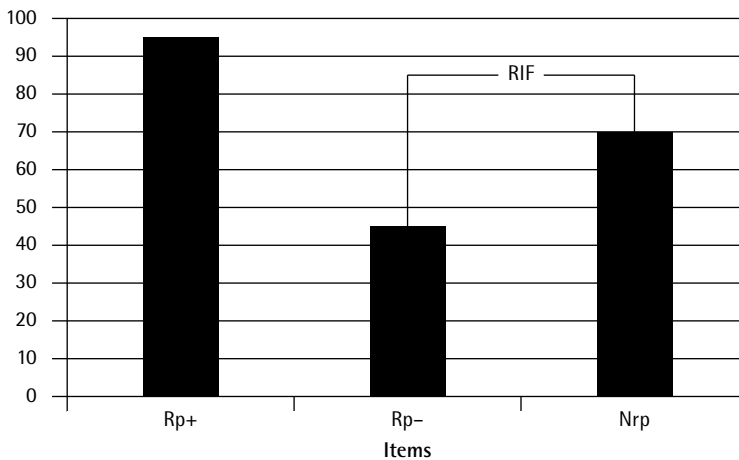


Figure 2: Graphical representation of typical findings of Retrieval-Induced Forgetting (RIF) studies.



Note: The values in the above figure do not represent real data. Rp+ items were practiced. Rp- items were related to the Rp+ items but were not practiced. Nrp items were not related to the Rp+ items and were not practiced.

The Retrieval Practice Paradigm was first used by Anderson and colleagues (1994). During the study phase participants studied a list of category-exemplar pair words. In the following retrieval practice phase participants completed a word stem completion tasks. Following a 20-minute interval participants were given a recall test. The results demonstrated that memory performance for the Rp+ items, was better than performance for the Nrp items (see also Anderson & Spellman, 1995). Furthermore, memory performance for the Rp- items was found to be worse than performance for Nrp items. This RIF effect has been demonstrated with a range of different stimuli (see Anderson et al., 1994; Anderson & Spellman, 1995; Ciranni & Shimamura, 1999; Koutstaal et al., 1999; MacLeod, 2002).

A number of theories have been proposed to explain RIF, including non-inhibitory and inhibitory theories. Non-inhibitory theories suggest that RIF occurs because the Rp+ items are stronger as they've been practiced (i.e. during retrieval practice) and this blocks the retrieval of the Rp- items, which are weaker due to not being practiced. An alternative account is the inhibitory theory, which suggests that RIF is the result of inhibitory processes (Anderson & Spellman, 1995). The inhibitory theory suggests that RIF is most likely to occur in situations where the Rp- items are strong, as the strong items are more likely to be inhibited as they are likely to intrude into consciousness during retrieval, resulting in competition between the items; as such RIF occurs to eliminate this competition.

To examine the contradictory predictions of the non-inhibitory and inhibitory theories, Anderson and colleagues (1994) manipulated the strength of the Rp- items. The results demonstrated that RIF was greatest for the strong Rp- items. It would seem then that strong items create the greatest retrieval competition during retrieval practice and are more likely to intrude into conscious awareness than the

weak category members. This means that the strong category members are more likely to be 'forgotten' in order to allow the information to be recalled, resolving the competition. This would be in line with the inhibitory theory. A second prediction of the inhibitory theory is that RIF continues to be found even when an independent cue is used in the test phase (i.e. one which differs to the one in the study and retrieval practice phase). Non-inhibitory theories suggest that it is interference along the retrieval route, which is the cause of RIF; therefore using an independent cue during the test phase should allow the Rp- item to be recalled as an alternative route would be utilised. Inhibitory theories suggest that it is the Rp- items itself, and not the retrieval route, which is impaired. This suggests that using another pathway (i.e. retrieval via the independent cue) should not allow the item to be retrieved.

Anderson and Spellman (1995) studied cue independence and found that RIF continued to be seen even when tested using an independent cue. Participants were asked to study categories of exemplars for which some exemplars had a pre-existing association with a second category. For example, under the category RED participants studied the word tomato; however, participants may then be tested for tomato under the category cue FOOD. Anderson and Spellman's (1995) findings are consistent with the inhibitory theory as it suggests that it is the item itself, which has been inhibited. As the interference occurs at the level of the item, even using an independent cue will continue to lead to impaired memory for the Rp- items (see also Bauml, 2002; Saunders & MacLeod, 2006). However, Perfect, Stark, Tree, Moulin, Ahmed and Hutter (2004) failed to find RIF under independent cue conditions (see also Williams & Zacks, 2001) suggesting that RIF occurs in cue dependent conditions; not in cue independent conditions.

A third prediction from inhibitory theories is that the forgetting of Rp- items are specific to the retrieval process. Other

methods such as extra study time or re-presentation, which only strengthen the Rp+ items, are insufficient to initiate retrieval competition, and no RIF should be seen. To investigate this, Anderson, Bjork and Bjork (2000) compared retrieval practice with re-presentation. Consistent with the inhibitory theory, RIF was only found following retrieval practice. Anderson et al concluded that RIF is not due to the strengthening of the memory trace, but that it is due to retrieval in the practice phase. There are several other predictions to the inhibitory theory as well including cross-category inhibition effects (see Anderson & Spellman, 1995; Saunders & MacLeod, 2006), and second order effects (see Anderson & Spellman, 1995).

It is important to study inhibition not only to examine mechanisms involved in RIF but also because it can have an adaptive function. Anderson and colleagues (1994) suggested that retrieval processes could play an important role in everyday forgetting, suggesting that items which could interfere with the retrieval of relevant information, are 'forgotten' allowing the relevant and required information to be retrieved (Oram & MacLeod, 2001). This would be adaptive for students studying for exams as students are required to study for several exams within a close period of time, so they need to learn several pieces of information, for example, being able to 'forget' certain items (e.g. information revised for a previous exam) would be beneficial. RIF may also play a role in social psychology, such as, retrieving personality traits of an individual can lead to an impairment of other traits (Macrae & MacLeod, 1999). For example, participants were asked to form impressions of two individuals, John and Bill. Participants were shown a card with the name of the individual (e.g. Bill) and a trait (e.g. romantic). RIF was demonstrated in this situation (see also Macrae & MacLeod, 1999, experiments 2 and 3; Dunn & Spellman, 2003).

The above demonstrates that although forgetting has been thought of as a hindrance in our daily lives, it can be beneficial, allowing related but unwanted information to be forgotten, and the desired memories to be successfully recalled. There are, however, two different theories for how this effect may occur, these are the non-inhibitory and inhibitory theories. Evidence has been found for both theories; however, the inhibitory theory seems to have become the more dominant theory. This is an important question not only from the point of view of forgetting, but it also has an adaptive feature, in that related but unwanted information can be forgotten, at least temporarily, to allow desired memories to be recalled successfully. This could be useful when remembering information, and in exam conditions, when we have to remember a lot of information in a small space of time. In this case perhaps a degree of forgetting is not so bad after all.

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Conference review:

Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference 2012

Jennifer Paterson

San Diego, California, 26–28 January

WITH THE HELP of an international conference bursary from PsyPAG and a Grindley Grant from the Experimental Psychological Society I was fortunate in being able to attend this year's Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) conference in San Diego, California. The conference attracted over 3500 attendees, with 75 symposia and 2100 posters being presented in a variety of sub-disciplines. Although these are remarkable figures, especially considering the conference lasted for only three days, the most impressive aspect of the conference from a postgraduate's perspective was how the conference managed to cater to the needs of its postgraduate members.

Even before the conference had started, the SPSP Graduate Student Committee ensured their members felt integral to the conference. The committee encouraged postgraduate students to submit applications for prestigious awards acknowledging outstanding postgraduate research and the best student poster presentation. Together with a monetary prize, the successful applications were prominently displayed for the entirety of the conference giving the winners a massive platform to showcase their research and talents. Further to this, to include those of us who did not get short-listed for the prizes but wanted to contribute to the conference, postgraduate students were also given the opportunity to review applications for the awards; an experience I thoroughly enjoyed and found to be extremely interesting and beneficial.

In addition to the prizes and the opportunities to review award applications, the Graduate Student Committee organised a range of events engineered to help postgraduates get the most out of the conference experience. For conference newcomers, the committee arranged a first-time attendees breakfast designed to help postgraduates navigate their way through the conference; a great idea considering the somewhat intimidating enormity of the SPSP conference. The committee also sponsored a preconference and a symposium, and even gave a selection of postgraduates the opportunity to meet an established researcher of their choice at the informal mentoring luncheon. The committee, being socially inclined, also organised a social night (including free drink!) in a nearby establishment. This helped to encourage networking and discussion of social and personality research in a more informal environment, and of course an opportunity to explore the more social aspects of attending conferences.

Back at the conference itself, postgraduates were spoilt for choice with preconferences, symposia, and poster sessions in all manner of social and personality psychology topics. Due to its relevance to my research area and its 50 per cent discount for students, I opted to attend the Group Processes and Interpersonal Relations (GPIR) preconference. One of the aims of the GPIR preconference is to allow at least two current or very recent postgraduate students to present their work alongside seven established researchers of the field.

Not only is this great for the two chosen postgraduates, but by explicitly representing postgraduates, GPIR acknowledges the importance of students while also providing attendees the opportunity to hear from the field's up and coming researchers. Moreover, by being a relatively small, select group of researchers who share many research interests, the preconference was a rare but ideal setting to meet and converse with all the significant people in the field.

Within the main SPSP conference, the importance of postgraduate experiences, postgraduate research, and postgraduate students were continually outlined by the notable delegates. In the Presidential address, for example, Professor Devine detailed her postgraduate experience and explained how the difficulties encountered during her PhD paved the way to what has been a remarkable career. She described how she had to defy the wishes of her supervisor to pursue the research that she was passionate about. Although the research was deemed 'risky' and had its setbacks (as all research does), she highlights this experience as pivotal because it not only opened up a whole new field of innovative research, the experience also gave her confidence and motivation to pursue the research that has made her career so illustrious.

In receiving the Donald T. Campbell Award for distinguished career contributions in social psychology, Jack Dovidio also elaborated on his postgraduate experience with his postgraduate supervisor and long time collaborator, Sam Gaertner. In contrast to Professor Devine's experience with a sceptical PhD supervisor, Professor Dovidio described his relationship with Professor Gaertner as mutually encouraging, enthusiastic and supportive, a sentiment that is

supported by the 133 papers they have co-authored in over 40 years of collaboration. However, the focus of the address was not his own postgraduate experience; Professor Dovidio used the occasion to specifically highlight the work of his postgraduate students indicating that these researchers were 'the future of SPSP'. He detailed his postgraduates' work with such enthusiasm and pride that it was evident that, for him, postgraduates are not only important to the field because they have the potential to bring new ideas and fresh approaches, they also help to reinvigorate and motivate the more experienced researchers as well.

With such notable scholars acknowledging the importance of postgraduate students, research and experiences, along with the variety of the Graduate Student Committee's events, I felt that the SPSP conference genuinely recognised and rewarded its postgraduate students. I left the conference not only informed with new social psychological research, I left feeling motivated and excited to continue my research and lucky to belong to a field that is supportive and appreciative of its postgraduates. I would thoroughly recommend the SPSP conference to any interested postgraduate student. Not only is it an extremely rewarding experience but next year it is in New Orleans which promises to make the conference academically, culturally, and socially stimulating.

Jennifer Paterson

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Informed consent in clinical research with youths

Israel Berger

THIS ESSAY will explore the issue of informed consent and ethical concerns involved in conducting research involving sensitive topics or in a clinical context with youths. Although readers may be most familiar with an under 18/over 18 dichotomy, informed consent and age is much more complex. I will discuss how capacity to consent has been historically and currently assigned based on age and what this means for researchers in psychology and related fields. This discussion is relevant to researchers who use a variety of research methodologies, including but not limited to those that involve surveys, interviews, or observational techniques. It is also relevant to current or future members of ethics committees and policy committees.

Discrepancies between existing professional and legal standards in medical and mental health care versus youth informed consent for research participation will be presented and analysed. Using examples from primarily British policies and research, this essay will highlight important conceptual dilemmas for researchers and institutions. First, age of consent for treatment will be examined. Second, age of consent for research participation be examined in light of age of consent for treatment. Third, the role (or lack thereof) of parents will be discussed. Fourth, issues of confidentiality will be considered. Finally, the dilemmas that these sometimes opposing standards can present will be discussed. At this point, suggestions for future research and policy will be presented.

Age of consent for treatment

English common law (from which the current laws of most English-speaking countries developed in some form) with regard to

all consent, not just for treatment, is based on a rule of sevens. This is a guideline based on the relationship between a person's age and their competence under the law. Under 7 years of age, people are considered legally incompetent without exception. Between 7 and 14 years of age, they are presumed incompetent, but evidence of competence can be presented. Between 14 and 21, they are presumed competent, but evidence to the contrary can be provided. Some laws and policies now specify ages, and societal norms have changed since this common law was indeed common. Some laws and policies can be obscure, and so it is not safe to rely on common law in first instance. I will discuss specifically medical and psychotherapy/counselling consent as it is today.

For medical treatment, people in the UK who are 16 years of age or older can consent to or refuse treatment on their own. Below 16, they can consent or refuse if judged competent by a medical doctor (Family Law Reform Act 1969; Age of Majority Act 1969 (Northern Ireland); Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991; Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000; Mental Capacity Act 2005; *Gillick v. West Norfolk and Wisbech AHA* [1986] AC 112). This is commonly known as *Gillick consent* (*Gillick v. West Norfolk and Wisbech Health Authority* [1986] AC 112), which refers to the standard that when someone under 16 demonstrates understanding of the procedure, they are able (i.e. allowed) to consent or refuse for themselves. Although consent for medical treatment has been spelled out in official documents, consent for psychotherapy or counselling has not been made so clear. As with medical treatment, people aged 16 years or over are able to consent independ-

ently. People under 16 are presumed unable to consent for themselves. However, there are no specific requirements for parental consent nor specific allowances for younger consent.

Age of consent for research

The UK has no laws pertaining to age of consent for research. Local NHS research ethics committees and/or other institutional ethics committees decide on consent requirements on a case-by-case basis or at the level of policy. Professional societies (e.g. British Psychological Society [BPS], 2010) publish guidelines only, but researchers and ethics committees have the ultimate responsibility for deciding on consent requirements. This allows great flexibility for ethics committees to work with researchers on the appropriate consent requirements for studies.

This brings us to the different kinds of consent that can be utilised in research, or indeed any situation clinical or otherwise. Olds (2003) looked at the consent patterns of parents whose children were given consent forms at school to take home to be signed. This situation is one of active consent: in order for the children to participate, the parent must actively communicate consent to the researchers. Olds surveyed non-responding parents and found that the majority did not object to their child participating in the research. Olds advocates for passive parental consent in which parents are given the opportunity to object to the research but are not required to respond in order for the child's participation to go ahead. This approach prevents children from being excluded from research due to parents' lack of action, which can be due to socioeconomic difficulties that make signing consent forms a low priority. Dent et al. (1993) found that adolescents who were omitted from research due to lack of action on the part of parents were at a higher risk for health and social problems, and Pirie et al. (1989) found that adolescents with the highest risk profiles are those least likely to

obtain parental permission. Active consent approaches can thus lead to research that is biased in favour of children from families with low risk profiles and high-socioeconomic status.

Involving parents in consent procedures can also cause inadvertent coercion of their children. Cohn et al. (2005) conducted a study on consent patterns of children and parents in a hospital setting. They found that when others were present, children were more likely to report that they did not feel that the decision to participate was their own. In other words, if the parent was supportive of the research, children felt that they had to consent to participate. This presents a very important issue, as coercion of any kind is strongly frowned upon in professional societies, law, and ethics committees, so much so that many professional societies and ethics committees discourage or prohibit research involving students or payment to participants.

Confidentiality and youth

The Hippocratic Oath and confirmation by several statements by the World Medical Association (WMA) since its inception in 1947 (WMA 1981, 1948, 1964) state the physician's responsibility to patients' confidentiality. The National Health Service (NHS) recognises confidentiality as an important and complex issue (Department of Health, 2003). Similarly, the General Medical Council (GMC) provides extensive guidance on confidentiality (e.g. GMC, 2009), and the BPS discusses confidentiality in its codes of ethics both with specific regard to research and more broadly (BPS, 2009, 2010).

Sometimes parents think that they have the right to demand that professionals break their children's confidentiality. However, this is not necessarily the case. Parents are commonly entitled to information in order to fulfil their parental role. Sometimes this is interpreted as a parental right to confidential information (e.g. in some parts of the US, Maradiegue, 2003). England and Wales

likewise justify providing confidential information to parents as providing parents with the necessary information to discharge their parental responsibilities, but parental rights to children's medical information have been firmly rejected by British courts (Data Protection Act, 1998).

Most discussion of confidentiality for people under 18 years of age is in relation to sexual health, and it is widely accepted that people are entitled to confidentiality in this area (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Adolescence, 1996; GMC, 2007; Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2009). Confidentiality is an extremely salient issue that affects young people's help seeking behaviour both for sexual health as well as other healthcare. Cheng et al. (1993) found that 25 per cent of Massachusetts high school students would avoid health care if they couldn't be assured confidentiality. Reddy, Fleming and Swain (2002) report that 47 per cent of teenagers would stop receiving services at Planned Parenthood and another 12 per cent would significantly alter those services to avoid parental notification.

In order to provide the best services possible, agencies and health care fields more generally must conduct research into the needs and experiences of young people. Sixty per cent of behavioural factors that are associated with health status indicate in adolescence; they significantly affect public health both now and in the future (Olds, 2003). Although Olds's research was conducted in the US, it is likely that the 2/3 of the annual US mortality for which these health behaviours account holds for other minority world countries such as the UK.

Researcher-participant relationships are not necessarily privileged as those of solicitors, doctors, and psychotherapists. In the UK, researchers are mandatory reporters for certain kinds of activities, including child abuse. Beyond the reporting of specified illegal activities, their obligations to participants are governed by professional societies' guidance and ethics committees' decisions.

The UK is not alone in research's grey area in terms of reporting. Jenden, Fisher, and Hoagwood (1999) discuss how all US States have laws pertaining to mandatory reporting, yet the situation for researchers is much more uncertain. Their recommendation to seek legal advice during study design holds for UK-based researchers as well.

Conclusions

Although there are fairly clear laws and policies on consent for medical treatment, there is less clarity around psychotherapy and counselling and even less clarity for research, even when medical or psychological treatment is involved. Decisions are often made by NHS and institutional ethics committees that may be ill equipped to deal with the complexities of youth consent and the research that is necessary to ensure services that meet the needs of young people. Such ethics committees may adopt blanket policies that all research with under 18s or under 16s must have parental consent. However, two general situations require particularly sensitive consideration to the needs of youth. Ethics committees should particularly bear in mind: What consent for research should be required when people are able to consent to treatment themselves? What consent for research should be required when disclosing the research topic or the reason for treatment would damage the parent-child relationship or cause danger to the child? It is crucial that ethics committees and professional bodies do not adopt blanket policies regarding youth or parental consent but rather evaluate the appropriate approach based on specific situations and consult with knowledgeable solicitors as appropriate.

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Conference review:

European Human Behaviour and Evolution Society Conference

Carmen E. Lefevre

Durham, England, 25–28 March

THE European Human Behaviour and Evolution Society (EHBEA) was founded in 2008 and has since established a popular annual interdisciplinary conference. The society branches between Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology involving anybody with an interest in evolutionary accounts of human cognition, behaviour, and culture. This year's conference took place in Durham, England, and was attended by around 230 delegates from across Europe and North America.

A total of seven exceptionally interesting plenary lectures were delivered throughout the conference. Opening the meeting was Professor Leslie Aiello, giving an exciting overview of the expensive tissue hypothesis and its development across the last 15 years. Further plenary speakers included Andy Whiten, Ian Penton-Voak and Simon Kirby. The new investigator award, annually given out by EHBEA, went to Pontus Strimling for his novel modelling approaches to the evolution of culture. In his talk Pontus demonstrated that it is unlikely that a general model predicting cultural evolution will be found.

Aside from classic evolutionary and behavioural topics there was also a conference-session entitled 'New Frontiers in Evolutionary Psychology' exploring novel approaches to mate choice research. It included a talk by Tamas David-Barrett demonstrating that the analysis of Facebook profile pictures can provide highly insightful information about sex differences in social groups: While women appear to have one or

two close friends (as depicted by groups of twos or threes on profile pictures) men tend to be members of much larger, though less intimately linked groups (as depicted by frequent display of group photographs with up to 10 or 15 members in them). In the same session Edward Morrison highlighted the importance of movement and in particular, gait, for attractiveness judgements recommending a focus shift away from static images to more real-life moving displays in the study of attractiveness.

General topics throughout EHBEA included facial attractiveness, life-history theory, mating strategies and evolution of behaviour. The structure of the conference was such that there were few parallel sessions. While this meant that only relatively few talks could be presented in total, it also allowed for delegates to hear talks on topics perhaps not immediately relevant to their own work. This arrangement presented a great opportunity for all attendees to gain a wider understanding of their field in general as well as be aware of current research within human evolution and behaviour.

A poster session, accompanied by locally brewed beer, was held on the second evening. More than 100 posters were presented on a large variety of topics. Posters by students and more established academics were intermixed, making the display diverse and informative. The session was broadly split into three areas: 'Evolutionary Psychology', 'Cultural Evolution' and 'Behavioural Ecology'. The award for the best student poster went to Emily Emmott

for her contribution entitled 'How much do fathers matter? Paternal investment effects on height in a Bristol cohort study'. The research explored whether father presence influences height, an indicator of physical development, when controlling for maternal investment. Results indicate that maternal investment but not paternal investment is important for physical development in children.

The social programme of the conference included a cruise on the River Wear, the evolutionary rapper Baba Brinkman, and the conference dinner at spectacular Durham Castle. Additionally a student lunch was organised during which students could meet one of the plenary speakers and chat to them informally. It can be hard to approach and talk to more senior academics at conferences so this lunch provided a great opportunity and was well received by many students who made use of this unique chance.

Durham proved itself a great conference location. It is a beautiful place with many exciting sights. The world heritage sites of Durham Castle and Cathedral are particularly worth visiting. The cathedral is the largest Norman-style building in England. Lastly, the great sunny and warm Spring weather made this week in Durham a great experience.

Overall EHBEA provides a great opportunity to learn about both the latest advances and historical development in the field of evolutionary and behavioural science. It is an excellent platform for the presentation of novel work since the audience is generally friendly and encouraging. Its relatively small size enables communication with other delegates both during question sessions at the end of each talk and during more informal settings such as coffee breaks and social events.

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Loose ends: Unravelling the benefits of knitting

Rosemary Kingston

I AM A KNITTER. Well, really more of a crocheter these days, but 'knitter' rolls more easily off the tongue. It's something I started doing regularly about three years ago, in the month-long gap I had between finishing my Masters and beginning my PhD. Having moved to a completely new part of the country, I was looking for something to do with my spare time, and not yet knowing anyone in the area, I went to my local library and borrowed some instructional books with basic crochet patterns.

Apart from a few mild (and one or two somewhat less mild) bouts of frustration when learning stitches from poorly drawn two-dimensional sketches and endlessly looped tutorial videos, it's something I found myself picking up fairly rapidly. I quickly grew to find both knitting and crochet immensely enjoyable, calming, and satisfying activities. As soon as the time came to start my PhD, I immediately signed up to one of the student-run societies on campus – KnitSoc – a small but vibrant group of crafty folks who meet up for a couple of hours every Monday, armed with wool and needles, to sit, chat, eat cake, and make things.

Over the years I've been enjoying going to this group, I've gained a real sense that it does me a lot of good. It almost goes without saying that doing a PhD can be highly stressful at times, and I know a number of people who find it difficult to 'switch off' from their work. I think I'm fortunate enough to be a relatively cheerful person by nature, but I always come away from our knitting sessions feeling uplifted, relaxed, happy, and with a better sense of perspective about what matters in life – that there's no need to devote energy to being worked up by participants who don't show up to your

experiment, scary quantities of 'track changes' comments on your work from your supervisor, SPSS not behaving, again... repeat ad nauseum. People walking past our small gaggle on a Monday evening often make comments to the effect that we look 'really chilled' or 'very Zen'. I've come to believe that not only are crafts like knitting and crochet – particularly when done with a group of people – an excellent pastime, they're an important means of accessing something that is fundamental to our sense of well-being.

The psychologist in me is really interested in this idea of why knitting, both as a solitary activity and something done with a group, seems to have this positive effect. Having searched the literature, there seems to be very little in the way of peer-reviewed research that has examined the effects of regular needlecraft (knitting, crochet, etc.), either alone or in groups, on mental health and well-being.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the obvious 'little old lady' stereotype of the knitter, much of the research has focused on older adults. However, the research seems to have unanimously positive things to say about its cognitive and emotional benefits. Correlational evidence from a large population study of individuals over 70 years old demonstrated that engagement in craft activities, including knitting, was associated with decreased odds of experiencing age-related mild cognitive impairment (Geda et al., 2011). Prospective evidence from another large study, conducted in France, demonstrated that knitting predicted lowered levels of dementia (Fabrigoule et al., 1995). In a single case study of a 70-year-old Alzheimer's patient, engagement with a knitting inter-

vention resulted in decreased feelings of apathy and depressed mood (Adam et al., 2000). However, the research hasn't been entirely limited to the study of older adults. In a study exploring the effects of anxiety management in inpatients with anorexia nervosa, patients reported that knitting was beneficial in reducing feelings of anxiety: they reported that it lessened the intensity of their fears and thoughts, that it had a calming and therapeutic effect, and that it gave them a sense of pride and accomplishment (Clave-Brule et al., 2009).

Whilst there is undoubtedly a lack of research examining the psychological effects of knitting specifically, I think one can get a sense of why it may have positive cognitive and emotional effects by extrapolating ideas from research in other areas. For instance, when considering knitting or crochet as an activity that can be done in a group, social psychological research has repeatedly demonstrated that social interaction has positive influences on both physical and mental health and well-being (e.g. Cohen & Wills, 1985). Considering the characteristics of knitting itself, an activity that can equally be enjoyed alone or in a group, there are a number of other reasons why it may confer some psychological benefit. It has been noted that the state of mind that one gets into when knitting is not dissimilar to mindfulness meditation: 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally' (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4). Manning (2004, p.3) remarks, 'I began to tune into the commonalities between practising mindfulness meditation and the actions of knitting. Both require light attention to the environment, both allow the mind to rest, both have a natural object of focus that contributes a rhythmic quality to the experience.' Research indicates that mindfulness practice

has a positive influence on psychological functioning, and can also help to relieve symptoms of a variety of mental health problems (e.g. Baer, 2003). In addition, the fact that knitting and crochet are creative processes that tend to evoke a sense of personal productivity and satisfaction may also explain some of the positive psychological outcomes. Research has demonstrated that participation in creative activities is associated with self-reported improvements in health and increased quality of life, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Batt-Rawden & Tellnes, 2005). Undoubtedly, there are numerous reasons as to why knitting may have such positive effects, and for a more extensive discussion of these ideas, see Corkhill (2008).

I would be delighted if, in writing this article, I had persuaded some of you that it might be fun or even psychologically beneficial to have a go at knitting or crochet if you've never done it before. Likewise, if you have vague memories of a kindly grandmother showing you the ropes when you were younger, I hope I've encouraged you to dig out your needles! If you're interested, see if there's a knitting group at your university or in your local area (check the website www.ravelry.com), and if not, perhaps consider starting a group with some like-minded friends. I feel I've gained so much from being a knitter, and really hope that more people take it up and gain as much pleasure and enjoyment from it as I do.

The Author

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Conference review:

The Acoustics 2012 Congress

Jayanthiny Kangatharan

Nantes, France, 23–27 April

THE Acoustics 2012 congress took part in Nantes, France, from the 23–27 April 2012 and was co-organised by the French Acoustical Society (SFA) and the UK Institute of Acoustics (IOA) with support of the European Acoustics Association (EAA). The congress covered topics ranging from Physiological and Psychological Acoustics through Aero and Hydro Acoustics to Speech Production. The congress was held at the Cité Internationale des Congrès de Nantes that is located at the centre of the city Nantes, which is the sixth largest city in France. With its multitude of small cafés, cozy restaurants and easily accessible historic attractions, Nantes was the ideal venue to relax following a day of thought-provoking presentations and discussions.

This congress represented my very first international conference and provided me with the rare opportunity to disseminate a number of very important findings of my research for the first time in public in form of an oral presentation.

The congress started with an opening ceremony in which the audience was treated to jazz music played by experienced local members of the acoustic community. The general co-chairmen Michel Bérengier (SFA) and Keith Attenborough (IOA) opened with a formal welcome in which they outlined the factors that facilitated the emergence of this congress. In addition, they emphasised that the goal of this congress was not solely to present attendees with a programme that exhibited the latest developments in acoustics, but to also encourage more students to showcase their research to the public and to foster the exchange of

information through networking with attendees from around the world. Given the considerably higher number of students presenting at this conference compared to the amount of students in previous Acoustics conferences, the goal can be considered accomplished.

Moreover, the congress offered plenty of opportunities to interact and network with fellow acousticians from different parts of the world. At the end of the ceremony, two plenary lectures on the acoustical monitoring of water infrastructure and on vibro-acoustics modelling were delivered by Professor Kirill Horoshenkov (University of Bradford) and by Professor Nouredine Attala (Sherbrooke University) respectively.

Across the duration of the congress, more than 825 of invited and contributed papers, poster presentations and eight keynote lectures were featured. Due to nine parallel running sessions, it was unfortunately not possible to be present at more than a small selection of talks and therefore I'll highlight those presentations that I attended and found particularly fascinating. One talk that captured my attention was a presentation on 'Formant frequencies of British English vowels produced by native speakers of Farsi' in which evidence in support of Kuhl's perceptual magnet hypothesis was presented. Accordingly, vowel sounds by participants with Farsi as their first language and English as their second language were recorded. As predicted, 'good' examples of English vowels were generated when a Farsi vowel existed in close proximity in formant space to the required English vowel. However, it was shown that

Farsi speakers' production of English vowels for which comparable equivalent in Farsi were absent, was sizably poorer. Produced formants were frequently closer to those formants for other Farsi vowels. Consequently, participants were observed to often confuse particular English vowels. This talk and its references were especially useful to me given my own focus on speech perception and formant measurement.

Another highlight was the keynote lecture by Professor Daniel Pressnitzer (Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paris) entitled 'The adaptive auditory mind'. It drew upon recent evidence according to which the capacity to adapt quickly in operation to nearby sounds and tasks represents a main element of brain function by which efficient listening is made possible. The idea of Auditory Scene Analysis (ASA) was then introduced which describes the capability to follow the origin of a sound in a mixture. It was argued that ASA is implemented through a broadly distributed neural network by which the entire processing chain is focused on the stream of attention. The manner in which the human auditory system copes with natural acoustic scenes with success was then suggested to be substantially facilitated by adaptive coding. Moreover, an interplay between levels of processing (features, ASA, memory) was proposed as well as a pervasiveness of rapid adaptive plasticity in the auditory system. This keynote lecture was especially intriguing and informative to me as it dealt with the auditory cortical areas regarding correlates of streaming, a topic that I'm eager to address in my own research as well.

The Acoustics 2012 congress also enabled me to attend presentations that were not relevant to my area of research thereby allowing me to acknowledge the research carried out in the broader academic community of acoustics. Highlights include a fascinating talk on 'Damping of flexural vibrations in rectangular plates by slots of power-law profile', which dealt with the applications of acoustic black holes.

Another engaging talk was entitled 'Comparison of temporal and frequency methods applied to ultrasonic nonlinear signals', which compared two approaches in their efficiency when the temporal signal is contaminated through equipment and environmental noises. There was also a riveting poster presentation on the 'Acoustic emission analysis of a laminate under a different loading rate' which examined the effect of stacking sequence of laminates on the evolution of damage mechanisms. These presentations illustrate not only the extensive array of research being exhibited at the Acoustics 2012 congress but also indicate the exceptionally high standard of talks and posters.

In addition to showcasing the most recent developments in the different aspects of acoustics, the congress provided its attendants with a wealth of opportunities to network. Events included a musical evening, the cruise and congress banquet, technical visits as well as diverse tours to explore the different attractions of Nantes. The Acoustics 2012 congress also offered a welcome cocktail and a student reception that included a variety of enthralling opportunities for ancillary relaxation where fellow acousticians could interact in a delightful setting.

My presentation took part on the last day of the congress. With about fifty delegates in the audience, my presentation entitled 'A-M I S-P-EA-K-I-N-G C-L-E-A-R-L-Y E-N-O-U-GH?: An investigation of the possible role of vowel hyperarticulation in speech communication' was well attended. My presentation was well received and I was given valuable feedback. I certainly enjoyed delivering my talk and was sad when it was over. Overall, I can say that I was really delighted with the Acoustics 2012 congress as my first conference. It enabled me to not only present results of my research to experts and receive feedback but to network with fellow researchers, expose myself to research from across the spectrum of acoustics and initiate some interesting collaborations. The main strength of this conference is that the

wide range of topics certainly will address one's particular research while it will also encourage one to explore new interests, which will make one's intellectual journey both more inspiring and stimulating. Thus, it offers a fair amount of opportunities for exploration and learning.

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Conducting empirical research: Reflections on control, process and congruence

Alice Davies

THIS PAPER offers a reflective account of conducting empirical research regarding an Assertive Outreach Team's (AOT) attitudes towards Community Treatment Orders (CTOs; Department of Health, 2008). Eight staff members were interviewed regarding their experiences of using CTOs. Interview recordings were transcribed and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Throughout the research a reflective journal was written. On reviewing the entries I have been struck by how closely many of the issues I have encountered map onto those shared by the participants. Consequently my reflective account will be structured around the three superordinate themes which emerged from the empirical data.

Managing the process

The theme of 'managing the process' in my empirical research was concerned with participants' evaluative accounts of the application of the CTO and covered issues such as its effectiveness, the use of collaboration and self competence. My experience of managing the process of research will now be explored with reference to methodological limitations and reflections on CTOs.

Methodological limitations

The participants used in my study were recruited from a service within which my clinical supervisor worked, consequently some staff may have felt a pressure to be involved and may have been guarded about sharing their experiences. Such risks were reduced by the study's design; for example, no raw data was shared with that supervisor.

Despite this, it became apparent that some participants may have been anxious about their involvement with one likening the interview experience with 'going over the trenches'. Most participants were enthusiastic about participating, however, with some stressing the importance of such research.

My own limited experience of interviewing should be considered. The process involved a steep learning curve which is likely to mean the interview quality progressed with each participant. Whilst I am familiar with the use of active listening skills, having a range of key topics to cover in such a limited time increased the demand for thinking 'one step ahead'. Consequently I found myself asking long or leading questions and found that seeking clarification from participants was important in managing this. In future I would use a shorter interview schedule. I would also use discussions with staff to develop the schedule, because on reflection they would have offered useful ideas around the issues important to them.

IPA is a qualitative method which focuses upon describing the meanings attributed by people to their experience (Smith, 1996). It is *phenomenological* in the sense that it relates to how one perceives the world and *interpretative* because of its reliance upon the researchers *own experience* in attempting to make sense of that experience. My experience of using IPA was generally positive. There were moments, however, during which I became overwhelmed by the detail required by the line by line analysis of transcripts (Shinebourne, 2011) and the amount of data generated. I also struggled at times to balance the use of descriptive and interpre-

tative analysis, a trait which is thought to characterise the novice (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.103). I became seduced into generating further questions as I analysed the data and was frustrated by the lack of reciprocity involved in working with 'one off' accounts. As my experience with IPA developed however, so too did confidence in my role as a 'filter'. During those times it was helpful to regularly refer to my research aims in order to focus my attention (Gee, 2011). It was challenging to write meaningfully about all eight interviews and I was required to be highly selective when constructing the final report, condensing over 1000 themes into three final key concepts. Such reduction of the data required a rigorous determination which also triggered anxiety relating to my desire to capture its essence. Frequent consultation with my supervision team was important throughout this process.

Reflections on Community Treatment Orders (CTOs)

Having never worked with the Assertive Outreach population, my feelings towards CTOs were mainly based upon my ideas about what life might be like under such restrictions. Like many of the staff I interviewed, I felt slightly fearful that a piece of legislation could not only stipulate where one can live and what medication one must take, but also that such constraints could be enforced in one's own home. I could accept, however, that CTOs theoretically offered the potential for care in the community that could facilitate recovery and was curious about how they had been experienced in reality. Participants had been required to review their ideas on the use of compulsion as well as integrate a range of models in the context of this legislation. I was struck by the extent to which clinicians' own professional background had influenced their initial attitude towards this new form of treatment and how many of those opinions had started to change as clinical experience of the CTO had increased. The application of 'reflective practice' seems particularly important in

maintaining awareness of the impact of one's perspective on work and ensuring an open-minded response in the face of its challenge. My views towards CTOs remain mixed, largely because of the diversity in experiences shared by participants. I have an increased awareness of the complex and sensitive nature of the issues involved in their use and whilst I would be less nervous about the idea of working with such powers, I am keen to develop a better understanding of their impact upon clients.

Issues around control

The issue of control was an important theme across the data set. Participants shared their fears around working with coercive powers, their experience of the benefits that structure could provide and their thoughts around the impact upon therapeutic relationships. My reflections will be structured around related issues from the perspective of staff, clients and self.

Staff: Responsibility and anxiety

A level of staff anxiety was apparent in the interview data and seemed to be exacerbated by the complexities surrounding the implementation of the CTO legislation. Participants spoke of various responses to this worry, including sharing responsibility with team members, imposing structured checklists to inform planning and taking time over decisions in an attempt to 'get it right'. Many spoke too of the way in which the ultimate responsibility rested with the Responsible Clinician, showing a sense of reassurance in deferral to others not dissimilar to that they described as being demonstrated by clients. Participants shared their successes and joys of working with certain clients as well as the sense of frustration and hopelessness generated by others. I became aware of the strength of feeling involved in working with these clients as well as how important it is for staff themselves to feel valued in order that they can effectively work with others. I was conscious also of the way participants responded to being interviewed and how

that may convey something of their style with clients. One participant almost 'became the interviewer' by altering questions and revising the order and importance of certain issues. This made me wonder about their style being an attempt to elicit control, perhaps out of anxiety provoked by the situation. My initial response was to adopt a more passive style out of a desire to allow the participant to share their experiences fully; this was replaced with increased structure as the interview progressed and I became aware of the need to cover all questions. Another participant spoke of how, when faced with a client who 'pushes the boundaries', her response was often to enforce them more strictly in order to maintain control. This type of interaction is likely to be influenced by the early experiences of both staff and client (Gray & Mulligan, 2010; Tyrell et al., 1999) and reinforces the importance of reflecting upon one's own personality style and emotional needs when working clinically.

Client: Compliance and boundaries

Whilst interviewing staff about their experiences of working with people on a CTO, I was intrigued by the variety of client reactions. I heard examples of clients for whom the CTO had enhanced their recovery and their engagement with services and also listened to situations where the CTO had threatened the therapeutic relationship and activated clients' feelings of disempowerment and rage. I became curious about the factors which influence this diversity in response. It seems counter-intuitive on one level to *elect* to be under compulsory powers, and yet that is exactly what some clients had done. For them, deferring the responsibility of their care may have served as an avoidant strategy to protect from a greater level of awareness which may have generated further distress. There were others for whom non-compliance appeared to serve as a strategy for maintaining control. Several participants described the influence of personality issues and one suggested a potential link with

attachment theory, ideas which are supported by research into recovery styles (Drayton, Birchwood & Trower, 1998; Tait, Birchwood & Trower, 2004). The client's ability to accept their experience of psychosis and maintain an open and responsible stance to its treatment, impacts upon engagement (Tait, Birchwood & Trower, 2003). An understanding of clients' relationship with their psychosis is, therefore, important when considering the likely outcomes of the CTO and the usefulness of boundaries as outlined by its criteria.

Self: Managing perfectionism

I was struck by how my personal style so closely related to the issues raised by the research. Perhaps it is no coincidence; I did after all choose to study this area. Whilst conducting this research I was confronted by my desire to maintain control and 'get things right', aspects which mirrored some of the experiences of my participants. For me, this personality trait was emphasised in the context of increased anxiety triggered by the significance of completing my thesis. Throughout the process as enthusiasm fluctuated, so did motivation levels; sometimes a desire to do well prevented me from moving on to the next stage. From talking with other trainees, I am relieved that this phenomenon is common and from experience I am aware that I am not the only psychologist to demonstrate obsessional traits in some areas. Whilst I do believe that being thorough can benefit one's work, being distracted by assessing your own performance ('Am I getting this right?') can distract from the task in hand, and in extreme cases can be detrimental (Covington, 1984). It is another manifestation of an avoidant strategy and can be likened to the responses of staff and clients in the face of distressing stimuli. For me this was crystallised when I found myself spending an excessive amount of time re-analysing a few pages of interview transcript out of concern that something had been overlooked. It was only afterwards that I became aware I had become 'stuck' on a

transcript of someone who had shared *their own* tendency to spend too long on tasks out of their personal need to 'get things just right'. Being aware of one's own style is essential in helping to understand the interaction between 'self' and 'other' in the process of both research and clinical work (Mollon, 1989). It is also important to find ways of managing such anxiety in order to maintain good psychological health (Souza, Egan & Rees, 2011).

Congruence

The final theme of 'Congruence' was interpretative in nature and arose from a perceived experience of conflict for staff because they appeared to need to integrate the CTO with other models. They were also led to update their ideas around the use of compulsion. This theme also relates to my experiences of research as I applied my own principles to my work and managed the, at times, competing demands of conducting research within the constraints of the doctoral training requirements.

Professional integrity

Throughout this process I have been aware of ethical responsibilities relating to conducting psychological research. Because of the time pressures faced by staff in the NHS, I was keen to minimise the time required of any one participant. Whilst it was not difficult to adhere to basic ethical principles such as 'the right to withdraw' and 'informed consent' (British Psychological Society, 2009a, 2009b) I experienced a sense of responsibility towards the data generated, the participants who offered their views and the clients whom they serve. I value the information shared by my participants and have attempted to represent their experiences as best I can. At the same time my thoughts have been with the utility of the research findings and in a study which is perhaps distant from the voice of the client, I am hopeful that the clinical relevance of the findings will contribute to the continuing work of the AOT and benefit the population they serve.

Clinician and researcher

Many of the clinical skills I have acquired as a psychologist have complemented my work as a researcher. I found myself more confident towards interviewing than I would have a few years ago and better equipped with psychological theory to interpret my findings at a conceptual level. During clinical psychology training I have improved my ability to work on a range of projects at once; a skill which is also congruent with the process of research. As the project progressed, certain tensions did, however, arise. Whilst attending a conference on the introductory use of IPA, I had been advised to reduce my sample size because of the small scale nature of my research. In subsequent discussion with my supervisors, it became clear this was not a viable option because of the specific requirements of the thesis. There seemed, therefore, a tension between 'doing the best IPA I could' and 'doing the best IPA I could whilst also meeting external requirements'. I was challenged to achieve a balance between robustness and achievability and forced to distance myself from the expectations of the depth of analysis I had returned from the conference with. Such need for pragmatism can be likened to the difficulties many clinicians face whilst working in the NHS, where 'ideal outcomes' may not be possible and sometimes doing 'enough' must be enough. Understanding when to stop assessing, end an intervention, or in this case, cease data analysis are critical skills which this process has helped me to continue to develop.

Conclusion

The empirical research demonstrated participants' need for collaborative working, supervision and self-reflection; conducting the research also reinforced my own need for those elements. The use of supervision has been valuable in helping to focus me throughout this process and as I have explored new areas of working, I have developed an increased confidence in my ability. Understanding my experience of control

and anxiety has been a valuable part of this process and supported by maintaining a good balance between life at home and work. Using leisure time to exercise, seek support from friends and enjoy other activities has helped me to maintain a sense of perspective. I consider myself to be a reflective person and am aware of the importance of acknowledging the impact of 'self' upon my work, and maybe work upon the self. My aim is to ensure I continue to practice in a reflective way when faced with new challenges as I begin my career as a qualified clinical psychologist.

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Conference review:

Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference

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Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, 11–13 July

THIS YEAR'S Psychology of Women Section (POWS) conference was once again held at the fantastic venue of Cumberland Lodge in Windsor. POWS is an organisation which focuses on issues surrounding gender and inequality. Individuals from different backgrounds, professions and continents attended this year's conference, which lasted three days. The key themes were focused around women and austerity, feminism and the media, feminism and sport and feminism and trans-feminism.

A compelling round-table discussion, chaired by Erica Burman (Manchester Metropolitan University), provided a fascinating exploration of women and austerity in the modern day. Four professionals from the field gave short speeches on the issue, each providing a unique perspective. In particular the old-fashioned wartime motto to 'make do and mend' was debated, particularly in terms of how this idea fed into society's constructions of modern women.

A session that I had been particularly looking forward to was Katrina Douglas' (University of Bristol) performance entitled 'Signals and Signs'. Coming from a mostly quantitative perspective in my current research, I was excited to hear about the creative performance-based methodologies used to portray her research. Katrina shared with us a number of songs and poems that she created from her previous work with David Carless (Leeds Metropolitan University). She performed a somewhat heart-warming song about the life of an elderly woman who was involved in her research.

She described how, when struggling to find the right thing to say, a rhythm would present itself that was able to tie the story together without need for words. The performance highlighted the value of creative-analytic methodologies in social research.

Another interesting talk was given by Kirsty Budds (University of Huddersfield), entitled 'Having it all or risking it all. Constructing the choice to delay motherhood in modern society'. Kirsty looked at media use regarding motherhood, and the way in which delaying motherhood is portrayed as a 'choice' in many of the national newspapers. Along with the associated increased risks involved in delaying motherhood (which is commonly defined as having your first child after the age of 35), this, therefore, portrays women as 'choosing' to put themselves and babies at risk. With many younger mums being frowned upon for having babies at a younger (but biologically 'optimal' age), this raised an interesting discussion about the limited time-frame in which society portrays as the 'best' time to have a baby.

Ending the conference was an outstanding talk by Professor Vikki Krane from Bowling Green State University, US, entitled 'The Heteronormative Landscape of Elite Women's Sport'. Using a queer, transnational, feminist approach, Vikki described several examples of LBT athletes who have been subjected to 'sex testing' (e.g. Caster Semenya). As well as describing the terrible consequences that this has had both

on the individual and their career, she explored the way in which these cases are often viewed within the media. The issue of race is seemingly overlooked, yet a transnational examination of media coverage reveals the stereotyped gender and raced undertones that are portrayed. At a particularly important time surrounding the Olympics, Vikki stressed the importance of continuing to critique heteronormative and international representations of elite sports-women.

Overall this year's conference was a huge success. Due to the intimate nature of the venue and the friendliness and openness of the attendees, it provides not only a place to debate and share research, but also a place where diversity is embraced, lasting friendships are formed, and positive memories are created.

The POWS conference is very welcoming of postgraduate students, offering both undergraduate and postgraduate prizes and bursaries to attend the conference. It is one of the most supportive conference environments that I have experienced during my time as PhD student, and I would highly recommend POWS to any postgraduate student in this field. It is a truly unique and inspiring conference and I am excited to see what next year brings.

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Blogging, the tipping point, and free will

Andrew K. Dunn

AH, BLOGGING!

I keep an occasional blog – drDrew01 on Wordpress (can be found here: <http://www.ntupsychology.net/>). It was intended to be about my research but is largely an opportunity for me to witter on about whatever it is I am thinking about. I try to keep it under 500 words (who can read more than that? Please keep reading this). I've not really been doing it long, I don't post very often and I'm not sure if I'm much good at it, but it is a useful way to: (a) keep writing (and write in a different style); (b) stretch my thoughts; and (c) reflect on them. All of which are important activities for an academic – budding or established.

So, I thought, as an additional exercise in writing and communicating I would present a version of one of my posts (Tipping the Vervet monkey: 20 December 2011), in the hope that it would stimulate a little thought and perhaps comment from the Psychology postgraduate community. Then, as I was thinking about doing this, it occurred to me that it might also be a good way to encourage 'You, Dear Reader', to have a go at blogging yourself. It's actually a very easy thing to do and it's remarkably satisfying. I would, however, caution you to think through what you are posting to the world (or even just your mates) because you never know who's reading. A similar word to the wise goes for Facebook and Twitter. Really, be careful.

Being a good academic should involve communicating with a wider community. Used wisely, blogging can be a nice entry-level opportunity to tell people what you do/think/know about/are interested in. Few academics really grasp the importance

of doing this (I know because until recently I was one) beyond writing for high impact journals that will make them super RAE/REF-able. Sure a blog won't necessarily get you a Pulitzer or similar academic accolade but it is a good forum for airing things beyond just a few North American/Western Europeans, publishing in one or two limited access journals, or worse not publishing at all (try getting a null effect published!). It can also (potentially) carry weight in terms of 'esteem indicators' and even advertise your place of work (potential brownie points there).

It can also be very useful for other academics (see here for two very good examples: <http://computingforpsychologists.wordpress.com/> and <http://psychologicalstatistics.blogspot.co.uk/>)

So what of my promised blog extract? Well, here it is. I hope you enjoy it even if you don't agree with what I have to say:

The tipping point and free will.

Psychology is about behaviour, and if we are to fully understand behaviour in all its grime and glory, we should not be afraid to read widely, to open our thinking to other disciplines or to consider other ways of thinking. Forearmed is forewarned, free your mind and the rest will follow, etc, etc ...

Where better to begin then, than with a recent episode of Radio 4's *Thinking Allowed* (or should that be aloud?) with the ever excellent Laurie Taylor (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qy05>)? In it they discuss, from a number of angles the notion of the *tipping point*.

The tipping point refers to a point (largely hypothetical; perhaps just metaphorical) at which a *system* is displaced from a state of stable equilibrium (balance) into different states (see Wikipedia). Sociologists use it to refer to a previously rare or small event/phenomenon that leads to a rapid and dramatic change – think Rosa Parkes on a crowded bus.

In the latter half of the programme they discussed the notion that all events have a precursor: Everything leads to a point that in turn leads to something else. Be it big or small, group or individual, it all has an antecedent and is, I suppose, the antecedent of other future events. The problem at the moment is calculating all the variables and then weighting them (and nigh on impossible task I would suggest) thought there is a project trying to do just. Fascinating as it is, and it is fascinating, I find this all a little bit worrying, since theoretically nothing is unpredictable (Minority Report anyone?), and no unpredictability=no free will (hard determinism). Personally I find the notion of hard determinism too hard to swallow but then perhaps I'm built that way? I am more of a Compatibilist, and, in my version, I have some degree of free will but reality is determined. That is to say, I can choose but I know that it is constrained, to some degree, by previous events and the natural sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology. Too much like sitting on the fence? Perhaps, but it avoids the nihilism and abandonment of responsibility that comes of hard determinism. What really worries me (and if you know me you'll know that I really do fret about such things) is that if it is possible to calculate, a priori, the tipping point, with any degree of accuracy, then where does that leave humanity? Certainly politics could get a whole lot nastier.

On a related note (it's in the programme) I realised that the Romantic Movement was actually a direct response to the rationality of the enlightenment and led, I suppose, to post postmodernism. I'd never really thought of it like that before but there you go.

This is not a blog nor is it a banana. It is both a blog and a banana but not both.

And that's it. Answers, comments and what-nots, on a comments card, please. Of course a better idea would be to post a message on my blog I suppose, or better still why just get out there and start blogging yourself? Happy blogging.

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Conference review:

Sleep 2012

Erica Kucharczyk

Boston, Massachusetts, 9–13 June

THIS ARTICLE reflects upon the highlights of the 26th annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, 'Sleep 2012' held in Boston, Massachusetts. I am now coming to the end of my PhD titled, 'The Occupational Impact of Sleep Quality', supervised by Professor Kevin Morgan of Loughborough University and Dr Andrew Hall of University Hospitals of Leicester. I was invited to present some of my findings on the sleep related occupational impairment of patients with obstructive sleep apnoea before and after treatment as a poster presentation. This was my third visit to the annual international Sleep conference (www.sleepmeeting.org), which brings together international researchers and clinicians from biopsychosocial sleep backgrounds, and each year I have been able to network with leading experts in my field with an increased level of confidence in my own research. A particular highlight was attending a postgraduate training day where leading experts provided a series of hourly seminar sessions with small groups of early-career researchers. I attended a session on the development of Patient Reported Outcome Measures presented by Dr Daniel Buysse (Pittsburgh), which was particularly salient as I developed such a measure in the early stages of my PhD and had been inspired by Dr Buysse's work in this area.

My research interests have broadened over the past eight months, as I have also been working as a Research Associate on an EPSRC funded project to investigate the use of social networks to improve adherence to computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for insomnia (Exploiting

social Networks to Augment Cognitive behavioural Therapy for insomnia, or 'ENACT' for short). Of particular interest to me at the conference was a seminar on the efficacy of online therapy for insomnia. In the UK, despite consistent evidence to suggest that CBT is an effective treatment for chronic insomnia, it is largely unavailable as a treatment on the NHS mainly due to a lack of resources and the costs involved with face-to-face delivery of therapy.

In the past few years, research has moved in the direction of developing cost-effective and accessible Computerised CBT for insomnia, known as CCBTi. At previous Sleep meetings there has been an increasing disquiet with the limited accessibility of psychological treatments for insomnia, so it was inspiring to see so much high quality research being conducted into increasing access to CBTi. It was invaluable to attend a seminar so relevant to my research interests, and encouraging to see that the ENACT project is moving in the same direction as other projects by leaders in this field.

After taking in a number of seminars, it was time to refocus my attention on my PhD research and present my poster titled, 'Sleep related occupational impairment before and after CPAP treatment for Obstructive Sleep Apnoea'. Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) is a disorder characterised by complete (apnoea) or partial (hypopnoea) episodes of upper airway obstruction occurring during sleep due to collapse of the upper airway. Upper airway narrowing and subsequent OSA are largely caused by excess soft tissue present in the neck area (particularly in obese or overweight individuals). Collapse of

the upper airway causes decreased blood oxygen saturation and results in brief arousals (10 to 30 seconds on average) from sleep as the individual wakes to gasp for air. Either as a consequence of the intermittent hypoxia or the disruption to slow wave or 'deep' restorative sleep, people with OSA typically present with excessive daytime sleepiness, fatigue and associated impairments in cognitive performance, which has the potential to affect occupational performance. In the UK, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) therapy is provided by an NHS sleep or respiratory medicine service following an evaluation and GP referral. A CPAP machine is a small electrical device which delivers lightly pressurised air via a flexible tube to a mask worn by the patient. The pressure of the air keeps the patients' airway open while they are sleeping, minimising arousals caused by oxygen desaturation, in order to stabilise sleep architecture and minimise subsequent daytime sleepiness. The study utilised the 19-item metric I developed in the early stages of my research programme, the Loughborough Occupational Impact of Sleep Scale (LOISS for short) and assessed patients at OSA diagnosis and at one month following CPAP

therapy. My poster presentation summarised the research aims of the study as: (a) to assess sleep-related occupational impairment in a clinical sample of OSA patients; and (b) to assess the clinical utility of the LOISS. Results indicated that sleep-related occupational impairment increased with OSA symptom severity at baseline, and secondly that increased adherence to treatment was related to a decrease in occupational impairment as measured by LOISS at follow-up. The poster session was a great networking opportunity; I was visited by people from industrial, clinical, and research backgrounds and I really appreciated the comments and questions about our research. After I presented, I was able to take in some of the other posters and was pleased to see that UK sleep research was well represented from a number of institutions. I would like to thank Loughborough University for awarding me a Research Student Conference Travel Award which made my attendance to the conference possible.

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Conference review:

International Society for Gesture Studies

Samantha Rowbotham

Lund, Sweden, 24–27 July

THE FIFTH CONFERENCE of the International Society for Gesture Studies (ISGS) was held at Lund University, Sweden, on 24–27 July 2012. The conference takes place every two years and brings together researchers with an interest in bodily communication, in particular hand gestures and sign language, from a diverse array of disciplines including Psychology, Linguistics, Anthropology, and Communication Science. As well as being international and interdisciplinary, the conference is also inclusive, with American Sign Language interpreters present for the duration of the conference allowing for dialogue between hearing and non-hearing delegates.

As this was the second ISGS conference I have attended (the first being the 2010 conference in Frankfurt-Oder, Germany where I also helped out with the conference summer school), my usual pre-conference nerves were abated by my excitement at the prospect of seeing everyone that I had met at the previous conference. I arrived on the afternoon of Monday 23 July giving me time to explore the picturesque city of Lund before the conference began on Tuesday morning. The venue was excellent, with talks held in the Lund University Conference Centre, which is set in the beautiful Lundegård Park. This was the perfect place to relax and chat with other delegates during coffee and lunch breaks, especially as we had sunny weather for the duration of the conference.

The conference opened with a welcome address from Lund University Assistant Vice Chancellor, Professor Sven Strömqvist, who gave us an overview of the rich history of Lund University, which is the largest and

oldest university in Sweden. This was followed by the first plenary, given by Jana Iverson (University of Pittsburgh) who talked about the role of hand gestures as predictors of language development in both typically- and atypically-developing toddlers and the variability in gesture use in infants at heightened biological risk of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This inspiring talk aligned well with the conference theme of 'The Communicative Body in Development' and highlighted the importance of hand gestures during development.

All the plenary speakers were excellent and their talks displayed the diversity of questions that are of interest to gesture researchers. These included: Wendy Sandler (University of Haifa) who gave a fascinating talk about the gradual and visible emergence of grammar in response to social factors in a newly-developing sign language (Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language); Spencer Kelly (Colgate University) who discussed the integration of gesture and speech, drawing examples from a series of simple yet elegant experiments using both behavioural and brain approaches; and Michael C. Corballis (University of Auckland) who considered evidence for the theory that spoken language evolved from manual gestures.

Although the conference days were long, starting at 9.00 a.m. and usually ending at 6.00 p.m., and packed full (five parallel sessions per day), the range of talks and the high quality speakers (along with the excellent catering for coffee and lunch breaks) more than made up for this. Talks were 20 minutes long with five minutes for questions and five minutes for room changes, and the

timetable was well adhered to meaning that the changeovers between talks were mostly smooth, although in some cases additional time for questioning would have been beneficial. The sessions covered a broad range of topics, including gestures in learning and teaching, sign language, gestures in art and music, metaphor and gesture, the role of gestures in social interaction and gestures in bilingualism/second language learning, to name but a few.

Some highlights for me included Vito Evola's work on gestures in forensic interviewing and Sara Healing's talk on the effects of recipient visibility (telephone vs. face-to-face) on the spatial cohesiveness of spontaneous gesture sequences. Ewa Kusmierczyk presented interesting data on the role of gestures in building mutual understanding in the context of job interviews and how this relates to interview success. Alan Cienki talked about gestural alignment between interlocutors during the process of shared remembering and presented a coding scheme to allow for coding of gestural alignment across multiple interlocutors.

Despite (or perhaps because of) its multi-disciplinary nature, the ISGS has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, fostering constructive dialogue between delegates and providing an excellent environment for post-graduate and early career researchers to present and receive feedback on their work. This was the first ISGS conference at which I have given a full talk (I gave a five-minute poster-talk at ISGS 2010), and although I was nervous about presenting the first study of my PhD to an audience of gesture specialists, the talk was very well received and I obtained valuable feedback.

The social programme was well balanced with events on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings, leaving the Wednesday evening free for people to make their own plans. The first day of the conference (Tuesday) was rounded off with a wine reception to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the ISGS. Here we were welcomed by the Mayor of Lund, Annika Annerby Johnson, and heard cele-

bratory words from past, present and honorary presidents of the ISGS including Jurgen Streek, Adam Kendon, Susan Goldin-Meadow, and David McNeill (via video-link). As a PhD student, it was fascinating to hear about how the ISGS has flourished over the last decade and I felt proud to be part of a field that is still young and has so many exciting opportunities for the future. The conference dinner took place on the Thursday evening in the sumptuous surroundings of the Grand Hotel, Lund. The event was well attended, although many were discouraged by the high ticket price (around £70). Although this is expensive, it does reflect the relatively high cost of eating and drinking out in Lund. The three-course meal with wine was excellent and we were treated to a local barbershop quartet singing Randy Newman songs between the main course and dessert.

Special thanks go to Marianne Gullberg (conference chair) and the local organising committee for arranging such a fantastic and memorable conference. At the General Assembly it was agreed that the next ISGS conference is to be held in San Diego in 2014 so I am eagerly awaiting that!

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False memory illusions in survival contexts: The role of problem solving

Sarah Garner

RESEARCHERS such as Loftus (2003) have suggested that memory is not always an accurate process and can often be prone to errors. These errors frequently lead to false memory illusions, whereby people remember details that never occurred, particularly when presented with incorrect or misleading information during encoding. Recent research has since discovered that these false memory effects can be recreated in a controlled laboratory environment using a powerful procedure known as the Deese-Roediger-McDermott paradigm (DRM; Deese, 1959; Roediger & McDermott, 1995). This procedure involves presenting a list of words that are all associates of an un-presented critical lure. For example, the words *truck*, *bus*, *train*, *vehicle*, etc., are all associates of the un-presented critical lure car. Despite never being presented, when tested participants will often falsely recall or recognise the critical lure as part of the list.

Research into false memory effects has often branched into interesting areas, with one of the most fascinating recent topics of investigation being that of survival memory. With regard to true memory, research has demonstrated a benefit for words encoded in a survival context (e.g. Nairne, Pandeirada & Thompson, 2008), with words rated on their importance to survival being remembered better than words rated for other aspects of semantic processing (e.g. pleasantness). Nairne et al. suggest that survival related information has greater adaptive value and consequently human memory systems are primed to remember this information better. One would expect, therefore, to find fewer false memories for survival related information, given its claimed evolutionary adaptive value.

Research by Howe and Derbish (2009), however, actually found the opposite to be true. After controlling for a wide range of word-specific factors, such as backward associative strength (BAS; the extent to which list items activate the critical lure), semantic density, arousal and valence, they found that survival related items and survival related processing increased the number of false memories produced. Given the evolutionary value of survival information, an increase in errors and false memories for this information seems to be maladaptive. One possible explanation as to why this may occur is proposed by the authors. They suggest that the priming of strongly interconnected survival concepts will subsequently activate associated concepts, guiding attention to other survival related materials. This will activate survival relevant knowledge that can be used to draw attention to key aspects of the environment, a trait that may be essential to survival, despite leading to increased false memories.

An alternative explanation may come from research into problem solving. The ability to solve problems in a survival related context is crucial (e.g. Leach & Ansell, 2008). Strong activation of survival-related knowledge may not only guide attention to key aspects in the environment, but could also aid problem solving processes. Difficult problems, for example, may require a high level of insight that could potentially be aided by the spreading activation of concepts in memory (Collins & Loftus, 1975). Research by Bowden et al. (2005), for example, has suggested that insight related problem solving initially involves the activation of concepts in memory that are unrelated to the solution, followed by the weak

activation of concepts that are critical to the solution. Research by Kershaw and Ohlsson (2004) has also found that insight problem solving initially involves searching through related concepts in memory for relevant information. An increase in false memories for survival related information, therefore, may not only serve the function of guiding attention, but could also serve the function of priming and aiding adaptive problem solving in a similar manner to true memories (i.e. via spreading activation). For example, falsely remembering the presence of a predator at a location based only on animal traces may not just make one more wary, but could actually provide insight into solving problems and making future decisions about this location. Indeed, research has already proposed that spreading activation may be the underlying mechanism behind false memories, priming and problem solving (Roediger, Balota & Watson, 2001), providing justification for studying the potential links between all three domains. There is the possibility, therefore, that false memory production may be more than just a by-product of problem solving, and the potential exists to explore links between problem solving theories and theories of false memories.

Support for these ideas seems to arise when one considers the role of creativity. Numerous authors (e.g. Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1998) have drawn attention to creativity as a useful tool in problem solving, particularly in insight problems. Creativity has also been proposed as a potential factor involved in the emergence of false memories. Hyman and Billings (1998), for example, suggested a possible link between creativity and suggestibility in adults, with suggestibility already being seen as a key factor in the production of false memories (e.g. Quas et al., 1997).

The current study addresses the issue of whether false memories are simply capable of priming problem solving tasks in a similar manner to true memories. These findings inform my future research which will be to

attempt to distinguish the function this priming may serve with regard to survival information.

A problem solving task which has been widely used in priming studies using true memories is the Compound Remote Associate Task (CRAT). Originally developed by Mednick (1962), a CRAT involve the presentation of three words, for example, *apple*, *family*, *house*, all of which can be associated with a fourth word, in this case tree. In order to gain insight and solve this problem, theories have suggested a process of spreading activation until the correct concept has been activated (Bowden et al., 2005), making the task an ideal problem within which to test a link between false memory and priming. The experiment reported below, therefore, aimed to use the critical lures from previously studied DRM lists to prime participants with the correct solution to a number of these CRATs in order to see whether problem solving is facilitated by priming. Facilitation will be defined as an increase in the number of CRATs solved as well as a decrease in the time taken to solve these CRATs. It is predicted, therefore, that when participants are primed with a critical lure using the DRM paradigm, they will solve more CRATs and solve them more quickly than when they are not primed.

A within-subjects design was used to study this prediction, whereby each subject was primed on half of the CRAT problems with a preceding DRM list whose critical lure was also the solution to one of the CRAT problems.

Eight CRAT problems were selected from the normative data produced by Bowden and Jung-Beeman (2003). Each CRAT consisted of three words, all of which could be solved by a single linking word. Eight DRM lists were used, consisting of 15 associates of the critical lure. Lists were selected because their critical lure was the same as the solution word used in the selected CRAT problem. DRM lists were taken from the normed associates created by Nelson, McEvoy and Schreiber (1998) and were

randomly divided into two groups of four. Participants were primed on half the DRM lists first and then completed all eight CRAT problems. The two sets of four DRM lists were equated on backward associative strength (BAS) List set 1 BAS=.189; List set 2 BAS=.186).

Each list was presented verbally, followed by a distractor task (counting backwards by threes for 30 seconds). Participants were then asked to recall as many words as they could remember from the list. Following study-test trials on four DRM lists, participants attempted to solve all eight CRAT problems.

The data showed that false memory rates were comparable to other studies using recall measures (e.g. Howe et al., 2009) with participants falsely recalling the critical lure an average of 56 per cent of the time. The mean CRAT solution rates (proportions) and the mean CRAT solution times (seconds) were calculated for each participant and analysed separately in a series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs). For primed CRAT problems, solution rates and solution times were further conditionalised on whether the participant had produced the critical lure during recall (i.e. primed/FM=critical lure produced and primed/No-FM=no critical lure produced). Thus, both solution rates and solution times were subjected to separate ANOVAs where the only factor was solution type (unprimed vs. primed/No-FM vs. primed/FM).

Concerning solution rates, there was a main effect for solution type, $F(2,82)=4.09$, $p=.02$, $\eta^2p=.09$, where post-hoc tests (Tukey's LSD) showed that solution rates were highest for primed/FM problems ($M=.65$) than primed/No-FM ($M=.45$; $p<.02$) and unprimed ($M=.48$; $p<.02$) problems, and the latter two did not differ. Concerning solution times, there was also a main effect for solution type, $F(2,82)=7.51$, $p=.001$, $\eta^2p=.16$, where post-hoc tests (Tukey's LSD) showed that solution times were fastest for primed/FM problems ($M=31.14$) than primed/No-FM ($M=45.15$; $p<.002$) and unprimed

($M=43.74$; $p<.006$) problems, and the latter two did not differ.

The findings from this study are the first to demonstrate that false memories can prime insight based problem solving. It was clear that when problem solutions were primed by the prior presentation of DRM lists whose critical lures were the solution to that problem, both the probability and speed of solving such problems improved significantly. Key to this finding is that it is not simply a consequence of priming of the problem solution given the presentation of a DRM list whose critical lure is the problem solution, but rather, the participant must also falsely remember that item as one having been presented in the list. That is, the false memory must, for all intents and purposes, become part of the 'presented' list and be recalled along with the items that were actually presented.

These results strongly suggest that false memories, like true memories, are capable of priming and facilitating problem solving. Specifically, DRM lists can prime and facilitate performance on problem-solving tasks. However, this conclusion is restricted to cases in which the critical lure is falsely recalled. Such facilitation is not found when the false critical lure has not been recalled. Indeed, priming with no recall of the critical lure resulted in problem-solving rates and times identical to conditions in which there was no priming. This outcome is similar to related findings in which falsely recalled critical lures behaved in a manner similar to true memories (e.g. McDermott, 1997). The importance of the present research is that it extends the domain of false memory priming effects to more than changes in performance on related memory tasks. Therefore false memories can prime performance on more complex problem solving tasks, in particular, insight problems.

These results support the growing literature to suggest that false memories can exhibit effects similar to those of true memories. Secondly, they add to an emerging consensus that false memories have benefi-

cial effects in human cognition and not simply the negative consequences we are all familiar with in the forensic (e.g. eyewitness memory) literature.

Based on these findings, the possibility exists that false memories could be adaptive, accounting for the increase in false memories for survival information found by Howe and Derbish (2009). That is, the function of false memories may be to aid survival by priming solutions to adaptive problems. If that is the case, one would expect problem solving to be facilitated more when participants are primed with survival information

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Conference review:

British Psychological Society Annual Conference

Helen Owton

Grand Connaught Rooms, London, 18–20 April

A review of the Innovative Qualitative Methods in Psychology presentations

THIS YEAR'S British Psychological Society (BPS) conference was fittingly set in the city of London. The conference was spread over three days, which gave delegates the opportunity to move around the impressive maze-like venue, the Grand Connaught Rooms, slipping in and out of various symposia to suit their interests. This year, the conference worked specifically together with four segments of the BPS: Qualitative Methods in Psychology (QMiP), Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Division of Academics, Researchers & Teachers in Psychology (DARTP) and the Student conference. As a third-year PhD student interested in many of these strands, I found the conference more intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking than previous BPS conferences. A guest appearance and keynote from James Cracknell also sparked up people's interest in sport.

Whilst some research presented still held onto traditional viewpoints and employed conventional methods, there was also an emergence of exciting qualitative and adventurous alternative and innovative methodological approaches. Along one of the corridors, I particularly enjoyed being captured by the series of filmed journeys of various athletic landscapes on the phenomenon of flow (by Victoria Tischler & David Bickerstaff: <http://vimeo.com/40260708>). As QMiP were particularly involved in this conference I would like to reflect on a selec-

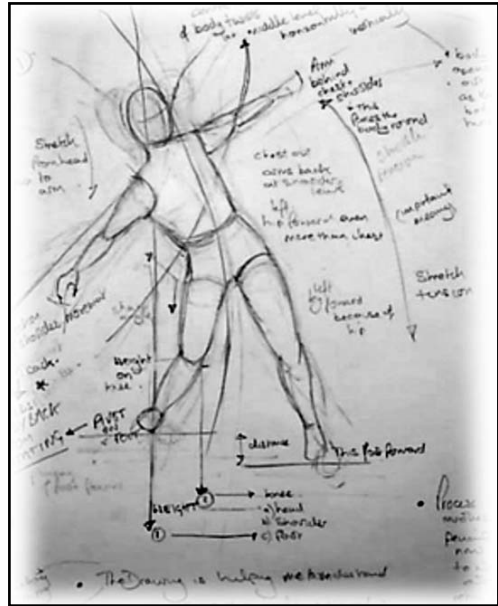
tion of presentations I attended, which were given as part of three symposiums they ran.

The three presentations that particularly captured my interest over the two days I was able to attend were by Peter Reddy, Hannah Gravestock, and Peter Branney. On the first day of the conference, Peter Reddy (with R. Shaw & E. Moores) from Aston University presented 'Psychology graduates in the transition to employment: Negotiating employability, identity and the meaning of higher education in the class of 2011: An IPA study'. This merged interests between QMiP and Teachers and Researchers in Psychology. Peter heartily explained how this study explored the lived experiences of psychology graduates (four with and four without year-long sandwich work experience placements) from a university in the Midlands. The researchers interviewed participants about their perception of readiness and preparedness for graduate professional employment and other development and emergent issues. Peter boldly focused on highlighting the dominance of status as a driver of participants' careers and the salience of clinical psychology. I found that the rich descriptive quotes from participants captured the emotional aspects and the impacts of graduation and postgraduation work.

Audience debate was evoked with a focus on the pressures we also feel as the impeding achievement driven culture influences our need to succeed in our careers. Many of us

seemed to have experienced others asking us, ‘What do you want to do? What do you want to do with your life?’ with the idea that a career should be one narrow direction with an emerging CV-building culture whereby often the intrinsic value and nature of doing anything is shifted into the background. Sometimes we need to be reminded that, ‘You are not your CV. You are so much more than your CV’ (Sparkes, 2007, p.528). Whilst we need to prepare students for a career after university, perhaps we also need to incorporate ‘a methodology of the heart’ (Pelias, 2004) and encourage a more enjoyable nature of creativity into the way employability is approached at universities.

The following day, I attended a QMiP presentation from Hannah Gravestock (University of the Arts London) who performed her intriguing research on *Embodying understanding: Drawing as research in sport and exercise*. This brought together interests between QMiP and Sport and Exercise Psychology. Hannah carefully introduced drawing as an interdisciplinary qualitative research method and articulated how drawings, if applied effectively, have the potential to enhance research methods in the field of sport and exercise science. As a figure skater herself, Hannah used three ethnographic case studies conducted in theatre and the sport of figure skating, and were analysed using a grounded theory approach. Hannah explained the concept of drawing as mime by using Jacques Lecoq’s (2006) understanding and application; understanding the rhythms of athletics as a kind of physical poetry that affected her strongly. Additionally, she meticulously discussed and illustrated drawings of three prominent scenographers: Rae Smith, Adolphe Appia (1862) and Casper Neher (1897–1962). Throughout, visuals streamed with emotion and enhanced the flow of her presentation. She also included some of her own exquisite and delicate drawings, which are shown here.





Paul Flowers, the chair of the symposium, (Glasgow Caledonian University) enthusiastically opened the floor to questions where the audience seemed stirred by creativity. Debates touched on how there is often a prioritisation of the written word over the visual representation, particularly in academia. Wendy Hollway (Open University) emphasised the importance of not being apologetic for not prioritising the written word and discussed ways in which we can draw from alternative epistemologies, which means drawing upon ‘characterised traits’ (Sparkes & Smith, 2009) to judge these (‘alternative’) types of research. Some might remember Brett Smith’s talk in ‘All the world’s a stage’ at last year’s BPS conference (2011) where he suggested that the open ended lists of ‘characteristic traits’ are brought to judgment with the perma-

nent capacity to add items to and subtract items from the lists (Smith & Deemer, 2000). For example, when judging an auto ethnographic piece of writing, perhaps one would consider whether it ‘contributes to knowledge’, or whether there is a ‘comprehensiveness of evidence’, ‘believable’ or ‘respectful’.

The final presentation I would like to focus on was by Peter Branney*; ‘I’m not going to ask that question because I think it’s silly: A participative-workshop study to explore the “quality of life” research priorities of patients with penile cancer’. Peter confidently described the need for research focusing on patients’ perspectives with penile cancer. The team in which Peter was working had decided to use a participative workshop design, which was a unique and interesting way of ‘giving power’ to participants. Particularly, participants took part in two focus groups ($N=10$) where each group designed a semi-structured interview schedule. Then, participants ($N=5$) used the schedule to interview each other. Various themes emerged from the data: waterworks, diagnosis and disclosure, and humour. Peter discussed the different ways humour and laughter seemed to prove contentious in one of the participant-conducted interviews. Whilst many seemed to use humour as a way to talk about uncomfortable and taboo issues, humour seemed taboo itself in certain circumstances for some people.

Audience responses seemed interested in the silences surrounding sexual dys/function and questioned how this might have something to do with an embedded hegemonic masculin culture: Peter acknowledged that these issues were discussed more in the individual interviews than in the focus groups. Rachel Shaw (Aston University) seemed particularly interested in the *process* of the research because it seemed clear that the research had been beneficial for the group involved.

¹ With Karl Witty, Debbie Braybook, Alan White (Centre for Men’s Health, Leeds Metropolitan), Kate Bullen (Department of Psychology, Aberystwyth University), Ian Eardley (Pyrh Department of Urology, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust).

Along with the abundance and somewhat richness of qualitative and sports research I found this conference a good opportunity to catch-up with PsyPAG (ex) members and mingle with other friendly academics. On previous occasions, I have found the BPS conference somewhat 'scientific' and I was apprehensive about presenting what some might call 'risky' methodological research, but I received some positive and valuable feedback from the compassionate and open-minded audience. So I would like to thank PsyPAG for providing me with funding to attend and present as well as QMiP for accepting my abstract and doing such an amazing job of giving qualitative research a large stage amidst the sports-focused BPS conference.

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Dates for your Diary

8 January 2013: The Grand Thistle, Bristol

Division of Educational and Child Psychology Trainee Educational Psychology

Conference 2013

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/division-educational-and-child-psychology-trainee-educational-psychology-conference-2013>

9–11 January 2013: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester

Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference 2013

www.bps.org.uk/dop2013

1 February 2013: The Rougemont Hotel, Exeter

Mindfulness and Mindfulness-based Approaches – From Reactivity to Responding

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/mindfulness-and-mindfulness-based-approaches-reactivity-responding>

4 February 2013: British Psychological Society London Office

Dialogue: How to create change in organisations through conversation

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/dialogue-how-create-change-organisations-through-conversation-2>

27 February 2013: British Psychological Society London Office

Through the Looking Glass: Doing Sport Psychology in Elite Youth Sport

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/through-looking-glass-doing-sport-psychology-elite-youth-sport>

25 March 2013: British Psychological Society London Office

An introduction to the science of sleep: Psychobehavioural assessment and treatment strategies for people with insomnia.

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/introduction-sleep-psychobehavioural-assessment-and-treatment-strategies-people-insomnia>

5 April 2013: British Psychological Society London Office

Understanding Qualitative Methods and Analysis

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/understanding-qualitative-methods-and-analysis>

9–11 April 2013: Harrogate International Centre and Holiday Inn, Harrogate

British Psychological Society Annual Conference 2013

<http://www.bps.org.uk/events/conferences/annual-conference-2013>

PsyPAG Committee 2011/2012

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Scottish Division of Educational Psychology	Position Under Review	
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Division of Forensic Psychology	Ross Bartels RMB956@bham.ac.uk	2013
Division of Health Psychology	Kimberley Hill Kimberley.hill-2011@brookes.ac.uk	2014
Division of Neuropsychology	Ralph Pawling Pss825@bangor.ac.uk	2013

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Psychology of Education Section	Emma Jackson e.jackson@worc.ac.uk	2014
Psychology of Women Section	Lauren Kita LKita@bournemouth.ac.uk	2013
Psychotherapy Section	Kate Doran K.Doran@sheffield.ac.uk	2013
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Social Psychology Section	Daniel Jolley dj93@kent.ac.uk	2014
Transpersonal Psychology Section	Alexander Griffiths-Moros aig3@st-andrews.ac.uk	2013
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Community Psychology	Michael Richards michael.l.richards3@stu.mmu.ac.uk	2013

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London and Home Counties Branch	Vacant Position	2013
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National Postgraduate Committee	Position Under Review	
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PSYPAG

About PsyPAG

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 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 publication, 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 Group of the British Psychological Society to raise awareness of postgraduate 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 and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or go to <http://tinyurl.comPsyPAGjiscmail>.

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

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