

Undergraduate psychology education: looking to the future

At the end of November 2010, invited participants met at Chicheley Hall, the Kavli Royal Society International Centre, for a two-day retreat to consider what changes may be needed to ensure UK undergraduate psychology education is seen as 'fit for purpose' in five years time. Data from over 450 responses to an online national consultation on the future of psychology education informed the intensive group work and discussions.

The vast majority of respondents to the consultation partly or strongly agreed with the statement 'Psychology undergraduate education needs to adapt to the changing context of UK education during the next five years' and although there were a range of views on *how* institutions might adapt to this changing context, there was considerable agreement on what the key drivers are.

Similarly at the retreat, there was a consensus around the structures and process where change might be most beneficial. Themes emerging from the consultation and subsequent meeting include the importance of aligning psychology with the needs of society, managing the transitional process from pre-tertiary education to employment, maintaining quality without constraining course design, maximising opportunities for students to engage in research, and emphasising experiential learning and teaching methodologies that will enable students to apply their psychological knowledge in different aspects of their lives. A report based on the retreat and the consultation will be published later this year.



Participants at Chicheley Hall, November 2010.

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The Academy Psychology Network, University of York

Annie Trapp Director
a.trapp@psych.york.ac.uk

Kath Armstrong Administrator
k.armstrong@psych.york.ac.uk

Naomi Craig Academic Coordinator
n.craig@psych.york.ac.uk

Marina Crowe Academic Coordinator
m.crowe@psych.york.ac.uk

Caprice Lantz Senior Academic Coordinator
c.lantz@psych.york.ac.uk

Siobhan MacAndrew Coordinator for Scotland
s.macandrew@abertay.ac.uk

Richard Plant Technical Support
r.plant@psych.york.ac.uk

Richard Ribeiro Computing Officer (Web)
rd.ribeiro@psych.york.ac.uk

The Academy Psychology Network Advisory Board

Verity Brown (Chair) representing AHPD
vjb@st-and.ac.uk

David Adams representing Biosciences Subject Centre
d.j.adams@leeds.ac.uk

Robert Aitken representing the University of York Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (FELT)
ra6@york.ac.uk

Tom Buchanan representing Psychology Network departmental contacts
t.buchanan@westminster.ac.uk

Elizabeth Freeman representing the PsyPAG
e.freeman@yorks.ac.uk

Julie Hulme representing the Association for the Teaching of Psychology (ATP)
J.A.Hulme@staffs.ac.uk

Dorothy Miell representing the BPS Psychology Education Board (PEB)
d.e.miell@ed.ac.uk

Siobhan MacAndrew Psychology Network Coordinator for Scotland
s.macandrew@abertay.ac.uk

Tim Moss representing professional psychology training
tim.moss@uwe.ac.uk

Dea Nielsen representing psychology undergraduate students
dn513@york.ac.uk

Pete Reddy representing Psychology Network departmental contacts
p.a.reddy@aston.ac.uk

Quentin Summerfield representing psychology at the University of York
aq1@york.ac.uk

Jacqui Taylor representing the BPS DTRP
jtaylor@bournemouth.ac.uk

Annie Trapp representing the Psychology Network
a.trapp@psych.york.ac.uk

Naomi Wilson representing clinical psychology training
n.wilson@surrey.ac.uk

News and awards

Past and future teaching practices in psychology

The BPS Division for Teachers and Researchers in Psychology are running a Symposium at the 2011 Annual Conference in Glasgow on the theme, "Past and Future Teaching Practices in Psychology". This will take place on Thursday May 5th from 0845 - 1200. We look forward to meeting readers of this newsletter and to encourage anyone interested in joining the DTRP to come to this session, or see us afterwards at the 'Sub-sections' stand in the main conference area.

The symposium presents papers from advocates of e-learning (including modes of e-assessment) and aims to develop a framework

for best practice in the utilisation of technology in teaching, whilst at the same time, discussing the merits of traditional teaching and assessment methods. Furthermore, it builds on and continues discussions from two previous symposiums hosted by DTRP members and is aligned with the key aims of the Division.

Also, following the previous DTRP symposiums, presenters will be invited to contribute to Psychology Teaching Review by considering a target paper by Professor James Hartley against the research presented at this symposium.

Contact: jtaylor@bournemouth.ac.uk

Excellence in psychology education award 2011

Members are invited to submit nominations for the British Psychological Society's Excellence in Psychology Education Award. All areas of teaching, training and education will be considered on equal grounds, including pre-degree teaching, teaching at first and higher degree level, training of professional applied psychologists, the teaching of psychology to other professions,

and adult and continuing education. Nominations should be able to demonstrate that the work of a nominee has made an unusually significant contribution to education and training in psychology within the United Kingdom. Closing date: 31st March 2011. Contact kelly.auty@bps.org.uk for more information or visit www.bps.org.uk/peb

Psychology network student essay award 2011

Every year the Psychology Network runs a student essay competition in which we ask students to tell us about an aspect of their psychology learning and teaching experience. The 2011 award is now open. To enter, simply send us an essay telling us:

How does the reality of studying psychology at higher education level match your initial expectations?

Essays should be no more than 1000 words, and the deadline for submission is Friday, 8 April, 2011.

The award is open to anyone studying psychology at any level in any higher education institution in the UK. International students studying at a UK institution are more than welcome to enter. However, UK or non-UK students studying at institutions outside of the UK are unfortunately not eligible for the award.

The winner of the award receives £250, and their winning essay is published on our website, in our newsletter, and (usually) in the BPS monthly magazine *The*

Psychologist. The winner will also be invited to attend (all expenses paid) the Higher Education Academy's annual conference at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham, from 5 to 6 July 2011.

For more information, including submission criteria and the winning essays from previous years, visit:

<http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/s.php?p=171>

Technician award 2011 now open

Each year the Psychology Network, in association with The Association of Technical Staff in Psychology, (ATSiP), runs an award to recognise the excellent work done by psychology technicians and demonstrators to support psychology teaching and learning. Nominations are now invited for the 2011 award.

Candidates should provide evidence of excellence relating to one or more of the criteria below. This evidence should take the form of a narrative report (maximum 1000 words), supported by testimonials from staff or students as appropriate. Applications should be submitted electronically by the appropriate Head of Department (or equivalent) to Kath Armstrong, k.armstrong@psych.york.ac.uk, by Friday 29th April 2011.

Criteria

- Areas of skill: the development of new or use of existing technology in particular areas of psychology (e.g., developmental) or particular kinds of technology (e.g., podcasts) to enhance the psychology student learning experience.
- Interpersonal / communication skills: interaction with staff and students.
- Instruction / teaching skills: the development of learning materials; departmental systems to support the student learning experience; support for lecturers.
- Administration / finance skills: the use of new or existing technology to improve administrative procedures or to reduce costs relating to the psychology student learning experience.
- Problem solving skills: the development of new or use of existing technology to develop solutions to problems relating to psychology learning and teaching. For example, enabling improved feedback to students; improving the teaching of very large groups; other problem identified by department.
- Innovative skills: the development of new technology, or the innovative use of existing technology, to enhance the student learning experience.
- Special skills: research or other work concerning the use of new or existing technology that has enhanced the psychology student learning experience.

The award will be presented at the ATSiP Conference in July 2011.

JISC funding call

JISC invites institutions to submit initial proposals for innovative projects in the e-learning domain, as part of its e-learning programme for 2010/11.

Projects and activities must fit with the vision, outcomes and principles of the JISC e-Learning programme and support innovative approaches to learning and teaching, identify areas of activity suitable for further investment and enhance the overall educational experience of students throughout the sector by identifying and solving common problems that are not covered by existing or planned JISC programmes.

Projects can cover any aspect of the e-learning domain. Maximum funding for any project is £50,000.

Deadline for receipt of proposals in response to this call is 12:00 noon on Monday 21 March 2011. Projects should start by June 2011, may run for up to 12 months and must be complete by May 2012.

Eligibility

Proposals may be submitted by HE institutions funded via HEFCE, SFC, HEFCW and DEL Northern Ireland, and by FE institutions funded via SFC, DCELLS Wales and DEL Northern Ireland. FE institutions in England that teach HE to more than 400 FTEs are also eligible to bid provided proposals demonstrate how the work supports the HE in FE agenda.

Proposals may be from single institutions or consortia. Partnership arrangements may be developed outside the sector (for example with research council sites, publishers, commercial suppliers), but the lead partner must meet the criteria outlined above. Funds can only be allocated through the lead partner.

Please note: The lead institution may only submit one proposal per assessment point.

Further information can be found at: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/funding_calls/2011/01/grant0408.aspx

JISC TechDis Subject Library Survey – experiences in obtaining alternative formats

Do you have experience of working with publishers to source or produce accessible texts for your students? JISC TechDis are seeking to produce a summary of publisher responsiveness to requests for alternative and accessible texts on a subject by subject basis. The summary aims to:

- 1 Advise subject communities on the best publishers in their subject areas in terms of: a) providing texts in accessible

format at source (e.g. accessible e-book platforms); or b) supporting requests for alternative formats of hard copy books.

- 2 Provide early feedback to publishers commended for their accessibility awareness.

- 3 Identify problem publishers. These will be approached (in partnership with intermediaries and peers within the industry) to give them feedback, make them

aware of the issues and point them to advice and guidance from the Right to Read Alliance and the publishing industry.

Further details can be downloaded from <http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/s.php?p=305>

The survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete and is available from www.surveymonkey.com/s/NYCL9HW

Letters

Anomalous cognition is not parapsychology!

Jason J Braithwaite, Behavioural Brain Sciences Centre, University of Birmingham

I read with both interest and some dismay the short article written by Dr Ian Baker on Anomalous Psychology and Parapsychology (Issue 57, Sept 2010). Dr Baker opened his article by stating that parapsychology and anomalous psychology involve the scientific study of ostensibly 'paranormal' phenomena. I would like to correct him on this point as to my mind this is misleading. Anomalous psychology, or anomalous cognition as it is also known, is certainly not tied to the methods, questionable assumptions and often controversial conclusions of parapsychology at all. As a consequence I think it is important to state that there are clear

distinctions to be drawn between these fields and that they should not be confused in this way. While studies of anomalous cognition may well touch upon experiences often deemed 'paranormal' by some, the adopted approach is typically within the scope of mainstream cognitive and clinical neuroscience – not parapsychology.

I am passionate about the serious and accurate teaching of anomalous cognition and at the University of Birmingham I have been teaching a 3rd year undergraduate module on hallucinations and delusions for some years now. The course draws upon, in part, research

on anomalous cognition. This is an extremely popular course for students and their feedback suggests they find it enjoyable and engaging. Using anomalous cognition as an vehicle to communicate otherwise difficult concepts of cognition and/or neuroscience to students has proved to be a highly effective and engaging teaching method and one I would recommend to my colleagues and fellow educators. However this is not, and should never be confused with parapsychology, an area of investigation still struggling to delineate a reliable object of study.

Parapsychology is anomalous cognition!

Ian Baker, TAPP Network Chair, University of Derby

I appreciated Dr Jason Braithwaite's correspondence concerning my short article on the development of the Teaching Anomalistic Psychology and Parapsychology (TAPP) network. In his correspondence he questions my linking of the terms anomalous psychology and parapsychology. Unlike Dr Braithwaite, I do not see such a clear distinction between parapsychology and anomalous psychology. In fact, I think that teaching students to fully evaluate ostensibly 'paranormal' phenomena requires an understanding of what he is referring to as 'anomalous

cognition', among other topics such as the psychology of deception, which is why I used the terms as I did. I am confused by his reference to methodology as parapsychology uses the same methods as the rest of psychology, although it arguably requires stricter adherence to some of its components than other areas of psychology, e.g., double/triple-blind methodologies, adoption of clear controls and extreme rigour in blocking possible sources of sensory leakage, etc. Perhaps this is why so many academics trained in parapsychology lead on or teach undergraduate psychology

experimental design and methodology courses at various UK universities.

Regardless of the terms that we use, one of the primary objectives of the TAPP network is to support the teaching of both anomalistic psychology and parapsychology, and we welcome everyone who teaches HE students about this difficult material. I would be delighted if Dr Braithwaite would join the TAPP network in order to add his support and expertise.

Departmental innovation

Wii-learning: an innovative technique for teaching sport psychology

Andrew Manley, Susan Backhouse, Jim McKenna & Lisa Whitaker, Leeds Metropolitan University



Recent research has advocated the use of game-based activities as an efficient vehicle for learning. In an extension to this area of investigation, researchers at Leeds Metropolitan University's Carnegie Faculty have examined the effects of traditional games (e.g., Hoopla, Darts) and active video games using the Nintendo Wii (e.g., Wii Sports Resort; Sonic and Mario at the Olympic Games) on the reported learning experience of students enrolled on an undergraduate sport psychology module. The project has provided initial evidence to suggest that active video games represent an effective and engaging way of teaching theoretical issues related to psychology.

A total of 74 male and female Level 5 students participated in four practical sessions designed

to help demonstrate and explain the impacts of psychological factors (e.g., anxiety, stress and arousal; self-confidence and self-efficacy) on sports performance. Two practical sessions involved traditional games, and two practical classes utilised active video games on the Wii. The order in which students participated in these practical sessions was counterbalanced, whilst the traditional and active video games were matched according to task type and difficulty. At the end of each practical class, students were asked to rate the session in terms of their enjoyment, interest/engagement, and perceived usefulness to their studies. Students could also provide written comments to explain their experience of the session.

Initial findings have revealed that active video games are just as effective as traditional games as a means of enhancing the learning experience of undergraduate students. Additional evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data is currently in progress; specifically, to examine the impact of teaching activities involving active video games on students' academic performance.

The increased sophistication of active video game technology provides teachers with a novel way to engage students. The preliminary findings from this project highlight that active video games represent an innovative and cost-effective resource for enhancing students' appreciation of new and complex ideas. Further work in this emerging area of technology-enhanced learning could be extended to the teaching of other psychology domains (e.g., health, developmental, occupational). In turn, future research of this nature may lead to findings that have important implications for the wider Higher Education community.

The findings of this project will be presented at the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference in Glasgow on Thursday 5th May, 2011.

For more information: a.j.manley@leedsmet.ac.uk



The psychology information skills programme at the University of Bedfordshire

Averil Robertson, University of Bedfordshire



In 2008, the University underwent a teaching and learning review. The Psychology department saw this as an opportunity to integrate 'employability' skills such as information literacy into their teaching; previously there had been no regularly timetabled information skills sessions, other than a general introduction in induction week. In collaboration with the academic liaison librarian for psychology, a programme was devised and embedded within core units at Levels 1 and 2. At Level 1, after their initial induction week activities introducing them to learning resources, students received hands-on instruction on planning and carrying out a search for information resources for their first assignment, supervised by the librarian and tutor. They were then required to complete 'homework' in small groups during reading week, in the form of planning and carrying

out a search for three information resources, results of which they brought back to their tutorial after the break to share with the rest of their tutorial group. Students then submitted this task individually, as well as their reflections on the process, to the librarian via the PebblePad e-portfolio system for feedback.

Students at Level 2 started their programme in induction week with a Turning Point 'clicker' presentation aimed at finding out what they had retained from information skills teaching at Level 1. In the second teaching week, they too had a hands-on session to refresh their skills and introduce them to more advanced searching techniques and new resources. These students had a week to track down some information resources to present back to their tutorial group, but then had several weeks to redo the search in more detail, again submitting via PebblePad.

The programme has been subject to revision based on feedback from students as well as evaluation of the success of the instruction. As

a result of findings from the first year that this programme ran, where only around 35% of Level 2 students completed the homework, submission in subsequent years was allocated 5% of the grade for the unit, after which completion rates rose to over 90%. Students at both levels now also complete a self-assessment survey of their confidence levels in completing various information skills tasks (using SurveyGizmo) before and after instruction. Students are now also required to provide a critical evaluation of a book and a journal article, using criteria from their choice of online tutorials. The next stage in assessing the impact of the programme will be to develop online tasks that measure actual skills attainment, speaking to students individually and via focus groups, and assessing learning by coding the PebblePad assignments using criteria based on the SCONUL '7 pillars' of information literacy.

For information contact Averil Robertson at averil.robertson@beds.ac.uk

Capturing lectures with Panopto

Gareth Hall, Aberystwyth University

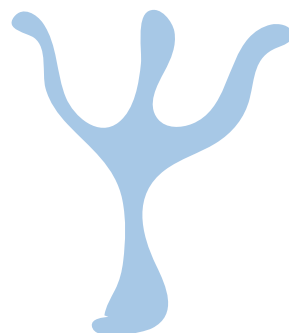
Recording lectures is nothing new, however, it has moved from primarily being hardware based (e.g., video cameras) to hardware and software based (e.g., Powerpoint and audio synchronisation software). With the improvements in technology, the department of psychology at Aberystwyth University is now midway through trialling Panopto lecture capturing software to record the majority of their taught schemes. The decision was based on research by Dr Hall, also part of the psychology team, and funded by the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fund, who found in a university wide pilot study that the software alleviated the negative consequences of lectures as a learning environment. For example, students felt that lectures were a poor learning environment where teaching staff sometimes delivered material too quickly and in a too complex manner, or students simply lost concentration during some lectures. Recording lectures and posting the lecture in a virtual

learning environment, such as Blackboard, meant students could then retrieve the lectures and listen to the parts of the class where their notes were incomplete or confusing, and students with dyslexia are also benefitting from using the software. The software has also been a useful revision tool at the end of term where students have been able to listen to key parts of the lecture again in order to direct further reading and independent research.

Furthermore, in contrast with many teaching staff's fears about the technology, students' motivation to attend remained high, and in two cases helped retain students who had been taken ill and would have otherwise withdrawn from their studies. However, students did voice concern about the potential for staff to abuse the software, too, mainly by pre-recording lectures in place of live lectures, although pre-recorded lectures were seen more positively specifically when staff were absent or on research leave.

Within the department of psychology at Aberystwyth, Panopto lecture capturing software has been well received by students. Additionally, the software has been particularly helpful for research methods based modules where teaching staff have been able to demonstrate to students using pre-recorded videos, the calculation of statistics within statistical packages, such as SPSS and SAS. To date, the only criticism by students of the software has been the uptake of the software by all teaching staff, which will form the basis to the second phase of Dr Hall's research program. There are clear benefits to using the software for students and given the current climate and uncertainty about tuition fees, capturing lectures might be just one way of increasing added value to student's experiences whilst at University.

For more information please contact Gareth Hall (gbh@aber.ac.uk).



Use of Camtasia to support lecture delivery and SPSS workshops

Debbie Pope and Derek Larkin, Edge Hill University

At most HE institutions, teaching materials are regularly provided to undergraduate students via Virtual Learning environments (VLEs) such as Blackboard or WebCT. However, materials provided are often just copies of slides or handouts without any further explanation. We believe that the development of more innovative uses of VLEs can: 1) improve student engagement with their course; 2) enable more informative materials to be conveyed to students and 3) assist revision by providing a pool of resource materials.

Staff at Edge Hill University have been trialling the use of Camtasia to enhance traditional PowerPoint slide lecture delivery and to support SPSS workshop classes.

Camtasia Studio and Camtasia for Mac are screen video capture software, published by TechSmith. An area of the computer screen or the whole screen can be recorded, along with accompanying webcam video footage on the same screen. There is an option to draw a circle around the cursor whenever the mouse is clicked, to better illustrate the actions of the lecturer. Camtasia allows audio recording while screen-capturing is in progress, so the presenter can narrate the demonstration as

it is carried out (particularly useful when demonstrating SPSS), or when displaying a series of lecture slides.

After the presentation has been captured, it can be edited by cutting and/or pasting different parts, as needed and arrows, text boxes etc., can be inserted to make the overall presentation more informative and professional-looking. If not already recorded, the presenter is able to overlay their voice, as well as adding sound effects or music if required.

Camtasia has been used to record and then videocast lectures within a Level 5 module. The lecturers voice and PowerPoint slides were integrated into one presentation, which was then available to students via Blackboard (with added annotation where necessary). The benefits of providing an accompanying videocast to the traditional lecture delivery means that students can go over the lecture playing/pausing all sections in their own time (particularly important for students with special needs). In addition, students who missed lectures have access to the virtual lecture (not just the lecture slides, which can be very dry and uninformative when read in isolation). We were initially

concerned that students would choose to miss lectures and just view the virtual lectures at home, but attendance remained high. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students used the live lecture to listen and engage with the topic, and the virtual lecture to make notes and use for revision.

Level 4 students also had a positive response to the SPSS videocasts: "I like to watch the SPSS workshops at home as I can stop and start and watch them over and over until I understand the concepts"; "It is good to have them to go back to later in the year when you have forgotten how to do a test – they are good to refresh your memory"; "It is like having my own classes at home with the lecturer talking to me personally".

Given the positive feedback, we are now extending the use of Camtasia into further areas of the curriculum (for example, to provide interactive guides on referencing, how to write a lab report, delivery of online materials, etc.).

For more information, contact Debbie Pope at debbie.pope@edgehill.ac.uk or Derek Larkin at derek.larkin@edgehill.ac.uk

Project updates and outputs

Who-wants-an-interactive-lecture: embedding use of personal response systems to enhance the student learning experience

Jane Guiller & David Bell, Department of Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University

The aim of this project, funded by the Higher Education Academy Psychology Network Departmental Enhancement Scheme, was to embed the use of a Personal Response System (PRS), across modules in the department to improve the student learning experience. The response system purchased for use in the Department of Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University was the TurningPoint system made by Turning Technologies (see <http://www.turningtechnologies.com/>).

This project has evaluated a way to promote student engagement and interaction, particularly in large lectures, using a PRS system. Table 1 summarises the potential barriers and enablers to using the PRS for teaching and learning activities from both the student and staff perspective. The disadvantages of using the PRS can be mostly overcome through careful planning, consultation with

students and trial and error learning on the part of the lecturer.

The outcomes of this project have prompted a dynamic change in the format of future planned lectures on the 'Psychology: An Introduction' module. With the help of timetabling, we have changed the lectures from two one-hour lectures to a double slot. This allows for cycles of information-giving, activities, peer-based and class-wide discussion during the double lecture. In order to use the PRS effectively and for students to value its use, a significant amount of work must be devoted to planning and preparing for sessions to integrate the PRS successfully to the teaching system. Through the staff evaluation aspect of this project, it was confirmed that staff are open to using the PRS but are unsure as to how to embed usage in their teaching activities. This project has identified and evaluated a range of uses, which students

were positive about in terms of the impact on their learning experiences. The most valued uses of the PRS were deemed to be activities which involve formative assessment and providing immediate feedback to students, addressing misconceptions in student knowledge and understanding, demonstrating psychological phenomena and facilitating peer discussion through individual, anonymous voting followed by small-group discussion and possibly a revote and then class-wide discussion. We are committed to continuing to support staff in their use of the PRS and will be offering sessions at upcoming departmental and School-wide teaching and learning events. We will also continue to analyse and develop the CASS instrument through obtaining a larger sample on which to conduct further reliability assessment of the scale.

	Enablers	Barriers
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for pedagogical development and practical and technical aspects • Range of examples illustrating effective use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited view of how they can be used • Perceived overreliance on technology
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving immediate feedback • Anonymous and active participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical hitches • Lack of perceived value of the PRS to the activity

Table 1: Staff and student enablers and barriers to use of a PRS in teaching activities.

CETL update

Resources for facilitating teaching practices and student learning

Savita Bakhshi and Kathy Harrington, London Metropolitan University

Since opening in October 2006, the London Metropolitan University Writing Centre, an initiative of the Write Now Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), has provided over 3,500 hours of writing support for all LMU students across different disciplines and levels of study. Writing support is provided by undergraduate and postgraduate Student Writing Mentors through hour-long, one-to-one tutorial sessions. This year, the Centre is staffed by a team of 15 Writing Mentors from a range of disciplines, including Psychology, Design, English, Law, International Relations, Human Sciences and Economics.

We are also currently conducting research into the effectiveness of

the scheme, looking specifically at the relationship between tutorial attendance and student learning, achievement and retention. This research will build upon recent work of Yeats et al. (2010; www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/00400911011068450).

The Writing Centre also provides support to staff with the aim of facilitating their own teaching practices and student learning and writing development. The Write Now CETL has developed guides for staff on establishing a peer mentoring in writing scheme; developing students' writing as an embedded part of their disciplinary learning; and effective assessment, marking and feedback practices. These guides draw on

the experiences and expertise developed in the three Write Now CETL institutions (London Metropolitan, Liverpool Hope, and Aston universities) over the past five years, and they aim to provide pedagogical models and concrete examples to enable staff to take an active role in developing their students' academic writing and related transferable skills in creative and rewarding ways.

For further information about the writing mentoring scheme and related projects, and for downloadable copies of the guides available in March 2011, please visit our websites: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/writingcentre> and <http://www.writenow.ac.uk>

New projects

Conversation and discourse analysis: an online resource for cross-disciplinary use in blended teaching

Sue Widdicombe, University of Edinburgh

This cross-disciplinary e-learning project will enhance teaching and learning of two core approaches to analysing qualitative data, Conversation Analysis (CA) and Discourse Analysis (DA). The theory and application of CA and DA are appropriately taught through conventional (face-to-face) methods; learning to do

CA and DA requires a practical, hands-on approach involving 'data analysis sessions'. This project addresses this need by developing eight modules which present students with: worked examples of particular analytic principles; further data and guided exercises through which to apply and practice analytic principles;

and short self-assessment tests to provide feedback on analytic skills. These modules will be implemented, evaluated, amended, and subsequently made widely available.

Contact S.Widdicombe@ed.ac.uk

New projects

Peer assisted learning in psychology statistics modules

Nathalie Noret, York St John University

Statistics is a fundamental part of undergraduate psychology degrees. However, academics frequently report a lack of engagement in the course material alongside frequently observed anxiety among students completing such courses. The

aim of this project is to explore the use of a peer tutoring system within the undergraduate statistics modules to examine whether such a system can reduce anxiety in undergraduate students. The project will explore how best to integrate a group of peer tutors

into the teaching of statistics and examine the effects of peer learning on the students, academics and peer tutors themselves.

Contact: n.noret@yorks.ac.uk

The effect of different penalties on decision making in MCQs

Chris Sterling, London South Bank University

The aim of this project is to provide a set of guidelines about the use of penalties for guessing in multiple choice tests. Previous work suggests that the optimal penalty for a wrong answer reflects the probability of guessing. However, this guessing correction is based

on probabilistic analyses of the problem and validations have been post hoc. This project seeks to validate the standard correction for a four choice test by comparing the effects of different penalties, known to participants prior to the test, on a participant's decision to

respond. Validation will take the form of confirming that the standard correction eliminates guessing and produces a score which reflects an examinee's knowledge than no penalty or a high penalty.

Contact: sterlicm@lsbu.ac.uk

Career mentoring scheme

Annette Baxter, Student and Learning Services, Sheffield Hallam University

The scheme aims to enhance students' employability by introducing 2nd year psychology students to a professional in a job role or organisation allied to psychology. Alumni will be recruited as mentors and students can research a career area that

is of interest to them and benefit from the insights and experiences of recent alumni. This is also an opportunity for the department and careers and employment service to work together to identify other organisations within the region and work collaboratively on an

employer engagement strategy that will encourage ongoing and sustainable employability activity embedded into the course.

Contact: a.r.baxter@shu.ac.uk

Enhancing job applications through the online card sort

Liz Whitaker, Career Development Adviser, York St John University

The psychology card sort is an online tool (hosted by the Psychology Network at http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/cardsort2/cardsort_psychology/), designed to make generic career-planning card sorts more focused on the specific outcomes that

psychology graduates' degrees should provide. The overall aim of the project is to illustrate the use of the card sort online, along with group discussion and careers staff involvement, to raise opportunity awareness, and assist with career development in relation to self-

awareness and career aspirations. This would supplement the earlier research into the card sort's utility and provide an example of its utility at level three.

Contact: l.whitaker@yorks.ac.uk

HEA recent publications

Student engagement

In 2010, the Higher Education Academy commissioned a review of research on student engagement by Professor Paul Trowler and Vicki Trowler. This led to the development of a literature review, a summary of the evidence, a briefing for institutional decision-makers, and a set of case studies of student engagement initiatives in action. These documents describe and employ the evidence that

exists on the nature and benefits of student engagement. The summary of evidence provides a good starting point to this work, as it describes the key statements regarding student engagement that are supported by the available international evidence, along with relevant references.

The evidence summary, international literature review,

Framework for Action for institutional decision-makers and a set of case studies are available from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/alldisplay?type=resources&newid=ourwork/studentengagement/Research_and_evidence_base_for_student_engagement&site=york

Dimensions of quality

The report, Dimensions of Quality, by Graham Gibbs has been written to contribute to the current debates about educational quality in undergraduate education in the UK, and about the need to justify increases in resources on the basis of indicators of educational quality. The report identifies a range of dimensions of quality and examines the extent to which each can be considered a valid indicator, with reference to the available research evidence. It attempts to identify which kinds of data we should take seriously and which we should be cautious of placing weight on. Some of these dimensions currently lack a solid evidence base, especially in relation to research carried out in the UK context, and so the report also identifies priorities for research and for data collection and analysis.

Also identified are dimensions of educational quality which can reasonably be used to compare educational settings. It adapts Biggs's '3P' model (Biggs, 1993) of 'presage', 'process' and 'product' to categorise the variables under consideration and examines a wide range of potential indicators. Presage variables define the context before students start learning, process variables describe what goes on as students learn, and product variables relate to the outcomes of that learning. For presage and process variables the available evidence is examined concerning the validity of the variable: the extent to which it predicts student learning outcomes and educational gains. Each product variable is examined for its ability to indicate comparative quality.

The report concludes it seems unlikely that comparative indicators of quality currently available in the UK could provide prospective students with a valid basis to distinguish between individual courses with regard to their educational quality. The collation of currently available data into league tables is invalid and misleading. Even in the US where a range of more valid indicators are more widely available, those responsible for collecting and interpreting the data counsel strongly against their collation into a single league table.

Link to full text: <http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/hea/evidencenet/resource.page?record=12nH2AFIYcc>

PLAT journal special issue

Call for papers

Special issue on teaching qualitative research methods for Issue 11(1), March 2012

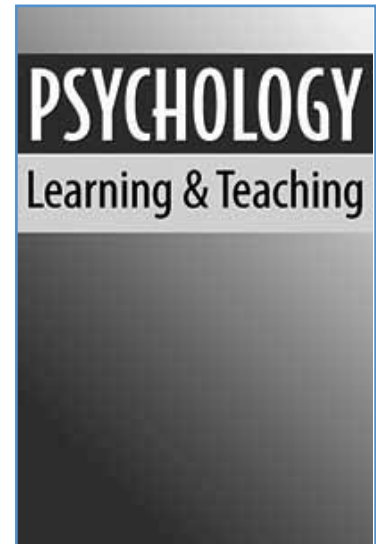
Deadline for submissions: 18 May 2011.

Qualitative research methods have long played a role in psychology, but in recent years there has been a rapid increase in their use, with many scholars embracing the conceptual and methodological challenges they have raised for the discipline. This has had important implications for teaching, with qualitative methods not only impacting on research methods teaching, but also posing a challenge for staff and students alike in doing justice to the sometimes complex philosophical underpinnings of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

This special issue of the journal *Psychology Learning & Teaching* (www.worlds.co.uk/PLAT) therefore aims to foreground recent work on the teaching of qualitative methods with a view to providing a forum for the presentation of research reports and other articles which will stimulate debate and discussion amongst all those with an interest in the teaching of psychology in higher education.

Submissions for the special issue should take one of the following forms:

- 1 Articles dealing with any aspect of the teaching of qualitative research methods in psychology in higher education. Articles should typically be no longer than 4000 words (excluding tables, references and appendices). Articles might present the findings from a research project, discuss conceptual issues related to the teaching of qualitative methods, or present an extended review of the literature. Submitted articles are subject to double-blind peer review.
- 2 Brief Reports dealing with any aspect of the teaching of qualitative research methods in psychology in higher education. Brief reports should typically be no longer than 2000 words (excluding tables, references and appendices). They may include reports of interesting current practice, resources or techniques, preliminary findings or the results from less substantial research projects. Submitted reports are subject to double-blind peer review.
- 3 Reviews of books, software and other resources relevant to the learning and teaching of qualitative research methods in psychology. These should be no longer than 1500 words in length. Submitted book reviews will be processed by a member of the editorial team.



Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with APA conventions (for more details, see <http://www.worlds.co.uk/PLAT>). Submissions should not previously have been published elsewhere, and nor should they be under simultaneous consideration for publication elsewhere.

Submissions for this special issue should be emailed directly to Stephen Gibson (s.gibson@yorks.ac.uk).

Guest editors for this special issue are Stephen Gibson (York St John University) and Cath Sullivan (University of Central Lancashire).

Diary of events

For the latest information on Higher Education Academy Psychology Network events visit:

<http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/s.php?p=201&menu=events>

Teaching qualitative research methods 27-28 April 2011, York

This two-day workshop, run by the Psychology Network, will offer discussion and good practice concerning thematic analysis IPA, grounded theory, discourse analysis and will also showcase other qualitative methods such as co-operative enquiry, media framing analysis and other phenomenological analysis.

<http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/s.php?p=202&db=219>

Higher Education Academy Conference 5-6 July 2011, East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

The title for the 2011 conference is 'Changing Practice - Changing Times', exploring challenges and changes to the sector over the next five years. There are five main sub themes: models of change, internationalisation, postgraduate provision, institutional CPD frameworks and changing and developing practice in student engagement.

Early bird bookings close: 21 April 2011.

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/eventsandnetworking/annualconference>

PsyPAG Annual Conference 6-8 July 2011, Bangor

This conference is a chance to meet other psychology postgrads from around the country, swap

ideas, network, and have some fun while presenting in an unpressured atmosphere.

<http://www.psytag2011.co.uk/>

3rd Vancouver International Conference on the Teaching of Psychology 29-31 July 2011, Vancouver, Canada

This conference, co-hosted by Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Douglas College, will cover a wide range of issues related to the teaching of psychology. It is designed for teachers of psychology at universities and colleges who are interested in enhancing their teaching skills, exchanging perspectives and exploring new ideas. The conference will include topics such as classroom demonstrations, new teaching methods, recent advances in specialized areas of psychology, and issues of assessment.

More information is available at <http://www.kwantlen.ca/ictp.html> or you can contact Steve Charlton at sjccharlton@shaw.ca or 604-669-5065.

14th European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) Biennial Conference 30 August - 3 September 2011, Exeter

The theme of the EARLI 2011 conference in Exeter is 'Education for a Global Networked Society' and looks at the following areas: multicultural education, education for the 'knowledge age' skills and dispositions, education and the internet and education and sustainable global development.

http://www.earli2011.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1

19th Improving Student Learning Using Learning Technology 10 years on 5-7 September 2011, University of Leeds

The major aim of this symposium is to bring together those who are primarily researchers into learning in higher education, learning technologists responsible for supporting the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning, and teachers in higher education who are interested in improving their practice.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/isl/isl2011/index.html>

Problem-based Learning Symposium 28-29 November 2011, Coventry University

This conference aims to bring together researchers from around the world studying all aspects of the learning process in problem based and project based learning, and those involved in the implementation of these approaches across the disciplines.

Further details can be found at www.coventry.ac.uk/pbl2011

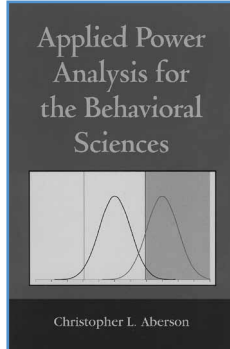
The European Network for Psychology Learning and Teaching (EUROPLAT) Conference May 2012, Vilnius, Lithuania

Further details will be announced at www.europlat.org

Reviewers wanted

We are looking for reviewers for the following books. Reviews will be published in forthcoming issues of *Psychology Learning and Teaching* (PLAT). Reviews are typically 1000 words in length and reviewers are given 6-8 weeks to submit their reviews.

If you are interested in reviewing any of these publications, please contact Marina Crowe on m.crowe@psych.york.ac.uk.

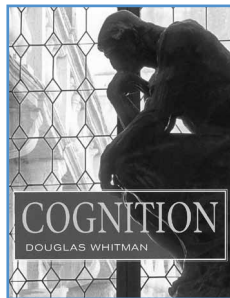
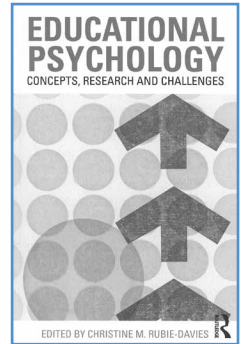


Applied Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences

Christopher L. Aberson, 2010; Routledge

Educational Psychology: Concepts, Research and Challenges

Edited by Christine M. Rubie-Davies, 2011; Routledge

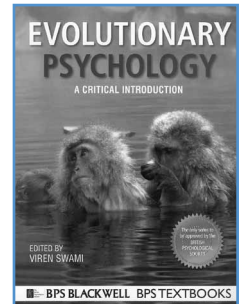


Cognition

Douglas Whitman, 2011; John Wiley & Sons Ltd

Evolutionary Psychology: A Critical Introduction

Edited by Viren Swami, 2011; BPS Blackwell



Psychology Around Us

Ronald Comer and Elizabeth Gould, 2011; John Wiley & Sons

Classic Case Studies in Psychology (second edition)

Geoff Rolls, 2010; Hodder Education

Consciousness: An Introduction (second edition)

Susan Blackmore, 2010; Hodder Education

Majoring in Psychology: Achieving Your Educational and Career Goals

Jeffrey L. Helms and Daniel T. Rogers, 2011; Wiley-Blackwell

Individual Differences and Personality (third edition)

Colin Cooper, 2010; Hodder Education

The Higher Education Academy Psychology Network contact details:

Psychology Network, Department of Psychology, First Floor, Information Centre, Market Square, University of York, York YO10 5NH

Email: psychology@heacademy.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1904 433154 Fax: +44 (0)1904 433655

web: <http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk>

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k.armstrong@psych.york.ac.uk