

PCP: A PERSONAL STORY Foreword

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We are delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this collection of papers from the conference held on 29th September 2006 at the University of Hertfordshire. It celebrated the 80th birthday of Professor Fay Fransella, the founder of the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology, and at the same time, the Centre becoming part of the University of Hertfordshire. The title of the conference was 'PCP: A Personal Story' and we think that the papers given at the conference more than satisfy the aims of the day. The papers are presented in the order that they were given, as this seemed to work well at the conference. We have included all the papers sent to us by the speakers for inclusion in this special edition of the Journal and we have edited them very little. Peggy Dalton was unfortunately not able to be present at the conference, but we are delighted to include the paper she would have given if she had been able to attend.

The conference was excellent in many ways. The presentations were very good and they were wide ranging in their appeal. They cover the history of PCP, business and organisational applications, therapy, forensic psychology and education. The papers included many personal stories about the experiences of their authors with PCP. It was very nice to meet not only old friends from the early days of the British group of PCP people, but also many new faces from Britain and abroad. This can only be encouraging for the growth and development of Personal Construct Psychology both in the UK and the rest of the world.

Helen Jones

My main role at the conference was to coordinate facilitated discussion around tables during the morning and the afternoon small group sessions, with the

aim of reflecting some of the reactions of members of the audience.

Whilst I did not give a presentation myself I would like to express my thanks to Fay Fransella for introducing me to Personal Construct Psychology in the early 1980s, for encouraging me to teach the subject to others as well as to practice it as a psychotherapist and for inviting me to join her in the early days of the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology in London. I joined the Centre as Director of Education and Training and, for a while, I was a partner in the business. At that time Fay, Peggy Dalton, Joyce Watson and myself were working together (with many other people who came to study with us and later to support the work of the Centre) and they were very exciting times. We were in a sense pioneers, as we tried to grow a business with a range of applications of Personal Construct Psychology. All of us also benefited greatly from having the late Don Bannister as a mentor. The common denominator for us was the natural common sense of the model. We all came to it because at some point we had found the theory valuable for ourselves and we wanted to explore and extend the theory as much as we could. We had Fay to thank for making the bold step to establish a Centre which could foster such growth.

When I left the Centre and moved to York, I began a new career in the National Health Service. Personal Construct Psychology was not in the foreground but I used it as the foundation for a large survey of doctors and managers to see how they could best work together in the future. As a result of this work I became the Director of the Centre for Leadership Development at York University, where I worked for about ten years before retiring in 2003.

Kelly's theory has been fundamental for me in all the work I did after moving north and I still convene a group of people interested in using PCP

called the Northern PCP Research group. So the interest continues and the bi-monthly meetings of this group are very lively and creative. It really is a fascinating theory.

Nick Reed

With the help of David Winter I organised the conference and I chaired the event. My own connection with Fay and the Centre has not been as long as many of those who will read these papers - a mere 10 years or so. However, I have had the privilege of working with Fay very closely over those years and of being her 'personal student'. That has enabled me to learn more about PCP than I could ever have imagined when I took the Centre's Foundation Course in 1996. One never stops learning and applying PCP, both to oneself and others, but the bed-rock of understanding of PCP and particularly of repertory grid technique, that I have learnt from Fay will be with me for the rest of my life. With Fay one always goes back to the theory. For her, personal construct theory is the place to visit and revisit whenever one is trying to understand the construing of another person (or group of people). And, as a truly reflexive expert on PCP, it is what she uses to understand her own construing as well that of others.

I am now the Director of the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire and I am proud to be so. I have established a rolling programme of PCP workshops and we hope to host more PCP conferences in the future.

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We hope the freshness of these responses to an elegant and widely appealing model of psychology will interest and excite you, the readers of the papers that follow. We would like you to enjoy them as much as we have.

Our thanks go to Jörn Scheer for both agreeing to publish the conference papers in this internet Journal, *Personal Construct Theory & Practice*, and for all the hard work that he has put into preparing the papers to go on-line.

Finally, we would both like to send our very good wishes to Fay both for her eightieth birthday and for her next decade.

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REFERENCE

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