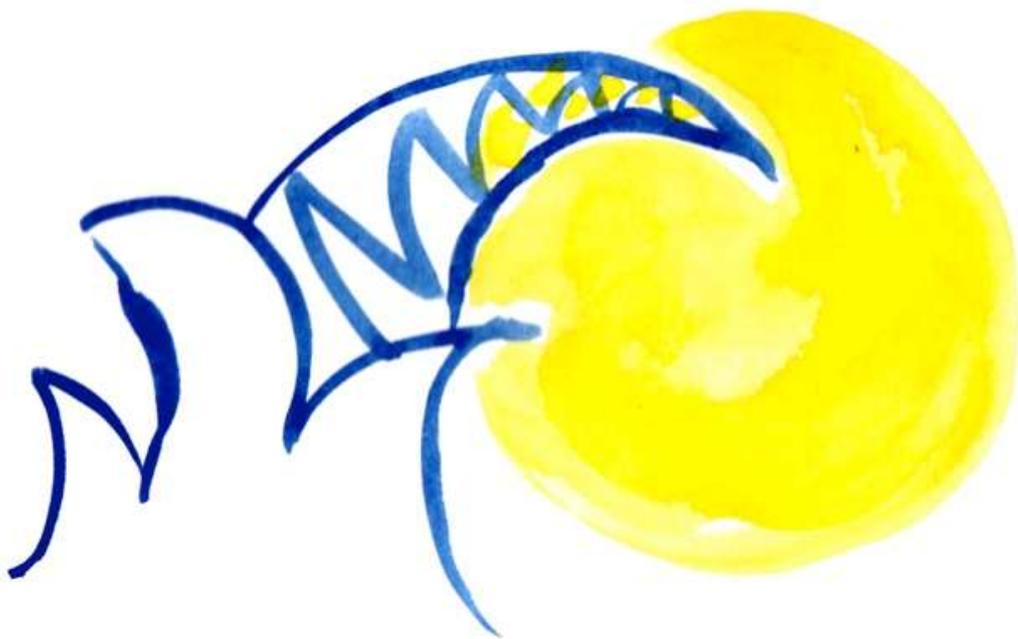


**20th International Congress of
Personal Construct Psychology**

Change: Person Society Organisation
Abstracts of Papers, Workshops and Posters



July 18 – 20, 2013
Sydney
Australia

Collated by Desley Hennessy

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	3
Preface	5
Handy Information	6
The Tom Ravenette Award for Outstanding Student Paper	7
Contributors	8
Program	10
Keynote Addresses	15
Papers	18
Dot Points, Doodles and Drawings	30

Acknowledgement of Country:



We would like to Acknowledge the Cammeraigal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Eora Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal peoples present.

What is Acknowledgement of Country?

Respect and acknowledgement are common conventions in Australian public life. As a sign of respect to the traditional owners of this land, more and more speakers at public events are opening their addresses with an 'Acknowledgement of Country'. An 'Acknowledgement of Country' simply recognises the particular Aboriginal country on which a meeting takes place and shows consideration to the traditional owners or custodians of that country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by anyone to show respect for a specific place and its caretakers.

The Aboriginal people of North Sydney were the Cammeraigal people and lived north of Sydney Harbour. The area was called "Eora Country". The word "Eora" simply means "here" or "from this place". It is now understood that they were describing that they came from 'around here' or were local, rather than the name of their group.

Cammeraigal people were custodians of salt water lore, practicing culture, ceremony and law on what we now know as the northern shores of Sydney harbour. As custodians of this area for many thousands of years, Cammeraigal people cared for and respected the land which provided for all of their needs. Cammeraigal fished, hunted, gathered and collected on the very same ground that we now drive and walk upon. In tune with the landscape, its

seasons, and cycles, Cammeraigal were governed by and belonged to the land and all that it held, above and beneath the sandstone. Cammeraigal people have lived in this area for thousands of years and continue to live nearby.

“The shadows of the stones are the footprints of the spirits; the raindrops and the streams are the tears and the blood of the land. The texture of the stone is the texture of our skin. We are alive, the land is alive. No colonial power can ever rob us of this.”

***Dennis Foley Gai-mariagal (Cammeraigal) man, Repossession of Our Spirit
2001***

Preface:

Welcome to the 20th International Congress of Personal Construct Psychology!

Central to Kelly's theory is the concept of change. People have the capacity and opportunity to experience an alternative way of making sense of their world. With this comes a sense of freedom.

So our Congress theme has been chosen to reflect change at personal and societal level, as well as how it may apply to organisations. Each day of the Congress opens with a plenary that focuses on an aspect of Congress theme – we are delighted that Profs. Jon Raskin and Gabriele Chiari, and Dr Chris Stevens have kindly agreed to deliver these keynote presentations.

We are also delighted to have a diverse and thought-provoking array of papers at this congress. We have delegates from North America, Europe and Australasia, illustrating to internationalisation of George Kelly's work.

We hope that delegates find this Congress rewarding, inspiring and, dare I say, change provoking!

The Organising Committee

Peter Caputi

Beverly Walker

Desley Hennessy

Jocelyn Harper

Nadia Crittenden

Kellie Buckley-Walker

And all the helpers!!

Handy Information:

G'day – means “hello” 😊

Conference organisers' mobile phone numbers:

Peter Caputi: 0410 021 107

Jocelyn Harper: 0409 906 055

Our Galah Dinner will be held at the Royal Automobile Club of Australia, 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Phone (02) 8273 2300. NOTE: this is NOT a “typo” ... the Galah is type of cockatoo found in Australia. It looks like this:



To get to the Galah Dinner by ferry

Walk to Milsons Point/Luna Park Wharf

Take the Darling Harbour East Balmain ferry (Sydney Ferries)

NOTE: This ferry DEPARTS at 6:40pm. It arrives at Circular Quay at 6:46pm.

IF YOU MISS THAT FERRY, then take the Darling Harbour/East Balmain ferry (Sydney Ferries) which departs at 7:10pm and arrives at Circular Quay at 7:16pm.

Assistance may be required for wheelchair access at low tide.

Alternatively, you are welcome to walk across our beautiful Harbour Bridge, or catch a taxi.

The Tom Ravenette Award for Outstanding Student Paper

This prize for best paper presented by a student at the 20th International Personal Construct Psychology Congress honours the memory of Dr Tom Ravenette.

Conditions/eligibility

Applicants must be currently enrolled students at a recognised university. Applicants may be enrolled full or part time. Regardless of enrolment status, applicants cannot be academic staff (excepting research assistants). The student must be registered for the entire Congress and present their paper. The student must not already hold any form of doctoral qualification.

Total value of first prize will equal AUS\$500

Prize will consist of cash (\$450) and a copy of Tom Ravenette's book: *Personal Construct Theory in educational psychology: A practitioner's view*. The runner-up will receive a copy of Ravenette's book. Books supplied courtesy of the publisher, Wiley-Blackwell.

The fine print

The prize will be awarded by a sub-committee of the Congress Organising Committee, all decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize will be judged on submitted abstracts accepted by the Congress Organising Committee and received by abstract submission deadline, and the student's presentation. The sub-committee reserves the right to award no prize.

The prize will be presented by one or more representatives of the Congress Organising Committee during the Congress (see the Congress Agenda for date/time) at a formal ceremony that the successful student must attend.

Prize sponsors: Dr Michael Henman and Wiley-Blackwell

Contributors:

Ahmed Agiel, University of New South Wales, Australia, a.agiel@student.unsw.edu.au

Chantel Ashkar, University of Wollongong, Australia, ca432@uowmail.edu.au

Richard Bell, University of Melbourne, Australia, rcbell12345@gmail.com

Christopher Best, Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), Australia,
Christoper.Best@dsto.defence.gov.au

Elena Bordin, Institute of Constructivist Psychology, Italy, bordin.elena@gmail.com

Narelle Campbell, University of Queensland, Flinders University, Australia,
narelle.campbell@uqconnect.edu.au

Peter Caputi, University of Wollongong, Australia, pcaputi@uow.edu.au

Nadia Crittenden, University of Wollongong, Australia, nadiac@uow.edu.au

Gabriele Chiari, School of Specialization in Constructivist-Oriented Cognitive Psychotherapy,
Italy, gabriele.chiari@tiscali.it

Julene Cook, Camperdown Resilience Centre, Australia, JULENE_COOK@YAHOO.COM

Richard Cook, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, New Zealand, r.cook@bti.ac.nz

Elizabeth Cridland, University of Wollongong, Australia, ekc977@uowmail.edu.au

Pam Denicolo, University of Reading, UK, p.m.denicolo@reading.ac.uk

Diann Eley, The University of Queensland, Australia, d.eley@uq.edu.au

Bob Green, Queensland Forensic Mental Health Services, Australia,
bgreen@dyson.brisnet.org.au

David Green, Green Psychology Ltd, West Yorkshire, UK, greenpsychology@aol.co.uk

Jocelyn Harper, University of Wollongong, Australia, jocelyn_harper@uow.edu.au

Mark Heckmann, University Bremen, Germany, heckmann@uni-bremen.de

Dawei Jia, Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), Australia,
DaweiJia@dsto.defence.gov.au

Sandra Jones, University of Wollongong, Australia, sandraj@uow.edu.au

Aida Keane, Dublin City University, Ireland, aida.keane@spd.dcu.ie

Funmi Ladeinde, University of Hertfordshire, UK, o.c.ladeinde@hotmail.co.uk

Chris Laming, Monash University Gippsland, Australia, chris.laming@monash.edu

Joseph Lancia, University of Rochester Medical Center and Private Practice, USA

Trevor Long, University of Reading, Henley Business School, UK,
trevor.long@henley.reading.ac.uk

Christopher Magee, University of Wollongong, Australia, cmagee@uow.edu.au

Lindy McAllister, The University of Sydney, Australia, lindy.mcallister@sydney.edu.au

Jane McKenzie, University of Reading, Henley Business School, UK,
jane.mckenzie@henley.reading.ac.uk

Blake Peck, University of Ballarat, Australia, b.peck@ballarat.edu.au

Jonathan D. Raskin, State University of New York at New Paltz, USA, raskinj@newpaltz.edu

Bronwyn Seaborn, Equinetime, Australia, seaborn@ozemail.com.au

Lisa Spackman, Equinetime, Australia, Spackman.lisa@gmail.com

Miriam Stein, Private Practice, USA, miriam@mailjar.com
Chris Stevens, CommuniCorp Group, Australia, drchris@communicorpgroup.com
Janice Tan, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore, janice_tan@msf.gov.sg
Jennifer Toms, Equinetime, Australia, Jtoms98@gmail.com
Lynette Toms, Equinetime, Australia, lyntoms@gmail.com
Deborah Truneckova, University of Wollongong, Australia, dtruneck1@bigpond.com
Linda L. Viney, University of Wollongong, Australia, lviney@uow.edu.au
David Winter, University of Hertfordshire, UK, d.winter@herts.ac.uk
Wong, Kin Lung Keith, Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong, Hong Kong,
keithwong@richmond.org.hk, or keith.wong@gmail.com
Nick Wood, University of Hertfordshire, UK n.1.wood@herts.ac.uk
Andrew Wu, Upfront Leadership, Australia, andrew.wu@inguz.com.au

20th International Personal Construct Psychology Congress Program

Wednesday 17th July

1:30pm – 4:30pm

Workshop: Personal Construct Psychology: An Introduction

Executive Boardroom, 11th floor (Includes afternoon tea at approximately 3:00pm)

David Winter

4:30pm – 6:00pm

Registration and Welcome Drinks

Thursday 18th July

8:30am

Registration

9:00am

Housekeeping

9:15am- 10:30am

Plenary Address: To Live is to Know, to Know is to Change: A Constructivist View of Personal Change

Gabriele Chiari

10:30am

Morning Tea

11:00 – 12:30pm

Room A

- Dodgy science and dodgy scientists
David Green
- The complexity of constructs and elements
Richard Bell

Room B

- Accelerated Change in Role Therapy Writ Large
Bronwyn Seaborn
- Resilient Self Elaboration: Positive, constructivist psycho-therapeutic techniques with predicted neuro-physiological and psychological effects
Julene Cook

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 – 3:00pm

Room A

- Construct Mapping: A methodology that captures the dynamic processes of therapy
Jocelyn Harper
- Narratives of Treatment Outcomes
Aida Keane

Room B

- Adolescents in Transition: The Sexual Risks of Self Channelization
Elena Bordin
- Understanding High Functioning Autism During Adolescence: A Personal Construct Theory Approach
Liz Cridland

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

3:30 – 5:00pm

Room A

- Therapeutic Relationships in Child-Centred Personal Construct Psychotherapy: Experiments in Constructions of Self
Deborah Truneckova
- Developing Students' Constructivist Therapy Palette
Richard Cook

Room B

- Quantifying self-characterization analysis –a grid approach
Chantel Ashkar and Nadia Crittenden
- Assessing perceptions of building appearance in architecture based on Personal Construct Theory
Ahmed Agiel

5:00pm – 5:30pm

Regional Meetings

Friday 19th July

8:30am

Registration

9:00am

Housekeeping

9:15am- 10:30am

Plenary Address: Autobiography of a (unintentionally) constructivist consulting company

Christopher Stevens

10:30am

Morning Tea

11:00 – 12:30pm

Room A

- Reconstructing life as a one-foot man: reflections on the role of football
David Winter
- Changing incarcerated sex offenders: The Badilika (Change) Project of Kenya
Chris Laming

Room B

- Culture change, manipulation or inspiration?
Andrew Wu
- Engagement, Disengagement and Meaningfulness: Simultaneous enhancement of work performance and individual well-being
Trevor Long

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 – 3:00pm

Room A

- Learning from Kelly and Matisse: Working with Opposites via Images in Personal Construct Psychotherapy (**Workshop**)
Miriam Stein

Room B

- Investigating peer influence on the presentation of self in drug abusing youth in Hong Kong
Keith Wong
- Data Analysis Approaches for Knowledge Structure Assessment in Collective Training
Dawei Jia

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

3:30 – 5:00pm

Room A

- Learning from Kelly and Matisse: Working with Opposites via Images in Personal Construct Psychotherapy (**Workshop - continued**)
Miriam Stein

Room B

- A New Development in the Hierarchical Clustering of Repertory Grid Data
Mark Heckmann
- Using repertory grids in a synchronous online environment
Narelle Campbell

7:00pm – late

**Galah Dinner - Royal Automobile Club of Australia, 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney
Phone 8273 2300**

Saturday 20th July

8:30am

Registration

9:00am

Housekeeping

9:15am- 10:30am

Plenary Address: Beyond Relativism and "Anything Goes": A PCP-Based Constructivist Model of Ethical Meaning-Making

Jonathan Raskin

10:30am

Morning Tea

11:00 – 12:30pm

Room A

- OpenRepGrid - Introduction to a new Open Source grid analysis software

(Workshop)

Mark Heckmann

Room B

- Persecutory Constructs
- Personal Construct Psychology: Hermeneutics or Bust?

Bob Green

Blake Peck

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 – 3:00pm

Room A

- Kelly's model for clinical assessment and intervention – alive and well! Its usefulness in an equine assisted psychotherapy practice

Lyn Toms

- The construing of allied health professionals in relation to work location and career success

Narelle Campbell

Room B

- Tom Ravenette Interview (DVD)
- Open discussions

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

3:30 – 4:30pm

Combined Meeting and Presentation of Student Prize

Sunday 21st July

9:30am – 10:45am

Workshop: Grief therapy over time

Robert Neimeyer

10:45am – 11:00am

Morning tea

11:00am – 12:30pm

Workshop continued

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 – 3:00

Workshop continued

3:00 – 3:15

Afternoon tea

3:15 – 4:30

Workshop continued

4:30pm

Close

Keynote Addresses:

To Live is to Know, to Know is to Change: A Constructivist View of Personal Change

Gabriele Chiari

School of Specialization in Constructivist-Oriented Cognitive Psychotherapy, CESIPc,
Florence, Italy, gabriele.chiari@tiscali.it

My paper deals with the subject of personal change. As such, one could be tempted to say that it deals with psychology as a whole: what else should psychology be concerned with, albeit in its distinct developmental, educational, social, and clinical subfields? But it is not exactly how things are, as I shall argue answering the first of the questions reading between the lines of my writing: “Is psychology, as a discipline, mainly concerned with the study of human change?”.

To the second question, “Is personal construct theory mainly concerned with the study of human change?”, I give an affirmative answer, after some necessary specifications.

I would like to dwell particularly on answering the third question: “Can the way personal construct theory deals with change be regarded as centering around a peculiarity?”. It is a rhetorical question, of course, but I am convinced that the revolutionary and cutting-edge nature of personal construct theory can be fully appreciated only by pinpointing and highlighting such a peculiarity.

In discussing this, I find convenient to answer the last question: “Is the way personal construct theory deals with change akin to the way other theories deal with it?”.

After having discussed personal change as it is dealt with in personal construct theory, I shall give a bird’s eye view of the contribution of personal construct psychology to the fields of psychology more concerned with change, that is, developmental and educational psychology. The last part of my presentation will be reserved to the role of change in clinical psychology, and to what Kelly pointed out as the focus of convenience of his theoretical construction: personal construct psychotherapy as a relational process aimed at favoring a personal change.

Beyond Relativism and "Anything Goes": A PCP-Based Constructivist Model of Ethical Meaning-Making

Jonathan D. Raskin

State University of New York, New Paltz, raskinj@NEWPALTZ.EDU

The view that constructivism embraces an “anything goes” ethics that permits any position is directly challenged. In constructivism, ethics is unavoidable because people are always embedded within ethical perspectives that infuse everything they do. “Anything goes” is never an option, even if what goes varies by person. After distinguishing three versions of constructivist theory, various criticisms that portray constructivism as endorsing an “anything goes” relativism are summarized and challenged. Using Kelly's personal construct psychology as a theoretical base, a constructivist model of ethical meaning-making is outlined.

Autobiography of a (unintentionally) constructivist consulting company

Chris Stevens

Director and Principal Psychologist with the CommuniCorp Group,

drchris@communicorpgroup.com

Over 20 years ago I read George Kelly's 1966 lecture, Behaviour is an Experiment, with great interest but, I can honestly say now, not a great deal of insight. It made sense and was refreshing in its tone, so much in contrast with the mostly turgid writing of contemporary academic psychology. But I didn't grasp the profound simplicity of what he was saying. I was, fortunately, profoundly influenced by Kelly's writings and my teachers in the years that followed. But for the past fifteen or so years I have not been active in constructivism nor in academic psychology. For the past 10 years I've been completely immersed in setting up and developing a psychological consulting company. The request to deliver this keynote filled me with gratitude and horror! What can I possibly say that will be of value to those of you who know so much more than I and who have advanced the cause of constructivism over the years? But it did occur to me that in developing the business, my business partner and I didn't know what we were doing and in many ways still do not. Likewise, in the years of providing counselling and therapy, I didn't really know what I was doing (and still don't!). And yet success has come our way and we've built a company that we are proud of and which I believe is making a valuable contribution. I've realised that, under the pressure of preparing this talk, unintentionally we have built a very constructivist company. That we had reversed the stimulus → response arrow of causation and had at best only operated with provisional hypotheses. Perhaps this ontological venture has been deeply informed by constructive alternativism after all. I suspect it has and I hope that these reflections encourage in you a confidently adventurous uncertainty.

Papers:

Assessing perceptions of building appearance in architecture based on Personal Construct Theory

Ahmed Agiel, University of New South Wales

Building appearance as a source of cultural identity has a significant impact on the architectural image of the city as well as the lives of end-users of the built environment. This study focuses on the nature of meaning in architecture. People's interpretation of building appearance is ambiguous as is the language used by architects. Therefore, the central question of this study is how architects and lay people perceive design quality of building appearance. The personal construct methodology is used to address this particular question using *Sci vesco interview* as an interactive repertory grid technique for data collection and analyses. Photographs were used as an effective substitute for eliciting architectural meaning from people's perceptions of the built environment. The purpose of this paper is to define the three key variables (perception, inherent image, design quality) of how people perceive building appearance and to establish the construct models for the assessment of people's perceptions. The reliability and validity of the construct models created to assess people's perceptions are presented. The main outcome of this research, therefore, is the system created to assess people's perceptions of architectural identity in building appearance.

Quantifying self-characterisation analysis –a grid approach

Chantel Ashkar, University of Wollongong

Nadia Crittenden, University of Wollongong

This paper describes the development of a grid analysis of self-characterization data. Using the multiple self-characterization technique (ref) participants wrote out a description for a number of selves they felt were relevant to their life. They then identified descriptors for each self and created bi-polar constructs for each self. As this technique was being tested as a way of measuring personality integration, the challenge was finding a way to analyse the data that identified the constructs that all the selves had in common. After a number of options were tried, we discovered that the data could be successfully entered into a grid for consistency analysis. The further challenge was the technological one of setting up the process electronically to allow participants to complete the data collection entirely online, including the grid input, so analysis could be carried out effectively and quickly. Two case studies are described to demonstrate the electronic version.

Adolescents in Transition: The Sexual Risks of Self Channelization

Elena Bordin, Institute of Constructivist Psychology, Padua

Does to say that teenagers are reckless, impulsive, ruled by hormones, incapable of considering the consequences of unprotected sex, help us understand them better? Having worked with them in sex education courses and in a Sexual Health Service for teenagers, I started to wonder what meaning “risk” had for them: what did behaving in risky ways, while being well informed on healthy sexual behaviours, mean to their sexuality? In the present paper I would like to propose a new interpretation of the Adolescence process, understood as a series of Slot Changes, Anxiety transitions and Aggressiveness. These processes would allow adolescents to go through experiences like inquiring men, with the aim of finding new constructions of Self, including in the field of sexuality. From this point of view, unsafe sexual behaviours can be understood as elaborative attempts to position themselves and cope with anxiety, through reduced C-P-C cycles and Impulsivity. Such a proposal can ultimately lead those who work with teenagers to think alternatively when drawing up prevention projects and sex education courses, in which the idea of right and wrong behaviour gives way to one of elaborative choice.

The construing of allied health professionals in relation to work location and career success

Narelle Campbell, University of Queensland, Flinders University

Lindy McAllister, The University of Sydney

Diann Eley, The University of Queensland

This paper presents preliminary results from a study based in personal construct theory that sought to understand how allied health professionals (AHPs) view success, personality and motivation in the workplace. Repertory grid technique was used to interview 34 Australian AHPs. Because of workforce shortages in remote Australia, understanding if construing by AHPs working in remote was different to urban-based professionals was important. Elements were based on a framework of AHP work roles and included those related to self (eg ideal job, previous job) as well as others (eg role model, remote AHP). Elements were negotiated with participants however the framework ensured sufficient consistency to facilitate comparison across multiple grids. Bipolar constructs were elicited. A five point rating scale was used. Participants included experienced and novice AHPs working in urban, rural and remote locations. Dieticians, physiotherapists, speech pathologists, podiatrists, occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers participated. Grids from remote and urban-based professionals will be compared. Trends in personal and motivation characteristics described. Understanding what AHPs think about work and career options in remote areas may assist policy developers to address negative and utilise positive

perceptions. This information could help in designing recruitment and retention strategies for areas of workforce need.

Using repertory grids in a synchronous online environment

Narelle Campbell, University of Queensland, Flinders University

Lindy McAllister, The University of Sydney

Diann Eley, The University of Queensland

This presentation outlines the development and use of repertory grid interview methodology to research the construing of allied health professionals (AHPs) in relation to motivation and personality traits that contribute to success at work. Wide geographic spread of participants precluded face to face interviews so a synchronous online interview environment was designed. Repertory grid interview was the preferred methodology because of its unique ability to explore and measure the perspective of the interviewee. Development of the main topic, element selection, triadic elicitation of constructs and ratings will all be described. Interviews with AHPs based in very remote through to urban Australian workplaces were conducted in real time using Google docs and teleconferencing. Design considerations, preparation required, strengths and pitfalls of this approach will be described. Interviewee engagement will be discussed in terms of process and outcomes. The paper will demonstrate that robust repertory grid data can be obtained using a relatively familiar, widely available, synchronous online environment. It will conclude with preliminary outcomes and be open to audience suggestions for further analysis. This paper will interest delegates with limited access to, or daunted by, high end technology but considering using repertory grid interviews at a distance from participants.

Resilient Self Elaboration: Positive, constructivist psycho-therapeutic techniques with predicted neuro-physiological and psychological effects

Julene Cook, Camperdown Resilience Centre, Camperdown, VIC

Resilient Self Therapy aims to resolve the identity constrictions found to characterise chronic lack of meaning and purpose in life; deficits of individuation, self-esteem and self-efficacy about what is personally valued. The RST suite of techniques for articulating and integrating dependable strengths into a more conscious and elaborated core construct system will be described in the context of predictions about their neurophysiological and psychological effects. Congruence between PCP theory and neurophysiology findings will be highlighted.

Developing Students' Constructivist Therapy Palette

Richard Cook, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, Tauranga, New Zealand

Responding to Neimeyer's 1993 challenge to develop a coherent epistemological base for any integrative constructivist approach to psychotherapy and counselling, the counsellor education team in this case study progressively evolved such a conceptual framework over 16 years. This faith-based, undergraduate counselling degree is introduced, its constructivist epistemological foundation outlined, its personal construct and social constructionist conceptualisation of persons detailed and its use of a palette of therapeutic interventions surveyed. This palette draws from Person Centred, Cognitive, Cognitive Behavioural, Narrative, Solution-focused and Strengths-based approaches. However, it does so selectively so as to contribute to the exploration of personal and social constructions of meaning and to the productive revision of constrictions, constructions and positionings. The conceptual framework is presented as a three-dimensional metaphor to visually illustrate the way the palette of interventions are integrated over time in a way that engages congruently with the ontological view of persons and the underlying epistemological assumptions.

Understanding High Functioning Autism During Adolescence: A Personal Construct Theory Approach

Elizabeth Cridland, University of Wollongong

Peter Caputi, University of Wollongong

Sandra Jones, Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong

Christopher Magee, Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong

Preliminary research towards applying Personal Construct Theory (PCT) concepts and methodologies to understanding individuals with High Functioning Autism (HFA) have suggested its utility for both research and clinical interventions. The developmental period of adolescence has also been outlined according to PCT. Importantly, however, PCT has not been applied to the more specific subgroup of *adolescents with HFA*, despite various theoretical tenets suggesting its utility. In addressing this research gap, we consider the following adolescent developmental tasks with particular relation to adolescents with HFA, (i) functioning within the increasingly complex world of adulthood, (ii) identity development, and (iii) development of higher order processing styles (including abstract thinking and flexible processing). These issues are described using PCT concepts. We consider ways to support individuals, and families, living with adolescents with HFA.

Construing persecutory delusions

Bob Green, Queensland Forensic Mental Health Services, Toowong

Persecutory delusions in their most extreme form are associated with adverse consequences to the individual feeling persecuted as well as to others. Personal Construct Theory concepts relevant to construing persecutory delusions will be examined in the context of contemporary research into persecutory delusions.

Examination of constructs and processes associated with persecutory delusions also affords an opportunity to consider concepts fundamental to PCT, such as validation and invalidation, which in turn has implications for understanding psychological disorder and health, as well as inter-personal conflict.

Dodgy science and dodgy scientists

David Green, Green Psychology Ltd, West Yorkshire, UK

Not everyone is impressed with the usefulness of Kelly's central metaphor of "Man the Scientist". The image has been variously criticised from within and without the Personal Construct world as being too rational; too idealistic and frankly not representing the way that humans generally go about the business of living. People generally don't act the way scientists are supposed to act. Nor it turns out do a substantial number of scientists...

Various forms of scientific skulduggery are considered so rife within medical research circles that the editors of The British Medical Journal recently pronounced that they feared that the inherent untrustworthiness of supposedly evidence-based healthcare carries significant threats to patient safety. We should not fool ourselves that psychology is immune from comparable malpractice.

This paper reviews criticisms of the Man the Scientist metaphor and considers some alternative characterizations of human decision-taking. It also offers a depressing tour of commonplace academic sins and even ventures briefly into the works of a few philosophers of science.

The presentation concludes with a close examination of the PCP notion of hostile construing. Although Kelly offered several examples of hostility as a "disorder of transition" he always wrote with a sympathetic understanding of how loathe we are, as lay or professional scientists, to abandon our most cherished theories. Paradigm shifts rarely come easily it seems.

Construct Mapping: A methodology that captures the dynamic processes of therapy

Jocelyn Harper, Counselling Service, University of Wollongong

Good counselling and therapy are dynamic and fluid processes which occur within both the client and the therapist, as well as the interaction between them. This paper describes construct mapping as a methodology to capture the constructs elicited during therapy, thus enabling the development of structure and clarity for both client and therapist.

A New Development in the Hierarchical Clustering of Repertory Grid Data

Mark Heckmann, University Bremen, Germany

Richard Bell, University of Melbourne

Hierarchical Clustering of elements or constructs had been an important way of representing structures in grid data. First introduced in the 1970's it remains an integral part of many grid analysis programs (eg WebGrid) and is favoured for its simplicity of interpretation (eg Jankowicz, 2004; Stewart & Stewart, 1981). However it has some drawbacks, such as the subjective decision about the number of clusters to be interpreted. A new development (from outside the grid world) takes advantage of modern computing power and uses re-sampling techniques to identify significant groupings. The approach is illustrated with several classical grids from the literature.

OpenRepGrid - Introduction to a new Open Source grid analysis software

Mark Heckmann, University Bremen, Germany

In the workshop participants are introduced to OpenRepGrid, a new Open source software for the analysis of repertory grid data. OpenRepGrid is an add-on package for the R program (see www.r-project.org) and runs on all major operating systems.

Over the last decades various grid programs have been developed. The way the production of these programs is organized entails several drawbacks: a) The implementation and improvement of the software depends on a small number of developers; b) Most programs only cover a small range of analysis options presented in the literature; c) Analysis features cannot be extended by other scientists. OpenRepGrid is designed as a framework to cope with these issues. The workshop gives an introduction to the software, its development philosophy and outlines the set of currently implemented features. Moreover, it is demonstrated how researchers may extend software features to suit their needs and actively contribute to its development. Further information about OpenRepGrid can be found on the program's website under www.openrepgrid.org.

Data Analysis Approaches for Knowledge Structure Assessment in Collective Training

Dawei Jia, Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), Victoria
Christopher Best, Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), Victoria

Measurement of knowledge structures in teams is important for understanding the effectiveness of training in the military. It is well known that the repertory grid technique can serve as an effective tool for measuring knowledge structures. However, there are several alternatives for analyzing repertory grid data and no clear guidelines as to which approach is the most effective. DSTO is undertaking a program of research to investigate the effectiveness of synthetic mission training for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). As part of this research, it is important to be able to measure knowledge structures in teams and the effects of training in both simulation exercises and laboratory experiments.

In this paper we discuss three different approaches for analyzing repertory grid data. These are: percentage similarity score, multidimensional scaling and block clustering. Our goal is to investigate the degree to which each method enables the team mental models to be measured and compared.

The three approaches will be discussed in terms of their suitability for quantifying and comparing the knowledge structures associated with different team member roles, level of experience, and change over time as a result of training.

Narratives of Treatment Outcomes

Aida Keane, St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University, Ireland

This paper is based on the findings of an interview study which explored how clinicians constructed the concepts of success, failure, and partial failure, and the discourses they drew on in their narratives in relation to self-injury. In addition, the study also focused on the clinicians' discourses of responsibility for treatment outcome. The findings highlight the complexities and difficulties that the clinicians encountered with regard to the evaluation of their clinical practice with self-injuring clients. In response to questions about the ways in which the clinicians gauged their treatment outcomes, it emerged that the clinicians seemed to have little or no systematic way of thinking or conceptualising "progress" with regard to self-injury. Across the group of clinicians, their discourses about the assignment of responsibility for treatment outcome, brings to light the varied discursive positions they occupied and reflects some of those articulated in the treatment literature. These findings have implications for the education and training of clinicians in developing systematic indicators of progress with respect to self-injury and to create spaces in which they can speak about and reflect on their clinical effectiveness and failures.

Changing incarcerated sex offenders: The Badilika (Change) Project of Kenya

Chris Laming, Monash University Gippsland, Churchill, VIC

This paper looks at the Badilika (change) project in Mombasa, Kenya that was established in July 2011. The local Pwani Gender Based Violence network, through the Coast Women in Development, aim to reduce recidivism by incarcerated sex offenders, once they are released. The project takes place in the Shimo la Tewa prison and in the nearby youth training centre (Borstal) for young sex offenders and the author assisted in its design and implementation. Personal Construct Theory heavily influenced the foundation of the project and its underlying philosophy of constructive alternativism, at many levels.

The combined use of Personal Construct Theory, Narrative Theory, the Good Lives model and Dialogical Self Theory in the Badilika Project, will be interrogated in this paper. An analysis of their effectiveness will also be explored, particularly in regard to changes in meaning making by the participants and how that is reflected in levels of community safety in both the long and short term.

The Most Significant Change Technique will be explored as a vehicle for a preliminary evaluation of the Badilika Project.

Engagement, Disengagement and Meaningfulness: Simultaneous enhancement of work performance and individual well-being

Trevor Long, University of Reading, Henley Business School, UK

Pam Denicolo, University of Reading, UK

Jane McKenzie, University of Reading, Henley Business School, UK

This paper reports on research into work engagement, disengagement and meaningfulness. The literature identifies meaningfulness as having a key role in work engagement (May et al., 2004), defined as the discretionary employment of self (Kahn, 1990), but it is not clear how (Michaelson, 2005). The research reported in this paper adopted a phenomenological, interpretivist paradigm, applying Personal Construct Psychology, and underpinned by an iterative research design. Qualitative data were collected using various techniques, including Repertory Grid, the use of metaphors and construct mapping. Findings produced evidence that, contrary to current literature, engagement and disengagement are distinct constructs, not opposites of a single construct continuum; there are critical differences in the sub-constructs operating in each experience, associated primarily with aspects of the self. Meaningfulness was found to be a key dynamic in both experiences. The nature of engagement and disengagement as distinct constructs, and the role that meaningfulness plays in each experience are discussed. Implications for theory are considered and the application of findings for managers and leaders are explored, with a discussion of how it

may be possible to manage dilemmas associated with the simultaneous experiences of engagement and disengagement in the same activity space.

Personal Construct Psychology: Hermeneutics or Bust?

Blake Peck, University of Ballarat, Victoria

This presentation will suggest that Kelly (1955) dealt inadequately with the phenomena of language and overlooked what Chiari and Nuzzo (2004) describe as “the crucial importance of language in the construction of realities and selves” (p. 57). More than this, Kelly is adamant that the construct – a structure that he undeniably considers to be the fundamental structure of being – is situated beyond the reach of language. Kelly fails to recognise that the medium of language is that within and through which we develop, nourish, and sustain our constructs, and in so doing, challenges the theoretical coherence of his position. This challenge is perhaps best captured by way of a question: In the absence of language how does the person that Kelly concerns himself with engage in the movement of abstraction that is requisite of his Fundamental Postulate and eleven elaborative corollaries? In fact, if the construct is indeed beyond the reach of language then Personal Construct Psychology is open to the charge of being merely a relativistic position. This presentation culminates in a suggestion that we go on ‘*as if*’ language is the missing medium in Personal Construct Psychology and that we make a Hermeneutic turn.

Accelerated Change in Role Therapy Writ Large

Bronwyn Seaborn, Psychologist in Private Practice

Lynette Toms, Psychologist in Private Practice

Lisa Spackman, Certified Horse Professional in equine assisted psychotherapy

Jennifer Toms, Certified Horse Professional in equine assisted psychotherapy

The question of how we help people to make changes in their lives is at the heart of therapy and an important corollary might relate to making that change faster and more enjoyable. Equine-assisted therapy seems to offer the promise of accelerated adoption of change in an interactive, playful context. In trying to understand the marked and often speedy change that accompanies the equine-assisted approach, we have drawn heavily on Kelly’s (1955 /1991) fixed-role therapy. The intersection of Kelly’s “full protection of make believe” (1955 /1991, p.277) with physically enacting a new role in a large space before supportive witnesses seems to be the source of this tendency to dramatic and life-enhancing change.

Learning From Kelly and Matisse – Working with Opposites Via Images in Personal Construct Psychotherapy

Miriam Stein Clinical Psychologist N.Y.

“Eternal questions are not really looking for answers, they are looking to be lived. The point is not to answer but to ask.” *Paul Chan, artist*

Kelly writes that the process of becoming “optimally human” occurs through integrating our socio-cultural and familial background and moving past this to our individuality. He suggests that rather than attempting to ignore, on the one hand or fight against what we perceive to be “other”; we do this by “construing our way out”. In this ongoing process of reconstruction, working directly with the imagination provides another way to ask important questions, explore painful conflicts, and open up new meanings within the psychotherapy context. Throughout their lives, both Kelly and Matisse engaged directly with contrasting images and constructs in a deep exploration of their personal and professional adventure.

This workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to carry out a non-verbal technique along with laddering. A clinical case example will also be presented as an aid to our discussions and exploration of the powerful role of images and symbols in our work as psychotherapists.

The complexity of constructs and elements

Janice Tan, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore

Richard Bell, University of Melbourne

An important quality of a construct system is its degree of complexity. This is usually quantified as cognitive complexity, a concept as old as the repertory grid itself. It is also possible to quantify the differentiation among elements in a similar fashion. Outside the personal construct world, where elements are different aspects of the self, it is termed self complexity. Although distinct concepts, the two complexities (cognitive and self) are calculated in similar ways, often from the same data, and not surprisingly perhaps, are sometimes mistaken for each other. In this study we compare the two, examine the relationship between them, and compare them in terms of the effect of positive and negative emergent poles of the constructs.

Personal Construct Psychology, a psychological theory for equine assisted psychotherapy.

Lynette Toms, Private Practice – Psychologist

Joseph Lancia, University of Rochester Medical Center and Private Practice

Kelly formulated a model by which to measure “the person in process” which is in contrast to popular measurement of persons through the use of static dimensions. This paper illustrated the usefulness of Kelly’s model through its use in equine assisted psychotherapy. A case example will be used to demonstrate the model’s effectiveness.

Therapeutic Relationships in Child-Centred Personal Construct Psychotherapy: Experiments in Constructions of Self

Deborah Truneckova, University of Wollongong

Linda L. Viney, University of Wollongong

Personal construct psychology is person-centred. It sets out to make the individual the central subject matter for any psychological enquiry. In child psychotherapy, the psychological processes are child-centred with primary consideration on the meaning making psychological processes of the child. However, for effective psychological change to occur, the child’s self-theory will be elaborated through the extension and definition of the core-construct ‘self-others’, and of the relationship of self and others. The child develops an understanding of her/his self by construing others’ constructions of them. Social and cultural influences generate and maintain the child’s sense of self with the therapist’s view of the child becoming primary evidence of how the child understands self. Events are anticipated by the child and the therapist as relating to self while their constructions of self are being tested by their relationships with each other. A personal construct model of child-centred psychotherapy embraces two psychological frameworks, the first is child focused, while the second is therapist-other focused. The model developed from these two frameworks will be presented. By drawing on clinical examples, we will also illustrate that both paradigms are needed to understand how creative change and growth occurs in our child clients.

Reconstructing life as a one-foot man: reflections on the role of football

David Winter, University of Hertfordshire, UK

Nick Wood, University of Hertfordshire, UK

Funmi Ladeinde, University of Hertfordshire, UK

This paper is one of a series of personal construct investigations of the aftermath of the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone. It is based on interviews conducted with nine members of the Sierra Leone Single-Leg Amputee Football Club, all of whom had lost a limb during the war. The paper will consider their construing of this traumatic event and its perpetrators, the constriction of their lives and the emotions (in Kellyan terms) that they subsequently experienced, and the role of football and of forgiveness in their recovery and in post-traumatic growth.

Peers and Self: A study of peer influence and the presentation of self in drug-abusing youth in Hong Kong

Wong, Kin Lung Keith, Research and Development Officer, Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong

This study investigates peer influence on the presentation of self in drug abusing youth in Hong Kong. Using Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT) and its repertory grid, supplemented by individual interviews and psychological scales assessing mental health, the perception of self, peers, and parents are examined in participants who are a) experimental drug users, b) active drug abusers, and c) in drug rehabilitation. Findings indicate that peer group a) promotes the emergence of a Drug Self through identification with an antisocial group identity; b) suppresses the positively evaluated Actual Self; c) enhances the Social Self that maintains group membership; and d) distances the Ideal Self, encouraging expression of the Drug Self. Given PCT's emphasis on the role of personal agency in the reconstruction of beliefs, a personal construct perspective is proposed to understand peer impact on self presentation as a function of contextual changes, raising the question of how far one can exercise personal agency in different social contexts? The study concludes by drawing implications for drug rehabilitation through a) promoting association with a positive peer group; b) strengthening one's self esteem; and c) using a constructivist approach that facilitates re-negotiations between peers and parents in drug abusing youth.

Culture change, manipulation or inspiration?

Andrew Wu, Director, Upfront Leadership, Sydney andrew.wu@inguz.com.au

Currently organisations are engaging large consultancy firms to do large cultural change projects that are “done to” organisations. They cost a lot of money, result in little return on investment, and reinforce cynicism and the dumbing down of organisations. Most cultural change is manipulation, it primarily focuses on the tactics, the “what and how”. In contrast inspirational cultural change focuses on the mindset of everyone within the organisation, focusing primarily on the “why”. This approach to cultural change is “done with” people, not to people. This paper contrasts the above approaches focusing on changing the organizational mindset, meaning making and identity through social constructivist interventions and neuroscience.

DOT POINTS, DOODLES AND DRAWINGS

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