



*Fall 2011:
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Psychology Newsletter

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What is Psych *ACCESS*?

The mission of Psych Access is to create a venue to share information related to the field of psychology.

Our specific goal is to provide information about the developments and advances in the field of psychology and address issues that relate to you!

Psych Access Authors



ADHD and college students: How to get ready for this school year

“What is that? That looks interesting.” Sunday night, you are in your room trying to study for a midterm exam. You are trying to concentrate, but you are distracted easily. We become distracted with Facebook, videogames, or smart phones (the list goes on with more Apple gadgets). We often postpone assignments that required attention and concentration, and we procrastinate (a topic that will be discussed in our next issue!). We all do that at some point because being able to concentrate and focus when we need to do so is a challenging cognitive task. However, there is a condition called Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that is characterized by having difficulty concentrating, attending, and directing one’s attention to a task that requires focusing and your full engagement (DSM-IV, 2000). If you have some of the aforementioned difficulties, it does not mean that you actually have this condition. ADHD is considered a neurological disorder and affects different areas of life, including social, academic, and emotional functioning. Currently, ADHD is defined as having difficulty with inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. It affects children, adolescents, and adults. It is estimated that 4-5% of adults meet criteria for ADHD (Wilens, Prince, & Biederman, 2008), and it is associated with risky

behaviors, including smoking, substance abuse, deviant risk-taking, and criminality (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). In terms of general recommendations, the following may be helpful:

- *Get organize*: set aside time to make organization a priority. Find a regular time to sort through (and purge!) papers and clutter. Assign designated places for things that are likely to get lost, such as your cell phone, keys, wallet, or other things that may lead to time management problems if they are not readily accessible.
- *Manage your time wisely*: break down larger projects into smaller parts, assign yourself deadlines, and reward yourself for meeting deadlines. Try not to over-schedule and leave yourself plenty of time to arrive punctually to meetings, class, and other commitments.
- *Minimize distractions*: turn off your phone while studying and keep open on your computer only the windows that you need (i.e., exit out of email when possible). Work in a space that is uncluttered and without noise – use ear plugs if necessary.
- *Maximize memory skills*: write reminder notes to yourself and leave them in highly visible locations. Be sure to write down important information throughout the day, and make use of a daily planner.

- Find productive ways to expend extra energy: take breaks during sedentary time to move about – take a walk or run up and down the stairs. Incorporating regular exercise into your day may also help to keep hyperactivity under control.

Medication may be beneficial for managing more severe symptoms of ADHD. Medication should be taken only as prescribed by a physician or psychiatrist. Additionally, a therapist or counselor may help to address the consequences of ADHD that may be present in your social, academic, and personal life.

If you experience ADHD symptoms, keep reading (try not to get distracted). There are several resources available around campus.

- Services for Students with Disabilities. Their office is located at 250 S. Main St. Suite 300. It is in the Kent Square building. You may be eligible for accommodations that could help make your life at Virginia Tech more manageable, including extended test time, a different test format, and a quiet environment. Contact them at 231-0858 or ssd@vt.edu
- The Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence. Located in 110 Femoyer Hall, the center offers free academic support to undergraduate students. Even if you do not experience ADHD symptoms, the center can help you in having a successful academic career. Contact them at 231-5499 or caee@vt.edu
- Cook Counseling Center. Offers several different options, including individual counseling, group counseling, and ADHD support groups. Cook offers study skills workshops and can even provide a referral to Student Health Services when needed. Cook Counseling Center is located in 240 McComas Hall. You can visit the center or call them directly at 231-6557 to arrange an appointment. Did you know that Cook Counseling Center has a satellite office in East Eggleston, too?
- Virginia Tech has two Assistive Technology Labs, located in Newman Library and 1180 Torgersen Hall. Students must be referred to the lab by Services for Students with Disabilities. Contact them at 231-3937 or at assist@vt.edu.
- The Psychological Services Center conducts full psychological assessment batteries (cognitive, memory, achievement, attentional, and emotional testing) for adults, along with a full report and feedback.



In addition, adult therapy is available that can help those who experience ADHD symptoms. The Psychological Services Center is located at 3110 Prices Fork Rd in Blacksburg. Contact them at 231-6914 for more information.

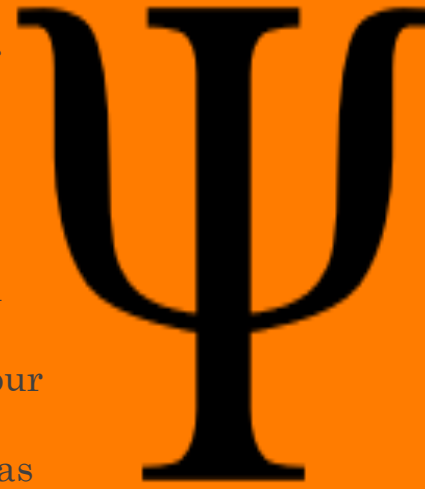
BY JILL LORENZI, JONATHAN WALDRON, & NURI REYES

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FIELDS IN PSYCHOLOGY

The study and practice of psychology encompasses a vast range of topics and a large number of subfields and specialty areas have developed as a result. Because human behavior is so varied, the number of subfields in psychology is constantly growing and evolving. Currently, the American Psychological Association has identified 54 subfields in psychology. Virginia Tech offers doctoral degrees in Clinical Psychology, Developmental and Biological Psychology, and Industrial/Organizational Psychology; however, our students and professors represent a wide array of research interests. A brief overview of the more popular and recurrent areas in psychology are presented here:



DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY focuses in advancing the knowledge associated with cognitive, social, and physical human development across lifespan (<http://www.apa.org/about/division/div7.aspx>).

BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY is a specialty in professional psychology that reflects an experimental-clinical approach distinguished by use of principles of human learning and development and theories of cognitive processing to promote meaningful change in maladaptive human behavior and thinking (<http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/behav.aspx>).



CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY integrates science, theory, and practice to understand, predict, and alleviate maladjustment, disability, and discomfort as well as to promote human adaptation, adjustment, and personal development. Clinical Psychology focuses on the intellectual, emotional, biological, psychological, social, and behavioral aspects of human functioning across the life span, in varying cultures, and at all socioeconomic levels. (Division 12, <http://www.div12.org/about-clinical-psychology>).



QUANTITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY (PSYCHOMETRICS) is the study of methods and techniques for the measurement of human attributes, the statistical and mathematical modeling of psychological processes, the design of research studies, and the analysis of psychological data. (Division 5; <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div5.aspx>).

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY is typically composed of psychologists whose major professional interests lie with children, families, and the schooling process. School psychologists are active in the delivery of comprehensive psychological services to children, adolescents, and families in schools and other applied settings. (Division 16; <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div16.aspx>).

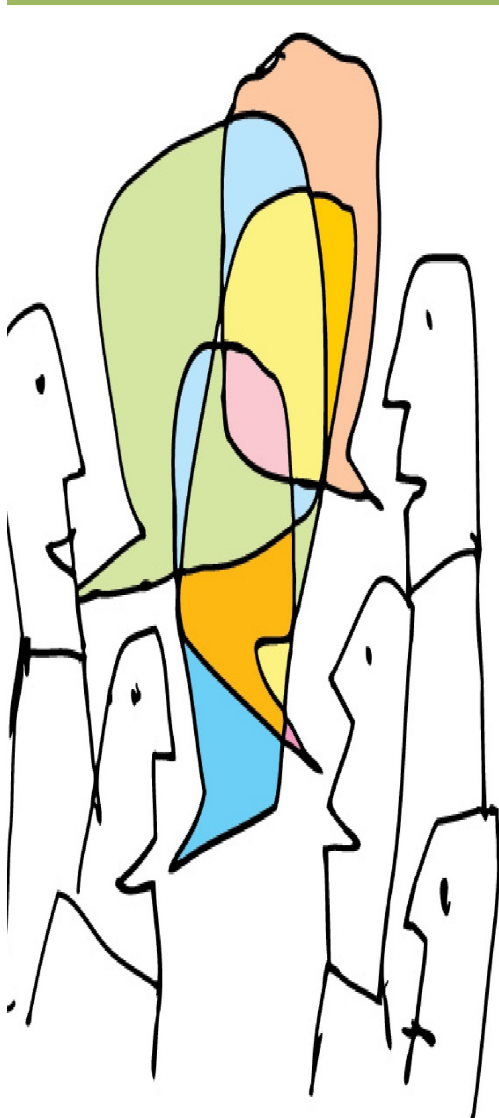
QUESTIONNAIRE



INDUSTRIAL-ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY is the scientific study of the workplace. Rigor and methods of psychology are applied to issues of critical relevance to business, including talent management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organizational development performance, and work-life balance. (Division 14, <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div14.aspx>).

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY is the study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. Social psychologists are employed in academia and private industry or government, and all are concerned with how individuals affect and are affected by other people and by their social and physical environments. (Division 8; <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div8.aspx>).

BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE Behavioral neuroscientists study the brain in relation to behavior, its evolution, functions, abnormalities, and repair, as well as its interactions with the immune system, cardiovascular system, and energy regulation systems. (Division 6; <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-6/index.aspx>).





Dr. Diana's area of specialization is the psychology and cognitive neuroscience of episodic memory. Episodic memory is the record of the events and experiences of your life. For example, memory for the lecture you just heard or your first date. I have conducted research into the retrieval processes operating in memory using behavioral techniques, event-related potentials, and computational modeling. My research has demonstrated that episodic memory is based on two processes: familiarity ("I've seen this person somewhere before") and recollection ("I met this person at the department picnic"). I have extended this research into the study of the brain by developing and testing a theory of medial temporal lobe function in episodic memory processing using ERP, fMRI, and patient approaches. The theory states that the hippocampus, perirhinal cortex, and parahippocampal cortex work together to enable episodic memory encoding and retrieval but that each region has a qualitatively different function.

Dr. Richey is a clinical psychologist with a background in cognitive neuroscience and human neuroimaging. Work in Dr. Richey's lab broadly investigates how the brain processes social information as well as clinical manifestations of faulty social information processing in the context of Autism and Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). In particular, this line of research seeks to uncover common and unique mechanisms of social dysfunction, as well as potential inroads for computerized intervention. To investigate this, the laboratory utilizes several neuroimaging modalities, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), high-resolution structural MRI and diffusion tensor imaging (DTI).



Dr. Cate is interested in several research questions. What information do we take away from our visual experience with the environment? When I first started studying perception, I was fascinated by the vividness with which I could remember the spatial layout of buildings that I hadn't visited in many years, in contrast to my more fuzzy memories of the appearance of old family cars.

Evidence from brain-damaged individuals and from neuroimaging methods like fMRI strongly suggest that there is more than just one pathway by which the visual system interprets shape. I am currently investigating the idea that in different viewing conditions we encode the same geometric form using qualitatively different feature schemes, which are based on anatomically distinct cortical pathways. For example, I am very interested in understanding the differences in how we encode objects with the same shape but different sizes, like a small model of a house and the real house itself. Differences in the optics of perspective projection, together with differences in the way in which we interact with small and large items, make it possible for us to perceive small and large instances of a geometric form by means of radically different visual features and processes. These differences, in turn, may lead to very different patterns of performance when we need to recognize or reconstruct small objects versus large built environments.

I spent most of the last six years learning functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) methods and applying them to the study of the human visual system. During that time I worked on several different topics that are particularly well-suited for neuroimaging, including multimodal auditory/visual interactions, interactions between the cerebral cortex and subcortical structures like the basal ganglia, meta-analysis techniques for examining data sets with large numbers of participants, methods for detecting individual differences in cortical anatomy. I am looking forward to continuing this work but I am especially excited about studying people (not just their brains) and their visual behavior again!

DR. HOFFMAN: Faculty Advisor to Psych ACCESS. Dr. Hoffman is a Developmental and Biological Psychology faculty and the Director of Undergraduate Studies at Virginia Tech.

NURI REYES is a fifth year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Virginia Tech. Her research interest is in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

JILL LORENZI is a third year graduate student in clinical psychology at Virginia Tech. Her research interests include the early identification and evidence-based treatment of autism spectrum disorders, particularly in young children.

JOY (QIONG) WU is a fourth year Ph.D. student in Developmental and Biological Psychology at Virginia Tech. Her research interest is infant language acquisition and development.

JARED MCGINLEY is a third year graduate student in biological psychology at Virginia Tech. His research focuses on central mechanisms in regulating autonomic activity as well as on profiling the biological signatures of anxiety disorders.

JONATHAN WALDRON is a second year student in Clinical Psychology at Virginia Tech. His research interest is in Violence and Victimization.

JORDAN BOOKER is a third year doctoral student in Developmental and Biological Psychology at Virginia Tech. His research interest is parental emotion socialization, children's development of socio-emotional skills, and peer relations, from a strengths-based perspective.

SARAH ALLGOOD is a fourth year graduate student in Industrial/ Organizational psychology at Virginia Tech. Her research centers on implicit leadership theories as well as on leadership development.

MICHAEL L. EKEMA-AGBAW is a second year doctoral student in the Industrial-Organizational department. His research interests include risk compensation, organization perceptions, interpersonal interaction, and performance evaluation.

KRYSTAL LEWIS is a fifth year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Virginia Tech. Her research interests are anxiety disorders in early childhood and the implementation of school-based prevention/intervention programs.

SCOTT MOSHIER is a third year graduated student in the Industrial/ Organizational Psychology program. His primary research interests include leadership, teams, and team processes.

JIWON CHOI, Editor, is a senior at Virginia Tech majoring in Psychology. After graduation, she is interested in pursuing a graduate degree in Clinical Psychology and working with children. *All pictures included in this newsletter were obtained from Google Images.