1. NEWS.

Firstly the profuse apologies section. I’m sorry I missed the March newsletter. It is only the second occasion in 76 actual newsletters. (The spellcheck just re-typed this as ‘action newsletters’). However I don’t really have the time to do this one either. That’s life in the market driven higher degree sector these days. We’re all so busy being accountable we don’t get time to do what we need to be accountable for. Still as long as the paperwork is done and more managers and auditors get jobs, that’s all that matters.

But we are going to have to think about getting a new newsletter editor soon. I just don’t have the time.

Well there’s bad news I’m afraid, as well as interesting and potentially exciting news.

Sadly Phillida Salmon passed away last month. Phil was a pioneer in the application of personal construct psychology to education. She was part of the group, working with Don Bannister, who promoted PCP in the UK context from the sixties on. She conducted some of the pioneering work with Don on thought disorder, was a dedicated teacher, but was best known outside the UK for her books. These were written in a direct, non-pretentious style and many found them both moving and very useful. Here are some of her book titles:

- Achieving a PhD: ten students' experience,
- Classroom collaboration,
- Coming to know,
- Psychology in the classroom: Reconstructing teachers and learners,
- Psychology for teachers: an alternative approach,
- Life at school: Education and psychology
- Living in time: A new look at personal development

I hope I may be able to give you a more informed account of her contribution from her former students or colleagues in the next newsletter.

Denny Hinkle has had a major operation, but is recovering well I understand.

Decisions – well the Australasian and interest group committees have decided to put in a bid for the next international congress after Ohio. We’re proposing to hold it at the Bardon centre, which is where we held the previous Brisbane Australasian conference. Its nice and compact, set in bushland adjacent to a national park (Mt Coot-tha), yet very close to restaurants, cafes and indeed 6 Kms from the centre of the city. At this stage there seems to be no other contenders rearing at the bit to hold the conference and it is our turn. So thanks to Bob Green in particular who has done much of the legwork in sorting through possible locations.

I have included information as requested about the Constructivist Psychology network, formerly the North American Personal Construct Network. As members of the Australasian network you too are entitled to a reduction in the price of the Journal of Constructivist Psychology. Just indicate you are a member when you ask them the price.

The Ohio-based International Congress of Personal Construct Psychology gets underway next month. It is still not too late to register. Check the website for information and the program information:

http://www.units.muohio.edu/launchingconstructivism/
2. CENTRE FOR PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY
RE-LOCATES TO UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE.

Excerpt from The Constructivist Interventionist, newsletter for the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology, April, 2005.

‘As many of you will know, the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology has been in existence for nearly a quarter of a Century. During that time it has had physical premises (in London) followed by a ‘virtual’ existence without formal offices. Now that the Centre has moved to the University of Hertfordshire it, once again, has a physical location. More than that, it is in a place where personal construct psychology is already both recognised and respected. David Winter and Fay Fransella are both Professors at the University and the Fransella Collection of PCP books, articles and papers is located in the University library. In short, the Centre has found not just a new place to carry on its work, but a real home. We would particularly like to thank Professor Ben Fletcher, Head of the School of Psychology, for his help and support in bringing this liaison about.

Nick Reed is Director of the Centre and will be supported by an Executive Committee whose membership has yet to be finalised, but it will initially include: Fay Fransella, David Winter, Maureen Pope and Nick Reed.

When Fay Fransella set up the Centre all those years ago, her overriding aim was to offer PCP to anyone who might want it. That aim remains the same at the Centre’s new home. David Winter has already succeeded in establishing personal construct psychology as a central component of the University’s Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, as well as supervising PhDs in this field. The Centre should now be able to provide a personal construct psychology input to courses for health professions at the University as well as offer PCP to other departments, drawing on its experience of working in organisations, undertaking market research and running courses for those in business, education, research and other settings. It also has to convince people coming from a wide range of disciplines that PCP can be of benefit to the work they are already doing. It will also provide consultancy services through the University to both public and private organisations and bodies. There is much to do

Within the university context, the Centre has to stand on its own feet and to pay its own way - in short, it has to be completely self-funding. That, at least, it is used to! To start with, the Centre will offer ‘open’ workshops at the University that anybody can attend who is interested in learning more about PCP. In addition, we are working on how best to continue running the existing intermediate and advanced distance learning courses offered by the Centre, so that we can teach PCP to those who cannot attend face-to-face courses. The Centre also plans to offer Continuing Professional Development workshops for people who use PCP in their work. Looking a bit further into the future, we hope to become a ‘resource’ for other departments in the University,
enabling them to have access to the unique benefits of applying personal construct theory and methods to solving problems and assisting change.

We believe that the move to the University of Hertfordshire will herald a new era both for the Centre and for personal construct psychology in Britain and that, in the course of time, a real Centre of Excellence for PCP will be created at the University.

Nick Reed & David Winter"

2. LATEST BOOKS.

TITLE:  Personal Construct Psychotherapy

EDITORS:  David Winter (University of Hertfordshire and Barnet Health Authority) & Linda Viney (University Of Wollongong)
PUBLISHER:  Whurr Publishers
FORMAT:  Paperback, 250 x 200mm, 300pp

PUB DATE:  01 May 2005

PRICE:  £29.50

DESCRIPTION:  In the half century that has passed since George Kelly put forward his psychology of personal constructs, there have been major advances in the form of psychotherapy derived from his theory. This book presents developments in the personal construct theory perspective on psychological disorders and their treatment in the context of contemporary issues in psychotherapy; illustrates the diverse range of personal construct psychotherapy approaches that have been devised for a wide range of clinical problems; and indicates the growing evidence base for these approaches. It contains contributions from most of the leading international practitioners in the field. It will not only be of interest to psychotherapists, other clinicians, academics, and students who are already familiar with personal construct theory or constructivism, but also to those who are seeking a therapeutic approach which is integrative but has a clear theoretical rationale, and which is able to combine humanism with rigour.

CONTENTS:
Part One, General Principles of Personal Construct Psychotherapy,

Part Two, Specific Clinical Problems,

Part Three, Evidence Base,
A Process and Outcome Study of Personal construct, Cognitive and Psychodynamic Therapies in a National Health Service setting, The Effectiveness of Personal Construct Psychotherapy, a Systematic review and Meta-analysis,

Appendix, References
TITLE: Essential Practitioners’ Handbook of Personal Construct Psychology

EDITOR: Fay Fransella


This book consists of chapters from the International Handbook. Wiley was pleased by the sales of the large Handbook and wanted to produce a shorter, paperback version designed for users of PCP. Fay Fransella could therefore only select chapters that were primarily about practice. The choice was not easy since excellent chapters had to be excluded because they were only theoretical. However, virtually all the chapters given below have a theoretical component. How can one practice personal construct psychology without using personal construct theory. The result is based on the opinions of the Panel of Advisers who worked on the original Handbook. Chapters in this shortened version are:

Section 1: What personal construct psychology is all about

1 George Alexander Kelly: the man and his theory by Fay Fransella & Robert Neimeyer
2 The logic of passion by Don Bannister
3 The power of a good theory by Sean Brophy, Fay Fransella & Nick Reed

Section II: What are some of PCP’s techniques?

4 Some skills and tools for personal construct users by Fay Fransella
5 A range of elicitation methods to suit client and purpose by Pam Denicolo
6 The repertory grid technique by Richard Bell
7 Making sense of dependency by Beverly Walker
8 Expertise and expert systems: emulating psychological processes by Mildred Shaw and Brian Gaines
9 From theory to research to change by Fay Fransella

Section III: How can PCP help us to understand people or help them to change?

Part 1: Working with the individual or individuals in small groups

10 Is treatment a good idea? By George Kelly
11 An audacious adventure: personal construct counseling and psychotherapy by Franz Epting, Marco Gemignant and Malcolm Cross
12 The evidence base for personal construct psychotherapy by David Winter
13 Constructive intervention with children by Tom Ravenette
14 How can we understand one another if we don’t speak the same language? by Devi Jankowicz
15 Working with anger by Peter Cummins
16 An approach to post-traumatic stress by Kenneth Sewell
17.1 Nursing by Julie Ellis, Jacqui Costigan & Julie Watkinson
17.2 Family therapy by Harry Procter
17.3 The Metropolitan Police, London: a personal account by John Porter
The Institute of Constructivist Psychology has opened a new school of constructivist psychotherapy in Padova, Italy. The school is called ‘Scuola di Psicoterapia Costruttivista’, which you might guess means the ‘School of Constructivist Psychotherapy’, and has been formally recognised in 2004 (by the Italian Ministry which governs the world of the universities in Italy) as a centre providing the 4-year specialisation training necessary if one wants to become a practicing therapist in Italy. This means that our school has the official status of a university-level professional award.

The school is an important part of the Institute of Constructivist Psychology which in its other wing focuses on the provision of organisational consulting to small and large organisations. The dominant consulting activities include culture change programs; the installation of ‘Constructive Participation’ and empowerment systems of working; outdoor management training activities (especially the use of sailing for the analysis and creation of alternative team-working); tennis psychology for professional tennis players; and the usual range of training seminars and workshops for management at different levels of the organisation.

An emphasis on Personal Construct Psychology

The primary orientation is around Kelly’s main work and so the 4-year course is an extensive training in PCT approaches and forms the foundational competencies for the students. On this basis I continue my 30-year interest in taking up Kelly’s original invitation to see what I can make of his theory myself, to which end I continue trying to ‘radicalise’ Kelly, which means taking his own more radical notions seriously and putting them in relation to more recent thinkers like Maturana, Varela and Ernst von Glasersfeld; and along the way, creating a novel frame wherein which the students can continue to ‘push the envelope’ of therapy with the idea of creating as many different approaches as possible.

I am hoping this year to finish a book I am writing with Ernst von Glasersfeld which attempts to provide a coherent application of radical constructivism to the area of psychotherapy. Obviously, there are great areas of overlap with Kelly’s approach.
while there is a lot of attention given to systemic and cybernetic frameworks and of working with families rather than ‘individuals’.

We are pushing further into the domain of non-verbal construing on the one hand and into the domain of experiencing in networks of conversations on the other. For example, one of his ideas which is little explored is his statement that our psychological system is ‘only a part of our total personal construction system’. This helps me to construct experiments on the ‘pre-verbal’ side of the dimension I just outlined. Here we need to put a lot of emphasis on the ‘corporeal self’ as Harré calls it, providing for the students foundational experiences in what actor’s have to learn in order to become a good performer. This of course is contextualised in the frame of fixed role therapy, the need for extensive role-playing, and the elaboration of pre-verbal construings.

To elaborate the other pole of this dimension I follow another important Kelly idea: the importance of understanding the person’s construing system as manifested in their best efforts to ‘fit’ with the shared constraints of their networks of conversations. While Kelly defines transitional constructs as various ‘internal conditions’ of the person’s construction system, he also said that the best explanation of a person’s psychological processes is in their efforts to relate themselves to events in the world. This goes with his statements regarding life as anticipatory in a participatory manner - and not merely as a passive academic exercise in ‘prediction’. And these ideas obviously go with his other views which make it clear that anticipation is a conjoint process (rather than a piece of ‘individualistic phenomenology’ set apart from the ongoing social world of experiencing).

Kelly repeated his view that personal change inevitably involves the interpersonal contexts of the person. Here the systemic framework is very useful to map out the requisite re-negotiations of one’s role positioning in the dominant psychological space co-constituted by all the participants in the network of conversations. Somewhere Kelly defined ‘culture’ as a shared similarity of expectations. And we mustn’t forget Kelly’s comments on ‘excommunication’ as “the most powerful device man has ever invented for bringing about individual conformity and cutting short man’s personal quest for distinguishing good from evil.” (Kelly, 1969, p. 185)

The fixed role sketch is not only about providing different ways of perceiving oneself or providing new activities, but more importantly to provide a novel basis for a new role relationship with others. So a lot of attention must go to how others are to be perceived and related to differently during enactments. In other words, to develop new ways of subsuming the ‘psychologic’ whereby others relate themselves to the person wanting ‘change’. This emphasis of Kelly conjures up a vision of our having yardsticks to measure others’ yardsticks for measuring us!

What unifies the school of therapy with the consulting wing of the Institute of Constructivist Psychology is the same Kellyan ethos of consistently underlining the ethical and political implications of the uses of psychology, and the implied necessity to ‘empower’ people by giving psychology away to them so that the unfortunate social tendencies of enslaving (or at least manipulating) people is less efficient and totalising than it otherwise can be. What he wrote at the end of World War 2 is no less relevant today in a disorienting world where there are no longer many beliefs about ‘fair play’ or ‘reasonable limits’. Rather there has been a ‘constructivist revolution’ in perceiving that any ‘limits’ are man-made and thus are up for grabs – or at least up for deconstruction.

Unfortunately, this ‘constructivist revolution’ has been done by ‘naïve realists’ who are now left with no way of co-constructing new jointly-limiting realities which might go some way towards creating a context of peaceful co-existence. There is a lot of work for constructivists to be doing right now, more than ever.

I am very pleased that many of the exciting, thought-provoking, and just ‘provoking’ people who were creative collaborators with my original Master’s course
in constructivist therapy at University College Dublin in the 1980’s and 90’s are going to be involved in this new venture. These include Miller, Mair, David Smail, Ivor Browne and Ernst von Glasersfeld, to name but a few.

I would have liked to decribe at length the different range of interests of my colleagues and associates in the new school but space does not permit. But if you go to our web site at http://www.icp-italia.it/ you will be able to see a listing of names of the people involved, some of which are already well-known to our English colleagues in the PCP circles and others still to be ‘discovered’.

In 2004 we ran a series of very enriching events, workshops, seminars in Padova., and plan to do the same in 2005 in parallel with the school’s activities. We are also setting up international collaborations with other constructivist training centres with a view to organising exchanges of students and also of teachers. We are also interested in creating further international collaborations for research in constructivist therapy and related phenomena. If you might be interested in joining us in any of this at an early stage you can drop me a line at: kenny@icp-italia.it or at kenny@oikos.org

(We are in the middle of shifting our current web site to a new server, so if you have difficulties please let me know.)

We are very interested in generating cross-cultural cross-fertilization, so do contact me with any ideas you might have if you are involved in constructivist trainings or research.

A presto, Vincent Kenny

Excerpt from The Constructivist Interventionist, newsletter for the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology, April, 2005

5. PERSONAL CONSTRUCT THEORY & PRACTICE

Dear colleagues,
The refereed online journal "Personal Construct Theory & Practice" has now entered its second year. The address is http://www.pcp-net.org/journal. To access the articles, a - free - password is required that can be obtained from Joern Scheer at joern.scheer@joern-scheer.de.

From now on, there will be no more regular "issues" as in a printed journal; instead, articles will be put online straight after (if necessary) revision. Registered subscribers will have the benefit of being notified by email when this happens. Therefore, subscribers are requested to inform us if their email addresses change. (If you are already a subscriber but have NOT received a message from us recently, that may be so because of a change in your email address). Articles published prior to 2005 are now accessible without password.

We'd like to thank authors, reviewers, and subscribers for making this - unsubsidised - publication possible. And please consider submitting a manuscript yourself!

Kind regards,
Jörn Scheer & Trevor Butt, Editors
Constructivist Psychology Network

The Constructivist Psychology Network (CPN) is a network of persons interested in constructivist approaches to psychology, relationships, and human change processes. It is largely comprised of psychologists, but there are also members from related disciplines. Those interested in personal constructivism or related areas of constructivist, constructionist, narrative, or postmodern approaches to psychology are encouraged to join.

Membership Information

CPN membership is open to anyone. An annual membership includes a subscription to the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* (4 issues per year) and receipt of the CPN newsletter, the *Constructivist Chronicle*. Dues can be paid in either US or Canadian dollars. Members from outside North America are welcome, though there is an added charge to cover overseas postage. Regular memberships are $76 US and student memberships are $46 US for persons from outside North America.
Join CPN
Joining CPN is easy! Dues payments, by check or money order, should be made payable to CPN. Please include your name, affiliation, address, and e-mail with your payment. Mail dues to:
April Metzler, Ph.D., Iacocca Hall, Room A-229, 111 Research Drive, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA 18015 USA
VISIT US ON THE INTERNET AT www.constructivistpsych.org

Organisational applications of PCP – Autumn 2005
United Kingdom

Consulting & Facilitation in Organisations – a PCP approach (4 day course)
PCP for Managers and Team Leaders (4 day course)

For further details and course dates please contact mary.frances@virgin.net or 01926 430720

EPCA publications

Two EPCA publications are still available:
Beyond Experimentation into Meaning, Fisher & Savage (eds), papers from 1998 Chester conference;
Challenging the Boundaries: PCP Perspectives for the New Millennium, Fisher & Cornelius (eds), papers from the 2000 conference in Malta.

Both are available priced £10 including p&p, from mary.frances@virgin.net

Two excerpts from Phil Salmons book Living in time, reprinted from Contact, June 2005

“Yet surely it is essential to examine the philosophy by which we live. As long as we go on accepting the received wisdom, refusing to question habitual assumptions, we shall continue to live out what may ultimately be an ultimately demeaning, an impoverishing philosophy of human life. We shall blindly endorse the particular forms & practices of our own society, despite the diminution, the disrespect, which these incorporate for certain phases, certain lives. It is because, as human beings, we do live out what we take to be true – we create the reality in which we believe – that our psychology is not something just for academic study, but the very underpinning of how we live.”

“To create a life story which is credible, which allows development as well as continuity, which tells a tale worth telling – this is the task that, as human beings, we must all attempt. It is a task which, essentially, demands imagination. If we are to construct a coherent account – an account which encompasses, rather than denies, all the phases we have lived through, the vicissitudes, the pain as well as the joy – then we must approach our experience, and that of others, with the greatest possible imagination. It is only through our imaginative construction that we shall be able to own the full heritage of the experience we have acquired through living in time. And if we are to confirm the meaning, the value, of our own story, we must make an act of personal faith. In the end it is the storyteller who, like any novelist, commands the audience. Our sense of the meaning of our story - that is our contribution to life.”