

Being and becoming excellent

I was intrigued to read Narinder Kapur and Barbara Wilson's article 'Aiming for excellence as an applied psychologist' (January 2010) as it set many hares running for me.

I would like to chase after one or two.

Their overall idea reminds me of Bartram and Roe's (2005) 'architecture model' of competency though, unlike that model, this one has the beginnings of a third dimension – development over time. I feel the sets of pillars require some form of link, one that would pull both the Technical and Personal sets into this third, developmental dimension.

The Personal pillars are introduced with a question 'How good a person *are* you?' (emphasis added), suggesting focus on *being* rather

than *becoming*, this latter idea derived from Wenger (1998) and seen more recently in Dall'Alba (2009).

Acknowledgement of this continuing personal development (becoming) will help us avoid ideas of learning as 'warehousing' (seen perhaps in some recent ministerial pronouncements about degree length) and any related suggestions that excellence can somehow be acquired in an absolute way. So, we may also wish to consider how our practice should be evidence-informed, given that most evidence is open to

a certain degree of argument.

Also, ideas of *habitus* (from Aristotle – see Hodgkinson et al., 2004) are

important – one's becoming depends as much on the personal (including history, experience, culture, attitudes and even prejudice) as on the expectations of any chosen profession.

Ideas of 'artistry' in professional working (e.g. Schon, 1983; Johnson, 2007) may serve to bind each set of pillars, and indeed the three sets, together. Johnson presents an interesting model of artistry, which she describes as 'The Structure of Personal Knowledge', as an amalgam of mastery and originality, with the two bound together symbiotically. As psychologists, we will have encountered ideas of gestalt early in our own learning and perhaps 'artistry' is what our professional gestalt is about. (That artistry may be difficult to conceptualise and describe does not stop it being important – think of Robert McNamara's difficulties with what to tell the American people about the Vietnam War. We should not, as McNamara was driven to do, avoid the important and focus on the easier or more accessible.)

The pillars as presented are important, though we should be cautious about privileging the 'countable' (the obvious 'things' indicated by the



The importance of artistry – Robert McNamara faced difficulties over what to say about the Vietnam War

Home education concerns

Tucked away in the Government's Children, Schools and Families Bill (see <http://bit.ly/7C7jYd>) is Clause 26, setting out registration and monitoring proposals for home-educated children. In the UK, education is compulsory, but school is not. Parents have a legal duty to cause their children to receive an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs, in school or otherwise. Estimates suggest that around 70,000 children are currently home-educated. In January last year the Department for Children, Schools and Families launched a highly controversial review of home education amidst

concerns that it might be used as a cover for abuse.

My partner and I are educating both our children at home because of difficulties ensuring a suitable education in school. One child has been found to have an Epstein-Barr infection (not the fabricated or induced illness initially suspected), and the other has Asperger's syndrome – with attendant learning difficulties.

Government concern about the quality of home education is laudable. But the way it has addressed these concerns has left much to be desired. If passed, Clause 26 will require parents in effect to seek

permission from education service providers (local authorities) to educate their children at home, even if the sole reason for home education is a demonstrable failure of local authority provision. And government is to define what constitutes a suitable education.

I have three major concerns about the direction of travel of education policy. Firstly, that uniformity rather than diversity of education, is seen as best equipping the nation to face future challenges. The organisational literature is clear: communities that have access to a diversity of skills, knowledge and strategies adapt better to change than

Where are the strategists?

Technical pillars in particular perhaps), when the gestalt of 'artistry' – sophisticated and perhaps excellent being and becoming – might more fully reflect what professionals aspire to.

Richard Parker

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monocultures. Secondly, that what constitutes a suitable education is being determined by central government, not by the unique educational requirements of each child. If education is not tailored to the individual child, then the child will not learn well. And thirdly, that not being enrolled at school, poor school attendance or not 'keeping up' are increasingly being seen as indicators of maltreatment or neglect by parents, rather than as possible outcomes of failures on the part of education or health services.

Many psychologists are involved in the assessment and support of children who fail to engage with the education system. I would be most interested to hear their views on the points I have raised.

Sue Gerrard

Market Drayton
Shropshire

Now that Chartered Psychologists (who have not narrowed their expertise into a protected title) are swimming in the same sea as anyone with a smattering of psychology about them, the time has come round, once more, to try and identify the uniqueness of a psychologist, and once identified, to convey this to customers and clients together with why it is so

vital to future well-being and performance. Without this exercise, the future for psychology as being anything more than performing tricks and undertaking research will be, and is, in doubt. Worse still, the failure to apply psychology to some amazingly complicated but everyday issues will demonstrate the failure of psychology to be relevant. I fear I have been a witness

to a profession that has been losing the plot over the past 20 years or so, and desperately needs to find a way forward that isn't to follow the whims and fancies of government inspired regulation. Where are the psychology strategists? What are they up to?

Derek Mowbray
Organisation Health
Psychologists

Cancer in the workplace

I read with interest the 'name and address supplied' letter 'Dying at work' in the January issue.

I would like to draw the attention of the author to a resource that was developed by Macmillan Cancer Support in partnership with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. This resource consists of a DVD and booklet *Cancer in the Workplace* designed specifically for managers in the workplace to give them support in managing employees who present with cancer. I would be very happy to send a copy to the author of the letter via your offices. Alternatively they could telephone our national helpline on 0800 019 2211, where they could request a copy of the resource.

The DVD scenarios can be viewed on YouTube – the search phrase is 'cancer in the workplace'. Additionally, searching on the word 'cancer' in the resources section of the website



www.healthyworkinglives.com, takes you to several helpful resources that can be viewed and printed.

I am sure that direct contact with Macmillan Cancer Support through their website www.macmillan.org.uk would also be helpful, as this organisation assists

family, friends and colleagues of cancer sufferers.

I hope this information is of value to the letter's author and to anyone else who has been affected by these issues.

Kathleen Houston
Scottish Centre for Healthy
Working Lives

FORUM WEB CHAT

'How is the internet changing the way you think?' is the latest question posed by *Edge*, the online club for intellectuals (<http://bit.ly/5qUeZU>). Numerous psychologists were again among the respondents with their answers falling into four discernible categories. Some were sceptical. 'I must confess to being perplexed,' wrote Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Claremont Graduate University). 'I am not even sure we have good evidence that the way humans think has been changed by the advent of the printing press.' Robert Shank (Engines for Education Inc.) struck a similar tone. 'Thinking hasn't changed,' he wrote. 'What has changed is how we find evidence, how we interpret the evidence we have found, and how we find available explanations from which to choose.' Alison Gopnik (UC, Berkeley) didn't deny that the internet has changed how we think, but she doesn't see these effects as any different from how other technologies have affected our minds. For her grandchildren, she predicted, 'the Internet will feel as fundamental, as rooted, as timeless, as a battered Penguin paperback, that apex of the literate civilization of the last century, feels for me.'

Other psychologists described how the internet acts like an extension to our own minds. 'We are in the process of outsourcing information storage and retrieval from mind to computer, just as many of us have already outsourced the ability of doing mental arithmetic to the pocket calculator,' wrote Gerd Gigerenzer (Max Planck Institute for Human Development). 'The Internet is a kind of collective memory,' agreed Stephen Kosslyn (Harvard University). 'When I write with a browser open in the background, it feels like the browser is an extension of myself.' Geoffrey Miller (University of New Mexico) described how websites like BBC News and The Economist are extending his perception, 'becoming my sixth sense for world events'. He also observed how the internet can improve our decision making through the use of peer ratings and recommendations, allowing us to benefit from the wisdom of the crowd.

The social implications of the internet were another focus. David Myers (Hope College) described the internet as a kind of social amplifier that's allowed him to spread the use of a simple but effective wireless technology for the benefit of people who use hearing aids. 'By linking and magnifying the inclinations of kindred-spirited people, the Internet can be very, very bad, but also very, very good,' he wrote. In a similar vein, Arnold Trehub (University of Massachusetts) exalted the networking benefits of the internet for science: 'In online workshops of the kind in which I am now engaged, serious issues can be explored among key investigators, in depth, over many months.' Paul Bloom (Yale) agreed, pointing to the voluntary contributions and edits to Wikipedia as evidence for 'the extent of human generosity in our everyday lives and also...how technology can enhance and expand this positive human trait.'

Others raised concerns about privacy issues. 'You feel in a zone that is private and ephemeral,' Sherry Turkle (MIT) wrote. 'But the Internet is public and forever...I think of how different things are for today's teenagers who accommodate to the idea that their e-mail might be scanned by school authorities and that their online identities might be tampered with.' Jesse Bering (Queen's University, Belfast) said this loss of privacy will mean a return to how our ancestors lived ten thousand years ago in close-knit societies. 'From background checks to matchmaking services, to anonymous Website browsing to piracy and identity theft, from "Googling" others [and ourselves] to flaming bad professors and stingy customers, the Internet is simply ancient social psychology meeting new information technology.'

Christian Jarrett is staff journalist on The Psychologist. Share your views by e-mailing psychologist@bps.org.uk.

Reductionism mistakes

It is not good enough to declare that reductionism is absurd, as Allan Dodds does (Forum, February 2010) and ridicule colleagues who appeal to it. You need to explain rationally why this is so. Dodds is right in citing Ryle's concept of a category mistake as the central plank of Ryle's debunking of reductionism, but his comments (i.e. 'Ryle denied mental events took place...linguistically they are a category mistake') suggest that he has not understood the argument. Ryle himself anticipated this difficulty when he wrote: 'I am not, for example, denying that there occur mental processes. Doing long division is a mental process and so is making a joke. But I am saying that the

phrase "there occur mental processes" does not mean the same sort of things as "there occur physical processes", and, therefore, that it makes no sense to conjoin or disjoin the two' (Ryle, 1949/1980, p.23).

Category mistakes refers to the attempt to account for a variable by appeal to a set of parameters to which it does not belong. Ryle gives several examples; for instance a child who watches a march past on being told that a division will come by, at the end of which asks his father when he will see the division. Or my own favourite: looking in the cupboards of a house to find where 'home' resides.

Reductionism is

Allan Dodds is right to mock the naive theorising of brain imaging scientists (Forum, February 2010). Such work is an embarrassment, and marks a regression to the dark days of the 18th century, and to what Dorothy Rowe aptly describes as 'The new phrenology' ('One on one', June 2009). Daniel Elkan's article on 'humour centres' in the brain illustrates Rowe's point even better (*New Scientist*, 30 January 2010).

But the failure does not arise from adopting a position of reductionism, so much as adopting a version of 'identity theory' that holds that the mind and brain are one and the same thing. But this in turn does not (I think) arise from explicitly adopting a particular philosophical position, but rather from failing to understand properly what reductionism in science really is, and from failing to develop the proper technical language that would accompany it.

Let us look at the science of 'sound'. Here we have

theories expressed at the level of sonics (which explains how sound is made up of waves of varying air pressure), at the level of acoustics (which explains how particular frequencies are perceived as pitch), at the level of phonetics (which explains how particular transitions of pitch are perceived as phonemes), and at the level of semantics (which explains how particular combinations of phonemes go to make up words and sentences).

This is reductionism as the rest of the science world understands it. It constitutes an explanatory system (as we intuit it) and results (seemingly) from the simple mapping between levels of description that it creates. But how would such a system play out in the science of minds and brains? Here things get a bit tricky because the science of minds is itself in difficulties because it has locked itself into a scientific paradigm that

an example of a category mistake in that it attempts to account for the world of ideas by appeal to the material world. For instance I may burn my fingers in a fire due to my ignorance of fire. Likewise I may burn my fingers due to delirium brought on by a fever. Whilst both situations have the same result, the former follows from a problem within the realm of ideas and is therefore not accountable by an appeal to the integrity of my brain functioning in the same way

that delirium secondary to an infection let us say will be.

If we continue to believe that all mental events are ultimately 'reducible' in this way, psychological interventions will always be seen as a 'half measure' whilst awaiting the 'real' science to catch up. I am not for a moment making the absurd declaration that Michael Church attributes to me (Forum, February 2010) that in all cases psychological intervention should be 'privileged', but we do need to ask ourselves why it is that as psychologists we often fail to make the case for what it is that we offer. One example from the medical front would be the complete lack of any

on a technical analysis of what a 'conscious' mind is, rather than an 'information processing' one. I then use this paradigm to analyse some visual tasks (in the real world, not the laboratory) that at some level map simply on to brain structures and functions. The key notion underpinning all this is that vision does not arise from processing information (which in any case is a logical nonsense) but from the controlled and

psychological intervention for COPD within the NICE guidelines. For examples within psychiatry I would refer the reader to Richard Bentall's *Doctoring the Mind* (reviewed in February's *Psychologist*).

At no point did I make the ad hominem comment that Dodds attributes to me that Descartes was a plumber; Descartes' plumbing metaphor was his own, not mine as I am sure Dodds will know from his reading of Descartes for his metaphysics class.

Stephane Duckett
Royal Free Hospital, London

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energetic fusion of data structures with knowledge.

John Campion
*Liphook
Hants*

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takes the *a priori* view that minds are information-processing devices; and they aren't (see e.g. Velmans, 1991).

In Campion (2009) I develop a new paradigm based

obituary

Dr Rose Donno (1978-2010)

Rose grew up in London to a German mother and an English father. As a child she often visited her beloved grandmother Lotti and aunt Ev in Germany. From the age of 15, Rose single-handedly cared for her mother who suffered from severe depression and her grandmother who suffered from Alzheimer's. This she did

with love, care and affection. Such was the grace and beauty of Rose. In her gap year she worked as a carer for a woman with multiple sclerosis in France.

She gained a first class honours degree in psychology from the University of Kent with a year in France. She went on to train as a clinical psychologist at UCL. She has

since been working at Great Ormond Street Hospital as a clinical psychologist within renal and cochlear implant specialities. Lindsay Edwards, her supervisor there, recently described Rose as 'a fantastic psychologist, admired and respected by everyone for her intelligence, creativity, commitment, kindness and empathy'. These qualities have

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

I am a clinical psychologist employed by CAMHS, and working within a Youth Offending Team in East Sussex. I am keen to hear from other **clinical psychologists placed within YOTs**. I would like to exchange views on best practice in assessment and treatment. In particular we are developing a standardised approach to assessing the young people and are keen to explore the best psychometric measures to use. We are currently piloting ways of screening for difficulties in mood, emotion regulation, cognitive functioning and social communication. We would like to develop ways of assessing personality and assessing risk of violence. We are also keen to develop an understanding of a young person's strengths and preferred learning style.

Ultimately, it may be beneficial for us to develop a network of colleagues within this speciality. Do please drop me an e-mail if you are interested in developing this area of practice.

Richard Bailie
*St Leonards-on-Sea
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I am trying to get hold of the **Columbia Test of Mental Maturity**, for use in research with children with severe motor disorders, but I'm not having any success. Does anyone have a copy of the test that they are no longer using and that they would be willing to donate?

Lindsay Pennington
lindsay.pennington@ncl.ac.uk

been echoed by Rose's many friends who also commented on her caring, sensitive and thoughtful nature as well as her great sense of fun. All of these things she had in abundance.

After 10 years together we got married in London in 2007. The sun was shining and we sent coloured helium balloons into the sky. On

every photo Rose is smiling, laughing, joking and full of joy.

A year later we embarked on a round the world trip. Rose especially loved the beauty and wildlife of New Zealand, the chaos and colours of India and the opportunity to use her Spanish in South America. She had an incredible ability with languages and I recall being open-mouthed with admiration as she proceeded to discuss the merits of the local healthcare system with a taxi driver in Peru. On Indian bus rides, my knuckles would often be white from holding on tightly in anticipation of seemingly unavoidable collisions, whereas Rose remained calm even when we overtook lorries on blind corners. Her fearlessness was most apparent in her smile as she jumps out of a plane, captured on film whilst skydiving in New Zealand.

Rose once remarked to Emma Taylor, her good friend as assistant psychologists, that 'there's nothing as disappointing as a cake that is not as good as it looks like it is going to be'. Above all, she had a great sense of humour and was at her sharpest when she spoke her mind when others did not dare open their mouths and said exactly what she saw, politely but unsparingly. She had a wonderful way with words and often had people in stitches with her witty banter and observational humour.

She was a beautiful person who meant so much to so many. Rose and I grew up together and shared so much happiness together. She was my better half, my best friend and the light that gave life its spark. I loved her more than words can ever express and will miss her for ever.
Joel Sheridan
London E11

obituary

Frank Landy (1942–2010)

Frank Landy, probably the outstanding writer, practitioner, consultant and expert witness in industrial/organisational psychology of his generation, died on 12 January 2010 aged 67. His own account of his life, as President of the Society for Industrial Organisational Psychology (SIOP) is fascinating, hilarious, and ultimately intriguing (www.siop.org/Presidents/landy.aspx).

Frank went from being a plumber's only son in Philadelphia to a Jesuit prep school, then from a failed student of mechanical engineering to pre-eminence in I/O psychology by a series of unlikely steps. He also managed to run over 60

marathons, become an expert fly fisherman and collect over 20 guitars (including building one of his own.)

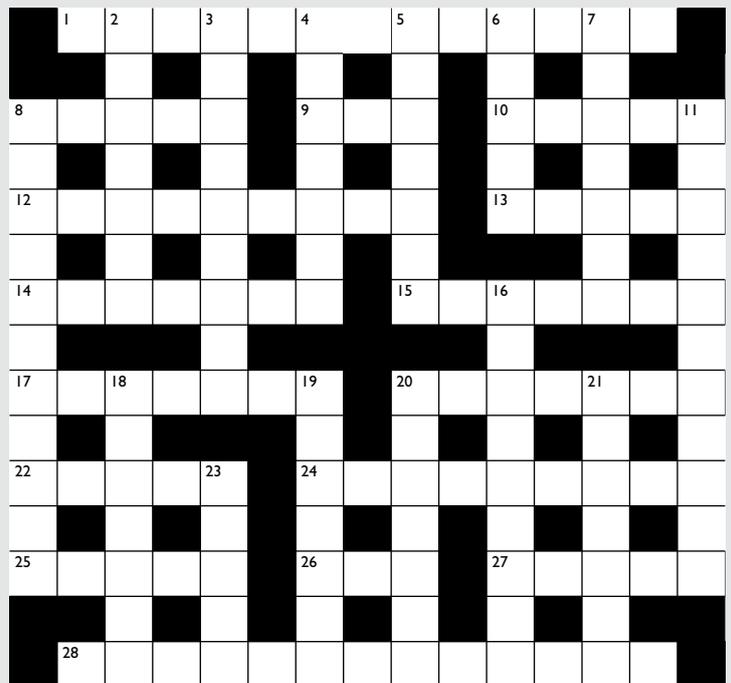
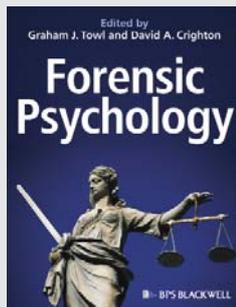
I first met him in the late 1970s, when he had already demonstrated his unusual and sustained interest in the work systems of European countries by taking a sabbatical in Sweden. He had written a major textbook with Don Trumbo in 1976; I once asked him why, and he replied that they were out running together and just thought of it as a joint challenge. He managed to include Scotland in his European tours some time, and picked up on some of my research on shiftwork (which is somehow crazily different in the USA), interrogated me, sent me

prize crossword

no 50

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Send your entry (photocopies accepted) marked 'prize crossword', to the Leicester office (see inside front cover) **deadline 12 april 2010. Winner of prize crossword no 49** Alan Richens, Bromsgrove

no 49 solution Across 1 Interpretation, 9 Antic, 10 Donnellan, 11 Inherent, 12 Rider, 14 Yang, 15 Fathom, 17 Cow, 18 Mar, 19 Stress, 20 Step, 23 Swami, 25 McCarthy, 28 Obtrusive, 29 Penne, 30 Antidepressant. Down 1 Inanity, 2 Titchener, 3 Record, 4 Radon, 5 Tang, 6 Theorem, 7 Ogled, 8 Andrew, 13 Thus, 16 Acre, 17 Catatonia, 18 Maslow, 19 Stimuli, 21 Payment, 22 Campus, 24 Act on, 26 Clear, 27 Fife.

a summary of our discussion, and played a game of squash with me. I think I beat him, but it was his first game, and his fitness made him quite a struggle.

He was a star visitor at the annual Occupational Psychology conference in the UK, and I vividly remember his account of the Domino's pizza delivery case: the pressure to deliver fast was highly dangerous, and he contributed to winning a very large judgement against the pizza chain, perhaps the peak of his many appearances in court.

He travelled widely in Europe (Romania and the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, Finland and Sweden) and then branched out into the rest of the world (South Africa, Mexico, South America, New Zealand, and Australia, amongst others): his cosmopolitan curiosity

made him a uniquely renaissance man of the modern I/O world. He worked for SHL for more than one period.

He resumed his high-ranking in textbooks with *Work in the 21st Century* written with Jeffrey Conte and published in 2004, now in its third edition, and modernising his *Psychology of Work Behavior* (1976). He also wrote a general textbook *Psychology: The Science of People* (1987).

He was back in Scotland more recently, to taste our porridge, (and take home a spirtle) and enjoyed a visit to the north of Scotland with Kylie Harper, his third wife. He was a loving and lovable man, and will be sorely missed by his many friends, as well as the profession.

Zander Wedderburn
Edinburgh

FORUM PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK

Leadership has always excited intense interest and considerable research. As the economy transitions from recession to recovery, it is successful leaders who are critical to organisational success or failure. Occupational psychology plays a significant role in driving this leadership agenda. An excellent example of best practice in organisational change and development is the award-winning 'Leadership Academy' programme run by Croydon Council in South London and developed by Hayley Lewis and her team.

To date there have been 150 participants in the Academy, with applicants across the organisation and at all levels. Access to the Academy is via a two-stage selection process; firstly an application form and secondly a one-day selection centre to identify potential. A new chief executive in 2007 provided Hayley Lewis and the team with the opportunity to engage senior leaders and to shape their understanding of leadership capability. The goal was to develop the leaders of the future – those with the drive and the skills to lead a progressive 21st-century council. The programme had strong sponsorship from the top of the organisation and was linked directly with the future strategic goals. Buy-in was critical and this involved challenging the 'silo' mentality, thus providing a more cohesive culture to foster leadership. The research highlighted three strands for improvement:

- l the need for increased leadership capability at all levels;
- l the importance of enhanced emotional intelligence; and
- l strong identity and sense of 'Place' for Croydon, and thus greater partnership working.

The three-year organisational development strategy underpinned the pillars for culture change. Of particular importance was amazing leadership. These successful leaders would be resilient, brave and self-aware, and would display their humanness and their vulnerability as well as strength. They could see the bigger picture and think globally beyond their immediate environment. These leaders would demonstrate excellent judgement and take considered risk.

The academy sought out leaders from different parts and levels within the organisation. Interestingly, female applicants for the programme performed well, with a significantly higher proportion of women in the academy programme compared with the number of women currently at senior levels. Many women demonstrated their emotional intelligence and their capability to learn and to lead the organisation.

This programme illustrates the value of good science coupled with effective best practice. A consequence of the programme was that 75 per cent of the participants, across all groups, moved to different posts: either to a more senior role, or on secondment, or an interesting sideways move. The organisation also benefited from lower staff turnover and from the innovative projects undertaken as part of the programme. There is now more confidence about the leadership capability and more effective leadership across the organisation.

Occupational psychology has demonstrated significant added value here. It is not enough to have the psychology, valid methods, and good tools and techniques. This has been achieved by working in partnership across the organisation and by enhancing the strategy and goals. This can be seen at the individual, team and corporate levels. There are lessons for us all in terms of communication, organisational buy-in and the combination of rigorous science with successful implementation.

Hazel Stevenson is Chair Elect of the Division of Occupational Psychology. Share your views on this and other workplace-related issues via psychologist@bps.org.uk.

across

- 1 Treat to demolish ego using procedural systems (13)
- 8 Freudian stage's requiring examinations (5)
- 9 Vehicle in front (3)
- 10 A payment for island (5)
- 12 Jungian representation, of James Brown? (4-5)
- 13 A man changes to accept one feminine archetype (5)
- 14 We start to mix up researcher into placebo effect in antidepressants (7)
- 15 A questionable character? (7)
- 17 Little devil concerning style of art (7)
- 20 Parry in part of 3 but not on duty (4,3)
- 22 Well-known and taken down (5)
- 24 Akin, though tolerated doctor (7,2)
- 25 Look round over the top for game (5)
- 26 In Japan, play to supply number with heroin (3)
- 27 Nobody given time for nine (5)
- 28 Only cure us somehow after dip – there you have it! (4,4,5)

down

- 2 Removal of data from period positive (7)
- 3 Has to slip away from sanatoriums (9)
- 4 Abnormal by way of looking into depression (7)
- 5 Flanders not following researcher into the positive effects of exercise on stress (7)
- 6 Hang about a country (5)
- 7 Controversial English grounds (7)
- 8 Alumnus meeting a learner whose neurosis might be? (11)
- 11 Minimum exertion in principle theorising on how rats learn mazes (5-6)
- 16 Neurotransmitter arising from tension or change (9)
- 18 Little French assigned to researcher into language development in young children (7)
- 19 Managed to get into 25, but left off Italian town (7)
- 20 We left dear French – he didn't pay up! (7)
- 21 Church service book number, sort of (7)
- 23 Decreases amounts of liquid (5)