

Body thinking and dance

At the Wayne McGregor | Random Dance 'Thinking with the Body' exhibition at the Wellcome Collection, London, you can stand with your head in a box, sit with your head in a box or lie on the floor with your head in a box. The boxes are dark and you hear things. I sat, stood and lay, listening, searching for meaning.

Wayne McGregor CBE is one of Britain's most high-profile and prolific contemporary choreographers, and he has an international reputation. What marks him out is that he collaborates with scientists and psychologists during his creative and developmental processes (see May et al. 2011) and this exhibition documents these collaborations.

The process of 'thinking with the body' is described in the exhibition notes as 'when thought, emotions, sensation and action come together to help achieve something in learning, creation or communication with others'. Wayne McGregor employs thinking-with-the-body techniques with his dancers to engage in different forms of mental imagery to help them create new movement material. His collaborations with cognitive scientists have led to the development of a set of choreographic thinking tools, which you can buy for £55.00. I bought the toolkit after my second visit to the exhibition.

The exhibition consists of eight separate video installations, a small sensory playground (containing head-boxes, fairground mirrors and an origami puzzle) and lots of written words. There's over an hour of looped content to watch, and because you cannot start the videos from the beginning you generally have to watch each video from about halfway through and then watch it again from the beginning. It's not an easy way to follow the story of how Wayne and the scientists developed their technique. There are some nice views of scientists sitting on the floor blending seamlessly in with the dancers, and of dancers looking at scientific boxes and arrows diagrams and nodding knowingly, but the collective videos didn't tell me, in a way I understood, exactly how the techniques work, either theoretically or in practice.

I watched Wayne's highly trained dancers create new movements on video as they wore 3D spectacles. The movements were characteristically abstract, but in my unstoppable search for meaning I saw the dancers as Hess's chickens, the ones fitted with prism goggles in the classic visual perception experiments of the 1950s.

Walking around the exhibition I tried to read all the notes. There were thousands of words, far too many to read, because the way they were presented prohibited the act. I felt I was being teased because the information I wanted was right in front of my eyes but the poster on which the words were printed, which was several metres wide, became saturated with words in colourful microprint and I didn't know where to peck.

I visited the exhibition twice and I bought the *Choreographic Thinking Tools*, but I am still no closer to understanding how lying on my back with my head in a dark box helps me to find new ways of thinking and moving. Of course, breaking away from physical habits is useful for thinking differently (Leung et al., 2012) but this exhibition didn't tell me how.



Thinking with the Body
Wayne McGregor | Random Dance

I left the exhibition feeling disappointed, twice. I didn't get it. I understood the process, the sitting on the floor, the talking, looking in wobbly mirrors and the moving but this exhibition didn't help me to understand, from a cognitive psychological perspective, what it is that links thinking with the body with habit breaking and innovation. I wanted to know what the presence of cognitive scientists has contributed to the choreographic end-result, and what working with dancers has contributed to our understanding of the cognitive basis of creativity.

I walked off down the Euston Road singing the words to 'The Emperor's New Clothes'.

References

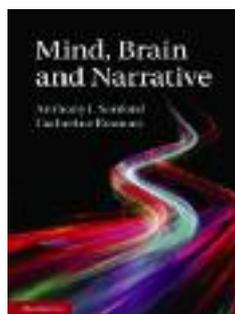
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Reviewed by Peter Lovatt who is Reader in Psychology of Dance at the University of Hertfordshire



An interesting integration

Mind, Brain and Narrative
Anthony J. Sanford & Catherine Emmott



This book is about the psychological processes evoked when reading literature. The book is a clever and far-reaching summary of recent psycholinguistic, neuroscientific and embodiment research. The text investigates how an author evokes emotional and felt reactions in the reader – that is moving from a purely cognitive domain to an experiential one. Coverage of this area of the reader's experience is what really brings this book alive. In order to synthesise the data in to a coherent psychological model, the book draws upon scenario-mapping theory as a sense-making framework. Within this model, readers map a current scenario onto previous experiences to inform their understanding. The authors state that 'meaning depends on interpretation with respect to background knowledge' (p.56) to integrate different perspectives on events. Situations that represent familiar schemas are quickly processed (known as primary processing). However, unusual or novel events require more cognitive effort from the reader to comprehend (invoking secondary processing).

The book starts with an overview of the main model and a review

of alternative models. Following this, the text discusses counterfactual worlds (i.e. worlds that are fictitious) and how the reader can become immersed in this world. The text then moves on to cover issues such as attention, authors' writing strategies, rhetorical processing and embodiment.

The book is a very interesting integration of concepts from the humanities and psychology. Much of the information contained within the text can be applied beyond that of reading, as there are many parallels in everyday conversations with the model described in the text. This book integrates information about the rapidly developing field of situated cognition. For this reason, this book represents a potentially ground-breaking text, which may help to focus future research work in this area.

Cambridge University Press; 2012; Hb £65.00

Reviewed by Mark Wylie who is a clinical psychologist at Grateley House School



Describing parts of the elephant

Research Methods in Occupational Health Psychology
Robert R. Sinclair, Mo Wang & Lois E. Tetrick (Eds.)



Occupational health psychology (OHP), as its name suggests, is a fairly eclectic area of research and practice. As such, those working within it will probably need to familiarise themselves with a range of methodological approaches – and this is where *Research Methods in Occupational Health Psychology* steps in. In the first part of the book, there are several short chapters covering various approaches to the study of OHP. These range from the ubiquitous (e.g. surveys) to the more sophisticated (e.g. immune system functioning). Each chapter provides a concise outline of the issues to consider when deciding on or implementing the respective methods. The second part of the book comprises longer discussions about general design issues; here, the reader is taken through the relative merits and limitations of various qualitative, quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal strategies.

A commendable feature of the book is the clear and straightforward writing style, which is maintained throughout the chapters. Within each chapter are many words of wisdom to guide those unfamiliar or inexperienced in any of the approaches set out. However, one slight misgiving that I did have is that the book left me feeling a little like the proverbial blind men with the elephant: each chapter, as good as it is, describes only one part of the elephant, but

I thought that the book would have benefited from an overview chapter to say something about it in its entirety. To stretch this metaphor further than perhaps I should, OHP is a multilevelled, multifaceted beast, and it would be useful to understand how the different elements of it, as represented by the book, relate to each other. Also I thought that some of the chapters gave better account of potential ethical issues than did others.

Overall, though, I think this is a very good primer either for those who are new to OHP, or for those who are already active in

this area but are looking for inspiration to develop their work. It would be ideal for inclusion in a postgraduate reading list for an applied psychology or ergonomics course.

Routledge; 2013; Hb £52.99

Reviewed by Denham Phipps who is a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester

just in

Sample titles just in:

Psychopaths: An Introduction Herschel Prins

CBT for Children & Adolescents with High-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder Angela Susan Williams White & Tony Attwood

Mindfulness-Based Play-Family Therapy: Theory and Practice Dottie Higgins Klein

Psychoanalysis and Ethics in Documentary Film Agnieszka Piotrowska

The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning Ho Law

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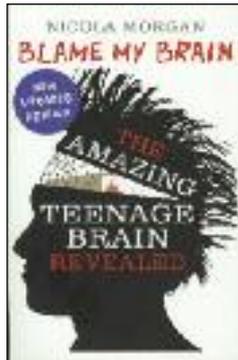


Teaching by stealth

Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed
Nicola Morgan

Working with 'teenage brain' undergraduates and having adolescent children, I was looking forward to reviewing *Blame My Brain*. However, on arrival the copy disappeared on to my partner David's bedside table. David works with young offenders and before reading the book myself I was provided with snippets of Morgan's writing, coupled with concrete examples of how this resonated with his 10-year experience of attempting to motivate, engage and inspire 14- to 18-year-olds. Once my partner finished, I managed to wrestle back the book before he took it away as 'an excellent resource for colleagues and the boys'.

I have lectured on adolescent brains but in my research the subject matter was never



presented in such an accessible format. Without sacrificing intellect, Morgan manages to discuss everything from the amygdala to mirror neurons in an interesting way. This 'teaching by stealth' is aided by an array of useful illustrations, and each chapter begins with a fictional vignette of the life of Matt, Marco or Gemma, which help to connect neurology with the everyday lives of adolescents. The quizzes were also completed by the whole family. *Blame My Brain* is an excellent resource for educators, youth workers, adolescents and parents.

| Walker Books; 2013; Pb £7.99

Reviewed by Dr Dawn Mannay who is a Lecturer in Social Science (Psychology), Cardiff University

Out of the mouths of babes...



A Sneetch Is a Sneetch: And Other Philosophical Discoveries
Thomas E. Wartenberg

This thought-provoking book takes the reader on a journey of discovery through the philosophical centuries, to try to answer truthfully some of the difficult questions that children so frequently ask.

What good is having willpower if you don't have any more cookies?

Why is the sky blue? What type of thing is the sky? Does the sky actually exist?

Do you get wet if you fall in an imaginary ocean?

How can Shrek be happy when he's so ugly? Do experts really know more?

The book prepares the reader for discussing existentialism with children; it also works as a refresher course in philosophy and ethics. Much time is spent debating the meaning of words and the meaning behind sentences spoken and the very words we have chosen.

Popular children's literature and



Laughing and speaking

The Life Scientific: Sophie Scott
BBC Radio 4

Cognitive neuroscientist Sophie Scott campaigned recently for the importance of serendipity in science (see News, September 2013). Listening to her on *The Life Scientific* on BBC Radio 4 in September it was easy to see why. Her own impressive career studying speech and laughter has developed through unplanned twists and turns.

One involved chatting to Paul Ekman, the doyen of emotion research, about the scientific neglect of positive emotions. Just look at the so-called six basic emotions of fear, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness and... happiness. With his own research focused on facial expressions, Ekman suggested to Scott that positive emotions might be transmitted more by sound. That was it – a new research trajectory launched!

Among other projects, Scott now leads an active programme on the neural correlates of laughter. Chatting to the show's presenter, Professor Jim Al-Khalili, Scott betrayed the joy she clearly finds in her work. One recent study required creating snippets of genuine and posed (social) laughter, which she and her colleagues created themselves. 'I've never had so much fun in an anechoic chamber,' Scott confessed.

More than fun, the research also uncovered intriguing insights. Both types of laughter – posed and real – were found to provoke similar levels of activity in the brain's mirror systems (areas activated by other people's emotions). But between individuals, those who showed more mirror activity were more likely to recognise the difference between the two laughter types – so this brain activity is not just about emotional contagion but also about understanding.

'It's not a trivial thing,' Scott said of her laughter research. 'It's

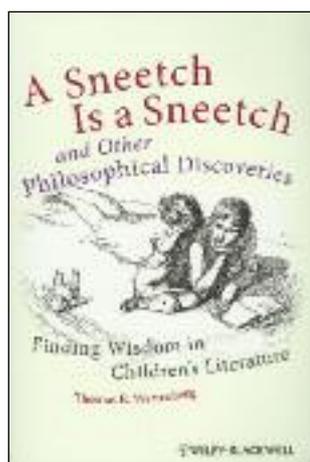
not a little squirt of amusement to make the day go better. It's actually shining a bright light on very basic aspects of how we're getting on with each other.' It seems others agree – Professor Scott is now deputy director of the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at UCL and will surely rise higher.

Sophie Scott would be an engaging guest on any show, but I found this programme lacked the extra dimension that comes from the musical interludes on *Desert Island Discs*. Although Al-Khalili went on to ask Scott about her experiences with UCL's Bright Club – where academics do stand-up – I also felt he never really delved into her psyche.

In fact, the programme seemed resistant to self-analysis. It passed without comment when Al-Khalili chuckled politely to Scott's anecdote about studying polite laughter. And it seemed amazing that he didn't think to ask Scott how her research on laughter and speech affects her everyday encounters. Isn't it difficult to laugh and speak naturally once you're too aware of the underlying meanings of these behaviours?

Professor Scott follows other psychologists who have featured on *The Life Scientific*, including Uta Frith, Annette Karmiloff-Smith and Nicky Clayton – all these episodes and more are available for download: bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/tls/all She also wrote for *The Psychologist* in April this year about laughter, see: tinyurl.com/pzqregq.

| Reviewed by Christian Jarrett who is staff journalist for *The Psychologist*



television is discussed, keeping the topic relevant to modern-day families. This book provides us with a deep and well-flowing argument, leading us to ponder one of the biggest questions in the psychology of parenting: *Is it OK for adults to deceive kids?*

A complex book with many references to 18th-century philosophy. Not a bedtime story.

Wiley-Blackwell; 2013; Pb £12.99
 Reviewed by **Kirsten Nokling** who is a trainee clinical psychologist with South Wales and Vale NHS Trust

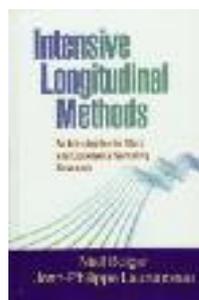
More than an introduction



Intensive Longitudinal Methods: An Introduction to Diary and Experience Sampling Research
 Niall Bolger & Jean-Philippe Laurenceau

Intensive longitudinal methods (ILM) are a fast-emerging and exciting approach to the study of the everyday in human experience. Despite acknowledgement of the merit of ILM, there remain few texts on the subject – a shortfall that Bolger and Laurenceau have taken great pains to fill.

The result is a clear, straightforward and exceedingly practical text. The authors do not labour on background theory (though direct you to other key texts that do), citing their main focus as being research design and data analysis. They include guidance on ILM design considerations, modelling within-subject processes in continuous and categorical outcomes, performing within-subject mediation analyses, calculating statistical power and psychometric analysis



and, of ever-growing interest, analysing data at the level of the dyad.

In each chapter the authors attentively integrate theory, including links to published studies, with meticulous instruction, comprising example datasets and code for the major statistical software packages. Additionally, there is guidance on how to write up each method of analysis.

It would almost do the text a disservice to call it an introduction, as indeed it does so much more. It would be highly valuable to any researcher (PhD upwards), in particular at the stage of writing a research proposal.

Guilford Press; 2013; Hb £33.99
 Reviewed by **Lisa Graham** who is a PhD student in health psychology at Queen's University Belfast



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