European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations

EFPTA Newsletter September 2008

Editor´s Note.

This issue of the Newsletter focuses on the seminar held in Cardiff, Wales, in April 2008, bringing summaries of the various lectures, but first Jari, the president of EFPTA outlines the history of EFPTA and brings his vision of its future.

I want to thank all those who have contributed to this issue of the Newsletter.

Annette Priskorn, editor, priskorn@hotmail.com

WHAT WE HAVE DONE - WHERE WE ARE STANDING NOW - WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

Four years ago we made history. We founded a European organization. We created a union to help each other teach psychology still better in our own countries. We have managed to have meetings twice a year these four past years. We have also managed to publish Newsletter twice a year. And we have now a very good website.

We have now registered our Federation. It is an official organization now. We have official status and can make official statements. We are not just a group of individuals anymore.

We have had meetings and conferences in different European countries. We started in Helsinki, and this autumn it is time to come back again to Finland. A four-year-period has passed very quickly, and it's time to elect people for the EFPTA board and EFPTA council. As we agreed in Cardiff it will be best for EFPTA that the same persons who have already worked for EFPTA can continue for the next four years. International work is very slow, and it seems to me that now we have learnt how to run things in EFPTA. I'm sure that everyone is willing to continue work in our Federation.

EFPTA is not going to grow very fast, but it will grow every year. We are going to get a new member in the Helsinki meeting. Maybe two. I believe that sooner or later we will have teachers of psychology from almost every country of Europe. We have formed an organization. There is little work left in that area from a legal point of view. But I hope that in the years to come we can focus still more on sharing ideas, and what's most important, to build some projects together.

I have spoken with one MEP, who told me that the EU has money for organizations like ours. I believe that together we will find someone to help us find that money.

On behalf of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations I want to thank you all. Members of the board and members of the council you have done excellent work. I hope you can continue working with me for the next four years.

Welcome to Helsinki

Jari Honkala
President
The European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

NOVEMBER SEMINAR AND ANNUAL MEETING IN HELSINKI 2008

Thursday 6.11.2008

Arrival and dinner

Friday 7.11.2008

9.30 Registration
10.00 Opening of Seminar (President Jari Honkala)
10.30 Lecture: Psychology of Learning (PhD Sari Lindblom -Ylänne)
11.30 Lunch Break
13.00 Visiting in International School
15-15.30 Coffee
15.30-16.30 Discussion Groups
16.45-17.30 Cooperation in Europe (Tuomo Tikkanen, President of EFPA 1999-2007)

20.00 Dinner in local restaurant

Saturday 8.11.2008

10- Workshops
12- Closing of seminar
12.30- Lunch Break
14.00 - Annual Meeting
15.30 - Council Meeting

Sunday 9.11.2008

Sightseeing

Annual report (the history of EFPTA)

1. The First Meeting (EFPTA founded) in Helsinki, Finland, in March 2004

The meeting took place in March 2004. We had many interesting discussions about teaching psychology in different countries with presentations from psychology teachers in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Germany, Estonia and Finland. The meeting culminated with an agreement amongst all of us to establish a Europe-wide organisation for pre-degree psychology, the European Federation of Psychology Teachers´ Associations (EFPTA) to support our cooperation.

2. The Second Meeting in Cambridge, England, in November 2004

The second meeting of the EFPTA at Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge, England,
on Saturday 6th (09.00-17.00) and Sunday 7th (10.00-11.30) November 2004

3. The Third Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in April 2005

The EFPTA board meeting in Copenhagen on 15–17 April 2005
Hotel CAB-INN Scandinavia, Vodroffsvej 55 DK – 1900 Frederiksberg C.

4. The Fourth Meeting in Swansea, Wales, in July 2005

EFPTA BOARD MEETING IN SWANSEA JULY 2005
The EFPTA board meeting in Swansea, Wales (UK) on 9th July, 2005.
This was not a regular scheduled board meeting. Since a number of EFPTA members were attending the ATP (UK) conference in Swansea, it had been agreed, at the suggestion of the President, that we take the opportunity to hold an extra meeting with the main aim of planning the Barcelona conference.

5. The Fifth Meeting in Barcelona, Spain, in November 2005

The EFPTA board meeting in Barcelona on 5th November 2005
Blanquerna Faculty, Universitat Ramon Llull
C.Cister, 34; 08022 Barcelona

6. The Sixth Meeting in Amsterdam, Holland, in April 2006

The EFPTA BOARD MEETING IN AMSTERDAM on 8th April 2006
HEM Hotel, Amsterdam

7. The Seventh Meeting in Dortmund, Germany, in November 2006

The EFPTA board meeting in Dortmund on 3rd November 2006
Hotel Gildenhof, Hohe Strasse 139, 44139 Dortmund

8. The Eight Meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, in April 2007

The EFPTA board meeting in Reykjavik on 21 of April 2007
Hotel Reykjavik, Centrum

9. The Ninth Meeting in Bologna, Italy, in November 2007

The EFPTA board meeting and seminar was held in Bologna, Italy, 8th to 11th of November 2007.

10. The Tenth Meeting in Cardiff, Wales, in April 2008

The EFPTA board meeting and seminar was held in Cardiff, Wales, on Friday April 11th and Saturday April 12th 2008

Jari Honkala
President
European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations
EFPTA

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"Even my dog speaks Welsh!"

Elin Evans is a teacher of psychology at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf (Llandaff Welsh Secondary School) in Cardiff, Wales, the largest Welsh-medium school in Wales She gave a very interesting and enthusiastic talk about her experience of teaching psyhology in the Welsh language.

Over a long period of time there has been a decline in the number of Welsh speakers, but in the past few decades there has been a growing interest in reversing that evolution. Studies show that in 1991 about 18,7% of the population of Wales spoke Welsh, 20,8% in 2001 and 21,7% in 2004. In 1993 the Welsh Language Act was introduced. That officially gave Welsh equal status with English in the public sector of Wales. Teaching of Welch is now compulsory in all schools in Wales, up to the age of 16, so all students learn both Welsh and English. Elin Evans said that this is not taken very seriously though, and Welsh is not taught at the same level as English in most schools.

Still most schools in Wales are in the medium of English with Welsh as a second language, but the number of schools that teach only in Welsh is exploding. Elin said that Welsh education is at least as good, and often better than the English one. The standard of the Welsh-medium schools is very high. Most parents see it as an opportunity for their children to be able to get an education in Welsh. It is an advantage for them to be able to speak many languages and it helps them in many ways.

Teaching in Welsh has faced many difficulties, one of the biggest being lack of resources. In the beginning there were only books in English and there was a lot of work for the teachers to translate everything into Welsh.

Elin spoke about the value of being able to get your education in Welsh. For the students it is an opportunity, she thinks that learning two languages encourages the students but does not limit them. Some critics have talked about it limiting their opportunities later in their education when many of them need to move to English-medium schools, but Elin said that is not a problem at all. The students are doing well in those English speaking schools.

Elin said that it was important to be able to do everything in Welsh, among that being able to learn psychology. It keeps the students on the subject, they don´t need to go somewhere else to learn it. It is also very important to have practicing psychology teachers that are fluent in the language since it is the first language for a lot of people.

When asked about why she chose to do what she does, she answered "Why not, I am a psychology graduate, I am Welsh through and through, I love the subject so for me to teach it in Welsh seems an obvious thing to do." And she added later with a smile: "Even my dog speaks Welsh!"

Elin brought four of her students with her and they kindly answered all of our many questions. Most of them come from families where neither, or just one parent speaks Welsh. Some of them have Welsh as their first language, others as their second. They think it is important to be able to learn as many subjects as possible in the medium of Welsh. Psychology is a very popular subject in their school and they see it as a natural thing to be learning that subject (like other subjects) in

Welsh.   Some of them said it even helps to have to think about it in another language, have to think about how it translates helps them to understand the subject better.

The students mentioned that some worried about having to change to the English language later (in university), but they didn´t think that was too much of a problem and that they will manage quite well. They are well prepared because in Welsh schools the English and Welsh languages are taught at the same level. If they were in an English-speaking school they would learn just a little Welsh, it would in fact be a lot easier!

When asked what other kids their age thought of them going to a Welsh-medium school, the students said they thought is was amazing and wished they could, too. But at the same time they often have to justify it to others and they think they shouldn´t have to do that.

Let me end this resume with a few words from one of the students, which show how much she cares for her language: "Even though I might choose to get more experince later and study in another country, Welsh is always going to be with me"

Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir

The Administration and Examination of Bilingual Teaching of Psychology
A lecture given by Dr Alison George WJEC (Examination Board)

The WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee) is an educational and cultural organisation that extends beyond exams and qualifications. It is a registered charity, owned by twenty two local authorities in Wales and provides examinations in GCSE, GCE and most recently, the Welsh Baccalaureate.
The organisation is committed to promoting Welsh by producing and supporting resources such as the National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Theatre and Welsh for Adults courses. It has 350 centres in Wales: 54 where pupils learn through the medium of Welsh and 296 English speaking. Interestingly, pupils can complete the exam in Welsh or English and procedures are in place to ensure quality materials are produced in both languages. A Welsh Medium Co-ordinator has been appointed to moderate the translation of key terms in Psychology and to ensure that scripts are examined by a carefully selected group of translators.

Diane Evans

The social context of suicide in young people.

At the seminar in Cardiff one session was about suicide among young people, as 13 young people had killed themselves in and around Bridgend, a town in south Wales, in the past year. This had led to much speculation and dramatic headlines even in 'quality' newspapers e.g. "Culture of suicide in Welsh valleys" (The Observer 27.01.08). The article in The Observer states that "the rash of suicides has been a concern in the area for some time." There had been speculation that the deaths might be linked to internet social networking sites, but coroner Philip Walters of Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys had found no evidence of that. However, he also pointed out that when being interviewed he had only concluded four of the 13 inquests.

Bridgend´s Labour MP, Madeleine Moon, did not think that the suicides could be due to social deprivation. Her theory was that living in such small communities could be claustrophobic, for if you have a relationship break-up, it´s the gossip of the village.

Dr. Jonathan Scourfield, senior lecturer at Cardiff´s school of social sciences, who has conducted research relating to suicides in Wales, said: "Most suicides are complex. I think cultural and social beliefs are very influential factors. By that I mean if a relationship breaks down, or there is a loss of employment, or terrible debts, suicide only becomes an appropriate response because it makes social sense. They have probably heard of other cases where people have killed themselves in those circumstances, so they think "well, that´s what you do." That´s where the copycat theory does have relevance – not that young people are goading each other on via websites – but in a broader sense. The more stories that appear about young people having killed themselves in your area, the more it might appear to you to be a reasonable response to a particular kind of crisis. It´s about the culture of suicide."

At the seminar, John, a student, who had done some research into suicides, presented the findings of his research, but nothing definite can be said about suicides.

During the discussion that followed John´s talk several possible explanations of why young people committed suicide were put forward. Phil Banyard of Nottingham Trent University said that the power has shifted to those who use the technology. At internet social networking sites a person may be bullied, and everybody can see it. The same is the case with text messaging. Dr. Alison George stressed the point that the internet happens so quickly and escalates so quickly that it is very overwhelming and may cause the victim to have suicide thoughts. It was pointed out that with the new technology bullying is everywhere, not just at school, but also in the home.

Annette Priskorn

The International Baccalaureate

Richard Penrose, who is responsible for Psychology and Social and Cultural Anthropology, talked to the delegates about the nature of his role with the International Baccalaureate in Cardiff, the largest of their offices with 300 employees. He explained how the IB is a challenging educational programme that has been in existence for 40 years, involving a total of 2 million people world-wide including alumni, students (currently half a million), parents, teachers and trainers. The first

graduates received their awards in Geneva in 1970 and the hexagonal model of the specification apparently reflects the shape of a conference table at the headquarters in that beautiful Swiss city.

The International Baccalaureate covers a wide age range from 3-19 with Primary (3-11), Middle (11-16) and Diploma (16-19) courses and it is described as being "very inclusive". Over fifty percent of the schools offering the IB in 120 different countries are "state maintained" and the organisation's mission is "A commitment to high quality programmes and teacher training". Professional development provision is excellent and potential teachers are expected to attend training courses before embarking on the teaching.

The IB programme is said to require students to be, among other things:
- ? Inquirers
- ? Thinkers
- ? Caring
- ? Compassionate

English, French and Spanish are the three main languages, though some use German or Chinese.

Richard explained that over 2000 universities are very keen to recruit students who have followed an IB programme as they are generally well motivated and settle down readily to university life. He described the structure of the Diploma course before going into more detail about the Psychology element. There are currently 10,000 candidates in Psychology in 500 schools in 50 countries and, starting in 2009, there will be a new, revised specification which has been developed with significant input from teachers, consultants, examiners and one "naïve" participant! The delegates were very impressed by the extent to which teachers had been involved in the changes.

The new specification aims to be less compartmentalised ("in boxes" as Richard put it) as it encourages students to take a more interactive approach. Hence the core includes socio-cultural levels of analysis in addition to the biological and cognitive approaches. Optional topics include abnormal, developmental and health Psychology as well as the Psychology of sport and relationships. Notice that there is no mention of Freud!

Students will carry out practical research using both quantitative and qualitative methods and Richard acknowledged the relative lack of good resources for teaching analysis of qualitative data. If anyone reading this article knows of any I am sure he would appreciate the details.

In the final part of his presentation Richard pointed out that some students do not qualify for the full Diploma but are, nevertheless, "snapped up" by employers and universities.

If you would like to know more about the programme you can visit www.ibo.org

<div align="right">Dorothy Coombs</div>

Suggested teaching activities

1) Playing music (Crazy – Gnarls Barkley) as students enter the room tends to calm them down and get them thinking.

2) Wearing inappropriate clothing such as pyjamas intrigues students and can be used to stimulate discussion. Discuss why wearing pyjamas is inappropriate, introduce concept of social norms and the fact that people who violate these social norms are seen as abnormal and sometimes mentally ill. Try the following activity.

What drumbeat do you walk to?

How many of the following would you consider could be attributed to you?

1. Nonconforming
2. Creative
3. Strongly curious
4. Idealistic
5. Happily obsessed with a specific hobby
6. Aware from an early age that you were different from others
7. Intelligent
8. Opinionated and outspoken
9. Non-competitive
10. Unusual eating or living habits
11. Not interested in the company or opinions of others
12. Mischievous sense of humour
13. Single
14. Eldest or only child
15. Bad speller

If you said yes to two thirds of these then you are considered eccentric and thus you are different (but not abnormally so) from the social norm.

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3) Ask students in pairs or small groups to note down their ideas about abnormality and mental illness. Many stereotypes should emerge that can be fully discussed with the whole class.

4) Beck's Depression Inventory – Ask students to fill in the questionnaire. However, you will need to proceed with caution. Explain to the student's that simply taking this test does not diagnose depression. To reiterate this point ask the students to evaluate the questionnaire. A similar questionnaire is used for post-natal depression. Would any new mother actually admit to wanting to hurt her child (even if she did)? Social norms about maternal instinct forbid women from talking about such thoughts and feelings. This, of course, affects the reliability and validity of these tests as a means of measuring mental illness. This activity leads into a discussion about the problems involved with accurately diagnosing mental illness

5)

Place the following words into as many groups as you feel is enough to accurately characterise them. Really think about them and your own abstract constructs, emotions and thoughts of the words. Make the 'logical' links between each of these but also use your individuality and what they mean to you.

Hammer	Tea	Brush	Bin
Radiator			
Blanket	Lamp	Book	Paper
Pillow			
Tree	Pick	Fork	Flower
Screw			
Crystal	Chalk	Racquet Tie	
Plank			
Shirt	Glass	Water	Leather Tin
Knife	Board	Stone	Fluff
Sand			
White	Red	Blue	
Yellow	Green		

Once you have formed these groups.

Associate them to an occupation or type of person.

Think of the characteristics of a person who would fit this occupation and give them a first name.

Examples of possible answers to activity in defining abnormality

The groups you have created have come from deep inside you. I bet that one of the occupations has some form of protective role, another would be related to thinking and another will be very expressive. See example below.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	
Hammer	Tea		Brush
Blanket		Bin	Lamp
Radiator	Book		Pillow
Screw		Paper	Tree
Pick		Chalk	Flower
Fork		Board	Crystal
Tie		Sand	Plank
Shirt		White	Glass
Racket			Water
Leather			Fluff
Tin			Green
Knife			Yellow
Stone			
Red			
Blue			

Group 1 – is a Naval Officer called John
Group 2 – is a Scientist called David
Group 3 – is an Artist called Gavin

These groups came from you and are representative of different aspects of your own personality. If you think about it you can see when each of these different parts of your own personality come to the fore. For example, when you are lying in bed needing to get up in the morning, John gets you up, Gavin argues to stay and David mediates them. John usually wins! What happens if they all fall out and stop talking to each other? Or worse, what if they deny the existence of each other? If they have separate jobs could they also be separate identities with different memories and experiences?

This task is designed to give you insight into disassociative identity disorder (DID). Interestingly, in people with DID (aka multiple personality), the different personalities also have similar roles. For example, they will often have an identity that is strong and protective, usually a solider, police officer or the like, another that is a problem solver and a final one that is weaker and emotionally expressive. They can be of either gender or any age. Usually there is a dominant personality (known as the host) and the patient can switch, sometimes dramatically, between personalities at any time.   Hopefully, now you will realise that it is possible to see that different 'personalities' exist in all of us. This type of exercise can be performed by students and helps them understand how even the strangest of psychological disorders can come about.

Note: This exercise is not the same as DID, but you can see how it could happen. Prior to developing DID, most patients (97%) suffered physical, usually sexual, abuse in early childhood.

References

Copy of Beck's Depression Inventory
http://www.gender-id.com/TSInfo/BecksScale.htm

Evaluation of Beck's Depression Inventory
http://www.swin.edu.au/victims/resources/assessment/affect/bdi.html

Downloadable leaflets on mental health
http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/   Contact me: d.gajic@sky.com

Beck's Depression Inventory

1.
0 I do not feel sad
1 I feel sad
2 I am sad all the time and cannot snap out of it
3 I am so sad and unhappy that I can't stand it

2.
0 I am not particularly discouraged about the future
1 I feel discouraged about the future
2 I feel I have nothing to look forward to
3 I feel the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve

3.
0 I do not feel a failure
1 I feel I have failed more than the average person
2 As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failure
3 I feel I am a complete failure as a person

4.
0 I get as much satisfaction out of things as I used to
1 I don't enjoy things the way I used to
2 I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore
3 I am dissatisfied or bored with everything

5.
0 I don't feel particularly guilty
1 I feel guilty a good part of the time
2 I feel guilty most of the time
3 I feel guilty all of the time

6.
0 I don't feel I am being punished
1 I feel I may be punished
2 I expect to be punished
3 I feel I am being punished

7.
0 I don't feel disappointed with myself
1 I am disappointed in myself
2 I am disgusted with myself
3 I hate myself

8.
0 I don't feel I am any worse than anyone else

1 I am critical of myself for my weaknesses or mistakes
2 I blame myself at the time for my faults
3 I blame myself for everything bad that happens

9.
0 I don't have any thoughts of killing myself
1 I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out
2 I would like to kill myself
3 I would kill myself if I had the chance

10.
0 I don't cry any more than usual
1 I cry now more than I used to
2 I cry all the time now
3 I used to be able to cry, but now I can't cry even though I want to

11.
0 I am no more irritated by things than I ever was
1 I am slightly more irritated now than usual
2 I am quite annoyed or irritated a good deal of the time
3 I feel irritated all the time

12.
0 I have an interest in other people
1 I am less interested in other people than I used to be
2 I have lost most of my interest in other people
3 I have lost all of my interest in other people

13.
0 I make decisions about as well as I ever could
1 I put off making decisions more that I used to
2 I have greater difficulty making decisions than I used to
3 I can't make decisions anymore

14.
0 I don't feel that I look worse than I used to
1 I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive
2 I feel that there are permanent changes in my appearance that make me look unattractive
3 I believe that I look ugly

15.
0 I can work about as well as before
1 It takes an extra effort to get started at doing something
2 I have to push myself very hard to do anything
3 I can't do any work at all

16.
0 I can sleep as well as usual

1 I don't sleep as well as I used to
2 I wake up 1-2 hours earlier than usual and find it hard to get back to sleep
3 I wake up several hours earlier than I used to and cannot get back to sleep

17.
0 I don't get more tired than usual
1 I get tired more easily than I used to
2 I get tired from doing almost anything
3 I am too tired to do anything

18.
0 My appetite is no worse than usual
1 My appetite is not as good as it used to be
2 My appetite is much worse now
3 I have no appetite at all anymore

19.
0 I haven't lost much weight, if any, lately
1 I have lost more than five pounds
2 I have lost more than 10 pounds
3 I have lost more than fifteen pounds

20.
0 I am no more worried about my health than usual
1 I am worried about physical problems such as aches and pains, or upset stomach, or constipation
2 I am very worried about physical problems and it's hard to think of much else
3 I am so worried about my physical problems that I cannot think about anything else

21.
0 I have not noticed any recent changes in my interest in sex
1 I am less interested in sex than I used to be
2 I have almost no interest in sex
3 I have lost interest in sex completely

Now that you have completed the questionnaire, add up the score for each of the twenty-one questions by counting the number to the right of each item you marked. The highest possible total for the whole test would be 63 – this would mean you had circled number 3 on all 21 questions, the lowest possible score is 0.

Total Score_____

1-10	These ups and downs are considered normal
11-16	Mild mood disturbance
17-20	Borderline depression
21-30	Moderate depression
31-40	Severe depression
Over 40	Extreme depression

Remember this is only one way of diagnosing depression and it does have serious limitations. However, if you are at all worried, please consult a health care professional.

Deb Gajic
Chair of the ATP (UK)

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Linguists estimate that there are around 6000 languages in the world and that around half of these will disappear in the next few decades. The figure of 6000 has to be an estimate because it depends what you mean by "a language". Some linguists see two languages where others see one language with two regional dialects. Some accept the predicted decline as natural wastage as with natural extinction of living creatures but others passionately advocate the preservation of languages.

On the other hand if you travel around Europe, including the UK you notice a great resurgence in local languages. It is this that interests me, both the growth itself and the reasons for it. For this reason I was keen to have our EFPTA seminar in Cardiff and I think not only our delegates from other European countries but also some from the UK were surprised at the extent to which the Welsh language is used, particularly in education. One linguist wittily observed that a language is a dialect with an army and navy. This is illustrated by the historical fact that those with political power have frequently sought to eliminate minority languages. The English tried to do this in Wales and up to a century ago it was forbidden to speak Welsh in school and children were punished for doing so. Since then the language has gone from strength to strength with many schools teaching only through the medium of Welsh.

It was therefore of interest to our seminar that in the school where one session was held, "Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf" all subjects including psychology are taught in Welsh. This raises issues of textbooks and teaching materials. However the growth in popularity of the language has contributed greatly to a sense of nationhood culminating in a considerable degree of autonomy for Wales which has its own parliament or Welsh Assembly. Paradoxically Scotland has a much greater degree of autonomy although the Scottish language, Gaelic, is spoken only by a very small minority. There is a great deal of positive discrimination in favour of the Welsh language, with all official documents in Welsh and English, all road signs etc. This despite the fact that only 20% of the population speak Welsh and all of them speak and understand English perfectly. This has led to resentment on the part of some non-speakers of Welsh who think that large sections of government and education are run by a Welsh speaking mafia.

The United Nations has declared 2008 the "Year of Languages" with the aim of enabling all speakers of minority languages to have the opportunity to use their languages in as many contexts as possible including education and urging speakers of majority languages to seek to learn a minority one. This no doubt is a counsel of perfection because in many cases people will want to learn another language only if it is of economic or political use to them.

If Israelis have a real sense of national identity not merely in being Jewish, it is partly through the resurrection of the Hebrew Language which has enabled Jewish people from many countries with many different languages to have their own common language.

Throughout history autocratic rulers and dictators have sought to repress minority languages seeing a single language as tool for control. In Franco's Spain the regional languages and especially Basque and Catalan were strictly forbidden.   However the corollary of this is that the use of these languages has led to strong regional political movements and the very real possibility that the Spanish state could be dismantled.   The situation is even more critical in Belgium. This small country is in real danger of splitting into Dutch and French speaking countries.

There is a difference between minority languages and lesser used languages. Catalan is spoken by around 8 million people but is a minority language in Spain. Icelandic is spoken by around 300,000 people and so is widely used but in Iceland not a minority language.

If your economic circumstances are such that you can only just make a living then the preservation of your minority language will not be a great priority. It is like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the basic ones have to be satisfied first.   But when they are satisfied then the need for a sense of belonging and a sense of achievement both as an individual and as a community then becomes relevant and language can and does become a focal point for acquiring political and economic power.

In contrast to other large countries the European Union has been particularly careful not to try to bring about a sense of unity by imposing one or a few languages. At enormous expense documents are produced in all the now many community languages although to the annoyance of some English is taking over as the lingua franca. English is actually a minority first language in the European Union being spoken only in Britain and Ireland whereas German is spoken by far more people. However if you include fluent English as a second language then English is the most spoken.

The European Union has also done a great deal to support minority and lesser used languages. A great deal of information about this can be found from the website of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, EBLUL. (www.eblul.org)   These include "very" minority languages such as Cornish in Britain which has not been a spoken language for two centuries but which is now being revived.   The website collects reports on language issues from various countries.   Other useful websites are www.eurolang.net and www.eurominority.org

In some developing countries minority languages suffer because they are seen by the young as "uncool." It becomes fashionable to be able to speak e.g. French or German. In Peru there are millions of people who speak Quechua, the language of the Incas but it is not seen as an economically useful language and little but lip service is paid to its preservation. There are also cases e.g. in Pakistan where members of the ruling class are educated in English and speak this better than local languages.

Throughout the world then there are two opposing trends. Many languages are spoken only by very small minorities and are certain to become extinct in the near future. On the other hand, and especially in Europe, minority languages have seen a great upsurge in interest but have often

become the centre of political conflict.   This revival of interest in these languages however has undoubtably help the preservation of cultures that might otherwise have been lost.

Joe Cocker

New Technologies in Psychology Teaching.

Phil Banyard, Nottingham Trent University

For most of the children and young people we teach, information technology has become central to their lives. Giving an overview of recent research into the digital world of the child, Phil Banyard highlighted the huge popularity of certain websites even amongst young children, for example "Club Penguin". Most KS2 children, given a choice between a computer and a TV, choose the computer.

Though schools and colleges do provide computer-mediated learning, the extent of such activity is variable, and children's and young people's use of technology is mainly in the out-of-school context. Whether communicating by phone, email, msn, social networking sites, or "broadcasting" video clips on YouTube, or searching for information on Google and Wikipedia, a wide range of knowledge and skills are being acquired, and Banyard contended that such activities should be recognised as learning opportunities, regardless of location; unfortunately, we "grown-ups" often see such activities as hazards, focusing on specific concerns such as cyberbullying.

As far as psychology education is concerned, information technology in its various guises contributes to our understanding of psychological phenomena, or conversely may itself be based on psychological knowledge. Banyard gave several fascinating illustrations: the mobile phone pictures taken by members of the public following the London bombings in 2005, showing victims being helped by passers-by, challenged the conventional wisdom of "diffusion of responsibility"; the possibility of two people existing in one body, as portrayed in the TV series "Heroes", is based on the notion of multiple personality; the blurring of reality and fiction in game sites such as "Second Life" where players "become" a virtual character or "avatar", may shed new light on the age-old media violence issue. This last example triggered lively discussion amongst workshop participants, especially in relation to the question "Would you kill an avatar?". The resemblance to classic obedience studies, and the potential for research into such social-psychological questions, was clear.

Banyard effectively conveyed a glimpse of the rapidly-developing digi-centric world of the child, and raised a number of thought-provoking questions about the implications for learning, teaching and assessment.

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