



<http://www.iupsys.net/index.php/publications/newsletter>

## Report from the President

**Rainer K. Silbereisen**



Looking out of my window here in Jena, Germany, I can see the trees taking on their autumn color and am reminded that the time of year is approaching when one starts to reflect on what has been accomplished throughout the

year, and of course on what there is still to do! In terms of accomplishment, I would like to focus on the various Union meetings that took place in July this year in Melbourne, Australia, and on the major activities that were reported on and discussed.

As I am sure you know, IUPsyS has three layers of governance. The legislative body and final authority of the Union is the Assembly, which holds a formal voting meeting every two years

at an International Congress (ICP or ICAP). The administrative body of the Union is its Executive Committee (EC), which usually meets once a year, but the main instrument for steering the work of the Union is the regular meeting of its Officers. Of the Melbourne meetings, I would first like to mention some of the highlights of the EC meeting that took place 17-18 July. This was a meeting over two days with a very full agenda, including the reporting back and discussion of many regular issues and activities. However, some stand out as of particular importance. One such was the presentation by the Workgroup on Awards (Chair: Zhang) of the new IUPsyS Awards, which will comprise a Young Investigator Award (actually 2 awards), a Lifetime Career Award, and an Achievement against the Odds Award, and will be presented for the first time at the 2012 ICP in South Africa – more detailed information on

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## The Editors' Page

This last Newsletter of 2010 contains articles about the International Union of Psychological Science and other issues that we believe will be of considerable interest to our national members and other scientific bodies.

The Report of the President of IUPsyS, Rainer K. Silbereisen, addresses a number of issues related to the activities of IUPsyS this past year. He discusses the meetings of Executive Committee and the Assembly held during the Congress of the International Association of Applied Psychology in Melbourne, Australia in July. He also discusses the various workgroups that IUPsyS has organized and their role in capacity building and in offering training in specific areas of psychology, such as the ARTS workshops.

The second article is a synopsis of the lecture, "How infants become children," by Michael Posner, Emeritus Professor at the University of Oregon, given during the International Congress of Psychology in July 2008 in Berlin. This was the newly established Paul-Baltes Lecture funded by the Berlin and Postdam Departments and

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Institutes of Psychology. In addition, Michael Posner was honored as the recipient of the first Mattei Dogan Foundation Prize in Psychological Science, in recognition of "a contribution that represents a major advancement in psychology by a scholar of high international reputation."

The next article is on the education workgroup project of IUPsyS, a survey of the status of psychology education in the Union's National Member countries. The education and training of psychologists is an issue in countries throughout the world. An important question assessing the degree of similarities in the education of psychologists in universities around the world, as well as differences that might reflect cultural and historical factors. Psychology has developed in different ways and to different stages across countries and regions. The long-term purpose of the project is for IUPsyS to aid in the further development of education and training of psychological science and practice in countries. The goal of the first stage is to survey through a structured questionnaire, the development and present state-of-the-art of psychology education at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. The project is chaired by Janak Pandey of India, former Head of the UGC Centre of Excellence for Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Coordinator of the Centre for Advanced Study in Psychology of Allahabad University, a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research and currently Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Bihar.

Merry Bullock has retired this year as Deputy Secretary-General, after 12 years of thousands (or is it millions) of hours of invaluable service to IUPsyS. Merry Bullock has developed and maintained the excellent website of IUPsyS these past years, which is a comprehensive picture of the Union's goals and activities. Although, as a member of the EC, I am responsible for the Newsletter, it is Merry who has come up with many ideas and has put bones and flesh on the final product. Nick Hammond and I will undertake the task of putting together the Newsletter from now on, and we will sorely miss Merry's input.

Sometimes there is the feeling that communication between the representatives of the member countries of IUPsyS and the Executive Committee is restricted to the Assembly meetings at biennial congresses. Extensive discussion of issues and questions relevant to psychology, spontaneously brought up by representatives of member countries during Assembly meetings, is not realistic. An important purpose of the Newsletter should be to serve as a focal point for member countries to raise potential issues of importance to them and to psychology in general. The age of one-way communication expressed by the traditional newsletter is over. In this age of instant and two-way communication, e.g., blogs, Twitter, Face Book, representatives of the member countries could comment on issues raised at general assembly meetings, problems faced by member countries, new directions for IUPsyS, commentaries and opinion pieces and many other topics which may lead to discussion by our members. Member countries are encouraged to send articles about important issues, events, and developments in psychology in their countries. These can be sent to either me at [dgeorgas@psych.uoa.gr](mailto:dgeorgas@psych.uoa.gr) or Nick Hammond at [nick.hammond@iupsys.org](mailto:nick.hammond@iupsys.org).

*The Editors: James Georgas, Nick Hammond*

**IUPsyS AWARDS**

The IUPsyS has launched four new awards, to be presented at the 2012 International Congress of Psychology in South Africa. The Awards are

- Young Investigator Award (one in the field of basic science, one in the field of applied science)
- Achievement Against the Odds Award
- Lifetime Career Award.

Nominations are now being accepted.

Further details are available at:

[www.iupsys.net/index.php/prog-awards](http://www.iupsys.net/index.php/prog-awards)

**INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF  
PSYCHOLOGY - 2012*****Science Serving Humanity***

Abstracts for the XXX International Congress of Psychology can be submitted.

Deadlines:

- 1 May 2011 (early deadline for funding purposes)
- 1 December 2011 (final deadline)

ICP2012 will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012,

[www.icp2012.com/](http://www.icp2012.com/)

### *President's Report, Continued from page 1*

these awards is available at <http://www.iupsys.net/index.php/prog-awards>. I am very happy with these developments, because such awards have important outcomes for the Union, such as helping increase our visibility and thereby supporting the acquisition of funds necessary for the implementation of our strategic plan, as well as recognizing personal achievement. As I noted at the meeting, the next step is jury selection (members of the jury should be senior psychologists) and issuing a call for nominations for each of the awards, which will be done as soon as the jurors have been appointed.

While on the topic of awards, we also discussed developments in the Dogan Award, which was first presented at the Berlin ICP in 2008. Very sadly, I have to mention the death of the founder of this award, Mattei Dogan, who has passed away at the age of ninety. The Union had a close relationship with him, and he and his work will be greatly missed. Despite this sad news, the Dogan Award will be presented again in 2012, and to this end we discussed the identification and appointment of jurors. It was decided that, as last time, this will be handled by the Past President, who also agreed to chair the juror panel for this award. I also took some time to discuss the background and possible developments of the Jacobs Award (the Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize for Productive Youth Development), which was presented for the first time in 2009 to Laurence Steinberg, Distinguished University Professor and Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology at Temple University. I am a member of the Jury for this award, the experience of which has been helpful in the process of setting up the new IUPsyS awards.

Keeping the topic of our Workgroups in mind, I was very impressed by the activities EC members have developed over the past year. When I took over as President, I was keen that EC members should be able to associate themselves with particular areas of the Union's strategic plan and general mission, and as such they have all been busy with Workgroups subsumed under the three Standing Committees: Strategic Planning, Capacity Building, Publications and Communications (see <http://www.iupsys.net/index.php/governance/iupsys-committeesworkgroups>). Let me also add that I was happy to be involved in some of the work. Besides the activities of the Strategic Planning Workgroups, such as Awards, I would like to mention the work carried out under the heading of Capacity Building, and in particular that of the

Workgroup on Education for Psychologists (Chair, Janak Pandey), which was constituted by the EC as part of the Union's 2008 Strategic Plan with the aim of promoting scientific psychology world wide: I was impressed by the excellent progress this group has made on a number of fronts, but especially with regard to gathering data from national members on the level and type of education available for psychologists in their respective countries. A web-based survey was developed by Martin Piquart, a German specialist in lifespan psychology, and colleagues under the auspices of this Workgroup and was the focus of a special Workgroup meeting in Melbourne. Particularly important from my perspective, however, was the fact that the activity of this Workgroup has led to plans for an international conference on scientific aspects of psychology education in 2011, possibly to a book being published in 2012, and to the preparation of a funding application in support of these activities. As I have said in many of my previous writings, I see this as the future for Union activities – applications for external funding based on an actual product and a concrete plan for future action.

Another Workgroup subsumed under the Standing Committee on Capacity Building is that of the Advanced Research Training Seminars, usually known as ARTS (Chair, Gonca Soygüt). ARTS provide

training opportunities for scholars from low-income countries, promote exchange and dialogue among early career psychologists, and foster excellence in research and scholarship. The seminars are held every two years in conjunction with the major international congresses of the sponsoring organizations, which are IUPsyS, IAAP, and IACCP. Three ARTS were organized and took place at the University of Melbourne before the start of the Melbourne Congress: Cultural and Social Cognitive Neuroscience Research, Test Development and Adaptation, and Discourse Analysis. At the

EC meeting, the Chair presented a written report including very useful feedback from the participants showing evidence of strong impact.

The feedback received following the ARTS programs was via a structured evaluation procedure, which brings me very nicely to another Workgroup that has been especially productive over the past year. I am referring, of course, to the Workgroup on Implementation of Quality Enhancement/ Evaluation Criteria (Chair, Barbara Tversky) that has developed the evaluation documentation. Indeed, it was very



Melbourne Convention Centre - drawing by Helio Carpintero, 2010

obvious from discussions at all (not just the EC) meetings that Union activities have increased to such an extent that there is a real need for greater regulation and organization. One way of doing this is to have an effective evaluation process that requires aims and objectives of events to be clearly defined prior to the event, for the expectations of participants to be known, and for these to form the basis of the final evaluation. In this way we can be sure that we are delivering what we set out to deliver, and external funding agencies can see that their support is put to good use.

The other meeting I would like to mention is the Assembly. This is always a moving and exciting event with so many representatives from our over 70 member organizations coming together to discuss the health and future of the Union, but this time I was especially impressed by the constructive climate and obvious desire to get things done. My impression was that they appreciated the activities we have undertaken, and that there was a general approval of the things we felt necessary to change, such as the new dues structure that was improved to reflect the differences in the strength of national members more fairly. To feel this approval was very important for all those involved in steering the Union and its work, and as this Assembly marked the midterm point in my presidency, it was of course extremely important for me.

When I presented my report to the Assembly, I explained that underpinning my activities during the first two years as President had been the Union's overall agenda: working for psychology as a science and application, and thereby attempting to convince others worldwide about the value of psychology. I also made it clear that I have been concerned about ensuring the future health of the Union, both financially and conceptually, and that I felt our work in all regards had been quite successful. However, what I did not say was what I personally have learned, particularly during my time in Melbourne and I want, therefore, to close this short article with a few very personal observations.

In Melbourne, I experienced the true Australian multicultural society, and learned a lot about the history of the territory and about the formation of the nation. But beyond all that, Melbourne helped me to see some of our activities and to put my own role in perspective. First, such meetings are an opportunity not just to meet new people, but also to say goodbye to some. Here I would like to mention Mike Knowles, the now Past-President of IAAP. I have had many exchanges with him over the years, and was always impressed by his high engagement combined with a lot of empathy and sympathy for the other's point of view. Only when it came to saying farewell, however, did I realize the extent to which working for IAAP had

been - and indeed still is - a part of his life. This brought home to me how much we are all poised to seek for meaning in our lives, and how serving a learned society as president or in a similar function is a way of achieving that, especially through the ability to generate opportunities for others.

Having mentioned Mike Knowles, I should add that we had organized the traditional "World Forum" at the Melbourne congress. Its topic was psychology's expertise on well-being and how we can be more successful in bringing this to decision-makers in society and governments. The conclusion was to repeat this exercise in Cape Town at our International Congress 2012 where the Forum will have the aim of propagating a declaration on what we know about the "resilience of the self." A draft of this declaration will be prepared by an expert panel that I am going to bring together. The declaration will then be distributed widely.

I also learned that waiting and avoiding premature action can be very useful for progress in organizations. For example, before and during the Assembly there were, of course, many opportunities to promote the outcome of future decisions by trying to persuade people concerning, say, the best sites of future congresses, the best dues structure, and the right people for various offices. Instead, we discussed all issues thoroughly and sought to prepare the relevant information as well as possible, but with as little prejudice as possible regarding preferred outcomes. My aim - and I outlined this as a personal goal when I was elected President of the Union - was to let the representatives of the National Members that comprised the audience truly engage in the process of problem solving and decision making. I was struck by the seriousness of discussions and the friendliness of the climate, even when it came to the tricky issues of divided opinions, such as allocation of funds. We live in times of accelerated change where everything has to happen at speed - but the constituency of a learned society needs its own pace. I firmly believe we achieve most by trusting in the power of the facts and by an objective discussion of them.

I have also realized, especially during the various meetings and activities in Melbourne, that we all have to rely on our predecessors - past-presidents in my case. I - or should I say, we - have the good luck that many Union past-presidents are still active, and in fact no less than three were involved in the meetings in Melbourne: their combined knowledge is a tremendous asset. Nevertheless, I have to admit that I was a bit concerned whether our handling of the affairs as presented in Melbourne would find their full blessing. I was very relieved, therefore, and really enjoyed the constructive stance with which these dear colleagues supported various innovations even where they might not have done so during their own term in office. This

was a real indication of working together for a common cause, and an indication of a strong and healthy organization, for which I am thankful.

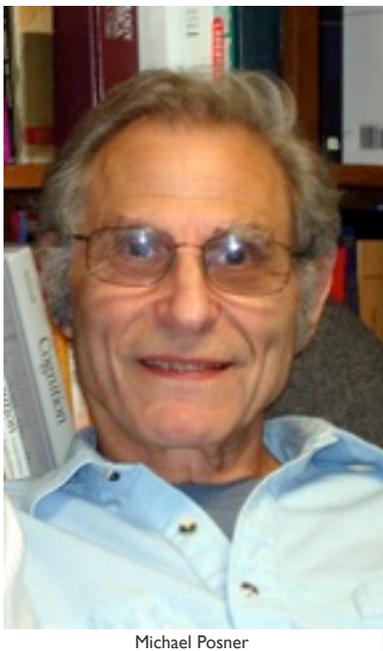
Finally, as I mentioned earlier, as the congress was in Australia, and although this was not my first visit, I thought I should do some non-tourist reading of guides to the history of mankind. I read a big volume on Australian pre-history and in particular on the culture of the aborigines. From there I turned to another volume on the history of humans' transition from hunter and gather, to agriculture, and later to the modern world and its use of technology. I learned that the timing of innovations (in millennia before our times) depended on geographical basics, such as the location on the East-West axis of the globe, or on the selection of plants and animals suitable for domestication, and how apparently minor differences in these conditions can result in remarkable cultural differences in human behavior. As a developmental psychologist the potential effect of these archaic forces made me humble and showed me the constraints of a psychology-only point of view. Society needs to coalesce, as we do in IUPsyS, and as was so very

evident in Melbourne. This understanding is a source of satisfaction in my professional and personal life. Thank you, Australia!

Finally, with regard to 'things to do,' there are always very many things to organize and accomplish when steering such a large organization, but I would like to take this opportunity to mention the next International Congress of Psychology that will take place in Cape Town, South Africa in 2012 ([www.icp2012.com](http://www.icp2012.com)). As we heard from the President of this ICP, Saths Cooper, during the EC meeting in Melbourne, preparations are well underway, and it is going to be a wonderful experience for all who attend. Indeed, we have now entered the official start-up period whereby July 2010 marked the start of Abstract submission. This ICP will also see the next Assembly and round of elections for several IUPsyS offices, as well as the other meetings I have discussed earlier. I would like to see as many people as possible attending the ICP, so please book early and make the necessary arrangements to enable this to happen. I hope to see you there.

## How Infants Become Children

### Michael Posner, University of Oregon



Michael Posner

**Introduction,  
Michel Denis,  
Former IUPsyS  
President  
(2000-2004);  
Honorary Life  
Member of the  
Executive  
Committee of the  
IUPsyS**

*During the International Congress of Psychology (Berlin, July 2008), Michael Posner, Emeritus Professor at the University of Oregon, was invited to give a newly established lecture funded by the Berlin and Postdam*

*Departments and Institutes of Psychology, the Paul-Baltes Lecture. The full version of the lecture, "Origins of Executive Attention", has been published in the Proceedings of the Congress (edited by Peter Frensch and Ralf Schwarzer). In the present issue of the IUPsyS Newsletter, Michael Posner offers a short article based on his original lecture, focusing on the early development of self-regulation and the mechanisms by*

*which genetic variations and social experience regulate attentional processes. Interestingly, the Berlin Congress turned out to be an exceptional setting to honor Michael Posner, as a leading contributor to psychology and its connections with neuroscience, neuropsychology, developmental biology, and genetics. In addition to the initiative of the German organizers to include the Paul-Baltes Lecture in the program of the Congress, the IUPsyS developed a procedure for designating the recipient of the first Mattei Dogan Foundation Prize in Psychological Science. The Dogan Prize is awarded "in recognition of a contribution that represents a major advancement in psychology by a scholar or a team of scholars of high international reputation". The international jury in charge of this designation selected the name of Michael Posner. As a result, Michael Posner was celebrated twice during the Berlin Congress, and this was highly significant given that the two selection processes were run totally independent from each other. This provided clear cross-validation of the very good reasons for international psychology to honor Michael Posner.*

*A biographical sketch and a scientific portrait of Michael Posner are available in the December 2008 issue of the International Journal of Psychology. The main feature of Michael Posner's research has been to connect psychological science to neuroscience, with the result of making major breakthroughs in the study of*

*attention, consciousness, memory, and information processing. Michael Posner's work on attentional processes and his use of chronometric methods for discerning the processes by which the human mind handles information changed dramatically the mode of thinking of psychologists. Michael Posner is also recognized as the founding figure of cognitive neuroscience, promoting the use of neuroimaging techniques to explore the neural basis of cognition. More recently, he became interested in genetics and took initiatives to bring together researchers that would contribute to the new field of cognitive genomics, investigating molecular genetics of self-regulation and its relation to environmental influence. Michael Posner is currently engaged in a project with Mary Rothbart, a developmental psychologist, to understand the development of the brain networks that underly attention. He is committed to the ambitious objective of connecting the study of the human mind as it operates in social interactions and the development of the human brain as an object of interest to biological science. In particular, he is conducting a set of studies that support the view that the expression of genes may be modified by specific experiences such as parenting and training. The most recent book by Posner and Rothbart, *Educating the Human Brain* (2007), is a major contribution to our understanding of brain development and its relation to education.*

The invitation to give the Paul Baltes lecture at the XXIX International Congress of Psychology was a very pleasant surprise. I knew of course the importance of Dr. Baltes work in the study of aging and life-span development, but although we were almost contemporaries, I never met him in person. My work in development psychology only came rather late in my career and concerned mainly infants and young children, so Paul Baltes and I were in different spheres within the same field. However, my collaborator Mary Rothbart, who is a genuine developmental psychologist, had met Baltes and agreed to work on the lecture with me.

To honor Dr. Baltes lifetime work it seemed appropriate to choose a topic in development and our research had been examining the early development of a brain network which is related to self-regulation in children. In addition, we were both very excited to be working on brain mechanisms related to such a fundamental psychological function. We have called this network the Executive Attention Network and we agreed to write about when and how it originated.

### **Attentional Networks**

Our paper begins by defining the three attentional networks that have been studied at the adult level. One of these networks, the executive network, appears to carry out the function of regulating other brain

networks both cognitive and emotional. This executive network involves the anterior cingulate gyrus in relation to areas of the prefrontal cortex and basal ganglia.

We measure individual differences in the efficiency of executive attention using a simple version of the flanker task (Attention Network Test, ANT) in which subjects respond with one key if the central arrow points left and another if it points right. Flanking arrows may point in the same direction (congruent trials) or in the opposite direction (incongruent trials). The difference in reaction time between incongruent and congruent trials measures the efficiency of the network. Surprisingly this simple task is correlated throughout childhood and into adulthood with parent and self-reports of a higher-order factor called effortful control that deals with the person's ability to regulate behavior and emotion. This finding allows us to use questionnaires to tackle broad questions of development while using the cognitive task to understand the neural networks, transmitters and genes involved in the network function.

Often ones thinking is guided by implicit assumptions that are not well articulated or supported. Since Mary Rothbart had found that parents could not report on their child's ability to self regulate until about three years of age and children below three could not carry out the ANT, we assumed that the executive control network would not be present during infancy. This implicit idea about the late origins of executive attention was put to the test in a study which examined the ability of seven-month infants and adults to detect error. Andrea Berger found that when infants were shown simple errors they not only looked longer than for correct answers but that the brain system involved was, as in adults, the anterior cingulate. Building on this finding we conducted a longitudinal study beginning at seven months and ending at four years.

### **Longitudinal Study**

Much of our lecture involved reporting the results of this longitudinal study. We used a simple anticipatory looking task in which infants were shown a series of attractive stimuli at fixed locations on a computer screen. We counted the times the infant looked in advance of the target (anticipatory looks) and when they looked after the target appeared (reactive looks). We found that the more infants looked in anticipation of the target, the more they showed slower cautious approaches to novel toys, looking longer at the toy before reaching for it and also showed more self regulation (look aways, thumb sucking) when looking at frightening masks. At the time of the lecture we assumed that the anticipatory looks were an early measure of the executive attention network. However, this has become less clear as we obtained data from

the same children at four years of age. At this age they carried out the ANT and we found that anticipations were more related to orienting than to the executive network. Of course we knew that the eye movement task we were using with infants involved orienting, but we had hoped that anticipations would reflect voluntary control and thus the executive network. The four-year old results cast doubt on this idea.

In addition we found that at seven months positive and negative affect as reported by parents was related to parents' reports of their infants' orienting skills. These findings have led us to the hypothesis that early control systems for infant affect and behavior are carried out by the orienting network and that only at two to three years later do these shift to the executive network. This new hypothesis receives some support from recent efforts to use fMRI resting connectivity to examine changes from newborns to children and adults. It is clear that the orienting network is tied into many brain areas in very early development, while connectivity of the ACC to distant networks continues to develop throughout childhood. We hope further tests of this idea will be conducted in the future, but we wanted to take advantage of this brief paper to show how new data are continually modifying our knowledge of the origins of early self regulation.

### ***Genes and Parenting***

At about two years of age we genotyped our longitudinal subjects and also observed their behavior in interaction with their parents in a free play situation. We used a rating scale to quantify the interaction. While all of our parents were clearly in the normal range of behavior we divided those who showed the most skillful parenting from those less skillful. Our goal was to examine a particular gene, the Dopamine 4 Receptor Gene, that had been shown to be related both to normal attention as measured by the ANT. One allele of this gene, the 7 repeat, has also been related to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. We found a strong interaction between the genetic variation and parental quality in relation to the child's impulsivity and risk taking. For children without the 7-repeat polymorphism, variations in parenting within the range we examined were unrelated to the children's scores on impulsivity and risk taking. For children carrying the 7-repeat gene variant, however, variations in parenting mattered. Those with higher quality parenting should normal levels of impulsivity and risk taking while those with lower quality showed very high impulsivity and risk taking.

Since there was evidence in the literature that the 7 repeat allele was being positively selected during human evolution, we hypothesized that a general feature of human evolution may be selection of those alleles that make the child more influenced by their

culture. Parenting quality would be one example of cultural influence. While we do not have any strong evidence for the hypothesis as yet, we find it an important idea that needs further test. We also speculated in the lecture on why parenting might be more successful for some forms of genetic variation. The anterior cingulate receives input on both reward value and pain or punishment and this information is clearly important in regulating thoughts and feelings. Dopamine is the most important neuromodulator in these reward and punishment pathways. Thus changes in the availability of dopamine could enhance the influence of signals from parents related to reward and punishment.

### ***Training***

The relation of genetic factors to the functioning of the executive attention system does not mean that the system cannot be influenced by experience. Indeed the gene-by-environment interaction discussed above suggests that sensitivity to the environment might be built into genetic variation. In addition, training programs have been successful in improving attention in patients suffering from pathologies involving attention.

To examine the role of training on the executive attention network, we reported tests of our five-day training intervention using computerized exercises. We tested the effects of this training during the period of major development of executive attention, between four and seven years of age. We hoped to observe improvements in conflict resolution following training, and adapted methods that had been used to train monkeys for work in space travel. The training began with the children learning to use a joystick. First they moved a cat to the grass so as to avoid mud. Over trials, the grass shrank and the mud increased, requiring more careful control of the cat. These skills were then used to teach prediction, exercise working memory and finally to practice children in resolving conflict. Children who went through the training were compared with a randomly selected control group who were engaged with interactive videos.

Before and after training the children performed the ANT while their EEG was recorded. The children who had undergone attention training showed clear evidence of improvement in the executive attention network following training in comparison with the control children. We found differences between congruent and incongruent trials of the ANT in trained six-year-olds that resembled differences found in adults. We also found a significantly greater improvement in a measure of intelligence in the trained group compared to the control children. This finding suggested that training effects had generalized to a measure of cognitive processing that is far removed from the training exercises. The parents did not report changes in temperament over the course of

the training, but this was not expected because parents had only the short time elapsing between assessment sessions on which to base their ratings. We also reported on a replication of this study by Dr. Charo Rueda in Spain, which showed some evidence for maintained improvement in comparison with controls after a two-month delay.

Since our Baltes lecture, we have been studying a second way of training attention. This method involved a form of meditation (integrated mind-body training IBMT) to change the brain state, rather than by exercising a specific brain network. This change of brain state also changed performance in the ANT and produced reduction in the stress response to a cognitive challenge and in increased immune response.

### **Life Span**

Paul Baltes has been a leader in the effort to study development, not only in infancy and childhood, but into maturity and old age. In examining research on executive attention, we found that the anterior cingulate was among brain structures that underwent the most reduction in activity and loss of connectivity with aging. We also found that IBMT in comparison with exercise produced improvements in the activation and connectivity of this brain area.

While genotype stays constant over the life span, the influence of genes may be even greater in old age than for younger persons. One study, carried out at Professor Baltes' Institute, examined the influence of the COMT gene on executive attention and working memory. They found genetic effects to be even stronger in the elderly than those found in younger adults. Frontal white matter connectivity has a very long history of development in childhood and adolescence. Thus, overall the studies of aging tend to support the general idea that connection between brain

areas which developed slowly may be especially vulnerable to the influence of aging.

We hope that these findings and the methods that support them can lead to improved research both on the development and loss of self regulation over the lifespan. The meeting in Germany was a wonderful opportunity to meet many colleagues around the world. I hope this communication will further salute the role of Dr. Baltes and arouse interest in current work on the development of brain networks.

### **Additional Reading**

*A fuller report of the lecture with all the references can be found in:*

Posner, M.I. & Rothbart, M.K. (2010) Origins of Executive Attention. In P.A. Frensch & R. Schwarzer (Eds), *Perception, attention and action: International Perspectives on Psychological Science* (vol 1), Psychology Press

*New work beyond the lecture mentioned in this note can be found in the following:*

Fan, J., Gu, X., Guise, K.G., Liu, X., Fossella, J., Wang, H., & Posner, M.I. (2009) Testing the behavior interaction and integration of attentional networks. *Brain and Cog.* **70**, 209-220

Tang, Y. & Posner, M.I. (2009) Attention training and Attention State Training. *Trends in Cognitive Science* **13**, 222-227

Voelker, P., Sheese, B.E., Rothbart, M.K. & Posner, M.I. (2009) Variations in COMT Gene Interact With Parenting to Influence Attention in Early Development *Neuroscience* **164/1** 121-130

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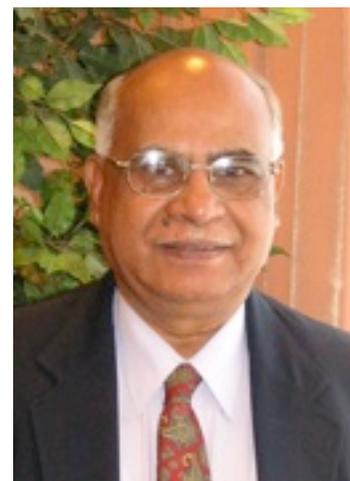
## **A report: IUPsyS Work group on Education of Psychologists**

**Janak Pandey**, Chair and member of the IUPsyS Executive Committee

### **Introduction, Rainer K. Silbereisen, IUPyS President**

*When I took over the Presidency of IUPsyS, one of my main goals was to bring the Union into a position where it could offer its members, the science of psychology, and broader political audiences, valuable information on the pivotal research insights of the discipline and scientific guidelines for their utilization in promoting human welfare. I anticipated this being undertaken from a global perspective and achieved with the best possible experts. Within this general framework, we in IUPSyS saw the training and education of psychologists as particularly important for the quality our work, be it for the purpose of science or*

*in the interest of the recipients of psychological services, policy makers, and the public. With this in mind, a group was formed under the leadership of Janak Pandey with the initial task of a comprehensive stocktaking of commonalities and differences across countries regarding issues such as content of academic programs, who*



*studies psychology, and towards what ends. Janak is eminently qualified in this position as former Head of the UGC Centre of Excellence for Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, and Coordinator of the Centre for Advanced Study in Psychology of Allahabad University, a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research and currently Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Bihar. The first results of an especially designed survey encouraged IUPsyS to apply at a science foundation for funding a workshop. This will enable us to take the work further and to discuss it against the backdrop of general issues of training and education with renowned international experts on programs and standards for psychology as a science and a profession. We want to bring the materials prepared for the workshop papers into a form that will lead hopefully to a resource book under the IUPsyS label. The book will also tackle the complex question of what frames or standards in terms of aims, content, duration, and certification academic programs in psychology should fulfil, wherever they are offered around the globe. Congratulations to Janak Pandey and his colleagues for what has been achieved so far, and what is already on the horizon.*

## Background

Following the adoption of its Strategic Plan in 2008, the International Union of Psychological Science established a Work Group to focus on Education for Psychologists. Its terms of reference are:

- (i) to consider the systems and structures of education for psychologists internationally;
- (ii) develop guides and standards for education and training in Psychology;
- (iii) to consider ways in which the work on the European Certificate in Psychology (EuroPsy) may be helpful in this task;
- (iv) to consider the feasibility of a more international curriculum and to take steps to develop this.

The Work Group has the following members: Janak Pandey (Chair and EC member), India; Allan Bernardo, Philippines; Jim Georgas (EC member), Greece; Silvia Koller, Brazil; Martin Pinguart, Germany; Boris Velichkovsky, Russia; Ann Watts (EC Member), South Africa. The Group was constituted in March 2009.

Each national society member of the IUPsyS was requested to nominate a representative to work with this committee, and representation was also invited from a number of international bodies. The following constitute the reference group: Duan Huang, China; William Gomes, Brazil; Pascal Hueget, France; Vindhya Undurti, India; Hyumnie Ahn, South Korea; A. Haringsma, Netherlands; Boris Velichkovsky, Russia; George Bishop, Singapore; Omar Khaleefa, Sudan; Guler Okman Fisek, Turkey; Gerry Mulhern,

UK; Robert Murphy, United States; Hassan Kassim, Yemen; William Gabrenya, IACCP.

## Recent activities

### *A survey of the status of Psychology Education*

The Union recognizes that variations in the history and development of psychology across countries and regions mean that there is much variability nationally, and sometimes even within a nation, in issues related to the education of psychologists, to professional practice, to the recognition of psychology as a profession, and to regulatory mechanisms. A variety of activities for collecting information are in progress. To address its first goal, the Workgroup is eliciting information about the development and present state-of-the-art of psychology education at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels.

The group initially suggested and planned to have a national status report of each member country. However due to low representation of the member countries and other factors, this proved not to be possible. Instead, one member of the group with expertise in educational issues worldwide, Martin Pinguart, led the development of a questionnaire to seek information on undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs as well as on training for practice and the overall status of psychology within IUPsyS member countries. Group members and nominated representatives of national societies were invited to pilot and help refine a draft version of the questionnaire by completing it for their country and sending comments back to Martin. Thus the questionnaire has been piloted across a range of countries and adapted on the basis of the feedback received. Finally, the questionnaire was posted on the IUPsyS website for completion by its National Members.

### *Round Table session of Workgroup in Melbourne*

The Work Group, together with a number of national representatives and members of the Union's Executive Committee, held a half-day round table meeting during the IAAP Congress in Melbourne, Australia in July 2010, under the auspices of the Union. The meeting was planned to facilitate communication with the national and regional representatives to identify important issues, and to consider the follow-up. Such an overview will facilitate the development of a comprehensive approach for raising the quality of psychology education and service.

Seventeen participants, representing 12 countries, were present: Oscar Barbarin (USA), Michel Denis (Honorary Life Member, France), Jim Georgas (EC member, member of the WG on Education, Greece), Nick Hammond (Executive officer IUPsyS, UK), Pascal Huguet (Secretary, France), Omar Khaleefa (Sudan),

Silvia H. Koller (Brazil, member of the WG on Education), Pam Maras (EC member, UK), Gerry Mulhern (UK), Janak Pandey (Chair of the WG on Education, EC member, India), Anand Prakash (India), Pierre Ritchie (Secretary General, Canada), Rainer K. Silbereisen (President, Germany), Gonca Soygüt (EC member, Turkey), Annie Trapp (UK), Boris Velichkovsky (member of the WG Russia) and Ann Watts (EC member, member of the WG on Education, South Africa).

The questionnaire described above had been posted on the web several weeks before the Melbourne meeting. At the time of this Round Table meeting, 26 countries from all regions of the world had completed the questionnaire.

Unfortunately, Martin Piquart was unable to attend the round table meeting. On his behalf, IUPsyS President Rainer K. Silbereisen presented the preliminary data from the questionnaire based on those countries that had responded. Whilst there was not enough data to make international comparisons or to draw any solid conclusions, this first set of data does reveal interesting information. Most notably, although the 26 countries do represent different regions of the world, the basic psychology courses, such as developmental, personality, social, methods, statistics, within the undergraduate program prove to be quite similar across countries.

Discussion regarding the responses received identified that missing information from a number of countries was a major problem. For example, some items require careful and thorough inspection and the use of statistical information at the national level, which in many countries may not be available. Other questionnaire items deal with the estimated reputation of the levels of education both between and within countries. Because these items heavily rely on the raters' subjectivity, they should be interpreted with caution when analyzing related data. Finally, some questionnaire items may have a different meaning for different countries, which may add further complications. However, all participants in the meeting agreed that the questionnaire has many strong points and a few limitations that will be overcome.

Data collection through the survey is continuing and it is hoped that as many National Member countries as possible complete the questionnaire to enable reliable conclusions to be drawn. To encourage this, an extended deadline, to the end of 2010, was agreed. It was further agreed not to rely exclusively on the representatives of national societies, but to ask for the cooperation of university faculty in psychology in completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire is also being translated into Spanish in order to facilitate completion of the questionnaire in Hispanic-speaking

member countries throughout the world. Martin Piquart will lead the analysis of the survey data, with support from other members of the Group.

Through the questionnaire, and from other evidence, the Work Group will be able to focus on basic information such as the core competencies, nature, and structure of the training programs, and accreditation issues, as well as on the generic similarities and differences between countries regarding these points. This might offer a data-driven perspective on what is "fundamental psychological science, knowledge and practice" worldwide.

For the future, and on the basis of the evidence collected through the survey, it is planned to seek funding for a workshop to bring together international experts on psychology education, to explore the analyses of the findings with them and to consider the implications for psychology education and training. It is envisaged that an outcomes of the international workshop will be a book as well as an IUPsyS Symposium at the International Congress of Psychology in Cape Town in 2012.

#### **Symposium at ICAP July 2010 Melbourne**

In addition to the Round Table session, a symposium entitled *Psychology Education, Training and Practice around the World*, was held in Melbourne. The objectives were to present an overview of psychology education in different regions of the world, to assess the nature and extent of training imparted to prepare psychologists for practice, and to describe standards of education and training. The symposium provided an opportunity to raise awareness among the congress participants of the IUPsyS program.

Abstracts for the Symposium and details of presenters may be seen at:

[http://icap2010.eproceedings.com.au/11.2\\_Symposia.pdf](http://icap2010.eproceedings.com.au/11.2_Symposia.pdf) (page 156).

## Service and Opportunity: Reflections on Over a Decade as IUPsyS Deputy Secretary-General

[Merry Bullock](#), International Office, American Psychological Association



Merry Bullock

I joined the IUPsyS Executive Committee in 1997 as its Deputy Secretary-General (DSG), following Bruce Overmier, who was DSG since 1992. My first meeting was in Stockholm, at the site visit for the 2000 International Congress of Psychology.

It was a whirlwind week – I remember a dense agenda, meetings, sub-meetings, side-meetings, and animated discussions about projects and plans involving organizations with long names and even

longer seeming acronyms. I also remember many meals in lively restaurants with spirited conversation. In addition to meeting colleagues and learning about the Union, my task at the first meeting was to take the minutes and I must admit my head was buried in the details. I do recall that at the end of that time – 9 days, including meetings before and after the actual Executive Committee – I calculated that I had had about 15 minutes “free” time. Luckily, Stockholm was a familiar city to me as I was then living in Estonia, teaching in the psychology department at Tartu University and working with the Estonian Academy of Sciences on policy issues for science in small countries.

Soon, of course, this initial dense and swarming picture came into sharper focus – the acronyms became a second language, I acquired a special kind of international multitasking that requires rapid shifts between minute details and the big picture in a culturally and politically ambiguous (but sensitive) context, and the Union became, quite literally, part of my daily life. But even at the beginning it was a good fit. The Union’s umbrella function – an organization that speaks to psychology in its global context, and that interacts with other global organizations to create policy and programs – meshed well with my interests in understanding the big picture of psychology, psychological science, and science in the international policy arena. The Union’s strong capacity-building orientation to support the development of psychology around the world fit well with what I experienced in my “day” life in Estonia, which itself was rebuilding a science infrastructure, especially in the behavioral and social sciences. Much of what I had been and done in my psychology career provided a useful base – I was a basic scientist in cognitive development, doing work in

the US, Canada and Germany for two decades; I had worked at the US National Science Foundation developing programs and overseeing a funding budget, and I had been the American Psychological Association’s “senior scientist” – a position in which I developed broad policy and program initiatives.

Over the next 12 years I came to know the Union from the top down – as the largest and most broad psychology organization, serving the development of a discipline and its organizations and their members,



IUPsyS Executive Committee, Istanbul, 2007

and from the bottom up, as a structure with a grand scope, a tall mandate, and a small infrastructure. During my tenure, I served under four different Union presidents, the Union’s Assembly changed the Statutes several times, including one substantial overhaul; the Union sponsored two major Congresses and took the lead liaison role with three regional conferences, created a newsletter, began to vigorously address public understanding of science, developed expanded capacity building programs, negotiated support for its infrastructure, gained 11 National Members, began to promulgate policy positions, developed and adopted a Strategic Plan, and moved from a person-based to an organization-based view of itself.

### What is the Union? – An Officer’s Perspective

IUPsyS is both the largest psychology organization in the world – it represents all the psychologists in over 70 countries, and speaks for psychology in global health, education and policy venues – and one of the smallest – its active cadre, even if you generously

count every Assembly and Executive Committee member numbers well under 150 and, until recently, its administrative functions were carried out by a small group of volunteer officers and committees.

Such a discrepancy in functional and actual size in any organization means that it must prioritize – either explicitly, or by virtue of the things it does and does not address.

### Changes in the Union

When I first became a Union officer it was, at least seen from the outside, an “old boys’ network” in style and in fact. The leadership was largely (but not exclusively) male, largely (but not exclusively) European and North American, largely well-seasoned, and there was a sense of many that this needed to change. These changes have begun to occur as a part of the natural growth of the organization – aided, I hope, in some measure by my and my fellow officers’ actions.

### Increasing Engagement and Expanding the Scope

The face of the Union has shifted, surprisingly not so much through a large change in the demographics of the Executive Committee or of the Assembly (which always did have broad representation of the Union’s active member countries), but in changes in how the officers, Executive Committee, Assembly and National members interact.

There has been a call for increased transparency in Union activities and decision making, that has been met through improved communication and opportunities for National Member involvement. The effect of this – increased explicit consultation with the Assembly, more consistent communications with National Members, and increased involvement in the life of the Union through workgroups and other activities, has moved a long way toward increased member engagement. This remains, though, one of the challenges of the Union as an organization – to pair efficient decision making with opportunities for broad engagement and involvement.

One of the side effects of the perception of the Union as an “old boys club” was that delegates outside that perceived network did not believe that the Union understood or could well represent emerging issues.

Over the last 12 years this has begun to change – the representation of women and colleagues from all corners of the world has increased in the Executive Committee and Assembly (there still has not been a female president, though); the issues the Union addresses involve people and perspectives from a broader set of countries; the Union has explicitly taken capacity building and increased engagement of the majority world as a strategic goal. Such a focus is also positioning the Union to fulfill its mandate as carrier of standards for the discipline – for example in its current attention to education and training in psychology. In addition there is increased involvement of psychologists with little prior history with the Union, always a healthy addition to an organization.



IUPsyS Executive Committee, 2009, Cape Town, South Africa

**Policy Development.** Although the Union may always have characterized itself as the voice for psychology in the policy arena, its articulation of this goal has taken shape in the development of an explicit policy perspective. The Union has adopted a number of policies directed to its own internal working (on dual service, on conflict of interest), and has developed statements directed externally in support of National Member countries struggling for official recognition of psychology (on the importance of psychology as an autonomous discipline) and generally in support of human rights (on the free circulation of scientists). In its last iteration of its working structure, the Union added a Workgroup on policy and policy development. This is an important step in the Union’s leadership for the discipline.

### The Show Must Go On

One salient aspect of day-to-day Union involvement is combining “getting the job done” with the need for a meta-awareness of the cultural, political, historical and

personal nuances of the issues and players in the international arena. Thus, my tasks as DSG ranged from the most lofty, visionary, developmental exercises to arranging meetings, disseminating and moving masses of information, and capturing seating charts, all under extreme time pressure. Every year at the officers and Executive Committee meetings, the Secretary-General, one of my comrades-in-arms Pierre Ritchie, would give an estimate of the person-hours the Secretary-General, DSG and Treasurer devote to Union business. I am sure that members of the EC thought we were fantasizing, but the person-hours we presented, adding to multiple days in each week, were most likely underestimates. But such grim numbers (it is a lot of work!) belie the reason for undertaking this strange volunteer job – a sense of gratitude and duty to the discipline, and the amazing good cheer and camaraderie of my fellow officers, especially the two other “appointed” officers with whom I have had the chance to form a team -- Pierre Ritchie, the Secretary-General, and Michel Sabourin, the Treasurer.

The opportunity to engage in broad-reaching work among good friends of the Union’s Executive Committee, to work closely with the Union’s Presidents and Past Presidents (Kurt Pawlik, Gery d’Ydewalle, Michel Denis, Bruce Overmier, Rainer Silbereisen), and to see directly the impact of this work on the development of psychology around the world, is unparalleled. The Union’s recent change in financial

resources – allowing it to hire an executive officer to carry out the administration of the organization, and allowing it to develop serious capacity building, information gathering and policy programs, is a marvelous stride forward.

I end this reflection with a sense of gratitude – through its global activities and partners from around the world, the Union has given me an opportunity to be a life-long learner and listener. It has helped me understand the multiple psychologies that exist across the countries of the world, and to learn both the big picture and small nuances of international conversation. It has (my fellow officers may disagree here) forced me to learn patience, tact, and to stand down and listen before acting. It has also afforded me the opportunity to learn a raft of new skills, from software use to crafting an elegant toast. But primarily the Union has offered a professional home and family of colleagues dedicated to many of the things I hold valuable – international understanding, looking forward, building organizations, and camaraderie in new places. It is with great delight that I anticipate continued interaction with the Union as a supporter, liaison, and constituent.

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IUPsyS Newsletter

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