



# Mind Pad

Canada's student written, edited,  
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# Notes d'idées

Le bulletin rédigé, édité et publié par les étudiants  
de la Société canadienne de la psychologie.

JULY 2018 – JUILLET 2018



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1. It aims to provide a professional newsletter that is written and reviewed by students of psychology who are affiliates of the Canadian Psychological Association. The content of the newsletter should be of interest to all who are practicing and studying psychology, but the primary audience of the newsletter is students of psychology.
2. It aims to offer studying psychology researchers and writers an opportunity to experience a formal submission process, including submission, review, and resubmission from the points of view of both submitter and reviewer/editor.

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# Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Depression: Its Theoretical Positions and Therapeutic Interventions

Anita Yu Sun, UBC, BA

## Abstract

Sigmund Freud was an outstanding figure in multiple fields of psychology; his psychoanalytic theory introduced a new era of psychotherapy. With a focus on the dynamics of the unconscious and its influence on human behaviour, psychoanalysis can be applied to explain and treat various mental issues. Depression, characterized by a constant low mood state, can be presented with marked agitation and complete lack of mood reactivity. Individuals who suffer from depression often feel persistent hopelessness, compound distressing emotions, and are at high risk of suicide. Psychoanalysis provides a systematic understanding of depression, as well as an influential, yet controversial, intervention for depression. This paper will be discussing the theoretical positions and therapeutic interventions for depression following an introduction to Psychoanalysis and depression.

## Résumé

Sigmund Freud a été une figure marquante de plusieurs champs de la psychologie; la théorie psychanalytique qu'il a développée a fait entrer la psychothérapie dans une nouvelle ère. En mettant l'accent sur la dynamique de l'inconscient et son influence sur le comportement humain, la psychanalyse peut être appliquée pour expliquer et traiter divers problèmes de santé mentale. La dépression, qui est caractérisée par un état dépressif constant, se présente parfois avec une agitation marquée et la perte complète de la réactivité de l'humeur. Les personnes qui souffrent de dépression ont souvent un sentiment de désespoir persistant, ainsi qu'un état de détresse émotionnelle prenant différentes formes, et présentent un risque élevé de suicide. La psychanalyse fournit une compréhension systématique de la dépression, ainsi qu'une intervention qui, quoique controversée, a fait école pour le traitement de la dépression. Dans le présent article, nous présentons en premier lieu la psychanalyse et la dépression, pour ensuite examiner les positions théoriques et les interventions thérapeutiques pour le traitement de la dépression.

In the field of psychotherapy, Sigmund Freud was an outstanding figure; known for his contributions in psychoanalytic techniques, his viewpoints and concepts continue to influence contemporary therapeutic approaches and practices (Corey, 2015; Gedo, 2002). One of his greatest contributions, psychoanalysis, introduced a new era of psychotherapy. Freud's psychoanalytic theory perceives human nature as deterministic, that is, driven by life and death instincts. Psychoanalysis provides a theoretical explanation for depression through its view of human nature, the role of the unconscious and superego, defense mechanisms, and early development. Today, mental health professionals consider psychoanalysis a viable treatment for various mental issues, and treating depression has been one main focus of research and practice in this field (Bonime, 1989; Blatt, 1998; Corey, 2013; Taylor, 2015).

Depression, or depressed mood, is characterized by a persistent low mood state and an absence of positive affect (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This illness can affect one's thinking and behaviour pattern, interfere with one's daily life, and prevent healthy functioning in various ways (e.g., physical pain, changes in appetite) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). Depressed mood has been categorized as a common diagnostic criterion of several mental disorders, including but not limited to major depressive disorder, dysthymia, and bipolar disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The behavioural patterns of people suffering from depression may be disturbed due to constant fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and insomnia or hypersomnia (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Fortunately, depression is treatable, and psychoanalytic psychotherapy for depression (PPD) as a viable treatment has been studied, practiced, and replicated for over a century (Karon, 2005; Taylor, 2015; Wolitzky, 2011). Psychoanalysis provides a systematic understanding of depression, as well as an influential, yet controversial, intervention for depression. This paper will illustrate and discuss the interaction of psychoanalysis and depression via its theoretical position and treatment techniques.





## Psychoanalytic Understanding of Depression

Psychoanalytic theory views depression as driven by a death instinct in human beings. In the opinion of Freud (1911), individual behaviour is influenced by either life instincts oriented to growth, or death instincts leading to aggressive behaviour. While dealing with unbearable mental pain, individuals with depression prefer destructive, neglectful courses of action in response to their active despair. This tendency for self-destructive thinking is a manifested form of an unconscious wish to die, rather than to live in pain (Taylor, 2015).

In psychoanalysis, the unconscious and the conscious are essential to understanding human behaviour and personality problems, including the understanding of depressive symptoms in individuals (Corey, 2015). According to Freud (1911), the unconscious contains all memories, experiences, and repressed thoughts. Unconscious material conflicts with the individual's internalized morality and reality, leading to conflicts and thus resulting in psychological problems. For long-term depressed individuals, their repressed memories and emotions have severely conflicted with their conscious rationale and social order, interfering with their daily life (Freud, 1911). Since the unconscious is typically inaccessible, people with depression are often unaware of their internal conflict, constant low mood state, or their abnormal behaviour pattern.

When it comes to the psychoanalytic structure of personality, the superego represents the internalized social component, which is related to rewards and punishments. A hostile or excessively severe superego would influence to what extent an individual is prone to depression (Freud, 1917), as the conflict between one's superego and natural impulses can trigger certain emotions. If an individual's superego excessively inhibits natural impulses, he would experience above average psychological punishment of guilt and inferior feelings, which may lead to a depressed mood. The majority of individuals not diagnosed with depression, otherwise, are more likely to reach a balance between their superego and ego without internalizing their negative affect (Corey, 2015).

Moreover, depression can be derived from one's major life events of emotional losses. In Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), it is stated that many cases of depression are rooted in one's biological factors, but others' depressed symptoms could result from losses. Losses are referred to the death of loved ones and particular objects, to which an individual is emotionally attached. Freud (1933) suggested that losses lead individuals to using ego-defense mechanisms as a strategy, so as to cope with anxiety

and protect their egos from being overwhelmed. Repression and denial are typical defense mechanisms that deny reality and operate on an unconscious level; however, they do not cope with losses in a healthy way, therefore resulting in depressive symptoms later in life (Freud, 1894, 1896). In most cases, individuals would identify themselves with the object of loss and thus redirect repressed anger about the loss inwards to themselves (Freud, 1917). This process precipitates lower self-esteem, which contributes to depression (Orth & Robins, 2013).

In line with losing a relationship, depression could be linked to rejection and abandonment by parental figures, as in loss of affection from a significant person (Freud, 1917; Klein, 1940). Early development experience provides important information in psychoanalytic practice; if a child's needs are not sufficiently met during certain development stages, they may be fixated at that stage leading to long-term immature psychological behaviours (Corey, 2015). Stage fixation can cause inability of dealing with negative feelings, which has a high correlation with development of depression in adulthood (Freud, Haute & Westerink, 2016). Hence, emotionally neglectful parents could entangle the healthy progress through these stages, and the parental influence still has a great impact as their children step into adulthood (Cohen, 2016).

## Psychoanalytic Therapeutic Techniques for Depression

To increase adaptive functioning, psychoanalytic treatment usually involves relief from symptoms, and increasing self-awareness and self-understanding (Wolitzky, 2011). To make the unconscious conscious and to build up the ego for more socially adaptable behaviour, psychoanalysis focuses on helping clients achieve greater insight into themselves (Corey, 2017). Corey (2013) illustrated six basic techniques of psychoanalytic therapy that are important to depression treatment: maintaining the analytic framework, transference, free association, interpretation, analysis of resistance, and dream analysis.

## Maintaining the Psychoanalytic Framework

Having a regular and stable in-session structure, between-session interval and treatment period can be fundamentally significant to the treatment outcome of depression (Corey, 2013; Klein, 1935; Taylor et al., 2012; Taylor, 2015). For instance, in the Tavistock Adult Depression Study (TADS), 60 sessions of weekly PPD was given over an 18-month period (Taylor et al., 2012). As this was Freud's recommendation (1912b), the study's manual clearly indicated that there shall not be unnecessary changing or chopping of regular

session times, and analysts should keep their neutrality. Besides consistent procedural and stylistic factors, the meeting environment, counselling charge and other factors should hold a consistent pattern as well (Corey, 2017). Not only does this consistency help individuals with depression perceive psychotherapy as stable and available, but it also increases one's motivation in coming to sessions.

### **Transference**

Known as a "blank screen" approach, transference in therapy is often perceived when the client unconsciously redirects his feelings from specific matters to the psychoanalyst (Corey, 2017). At the same time, the psychoanalyst remains neutral, allowing clients to make projections, where they may attribute one's unacceptable impulses onto their therapists (Freud, 1912a, 1915). This technique can be adopted after the client and the therapist have established a trustworthy relationship; and by perceiving their projections onto the therapist, depressed clients may have a clearer idea of what conflicts they are fixated on (Freud, 1915; Klein, 1952). Depressed clients frequently have an excessive need to depend on others, and as such are easily influenced by those with whom they interact (Cohen, 2016). Therefore, when working with individuals who have depression, therapists should pay particular attention to transference.

### **Free Association**

Free association is one of the most known psychoanalytic techniques and has a significant effect on finding the roots of a client's depressed mood (Corey, 2017). In free association, psychoanalysts encourage their clients to say whatever comes to their mind, and the analysts will note down everything they feel is relevant to the client's malfunctioning. Freud employed the couch method while practicing free association: clients would lie on a couch facing the ceiling whilst the analyst sits beside the sofa. In the client's vision, there is nothing but the roof, which provides no stimuli on the client's narrative (Gedo, 2002). Psychoanalysis relates depression back to losses, mostly in childhood (Freud, 1917; Klein, 1940). Thus, encouraging clients to recall old memories, especially those from early years of upbringing, by practicing free association can lead to unexpected recollections of past experiences that are linked to one's depressive symptoms.

### **Interpretation**

The process of interpretation is vital in treating depressed individuals, as it can lead to insight or resistance. People with depression often experience difficulty understanding their thoughts and relating

them to one another (Karon, 2005). Psychoanalysts collect information from clients, and they explain the meanings or their understanding of these behaviours to clients. As therapists bring client's unconscious behaviour pattern into their conscious, clients who are ready for more analysis and interpretation may engage in reflection. In this process, clients can reflect on certain aspects of their life experiences and, in turn, achieve more insight to their current situations (Freud, 1912b). Those who are not ready for interpretation, on the other hand, may show resistance to changes. Therapists use clients' reactions as a measure of their readiness for interpretation (Corey, 2017). However, research shows that many clients with depression are barely responsive to psychoanalysts (Taylor et al., 2008, 2012, 2015). Furthermore, inactive clients make it harder for therapists to figure out the perfect timing to talk about interpretation.

### **Analysis of Resistance**

As mentioned above, resistance presented in session may arise from the client's unpreparedness for interpretation; however, it can also be a result of an unwillingness to change (Corey, 2013; Shapiro & Emde, 1991). Resistance is a representative of people's unconscious self-protection from overwhelmed fears, and it operates as a defense against the client's anxiety of changing (Corey, 2017). It is noteworthy that resistance does not necessarily impede a client's treatment of depression; in contrast, it can be beneficial to the therapeutic process by giving the psychoanalysts a clearer treatment direction (Corey, 2017; Taylor, 2015). Therefore, we should see the essence for psychoanalysts to carefully analyze a client's resistance, for resistance can be a double-edged sword.

### **Dream Analysis**

Dream analysis is another classic psychoanalytic technique developed by Freud (1911), functioning as a procedure to uncover the unconscious and give clients insight into unresolved issues. In Freud's opinion (1911), every dream has both manifest and latent content, whilst latent content represents individual thoughts without any impulse control. In the TADS (Taylor et al., 2012), therapists asked clients to use a recent dream and their earliest memory of childhood as a representation of their interpersonal relationships. By collecting these data from different time points, researchers found a positive relationship between changes in a client's narrative and his improvement in the treatment program. Similar methods have been used in psychoanalytic therapy to form a baseline of emotional processing and facilitate the process of free association (Wachtel, 1987). Through inter-

preting the manifest content in client's dreams, therapists strive to uncover the latent content behind dreams.

To conclude, psychoanalysts are crucial in a successful treatment to reduce depressive symptoms. As the treatment is relatively prolonged and intensive, psychoanalysts are responsible for maintaining a consistent analytic framework throughout the therapeutic process. Successful psychoanalysts ought to maintain neutrality in session with the clients, to better understand their transference and resistance. Therapeutic techniques (e.g., free association, dream analysis) can be applied to analyze and interpret individuals' past and present (Corey, 2017; Cuijpers et al., 2008).

### Contributions and Limitations of Psychoanalytic Therapy of Depression

Freudian psychoanalytic approach emphasizes looking into behaviour patterns and understanding the origins of malfunction. Psychoanalytic therapy is useful in helping individuals with depression understand how past experiences influence their present situation and how the conflicts keep people fixated on early development. With its understandings of resistance, transference, the unconscious and defense mechanisms, psychoanalytic theory provides a conceptual framework that continuously influences various theories in the psychotherapeutic field, such as humanistic approaches.

In regard to interventions for depression, the psychoanalytic therapy is one among which present relatively high efficacy (Luborsky, 2001; Taylor, 2015). However, as effective as psychoanalysis is, several limitations should still be noted. Psychoanalytic therapy is, by its nature, quite intensive and requires a large time commitment, which clients with depression may not be willing or able to fulfill. According to Shapiro and Emde (1991), depressed clients are more motivated by a quick curing therapy, to which psychoanalysis cannot well accommodate.

Furthermore, individuals with depression may not respond actively while participating in psychoanalytic sessions, and this would affect therapist's interpretation (Shapiro and Emde, 1991). Given existing literature (Taylor, 2015; Wolitzky, 2011), psychoanalytic therapy requires clients to talk and interact with therapists, so they can have sufficient information for analysis and interpretation. If clients are inactive or unmotivated because of depression, it can be challenging for psychoanalysts to do their job with certain efficiency. Nowadays, more therapists combine psychoanalysis with other therapeutic interventions (Cuijpers et al., 2008; Milton, 2001; Cohen, 2016). With its insightful techniques of treating depression, psy-

choanalytic therapy can be further developed and broadened as integrated with other contemporary approaches.



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# Modern Pathways to Education: Interactive Technology and Learning in Children

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## Abstract

Interactive technology consists of a suite of technological programs that offer contingent responses based on a user's actions. These devices (e.g., iPads and touchscreens) have garnered widespread popularity, being used in recreational and learning contexts by adults and children alike. However, despite the potential educational value that interactive technology possesses, the current literature on the effectiveness of interactive media on learning in children is scarce. The present paper attempts to synthesize the current literature on the effects of interactive technology on children's learning, address domains that require further attention and provide suggestions for future research. In addition, recommendations for specific strategies to maximize the efficacy of interactive technology on children's learning based on empirically validated research are provided. Finally, the role of interactive technology on providing further insight into children's ability to selectively learn from informants and filter out misinformation is explored.

recherche future. De plus, des recommandations de stratégies, fondées sur des recherches empiriques, ayant pour but de maximiser l'efficacité de la technologie interactive sur l'apprentissage des enfants sont proposées. Enfin, l'utilité de la technologie interactive pour mieux comprendre l'aptitude des enfants à apprendre de manière sélective à partir d'informations fournies par une tierce personne et de filtrer les fausses informations est explorée.



With the recent advancements in the accessibility and functionality of technological devices, children are receiving greater exposure to interactive technology than ever before. Results from a recent study by Kabali et al. (2015) underscore the near universal usage of interactive technology by children, with 97% of children ranging from 6 months to 4-years of age sampled from an urban, low-income, minority community having previously used a mobile device at least once in their lifetimes. Moreover, the projected number of worldwide mobile users was estimated to surpass 6.2 billion (a staggering 84% of the world's anticipated population) by the end of 2018 (Radicati, 2014).

Considering widespread use of interactive technology in everyday life and its potential impact on sensitive periods of development (i.e., infancy and childhood), researchers have made a concerted effort to evaluate the educational value interactive technology can have for children (see Kwok, Ghrear, Haddock, Coleman, & Birch, 2016; Kirkorian, Choi, & Pampek, 2016; Haßler, Major, & Hennessy, 2015). However, despite these attempts, the amount of research on the impact of interactive technology on children's learning has been incommensurate with the current pace of technological advancements in this domain (Radesky, Schumacher, & Zuckerman, 2015). This relative paucity in the literature may prove problematic as further research on the effectiveness of interactive technology on learning could enrich curricula in education, inform pedagogy, as well as subvert stereotypes and negative beliefs regarding the value of interactive

## Résumé

La technologie interactive consiste en une suite de programmes technologiques qui offrent des réponses conditionnelles basées sur les actions de l'utilisateur. Les appareils qui empruntent ce type de technologie (p. ex., tablettes intelligentes et écrans tactiles) bénéficient d'une grande popularité, et sont utilisés dans des contextes d'apprentissage et de loisirs autant par les adultes que par les enfants. Cependant, malgré le potentiel éducatif que possède la technologie interactive, la documentation actuelle sur l'efficacité des médias interactifs sur l'apprentissage des enfants est peu abondante. Le présent article tente de synthétiser la documentation actuelle sur les effets de la technologie interactive sur l'apprentissage des enfants, aborde les domaines qui nécessitent une attention particulière et fournit des suggestions qui pourraient orienter la



media as a teaching tool. Indeed, previous research based on parental report shows that the primary reason parents report for allowing children access to these devices is for entertainment purposes (Beauchamp & Hillier, 2014; Wooldridge, 2016) and that the majority of parents believe that interactive technology is less effective than real-world interactions with regards to learning (Wooldridge, 2016).

This review of the literature is dedicated to further understanding interactive technology in the context of children's learning by summarizing the current literature and providing directions for future exploration of interactive technology as a mode of learning. In addition, recommendations for strategies to maximize the benefits of interactive technology on children's learning will be discussed. Finally, the present paper will highlight the importance of studying interactive technology to enrich our own understanding of the processes children utilize as active learners to determine whether an informant is credible, as well as filter out misinformation.

### **Interactive Technology and Learning in Children**

Although the majority of parents believe that technology is crucial for their child's educational success (Beauchamp & Hiller, 2014), they simultaneously endorse a contrary belief: interactive technology is less effective than traditional pedagogical approaches in facilitating learning in children (Wooldridge, 2016). One possible explanation for this pervasive belief may be due to the unintentional homogenizing of interactive devices with traditional non-responsive media. Indeed, research has shown that traditional media is less effective than other learning approaches in certain contexts such as language acquisition (Kuhl, Tsao, & Liu, 2003) and often demonstrates transfer deficits in real-world applications (Strasburger, 2015). However, interactive technology can be differentiated from traditional media through its ability to facilitate active interactions by affording contingent responses based off a user's actions. These sensorimotor interactions form the basis of "embodied cognition", which posits that active interactions between one's body and the environment are crucial in facilitating the development of cognitive processes (Thelen, Schoner, Scheier, & Smith, 2001; Wilson, 2002). Consistent with this idea, Huber et al. (2016) demonstrated that children were better able to transfer skills learned from a touch-screen device to a physical version of a similar task compared to only watching through a screen.

Although research comparing the efficacy of interactive technology to traditional learning methodology is still scarce, the findings are nonetheless promising. Recently, a study by Kwok et al. (2016) provided evi-

dence supporting the value of interactive technology as a learning tool, showing that children learned novel facts about animals equally well from a touch-screen device as they did from face-to-face instructions. Moreover, interactive technology has also been shown to facilitate foundational skills for writing (Price, Jewitt, & Crescenzi, 2015) and clock reading (Wang et al., 2016), even in children as young as 24 months of age. However, some researchers have expressed concern that the hand movements used for touchscreens are qualitatively dissimilar and less complex than real-world physical interactions with objects (Crescenzi, Jewitt, & Price, 2014), which may have negative implications on the development of fine motor skills. Another concern relates to the opportunity cost of using interactive technology: the use of these devices may detract a child from more enriching real-world experiences (Galetzka, 2017). In order to address the above concerns, studies employing a longitudinal design will be needed to explore the long-term influence of interactive technology on learning in children. Moreover, the relationship between the potency of interactive technology as a teaching tool and the specific subject matter being taught is still unclear. For example, although these devices may be useful for teaching factual information (e.g., Kwok et al. 2016), interactive technology may be less efficacious in moral domains. In order to maximize the efficacy of this method, it will be useful to examine the specific learning contexts in which interactive technology is equivalent or superior to more traditional approaches.

### **Applications of Interactive Technology in Learning**

In light of the conflicting evidence for the potential benefits of interactive technology, it is imperative to determine optimal ways to apply this method to maximize its educational value. One component that has been heavily researched is the role of attention on facilitating learning. Consequently, the capacity for interactive media to engage attention using digital scaffolds such as highlights and sound effects (Radesky, Schumaker, & Zuckerman, 2015) may be useful in learning contexts. However, the same enhancements, if used inappropriately, could distract children from the taught material and negatively impact learning and retention (Roseberry, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2014). Thus, research on effectively employing these scaffolds to focus attention toward pertinent information will be necessary to increase the educational value of interactive technology. In addition, the role of parents or teachers in providing social scaffolding as well as directing the child's attention should be underscored. Work by Barr, Zack, Garcia, and Muentener (2008) emphasized the importance of

a supportive caregiver in directing attention, whereby infants who were provided social scaffolding showed increased attention and responsiveness when watching an instructional video on word learning.

Another interesting avenue to explore is the use of parasocial relationships (one-sided relationships in which one individual extends emotional energy in absent, or attenuated, reciprocal interaction) as an aid in learning (Hoffner, 2008). Prior research has shown that a child is more likely to learn from an on-screen character when he or she closely identifies with that character (Bandura, 1989). For example, children 7-years of age are more likely to form parasocial relationships with same-sex characters (Hoffner, 1996). Moreover, studies using an adult sample have also shown that learning from confident teachers can increase retention and speed of material learned compared to unconfident sources (Barr, 2003). It may thus be valuable to develop on-screen characters who are likeable and appear confident to facilitate learning.

The application of interactive technology should also be considered in relation to more traditional pedagogy, such as by acting as a supplemental learning tool (Kwok et al., 2016). As previously mentioned, one critique of the use of interactive media is that it may reduce opportunities to learn from real-world experiences (Galetzka, 2017). On the other hand, the malleability and oftentimes, simplicity of motor skills required when using interactive technology can be useful in cultivating nascent abilities during infancy and early childhood. For example, Price et al. (2015) demonstrated that the use of an iPad fostered foundational skills in writing (i.e., complex mark-making) more efficiently compared to traditional pencil and paper methods. Thus, the use of interactive media may be best used to provide additional support when a child is lacking sufficient skills to engage in traditional methodology and in situations where interactive media is a more convenient method (e.g., while on a bus).

### **Understanding Children as Active Learners**

The study of interactive technology in the context of children's learning is beneficial not only in an applied sense, but will also further our basic understanding of children as active learners who are constantly making decisions on whether information is credible or not by assessing cues such as prior accuracy (Brosseau-Liard & Birch, 2010) and confidence (Sabagh & Baldwin, 2001). Indeed, past research has shown that even children as young as two are capable of using non-verbal cues to guide their learning (Birch, Akmal, & Frampton, 2010). However, despite the wealth of literature that suggests children are sensi-

tive to these credibility cues, less research has focused on individually examining these cues to assess their respective salience during credibility assessment. Studying interactive technology could contribute to this line of research as certain cues (e.g., verbal, paralinguistic) could be emphasized or removed to test their importance when assessing whether an informant is trustworthy. Furthermore, this assessment could be extended to examine whether these cues have differential effects on retention, rate of learning, as well as how they affect impressions of the 'teacher'.

Similarly, examining interactive technology could further our understanding of children's ability to filter out misinformation, otherwise known as "epistemic vigilance" (Sperber et al., 2010). Although children have been shown to demonstrate an implicit trust bias (Jaswal, Croft, Setia, & Cole, 2010), research has shown that children are more likely to trust claims made by an informant who behaved kindly compared to a mean one (Mascaro & Sperber, 2009). As certain social cues presented through touch-screens may be impoverished compared to real-world interactions, children's ability to filter out misinformation may then be compromised. Thus, further research using interactive technology can elucidate the mechanisms that underlie epistemic vigilance and selective trust in children and how they are moderated by the presence or absence of different cues. By enriching our understanding of these mechanisms, we can begin to apply interventions and design interactive technology in a way that encourages children to become savvy consumers of information.

### **Future Directions and Conclusions**

The current literature on interactive technology as a learning tool seems promising; however, more research is needed to carefully delineate how different contexts and topics may impact children's propensity and capacity to learn from information provided by these devices. Indeed, studies have shown that children begin to assess informants in a more nuanced manner throughout development. For instance, Brosseau-Liard, Cassels, and Birch (2014) found that between the ages of 4 to 6, children increasingly begin to trust an accurate but hesitant informant compared to a confident informant with a history of inaccuracy. In addition, emerging work at the K.I.D. (Knowledge, Imagination, and Development) Studies Centre led by Dr. Susan Birch provide preliminary evidence that children interpret credibility cues differentially depending on the context of the topic (e.g., children may be interpreting confidence as being unjustified in moral dilemmas; Severson, Lau, Li, & Birch, 2017). Thus, fu-

ture work could examine whether children assess and retain taught information from interactive media differently than from information taught using traditional methodology as a function of subject matter. These findings may then inform applications of different teaching methods, which would facilitate context-dependent learning.

While studying the effects of interactive technology on children's learning can promote changes in modern day education, this research can also provide invaluable insight into the minds of children as active learners. Specifically, their ability to attend to and assess cues to credibility as well as filter out misinformation could be further understood by employing these devices within research designs.

As interactive technology has become a widespread phenomenon of the modern era used even by children early on in development, it is important to further understand the strengths and weaknesses of these devices as an educational tool. In doing so, we can begin to make a concerted effort to promote accurate understanding of interactive technology as an educational tool and promote a more enriching and holistic learning environment for children.



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# A cross-cultural perspective on contributing factors in Anorexia Nervosa

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## Abstract

Anorexia nervosa affects between 0.5-4% of Canadians each year. Although eating disorders appear to be prevalent around the globe, anorexia has often been deemed a “Western illness.” This misconception has affected anorexia’s diagnostic criteria, treatment, and recovery in non-Western patients. Although anorexia nervosa is characterized in all cultures by significant weight loss due to dietary restriction and the refusal to maintain a healthy body weight, specific contributing factors may arise when treating non-Western patients for anorexia nervosa. This article examines the similarities and differences in these factors with a focus on three regions: Asia, the Middle East, and South America. Recognizing anorexia nervosa as a mental illness that can affect people from any cultural background, and not just as a Western illness, will eventually allow for a more culture-specific treatment of this illness worldwide. This knowledge can also help decrease the stigma associated with anorexia nervosa in non-Western cultures.

ment adapté de cette maladie présente dans le monde entier. Ces connaissances peuvent aussi aider à réduire la stigmatisation associée à l’anorexie mentale dans les cultures non occidentales.



Three times a day, a group of ten adolescents hospitalized in an inpatient facility for anorexia nervosa gather around the same yellow table with the same blue chairs to have their meal. Every meal comes with its own unique set of challenges and struggles. Every patient sitting around the table has an almost identical course of treatment. *Step one*: gain weight; *step two*: practice meals outside the hospital; *step three*: discharge. Every patient has 7 a.m. weigh-ins and meetings with the dietician. This standardized treatment is often accompanied by a legitimate question: why do some patients recover after one inpatient stay whereas others are sitting around the same table for their tenth time? Undoubtedly, there is not one simple answer to this question. Anorexia nervosa has a reputation of being one of the hardest mental illnesses to treat (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2007). Genetics, as well as environmental and social factors, play a large role in recovery and relapse rates in anorexia nervosa (Butcher et al., 2007). Nevertheless, what if a piece of the answer lies in the fact that the vast majority of well-established research on contributing factors and manifestations of anorexia nervosa have come from studies of Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) patients and that treatments were designed uniquely based on findings in this population (Butcher et al., 2007)?

Around the same yellow table mentioned earlier sat a Moroccan, an Algerian, a Chinese, a Columbian, a Mexican, two Costa-Rican twins, an Israeli, and two French Canadian patients. Cultural differences were frequently considered in group therapy and during post-meal discussions, yet little importance was given to the impact of these differences on the development and treatment of the disorder. With this being said, the goal of this paper is to improve the understanding of cultural differences in the manifestation and contributing

## Résumé

L’anorexie mentale touche entre 0,5 % et 4 % de Canadiens chaque année. Bien que les troubles de l’alimentation semblent présents partout sur la planète, l’anorexie est souvent considérée comme une maladie propre à l’Occident. Cette idée fausse affecte les critères diagnostiques de l’anorexie, le traitement et le rétablissement chez les patients non occidentaux. Bien que l’anorexie mentale se caractérise dans toutes les cultures par une perte de poids significative causée par la restriction alimentaire et le refus de maintenir un poids santé, certains facteurs peuvent survenir lors du traitement de patients non occidentaux souffrant d’anorexie mentale. Le présent article examine les similitudes et les différences entre ces facteurs en mettant l’accent sur trois régions : l’Asie, le Moyen-Orient et l’Amérique du Sud. La reconnaissance de l’anorexie comme une maladie mentale qui peut toucher les personnes de toute culture, et non seulement comme une maladie propre à l’Occident, permettra à terme d’offrir un traitement culturelle-

factors of anorexia nervosa. Furthermore, this paper highlights the absence of fat-phobia in certain patients who meet every other diagnostic criterion for anorexia nervosa (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Ultimately, this knowledge will hopefully lead to more culture specific treatments and improved treatment outcomes.

### **Contributing Factors of Anorexia Nervosa: Sociocultural Theories**

Anorexia nervosa has often been considered a Western illness (Simpson, 2002). Socio-cultural influences such as fat-phobia and the internalization of the thin ideal have received most of the attention when discussing the influence of Western culture on the development of anorexia nervosa (Butcher et al., 2007). Simply opening a magazine or turning on the television in North America will inevitably demonstrate the overwhelming presence of the thin ideal in Western culture. Young women and men strive to achieve the unrealistic beauty standards emphasized in today's Western society and this can lead to devastating consequences. Dieting has become an inherent part of the Western world; 91% of women surveyed on a college campus said that they tried to control their weight through dieting, and 81% of ten-year-olds said that they were afraid of being fat (Wade, Keski-Rahkonen, & Hudson, 2011). However, recent research has demonstrated that anorexia nervosa can exist without the fear of being fat. The belief that anorexia nervosa is uniquely due to a fear of being fat may taint health care professionals' understanding of patients' unique reasons for starvation, and even impede their recovery (Simpson, 2002). The following sections discuss the manifestations and contributing factors of anorexia in various parts of the world. The goal is to better understand the influence of these particular cultures on the numerous possible trajectories of the development of anorexia nervosa. This understanding will surely help improve treatment options and outcomes for those diagnosed with anorexia nervosa in non-Western societies.

### **Anorexia Nervosa in Asia**

As mentioned in the previous section, anorexia nervosa can exist without the stereotypical fear of being fat. This type of anorexia is especially prevalent in Asia and in Asian communities in North America. In a study conducted in 2002 on Asian Americans, there was found to be a greater incidence of anorexia nervosa among the Asian community than the national American prevalence of 0.21% (Lee, Kwok, Liao, & Leung, 2002). The reported cases came from higher income, achievement-orientated families whose children reported being concerned with meeting their parent's expectations (Lee et al., 2002). Before the 1970s, eating

disorders were virtually unheard of in Asia (Pike & Dunne, 2015), but by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was an exponential increase in the number of cases of anorexia nervosa reported in high-income Asian communities; particularly in Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan (Pike & Dunne, 2015).

Two significantly different types of anorexia have emerged in Asia. The first type mimics the Western 'fat-phobia' but the second type is defined by an absence of this phobia. As these countries have continued to evolve and globalize, the percentage of reported eating disorders per year has steadily increased (Lee et al., 2002). The impact of globalization has been observed in the increased prevalence of fat-phobia observed in China (Lee et al., 2002). After the implementation of obesity awareness in after-school programs, the prevalence of eating disorders increased by 11.1% (Lee et al., 2002). The primary reason given for starvation in anorexia patients in China was "pressure to conform to the thin ideal" (Lee et al., 2002, p. 96). On the other hand, in both Hong Kong and India, studies have shown that there are no significant links between the typical fat-phobia and the prevalence of anorexia (Lee et al., 2002). In these cases, the focus was placed on somatic complaints such as gastric and digestive problems and an absence of appetite without the typical fear of being fat (Lee et al., 2002). These patients' complaints resembled those diagnosed with somatoform disorders while simultaneously presenting symptoms of anorexia nervosa. This non-fat phobia type of anorexia nervosa also represents 22.5% of anorexia nervosa cases in Japan (Pike & Dunne, 2015). Furthermore, starvation has been hypothesized to be a frequent method employed by South Asians to achieve self-determination and meet the demanding social standards of their culture (Littlewood, 1995). In studies published with participants from Pakistan and India, the desire to fast for prolonged periods of time has been tied to religious purposes (Castillo, 1997). Globally, there is a positive correlation between globalization, exposure to Western culture and the number of anorexia nervosa cases in Asia. However, globalization does not account for the whole story. Multiple studies from countries across Asia, such as those cited above, have reported cases of anorexia nervosa without the fear of being or becoming fat. This poses an important question about including "intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat" as a diagnostic criterion for anorexia nervosa (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

### **A Middle Eastern View of Anorexia Nervosa**

Far less research on anorexia has been conducted with Middle Eastern populations than in Asia. Nevertheless, in the past decade there have been shocking statistics published by various eating disorder aware-

ness organisations in the Middle East. Out of a sample of 94 young Jordanian women, 14% showed enough symptoms to be diagnosed with an eating disorder (Gable, 2014). In Oman, 33% of young women showed symptoms of anorexia nervosa (Al-Adawi et al., 2002). In these countries, the extreme stigmatization of mental illness has led to the treatment of anorexia nervosa as solely a physical illness rather than a mental illness (Gable, 2014). Furthermore, the lack of education and the lack of resources available for those at risk of developing anorexia in the Middle East has been hypothesized to be one of the contributing factors of the increasing prevalence of this disorder (Gable, 2014). Typically, Middle Eastern culture places a lot of importance on appearance and associates appearance with honour and pride (Gable, 2014). This extreme pressure to conform to the standards set forth by family and friends is one of the biggest contributing factors of body dissatisfaction leading to eating disorders (Gable, 2014). In an interview study conducted in Jordan, participants explained that physical attractiveness is most important because in traditional marriages, the first thing a man will see is the woman's body and therefore she must be attractive in order to attract a 'good man' (Gable, 2014). Moreover, the Middle Eastern view of attractiveness has changed with the increased exposure to Western media (Gable, 2014). A study conducted in 2007 in Egypt showed a significant positive correlation between body dissatisfaction and the availability of Western media (Ragab, 2007). Another important contributing factor in the development of anorexia in the Middle East is parent-child relationships (Musaiger et al., 2013). One study found that young women diagnosed with anorexia nervosa felt more criticized, less accepted, and less close to their parents than did the control group (Musaiger et al., 2013). Additionally, fasting is an integral part of the Muslim faith and exposes adolescents and adults to this potentially addictive behaviour. Statistically, the biggest risk factor for anorexia nervosa in the Middle East is the limited education offered with regards to nutrition and health (Musaiger et al., 2013). Once again, globalization and the increased presence of Western media in the Middle East, has correlated with the increase in reported cases of anorexia. However, due to the lack of research on the topic, it is difficult to determine whether the presence of Western media has played a causal role in this increase. Furthermore, a literature search revealed that there has been no research conducted on eating disorders in the majority of Middle Eastern countries. In order to better understand the role of Western media in the development of anorexia, large scale studies must be conducted in many Middle Eastern countries. Additionally, these studies should increase the understanding of the role of fat-phobia in the development of this illness.

## **The Rise of Anorexia in South America**

Traditionally, the two eating disorders that have been linked to the South American community are binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (Becker, Franko, Speck, & Herzog, 2003). However, there has been a steady rise in the number of cases of anorexia nervosa in South American patients in the past two decades (Negrao & Cordás, 1996). Young Latin American women were thought to be immune to this disorder due to the cultural preference for a "fuller" body type, however, Columbia currently holds the record for the country with the highest prevalence of anorexia nervosa in the world (Eating Disorders as a Public Health Emergency, 2006). In this country, 17.7% of young women meet the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-5 for anorexia (Eating Disorders as a Public Health Emergency, 2006). This number is much higher than what is typically observed in North American studies of patients with anorexia (Lee et al., 2002). One of the most recurrent explanations of restrictive behaviours in outpatients in Mexico was the need for control (González-Macías, Romero, Rascón, & Caballero, 2013). During patient-parent interviews, patients reported that their need for control stemmed from over-bearing and over-controlling paternal figures (González-Macías et al., 2013). The main conclusion drawn from these interviews was that severe family dysfunction was one of the greatest risk factors in the development of anorexia nervosa (González-Macías et al., 2013). Although the overall picture of South American patients with anorexia nervosa seems to show many similarities with North American patients, it is important to investigate the matter further as a review of current literature demonstrated that there have been no large-scale studies focused on anorexia in Latin America and few case studies. These studies will allow for more informed conclusions about what factors are contributing to the rise of anorexia in South America and whether fat-phobia plays a causal role in the development of this illness.

## **Adapting Treatment Based on Cultural Differences**

After examining the particular manifestations and contributing factors of eating disorders in non-North-American cultures, it is important that health care practitioners take the time to understand the cultural background of their patients with anorexia nervosa. It seems that, although most of the contributing factors of eating disorders stem from the desire to be thin and conform to the Western thin ideal, in non-Western societies there are other predominant contributing factors which lead to the development of anorexia. One of the diagnostic criterion of anorexia nervosa in the DSM-5 is "an intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat, even though underweight" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). However, this criterion seems absent in

many of the reported cases of anorexia nervosa in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. This fear is sometimes replaced by the need to conform and cope with family pressure and might appear as somatic symptoms rather than deliberate dietary restrictions. In order to improve recovery rates for patients worldwide, these cultural differences must be understood and integrated into eating disorder treatments. Furthermore, once adequate research has been conducted, this criterion should be revised in order to judge whether it is an accurate reflection of contributing factors to eating disorders worldwide. This paper is limited by the inadequate amount of research conducted on eating disorders outside of North America. General and definitive statements about contributing factors in eating disorders cannot be made until sufficient research has been conducted in the field. Future research may conclude that individuals who do not show signs of fat-phobia, in fact, do not suffer from anorexia nervosa. Rather they may suffer from an entirely different mental or physical illness. With this being said, future directions should include increased research on contributing factors of anorexia nervosa in Asia, the Middle East, and South America. A particular emphasis should be placed on the role of fat-phobia in the development of eating disorders cross-culturally. This research will foster a cultural orientation in mental health domains and allow healthcare professionals to be equipped with a cross-cultural understanding of contributing factors in the development of anorexia nervosa, which is essential in the improvement of treatments and outcomes worldwide.



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## Definitions

- Somatic refers to the body, especially as distinct from the mind
- Somatoform disorders are a group of psychological disorders in which a patient experiences physical symptoms that are inconsistent with or cannot be fully explained by any underlying general medical or neurologic condition



# Children's Lying Behaviours in Eastern and Western Cultures

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## Abstract

Children's lying behaviours can be affected by various factors. The purpose of this review is to provide a glance at how children differ in their lying behaviours from a cultural perspective. With a focus on Eastern and Western cultures, this review explores two lying patterns including modesty lies (i.e., when children downplay their achievements by discounting the fact that they did something good for their group) and blue lies (i.e., when children choose to lie for the benefit of their group). Studies from this review suggest that children from Eastern cultures are more likely to be modest and lie for the group's interests, while children from Western cultures are less likely to do that. Findings in this field have practical implications for educators and school policy-makers by providing a more cosmopolitan and inclusive perspective for future teaching and practice.

## Résumé

Les comportements mensongers chez les enfants peuvent être influencés par divers facteurs. Le but de la présente revue de la littérature est de donner un aperçu de la façon dont les comportements mensongers des enfants diffèrent selon la culture. En mettant l'accent sur les cultures orientales et occidentales, le présent article explore deux modèles de mensonges, à savoir la fausse modestie (c.-à-d. lorsque l'enfant minimise l'importance de ses réalisations en ignorant le fait qu'il a fait quelque chose de bon pour son groupe) et la tromperie (c.-à-d. lorsque l'enfant choisit de mentir pour le bien de son groupe). Les études analysées dans la présente revue indiquent que les enfants issus de cultures orientales sont plus susceptibles d'être modestes et de mentir au bénéfice du groupe, tandis que les enfants de cultures occidentales sont moins susceptibles de le faire. Les conclusions dans ce domaine ont des implications pratiques pour les enseignants et les responsables des politiques scolaires car elles offrent un point de vue de plus en plus cosmopolite et ouvert qui aura un impact sur l'enseignement et les pratiques éducatives de demain.



## The Context

Lying pervades nearly every aspect of our lives, such as in marriage, politics, and business (Fu, Evans, Wang, & Lee, 2008). Understanding the development of lying behaviours is thus of special interest to developmental psychologists (Lee, 2013). Previous studies found that children's lying behaviours emerge as early as two or three years old (Evans & Lee, 2013; Lee et al., 2014). As they age, children become more adept at using strategies to conceal their lies (e.g., trying not to say anything inconsistent with their lies; Talwar & Crossman, 2012) so that adults are less likely to discover the truth (Lee, 2013). However, do all children across different cultures engage in similar patterns of lying behaviours? Studies focusing on this would provide important theoretical foundations for school counsellors as they design culturally sensitive interventions to reduce lying behaviours; such information would also allow policy-makers to structure the school environment and teaching methods in ways that are more inclusive of children with different backgrounds.

## Eastern and Western Cultural Values

According to ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), individuals develop within a complex system where different environments interact to influence behaviours in varying degrees. Of particular interest to this review is the outermost system, specifically, the macro system (see Figure 1 for the system model). Broadly speaking, this system refers to the larger social context within which individuals live and interact, such as cultural values, laws, and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Among these contextual factors, the topic of cultural differences has been of continuing interest to many developmental psychologists in their examination of child development. In this review, we extend this examination by focusing on two cultural groups: Canada and China.

Despite being regarded as a multicultural country, the core values of Canada are rooted in individualism

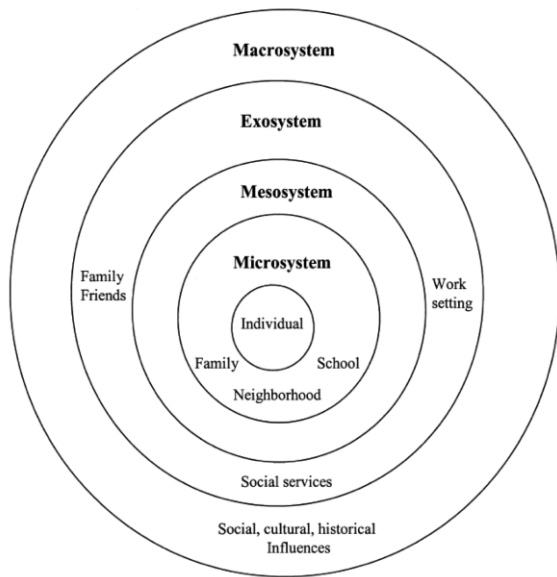


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This figure illustrates a system within which individuals develop (Swanson et al., 2003).

(Lau et al., 2013). Due to its focus on individual rights and freedom of choices (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002), children who grow up in an individualistic culture are often encouraged to stand out and demonstrate their confidence (Heine, 2001). Consequently, these children may focus more on themselves and be more inclined to make decisions on their own (Lee, Xu, Fu, Cameron, & Chen, 2001).

In contrast to Canada, China is a collectivistic country where children are taught at a very young age to put the group's interests first over their own interests (Fu et al., 2008). Confucianism, a unique philosophy of China, suggests that humanity should be the primary virtue of the society, wherein everyone should provide love and be considerate of others' feelings (Ho, 1995). Chinese culture also maintains the need to remain modest even in cases of a person's accomplishments (Kim, Chiu, Peng, Cai, & Tov, 2010). Together these teachings underlie the political and educational systems that are unique to Chinese culture (Lee, 2000).

### Children's Lying Behaviours in the Context of Two Cultures

Extant studies have categorized lying into different types, such as white lies (Ma, Xu, Heyman, & Lee, 2011; Talwar & Lee, 2002), modesty lies (Cameron, Lau, Fu, & Lee, 2012), and blue lies (Lee, 2013). White lies are regarded as prosocial lies; they denote a type of lie that children give to protect others' feelings (e.g., showing gratitude for a gift even though they do

not appreciate it; Ma et al., 2011). Modesty lies typically refer to a situation where children would deny doing something good for their group in front of an authority figure (e.g., the teacher; Cameron et al., 2012). Blue lies represent a type of lie where children would lie to conceal transgressions committed by their group in efforts to benefit their group and to protect their reputation (Fu et al., 2016). Currently only modesty lies and blue lies have been examined within the context of cultural differences (Cameron et al., 2012; Lau et al., 2013) because these two types of lies have strong associations with the values that are upheld by Eastern and Western cultures. Therefore, this review focuses on these two types of lies by reviewing quantitative studies which measured children's lying behaviours.

Previous studies suggest that children from Eastern and Western cultures differ in their tendency to use modesty lies (Heyman, Sweet, & Lee, 2009). To explore these differences, Lee, Cameron, Xu, Fu, and Board (1997) conducted a cross-cultural study involving children from ages seven to 11 years in both China and Canada. In this study, children were read a series of illustrated stories describing a scenario where a child protagonist performed either a "good" (e.g., tidying the classroom) or "naughty" (e.g., pushing a peer) deed; the child was later asked by the teacher whether he or she was responsible for the deed, to which the child either admitted or denied. After reading these stories, participants were asked to rate whether the protagonist's response was "good" or "naughty". Results showed that Canadian children were more likely to favour truthful acknowledgement (e.g., rating the protagonist as "good" when he or she truthfully told the teacher that he or she was responsible for the good deed) as opposed to false denial (e.g., rating the protagonist as "naughty" when he or she denied being responsible for the good deed). In contrast, Chinese children shared the opposite pattern by strongly favouring false denial (e.g., rating the protagonist as "good" when he or she denied being responsible for the good deed) rather than truthful acknowledgment. Extending this study, Fu, Heyman, and Lee (2011) explored modesty lies among Chinese adolescents using a methodological approach that is similar to that of Lee et al. (1997; e.g., telling the truth when the teacher asks who did the good deed or denying the truth to be modest). Results indicated that like their younger counterparts, Chinese adolescents also favoured falsely denying their good deeds. By contrast, another study with Canadian adolescents (Lee et al., 2001) revealed that Canadian adolescents were more likely to perceive modesty lies negatively and were more likely to tell the truth to obtain praise from the

teacher. These studies thus provide support to the notion that children's lying behaviours are related to their cultural backgrounds (Heyman, Itakura, & Lee, 2011; Lee et al., 2001).

Like modesty lies, there are also cultural differences in terms of children's use of blue lies. Using a mixed-method approach consisting of both interviews and lying story vignettes, Fu and his colleagues (2008) investigated whether Chinese children would lie to conceal their groups' transgressions. Children in classes were told there was a chess competition and that each class needed to select two experienced players and two novice players to form a team. Despite the selection rule laid out by the experimenter, all groups chose four experienced players in order to win the competition. Each child was then interviewed individually to see if he or she would lie about the class' transgression (i.e., choosing four experienced players rather than two). Children who lied were categorized as lie-tellers and those who told the truth were classified as truth-tellers. After this phase, children were shown hypothetical stories that described situations where they had to choose between lying or telling the truth about a transgression committed by their group. Results showed that lie-tellers were more likely to lie about the group's transgression because telling the truth would be unfavourable to their reputation. In an extension of this study, Fu and colleagues (2016) explored Chinese children's blue lies by manipulating the size of the group, specifically, a small (their class), medium (their school), or large group (their country). It was found that the bigger the group, the more likely it was that children would lie to conceal their transgression. This tendency for Chinese children to protect the larger group is thus congruent to the cultural emphasis on group harmony.

Given that Chinese children use modesty lies in ways that are reflective of their cultural values, would similar patterns also be evident among Canadian children? To explore this question, Fu, Xu, Cameron, Heyman, & Lee (2007) asked a group of Canadian children to read a series of moral stories about a character facing a dilemma (e.g., concealing or revealing a transgression done by his or her group); they were then asked to report what they would do if they were in that situation. Results showed that when faced with such dilemmas, these children were likely to tell the truth even though it might harm the group. Another study which investigated blue lies among children from North America and China found that children of an individualistic culture were more likely to tell the truth about the group's transgression even though they were put in a collective situation (e.g., their class and school) (Sweet, Heyman, Fu, & Lee, 2010). To-

gether, findings of these studies reflect the notion that individuals with a Chinese background would regard the groups' interests as priorities while individuals from Canadian culture regard personal feelings and choices as priorities.

## Discussion

Studies in this review evaluated children's modesty lies and blue lies through the use of vignettes adapted from real-life situations, which helped us better understand children's different lying types in different cultures. Even though studies from this review found differences in children's modesty lies and blue lies in the context of different cultural backgrounds, there were some limitations. First, because participants of these studies were presented with story vignettes in paper format with the presence of a researcher, potential social desirability effects may have been present. Therefore, future studies should investigate whether children would give socially desirable answers and how this would affect their lying behaviours. Second, while some of these studies compared lying behaviours among both Chinese and Canadian children, some only included children from a specific cultural group. It would thus be important to conduct additional cross-cultural studies to elucidate how cultural factors might relate to children's lying patterns. Finally, most of these studies involved only children participants. Given that adolescents strive for independence and autonomy regardless of their cultural backgrounds (Gingo, Roded, & Turiel, 2017), there is a possibility that cultural differences found in lying behaviours might be less salient during adolescence. For example, although modesty is highly valued in the Chinese culture, Chinese adolescents might also be in favour of publicizing their good deeds because doing so would support their autonomy. In light of this, it is important for future studies to explore lying behaviours among adolescents. Overall, studies in this review provide practical implications for educators and other professionals who work with children in multicultural countries such as Canada by suggesting that cultural values may influence how children perceive a particular situation. For example, in cases where there is a transgression in the classroom, children with an Eastern cultural background may view it differently from those with a Western cultural background. Teachers who teach under these circumstances should embrace and respect children of different cultural backgrounds. Through learning about their students' cultural backgrounds, teachers would be more likely to achieve a sense of inclusiveness in the classroom and schools.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this review was to explore how cultural values may be related to children's modesty and blue lies. Review of seven studies suggested that there are cultural differences in children's use of modesty and blue lies. Compared with children from Western cultures, children from Eastern cultures are more likely to downplay their accomplishments and tell modesty lies in given situations, thereby reflecting an internalization of Eastern cultural values. Children from Eastern cultures are also more likely to tell blue lies to conceal their groups' transgressions or to help their group gain benefits than those from a Western cultural background, who are more likely to tell the truth. Together, such evidence supports Bronfenbrenner's theory (2005), where the cultural environment within which children grow up plays a unique role in their development. Findings from this cross-cultural research emphasize the need to take the cultural context into account when understanding children's behaviours.



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# The Health Chats: A Seminar-based Forum for Mental Health Promotion for Graduate Students

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## Abstract

Graduate students represent an important demographic on university campuses; however, more research about their experiences with mental health during their time of studies in Canada would be beneficial. The following article describes an ongoing seminar-based forum at the University of Saskatchewan conducted by and for graduate students to discuss their experiences with mental health during their studies. This forum was coined the 'Health Chats' and facilitates a forum for graduate students' peer support. On average there are eight sessions per academic year, and in the 2016-2017 year, approximately 20 graduate student participants attended each session. Two distinct populations attended the Health Chats; Doctoral students in the College of Engineering who were mostly male, and graduate students who were mothers, across disciplines. This paper is an anecdotal account of the success of the Health Chats over the past two years. The paper concludes with recommendations for empirical research to determine the effectiveness of the program.

torat de l'école de génie, qui étaient essentiellement des hommes, et des étudiants des cycles supérieurs, mères de famille, de toutes disciplines. Le présent article est un compte rendu empirique de la réussite des « Health Chats » au cours des deux dernières années. Des recommandations de recherche empirique visant à déterminer l'efficacité du programme sont présentées en conclusion de l'article.



*"With all the school work and exams coming up in April, the health chat series helped me to step back a little and think about my mental and physical health. Our wonderful conversation and brief Zumba practice helped me keep the promise that I made in the sessions to walk at least 8,000 steps a day and not to sit at my desk for more than 45 minutes in a row. Since then, I have noticed that my low-back pain has almost gone away and I have been more productive in academia."*

— Anonymous

## Résumé

Les étudiants des cycles supérieurs représentent un segment démographique important sur les campus universitaires canadiens; cependant, il serait utile de mener des recherches plus approfondies sur leur vécu émotionnel pendant leurs études. L'article suivant décrit un séminaire, offert régulièrement à l'Université de la Saskatchewan, mené par et pour les étudiants des cycles supérieurs, dans le but de donner la chance à ceux-ci de s'exprimer sur leur vécu émotionnel pendant leurs études. Appelé « The Health Chats », ce séminaire se veut un forum où les étudiants de troisième cycle peuvent trouver du soutien de leurs pairs. En moyenne, huit séminaires sont donnés chaque année universitaire, et en 2016-2017, environ 20 participants ont assisté à chacun des séminaires. Deux populations distinctes ont participé aux « Health Chats » : des étudiants au doc-

## Background & Introduction

Graduate students' play an integral research role on university campuses with many students conducting cutting-edge research; however little is done to enhance or prevent students mental health on-campus. Given the evidence of high psychological distress, understanding their unmet mental health needs will both enhance efforts to prevent mental health issues as well as cultivate a positive graduate student experience. Most published studies on the mental health of graduate students is based on American data (e.g., Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2006), as little research has yet been conducted with Canadian graduate students. Anecdotally, Canadian graduate students have reported that the stress of graduate studies impacts their mental health. For instance, one graduate student at a Canadian institute disclosed to a group of colleagues at a graduate student summit

that they had to seek mental health services off-campus on their lunch break as their supervisor would not allow them to leave during office hours. This anecdote speaks to one of the many challenges graduate students experience when accessing mental health supports.

Given the evaluative and competitive climate of graduate studies (Farber, 2000), graduate students experience higher rates of mental illness as compared to undergraduates (Peters, 1997). This may be due to the stressors of conducting and publishing research, teaching, and the worry of attaining employment post-graduation, as well as navigating the expectations of supervisors (Hyun et al., 2006). Graduate students often struggle with work-life balance, as many are isolated from the sociocultural activities that often target the undergraduate populations on campuses (Fox, 2008), and tend to focus much of their attention on academic work (Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013). The rigour of graduate studies via the academic workload is related to the perceived stress among graduate students (Kausar, 2010). As such, mental health problems represent an important but relatively unexplored factor in graduate studies in Canada.

### Health Chats

At the University of Saskatchewan, graduate students across disciplines who are passionate about health promotion created a forum on campus addressing the mental health of graduate students. This was a valuable initiative, as evidence shows that students who spend a lot of time in classes, in labs, and working on assignments report greater levels of stress (Kausar, 2010). Through the support of the Health Promotion Officer on campus, the 'Health Chats' forum was brought to life in September 2015 to promote positive mental health. Positive mental health, as defined by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2014), is the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and cope with challenges. Due to graduate students' vulnerability to mental health issues and challenges they experience during their studies, this forum is important in both providing students with peer-to-peer support as well as engagement in meaningful activities; attendees reported positive feelings towards their mental health (e.g., the sessions provided an outlet for students to debrief about the challenges they were experiencing).

The Health Chats forum is a seminar-based session that is offered to graduate students on a monthly basis during the academic year (September to April). The Health Chats are planned and facilitated by a

group of four graduate students who are interested and knowledgeable in the promotion of healthy behaviours (e.g., "Exercise is Medicine", meditation, nutritional advice, and setting goals). In one example, 'Exercise is Medicine' is a movement to encourage physical activity through incorporating exercise into daily routines to reduce physical ailments (Exercise is Medicine Canada, 2017). This formed the basis of including physical activity and exercise into all the Health Chat sessions. The Health Chats also served as a feedback loop to the Graduate Students' Association Executive on where they should direct their efforts to improve graduate students' mental health through lobbying senior administration on-campus and the provincial government for funding allocation to student mental health.

The Health Chats runs for two hours and consist of two components. The first component involves a discussion of relevant mental health issues and the complexities of underlying physical health issues that influence the precipitation of poor mental health outcomes, such as depression, amongst graduate students. Such topics include stress management, goal-setting, maintaining healthy relationships, nutrition, maternal mental health, and mindful meditation. The second component involves a physical activity session. Examples of physical activities include Zumba, yoga, and Irish dancing offered by volunteers from various community organizations. For example, as most graduate students are sedentary for eight hours daily and it is common knowledge that regular physical activity has a positive effect on mental health (Exercise is Medicine Canada, 2017; Penedo & Dahn, 2005), the Health Chats included physical activity as an important and valued part of the experience. The Health Chats concluded with a healthy meal and a reflection period where the participants could share their experiences of the Health Chats. It was important to provide food as high numbers of graduate students are using the on-campus food bank service (Olason, Engler-Stringer, Vatanparast & Hanoski, 2017). This format was chosen to help satisfy the basic needs of graduate students and to ensure the Health Chats program addressed mental health from a holistic perspective. Moreover, given that many graduate students work in isolation and do not integrate with the rest of campus outside of their studies, it was important to have the Health Chats in a central location to eliminate the barriers often faced with other similar supports such as accessibility, stigma, and cross cultural disparities (Gonzalez, Alegria, Prihoda, Copeland, & Zeber, 2011; Vidourek, King, Nabors, & Merianos, 2014). As such, the Health Chats were offered at the University of Saskatchewan

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Commons, which is a central location for graduate students.

The Health Chats program, developed two years ago, operates by and for graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. The following are observations about this grassroots program over the course of two years. The majority of attendees are male graduate students from the College of Engineering. One Graduate student from the College of Engineering stated that *"Mental/Physical health is very important for success and general well-being. It is a great opportunity for all graduate students to have access to Health Chats through the GSA"*. A common theme in the sessions were graduate students', across disciplines, reporting the student-supervisor relationship as one of the top stressors influencing their poor mental health. The Health Chats create a safe space for students to gather and openly discuss issues to implement fruitful strategies to inform the GSA executives' on important lobbying asks both institutionally and provincially to help foster a positive graduate student experience at the University of Saskatchewan. Mothers attending the Health Chats encouraged the development of a specific Health Chat on maternal health of graduate students. It creates a medium for graduate student mothers to discuss the challenges of motherhood as well as the compounding effect of graduate school on maternal mental health. The Health Chats not only instill positive coping skills and lifelong lessons on work-life balance, but also provides a pleasurable and interactive platform that encourages networking. Lastly, graduate students talk about their own experiences in graduate studies and how these affect their mental health, as well as offer support to their peers and colleagues.

### Recommendations

Since the inception of the Health Chats program, the first author of this paper, who also served as the Graduate Students' Association Vice-President External, has observed that Canadian institutions could be working more closely with graduate students in the area of positive mental health. Given the limited data it is important to address the following gaps: the prevalence of mental health of Canadian graduate students, the best practices of education, prevention and intervention of mental health in academia, and help-seeking behavior among graduate students.

The following section is a series of recommendations that have been observed through the Health Chats. First, research is needed to address these gaps in the literature to inform the design and implementation of positive mental health initiatives on university campuses for graduate students in Canada.

Second, it is important to solicit additional funding to sustain preventative grassroots initiatives that promote the mental health and well-being of graduate students through programs such as the Health Chats on university campuses. For example, this funding could be used to provide Mental Health First Aid training to facilitators to better support their efforts in supporting their peers. Third, engaging and partnering with additional community organizations on campus and the city of Saskatoon would help ensure the sustainability of the program and better connect graduate students to resources (e.g., counseling services on- and off-campuses). Fourth, it is recommended that the GSA establish an outreach plan to enhance and expand the engagement of graduate students participation in the Health Chats program consistently (e.g., to have facilitators of the Health Chats from the Department of Psychology). Fifth, create a program logic model and conduct a process and summative program evaluation plan to provide meaningful information about the program outcomes and effect on graduate students' mental health. The outcomes of these evaluations will inform a Graduate Wellness Strategy in collaboration between the University of Saskatchewan and the GSA. Lastly, it is recommended that the GSA hire a program coordinator/partner with a Master of Public Health 'Health Promotion Course' or the Department of Psychology that advocates for the mental health needs of graduate students through education and promotion activities to improve the mental health of graduate students.

### Conclusion

The Health Chats goal is to facilitate peer mentoring, as the organizers recognize the importance and crucial role peers have in supporting the mental health of their colleagues. The facilitators recognize that most graduate students attending the Health Chats are looking for self-care tips and social support. The 'Health Chats' helps address their needs through building healthy coping strategies, confronting challenges with stigma, normalizing help-seeking behaviours, and discussing many preventative measures that support graduate students during their studies. These Health Chats help graduate students form supportive relationships with colleagues within and across disciplines. The Health Chats have brought awareness to graduate student mental health issues at the University of Saskatchewan campus. This forum can help start the dialogue on university campuses through student leaders and build on this to ultimately develop a holistic student mental health strategy.





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# Utilizing SMART Goals in Balancing Graduate School Life

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## Abstract

For graduate psychology students, school and personal life may be difficult to balance. It is assumed that all students have acquired skills to manage their time, priorities, and goals. However, this may not be the case for all students. Graduate students are often expected to undertake multiple research projects and clinical placements, participate in conferences and in leadership roles (eg. student representation), and may also be working part-time to meet financial needs. As such, students may find it difficult to manage their many roles both in school and in their personal life. This article discusses the importance of time management and the necessity of SMART goal setting. By understanding the importance of setting SMART goals and implementing them in academic life, students can acquire the ability to concretize their priorities. This can lead to greater personal achievement and to the promotion of a better school-life balance.

## Résumé

Pour les étudiants des cycles supérieurs en psychologie, les études et la vie personnelle sont parfois difficiles à concilier. On suppose que tous les étudiants ont acquis les compétences nécessaires pour gérer leur temps, leurs priorités et leurs objectifs. Cependant, ce n'est peut-être pas le cas de tous les étudiants. On s'attend souvent à ce que les étudiants des cycles supérieurs entreprennent plusieurs projets de recherche et stages cliniques, participent à des congrès et s'impliquent dans des rôles de leadership (p. ex., représentation des étudiants), tout en ayant à travailler à temps partiel pour subvenir à leurs besoins. C'est pourquoi les étudiants peuvent trouver difficile de gérer les nombreux rôles qu'ils assument, tant dans leurs études que dans leur vie personnelle. Le présent article traite de l'importance de la gestion du temps et de la nécessité d'établir ses objectifs selon le modèle SMART. En comprenant l'importance des objectifs SMART et en mettant ceux-ci en œuvre dans leur parcours universitaire, les étudiants peu-

vent apprendre à concrétiser leurs priorités. Cela peut conduire à une plus grande réussite personnelle et à la promotion d'un meilleur équilibre entre études et vie personnelle.



## What graduate life may look like

Prior to starting my PhD, I had no framework to schedule my life. I was working several part-time jobs to fund my living expenses and to gain applied experience. This was in addition to completing the requirements of my Masters program where there were intense coursework demands. When I started in my PhD program, I was unprepared for the struggles that entering students often experience. I took four courses during my first year, which required about 12 hours of work outside the classroom. In addition, I was advised to participate in multiple research projects. Unfortunately, I did not have adequate funding to cover costs of living and tuition in my first year of graduate school, so I was required to work as a tutor, in-class aid, teaching assistant, and as an invigilator. I was also required to develop a topic for my comprehensive exam, and my dissertation. Before starting my PhD, I was able to enjoy hobbies like cooking and socializing with friends. However, during my PhD studies, I was not able to find the time to do so. I spent the majority of my time doing school work or at home, thinking of what I needed to do at school. As a result, I neglected other parts of my life that were of equal importance. My first year was disorganized, I had occasional thoughts of wanting to drop out, and it left me feeling confused as to how I would be able to manage four more years. At this point, my supervisor encouraged me to implement SMART goals in order to manage these stressors, and to achieve balance in my work and personal life. To preface, SMART is an acronym that represents goals that are: 1) specific, 2) measurable, 3) attainable, 4) relevant, and 5) timely (Doran, 1981; Rubin, 2002).

For psychology graduate students, as well as undergraduates, school life is often an emotional rollercoaster. Students may be faced with various deadlines, such as funding and grant applications, journal and

conference submissions, and various research project deadlines. Whether in a clinical or research-based program, the workload changes regularly. Throughout each year of graduate school, priorities may change, from classes to internships to research projects. Eventually, students work on their own projects that they are interested in instead of classes. For programs that are not course-based, principal investigators may require assistance in their projects and students may be required to work in their laboratory, along with conducting their thesis. In between classes and research, they may be encouraged to participate in administrative positions, co-curriculars, leadership positions, and conferences. A question might come to mind: how can graduate students balance between academic and personal lives? It can be a difficult balance to achieve, and graduate school is a hurdle that particularly tests the ability of students to manage their personal and academic lives.

### Time management

Time management is an abstract concept with no one definition. Time management, in a person-centered sense, can be defined as how individuals make decisions about how they allocate time as proactive and intentional agents. Thus, time management in this approach is a form of decision-making used by individuals to organize, outline, and adapt their time in the face of changing conditions (Aeon, 2017). Research has shown that the ability to manage time efficiently was associated with lower levels of depression, psychological distress, anxiety, hopelessness, and overall greater life satisfaction (Aeon, 2017). The role of time management becomes particularly important for part-time students compared to full-time students or students who have less temporal demands. Several studies have demonstrated that time management skills can be learned, by practicing SMART goal setting (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2009; MacCann, Fogarty & Roberts, 2012). Time management skills, such as setting goals and priorities, and the ability to learn the mechanics of scheduling and planning, have been shown to be negatively correlated with less ambiguity for students and greater perceived academic performance than those who did not set goals or priorities (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye & Phillips, 1990).

One subset of time management is goal setting and prioritizing, which SMART goals can help students facilitate and accomplish. It is important for graduate students to gain skills to differentiate their priorities, as this increases their efficiency in accomplishing tasks, leading to a more optimal academic and personal life balance (Gortner-Lahmers & Zulauf, 2000;

Macan et al., 1990). Do they need to network to initiate research collaboration? Do they need to create a plan on writing their ethics proposal? Do they need to decrease the amount of time they might be working to incorporate 'me' time? Writing down priorities will give an opportunity to visualize the importance of each priority, and subsequently, the amount of time and effort that should be spent on each priority.

### Overview on SMART goals

SMART is a mnemonic which guides students to frame their goals in a more concrete and focused method, with each component being used to create more specific (targeting a well-defined area to improve), measurable (quantifying the goal), attainable (given the student's resources), relevant (linking this back to the student's overarching priorities), and timely (when the results can be achieved) goals (Doran, 1981; Rubin, 2002). It is useful to differentiate goals from priorities in terms of short-term and long-term. For goals, if they are specific and short-term focused, they would be more successful compared to goals that are rather challenging, obscure, and long-term (Mento, Steel & Karren, 1987). Research has also shown that having clear goals can increase persistence and self-efficacy, making it harder for students to be frustrated, anxious, or disappointed when faced with outcomes that did not match the goal (Schunk, 1990).

Self-efficacy refers to the perceived competence of an individual to succeed at a certain task (Bandura, 1986). If a student believes that they are making goal progress, as visualized through SMART goals, self-efficacy increases, and motivation can be sustained, leading to further self-regulated learning (Cetin, 2015). Self-regulated learning, broadly speaking, refers to learning that is done autonomously by the student who is able to monitor and direct their actions towards moving forward to their goals, which SMART goals can be a tool for.

SMART goals also lead to cognitive and affective outcomes. With regards to cognition, Lee and Reeves (2013) have shown that the self-determined behavior of goal setting is related closely to people's sense of agency and is correlated with an increased intrinsic motivation. The affective component is the emotion attached to completion of a goal. The sense of competence from achieving their goals can result in students feeling encouraged to set more challenging goals. Eventually, they may become conditioned through such feelings to think of their future assignments and deadlines with respect to setting SMART goals. Conversely, when a goal is not achieved, students may have the opportunity to reflect and analyze reasons and barriers

to achieving the goal (Hattie & Anderman, 2013).

### **Skills of goal setting: SMART goals**

Many studies in the past, such as Zimmerman (1990), have shown that the goal setting process significantly improves learning and motivation for students. For graduate students, there may be opportunities to learn important goal setting skills. Research has shown that by increasing the frequency of goal-directed behavior, a critical element of SMART goal setting, students feel more empowered, more self-fulfilled, and will have a higher probability of continuing this internal rewarding behavior (Elliot & Fryer, 2008). Goal setting, in other words, provides an opportunity to visualize, identify, and partition a person's behaviors as either promoting progress or acting as barriers to their goals. As such, setting goals is a highly useful skill for graduate students to learn for effectively balancing both academic and personal life. Ferguson and Sheldon (2010) have shown that individuals who wrote clearly defined goals had a higher probability of achieving these goals as compared to individuals who wrote goals that were not clearly defined. By writing more specific goals and the precise means of achieving those goals, students were more likely to internalize their goals over time and report greater probability of writing more goals and subsequently achieving them. Studies further report that students who are able to manage their time exert a positive influence on their learning outcomes, such as academic performance (e.g., Claessens, Eerde, Rutte & Roe, 2005), and that these positive influences were sustained 6 months later (Noftle & Robins, 2007; O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007).

Graduate students are expected to invest time in planning education and career paths but are not taught how to do so. This is one of the reasons why it is essential to learn to create plans and set goals using SMART goals. SMART goals may generally be used for non-academics in various fashion, throughout the year, but for our day-to-day work as graduate students, planning daily, weekly and monthly goals are essential. By breaking down weekly goals into daily goals, this facilitates productivity and managing both academic and personal life tasks (Werle-Lee, 2010).

### **The realities of graduate school**

In graduate school, students are often required to engage in multiple research projects, clinical internships, leadership positions, and gainful employment outside of academia while aspiring for a balanced life and an adequate income. As such, many graduate students often lack a well-balanced academic and per-

sonal life, despite some institutions incorrectly assuming the presence of this (Balapumi, Konsky, Aitken & McMeekin, 2016). Rather, graduate students require active support and resources in this area, particularly with regards to fostering the ability to manage their varied responsibilities. This can include time management (Balapumi et al., 2016). By facilitating student's understanding of graduate life management, they may be more inclined to reach towards a balance between work, school, and personal lives. It is also important for university stakeholders, such as administrators, faculty members, and support staff, to understand that graduate students are also concerned, not just about academic issues but also their overall quality of life. By utilizing the SMART goal framework within multiple aspects of a student's life, some of the stress and physical and emotional feelings of being overwhelmed can be mitigated.

### **Implications for graduate programs**

While many graduate students begin their PhD programs with high aspirations, some inevitably discontinue their studies part way through. An often-cited reason for suspending studies is related to difficulties with time management and subsequently feeling overwhelmed. As such, it is beneficial for graduate programs to incorporate workshops or resources in courses that enable students to learn SMART goal setting skills to frame their priorities, both for academic and personal life. This can result in students feeling less overwhelmed and more likely to attain a work-life balance (Gortner-Lahmers & Zulauf, 2000; Macan et al., 1990). Although graduate programs can vary from one educational institution to another, it is imperative that program administrators provide the necessary tools to ensure their graduate students are well supported in balancing their academics as well as other aspects of their life. SMART goals provide one such set of tools.

### **How SMART goals changed my life**

Having used SMART goals for two years, I part my SMART goals into eleven goals, which had a balance of research-oriented (comprehensive exam, research projects, leadership-related) as well as personal-oriented goals (physical health, social health), listed in no particular order. My next step was to split my SMART goals into research, professional, and personal. After splitting, I would write what I wanted to achieve and aim for at the end. Then, in another column, I would write my weekly SMART goals and what I am required to do each week to reach toward my long-term SMART goals. Some of them would be wait-



ing for responses, which I would write, as knowing that I had to wait for someone before moving on, I could mentally put that goal away for that specified week. Lastly, planning out what I had to do each day and making the link between daily goals and weekly goals clarified that once I had met the daily goal, I can clearly see that I am on track. As I can refer to my SMART goals, I do not have any sense of worry or feelings of being overwhelmed. That being said, SMART goals can be manipulated and be made unique to make it work for different individuals, as long as the purpose of SMART goals is accomplished.



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# Note Taking in Investigative Interviews: Memory Enhancement Tool or Distraction?

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## Abstract

Investigative interviews – particularly, interviews with witnesses – are a key component of criminal investigations. Consequently, researchers in forensic psychology are continually attempting to determine how to optimize information provision during witness interviews. One method that has been suggested by researchers is for the interviewers to take notes during interviews. In other domains (e.g., education, juries, clinical), note-taking has been shown to improve information retention, recall, and recognition, thereby suggesting that note-taking could potentially be a useful memory enhancement tool for investigators. However, some evidence also exists to suggest note-taking may produce a potential distraction effect in an interview setting – witnesses may perceive the interviewer negatively and subsequently provide less information. This literature review considers these contrasted findings and outlines future directions for this area of research.

## Résumé

Les entrevues d'enquête – en particulier, les entrevues avec les témoins – constituent un élément clé des enquêtes criminelles. Par conséquent, les chercheurs en psychologie judiciaire ne cessent d'essayer de déterminer comment optimiser la communication d'informations durant les entrevues avec les témoins. Les chercheurs ont suggéré comme méthode la prise de notes par les intervieweurs pendant les entretiens. Dans d'autres domaines (p. ex., enseignement, jurys, clinique), la prise de notes a fait ses preuves comme moyen d'améliorer la rétention de l'information, le rappel et la reconnaissance, ce qui laisse croire que la prise de notes pourrait être un outil d'amélioration de la mémorisation utile pour les enquêteurs. Cependant, certains éléments probants indiquent que la prise de notes est susceptible de produire un effet de distraction potentiel dans le cadre d'une entrevue; il est donc possible que les témoins perçoivent l'intervieweur négative-

ment et, de ce fait, fournissent moins d'information. La présente revue de la littérature analyse ces conclusions contrastées et définit les orientations futures de ce domaine de recherche.



One key determinant of whether or not a criminal investigation is solved is the completeness and accuracy of eyewitness accounts (Kebbell & Milne, 1998; Milne & Bull, 1999). Successful witness interviews can lead to the discovery of new information, inclusion and exclusion of suspects, and new lines of inquiry. However, interviewing is a complex process that is difficult to practice and receive training in, and often involves issues with both interviewer and witness memory (Shepherd, 1991). Thus, researchers are continually trying to improve best-practice investigative interviews without damaging memory retrieval.

One method that could be effective in improving investigative interviews is note-taking by police interviewers. Schreiber Compo, Gregory, and Fisher (2012) suggested that note-taking could be beneficial in enhancing interviewer memory for witness accounts because it helps officers reconstruct information later, through the activation of working and long-term memory systems. However, it is also possible that note-taking could be a distraction that divides officers' attention between listening to the witness and copying down information (Hickling, Hickling, Sison, & Radetsky, 1984). Another concern is the effect of note-taking on the witness; note-takers may appear disinterested in the information being provided because the witness does not receive the interviewer's full attention. This may result in distraction, negative perceptions of the interviewer, and a decrease in recall on the part of the witness.

The note-taking process is not standardized across police organizations. Although some jurisdictions do advocate for note-taking (e.g., Investigative Interviewing, 2013), it is difficult to know whether individual officers actually adhere to the practice. There are also some jurisdictions that advise against taking notes

during interviews (Achieving Best Evidence, 2011; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2015). Additionally, there are many police organizations for which no information is available regarding their use of note-taking. While empirical data on the use of note-taking by police officers is lacking, anecdotal evidence can shed some light on current practices; video footage of police interviews in the media often portray police officers not taking notes (e.g., *Making a Murderer, the Confession Tapes*). Given this apparent inconsistency in the use of note-taking in investigative interviews, empirical research on this topic is warranted to determine whether the benefits of note-taking in this context outweigh the costs.

### **Note-Taking: An Effective Memory Enhancement Technique**

Given the lack of empirical research on the effects of note-taking in investigative interviews, note-taking has been heavily studied in other fields. In particular, numerous studies have indicated the benefits of note-taking in the educational context. For example, DiVesta and Gray (1972) showed that when participants were allowed to take notes during a lecture, they remembered more information on a free recall test than participants who only listened to the lecture. The researchers concluded that note-taking is an important learning tool that should be used in schools to increase retention and recall of information. Various meta-analyses on this topic echo those results, suggesting that note-takers exhibit increased memory performance over those who do not take notes (e.g., Henk & Stahl, 1985; Kobayashi, 2005; Kobayashi, 2006).

There are two main theories that explain why note-taking is effective for improving memory performance. The *encoding function theory* of note-taking states that the process of taking notes itself (regardless of whether or not the notes are reviewed) leads to a greater increase in achievement than does listening only (Kierwa, 1985). This theory suggests that note-taking should be seen as a deep and meaningful reproduction of material, and thereby involves processing the recorded material in ways that make it relatable and personally understandable (DiVesta & Gray, 1972; Faber, Morris, & Lieberman, 2000). Unsurprisingly, research has shown that material generated during this encoding process better facilitates learning of said information than material that has only been heard (e.g., Benton, Kierwa, Whitfill & Denison, 1993; Bohay et al., 2011; Faber et al., 2000). According to Piolat, Olive, and Kellogg (2005), note-taking requires great cognitive effort because the note-taker must choose the material to be recorded, and do so in an organized manner that makes sense to

him or her. Therefore, it is possible that the mental effort required for taking notes (i.e., selecting and organizing material) makes it an effective strategy for improving memory. It has also been posited that taking notes allows the note-taker to record whatever subjective associations, inferences, and interpretations occurred to him or her while listening, thereby leading to more meaningful processing of material and contributing to increased retention, recall, and recognition (DiVesta & Gray, 1972).

While proponents of the encoding function theory believe that the act of taking notes itself is beneficial for retention and performance, other researchers argue for an alternative theory. The *external storage function theory* suggests that it is the act of reviewing notes that is beneficial for improving memory performance, as opposed to the act of taking notes itself (Carter & Van Matre, 1975; Kierwa, 1985). According to this theory, notes are useful because they give the note-taker an opportunity to store information somewhere other than the brain and review it later (Faber et al., 2000). In a study by Carter and Van Matre (1975), no difference in recall performance was found between participants who took notes and those who did not, but when participants were given the opportunity to review their notes prior to recall, they performed significantly better than those who did not have access to their notes. The fact that research supports both theories suggests that note-takers may benefit both from the act of taking notes and the ability to access an external copy of key concepts and ideas.

While empirical research on note-taking in witness interviews is lacking, the practice has been researched extensively in other areas of the criminal justice system, with most of the focus on jury recall. In a study where mock jurors were asked to take notes on trial proceedings, the participants reported that the process of note-taking helped refresh their memories and made the trial less difficult to understand (Flango, 1980). In a study by Rosenhan, Eisner, and Robinson (1994), mock jurors watched a video of a trial, while half of the jurors were allowed to take notes. The results revealed that note-takers scored significantly higher on a test of recall than non-note-takers. Heuer and Penrod (1988) found that jurors who took notes did not find that the act of note-taking was distracting to themselves or to other jurors.

### **Judging Note-Takers: Implications for Information Provision**

Although there is a wealth of evidence to support the effect of note-taking on improving recall, some research suggests that it could also be detrimental in an interview setting. In a study by Hickling et al.

(1984), clinical interviews were simulated and videotaped using professional actors as the therapist and client. The therapist either took notes during the session or simply listened. Participants watched the simulated interviews and were asked to rate the therapist's effectiveness, the client's perception of the session, and the overall session. Results showed that the session without note-taking was rated higher in all categories, suggesting that listening was preferred and that note-taking may have been viewed as distracting rather than facilitating.

Although there is a lack of research on note-taking in witness interviews, guidelines from police organizations in Canada and the U.K. suggest that note-taking during interviews can be detrimental in that it may distract the witness and lead to reduced information provision (RCMP, 2015; Investigative Interviewing, 2011). The fact that note-taking during an interview could be seen as distracting has major implications for its use in investigative interviews. For example, if witnesses do not feel that they are being listened to, they may be less likely to tell their whole story and could provide less information (e.g., RCMP, 2015). The negative findings regarding perception of note-taking call into question the application of the practice, regardless of its known positive effects for the mnemonic ability of the note-taker.

### **Explaining the Note-Taking Process**

One potential factor that could lead to the negative perception of note-taking is a lack of explanation about the note-taking process. Given that police interviews play a foundational role in solving crimes, it is crucial that the environment in which the interview is conducted is as accommodating as possible for the witness. Of particular importance is the introductory phase of an investigative interview, which stresses the importance of (1) sufficiently explaining the interview process to witnesses (e.g., expectations, purpose, routines), and (2) engaging with the witness (e.g., asking their preferred name, addressing personal needs; see Clarke, Milne & Bull, 2011; Walsh & Milne, 2008). This process of explaining interview procedures and engaging the witness aims to develop and increase rapport, a process that involves building the interviewer-witness relationship and has been shown to increase the amount of accurate information reported in an interview setting (Kieckhafer, Vallano, & Schreiber Compo, 2014; Schreiber Compo, Gregory, & Fisher, 2012). It is possible that if an explanation of the note-taking process were to be included during the introductory stage of an interview, the potential negative effects of note-taking could be mitigated.

### **Eye Contact: Signaling Interest in What is Being Said**

A second possible explanation for the negative perceptions of note-takers may be the level of eye contact during an interview. Maintaining eye contact with a witness is argued to be important in contributing to rapport and witness engagement, because it signals that the interviewer is confident and paying attention (Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013) – but no empirical research has been conducted on the effect of eye contact in police interviews, specifically. Social psychology research has shown that compared to those using indirect or no eye contact, higher ratings of credibility were given to people who used direct eye contact (Aguinis, Simonsen, & Pierce, 1998). The importance of eye contact has also been studied in clinical interviewing contexts. In one study, counsellors who maintained high (versus medium and low) levels of eye contact were rated higher on measures of attention, interest, respect, and genuineness (Kelly, 1978). Tipton and Rymer (1978), however, found that counsellors who maintained high (versus low) eye contact did not differ significantly on ratings of similar traits. Sharpley and Sagris (1995) suggest that good client-counsellor relationships are characterized by varying levels of eye contact at certain times during the interview, contributing to higher levels of rapport. If, in a clinical context, sufficient eye contact contributes to increased rapport – a critical component of witness interviewing – it is possible that maintaining eye contact during a witness interview may decrease the negative effects of note-taking (i.e., distraction, negative perceptions of interviewer, decreased information provision).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Note-taking has been shown to be an effective memory enhancement tool in various domains (i.e., educational, legal, and clinical settings), thereby suggesting that it could also be a useful tool for police interviewers. It is possible, however, that note-taking may also have a distracting effect during the interview and could decrease engagement and rapport between the interviewer and the witness. Based on the evidence that both supports and cautions against the use of note-taking in investigative interviews, and since it is not currently a standard practice, it is clear that this topic is deserving of further research. In particular, it would be useful to determine whether the benefits of note-taking in witness interviews outweigh the costs. Future research could test the benefits of note taking as well as the potentially distracting effects using a mock-interview design. The results of



this research will shed light on the benefits (and consequences) of note-taking in witness interviews. If the benefits of note-taking in this setting are confirmed, then researchers should look at two potential moderators of this effect: engagement with the witness (e.g., maintaining eye contact) and explanation of the note-taking process. Investigating these variables will allow researchers to determine the appropriate circumstances that will allow interviewers to reap the benefits of note-taking, without an added distraction factor or other negative experiences for the interviewee. This line of research could lead to an overall improvement in criminal investigations (e.g., reduction in miscarriages of justice, fewer wrongful convictions), and subsequently, improve the criminal justice system as a whole.



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# How to embark on your graduate school journey in a new country: tips for international students

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## Abstract

Over the past few decades, more and more students choose to pursue their master's or PhD degree abroad in order to expand their knowledge and experience different cultures. However, being in a new country often comes with significant challenges. New languages, cultures, onerous coursework and research tasks often overwhelm new international graduate students who have just started their life and study in a new country. These challenges, if not navigated well, may result in negative or even detrimental consequences. This article aims to present several tips such as academic and conversational language preparation, program information searching, accessing international student services, consulting for help when encountering difficulties, in order to help students prepare their new adventures in both daily living and study in new countries. These tips could yield practical implications for international graduate students by helping them fit in the new environment smoothly.

## Résumé

Au cours des dernières décennies, de plus en plus d'étudiants choisissent de poursuivre leurs études de maîtrise ou de doctorat à l'étranger afin d'élargir leurs connaissances et de s'exposer à des cultures différentes. Cependant, s'installer dans un nouveau pays s'accompagne souvent de défis de taille. Dans bien des cas, les nouveaux étudiants étrangers, qui viennent tout juste de commencer leur vie et leurs études dans un nouveau pays, sont souvent submergés par l'apprentissage d'une nouvelle langue et d'une nouvelle culture, ainsi que par des cours et des activités de recherche exigeants. Ces défis, s'ils ne sont pas relevés avec succès, peuvent avoir des effets négatifs, voire néfastes. Le présent article vise à présenter plusieurs conseils, comme la préparation au langage académique et l'apprentissage de la conversation, la préparation linguistique, la recherche

d'information sur le programme, l'accès aux services aux étudiants internationaux, la consultation si l'étudiant rencontre des difficultés, et ce, dans le but d'aider les étudiants à préparer leurs nouvelles aventures dans le quotidien comme dans leurs études, dans leur pays d'adoption. Ces conseils pourraient avoir des conséquences pratiques pour les étudiants internationaux; en les appliquant dans leur nouvel environnement, les étudiants pourront faire une transition sans heurt dans leur nouvelle vie.



Over the past few decades, international communications such as business trades and cultural communications among different countries have become increasingly close and more frequent than ever before (Buckley, Enderwick, & Cross, 2018). For example, Canada's goods exports to China rose 4% in 2016 and commercial ties between Canada and China has been tightened through talks on a free trade agreement (Global Affairs Canada, 2017). A new phenomenon, globalization, has been taking place and growing promptly in this context (Baylis, Owens, & Smith, 2017). Globalization has been defined as increasing interactions worldwide through the international flow of capital, ideas, knowledge and cultures (Bryant & Javalgi, 2016). Trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge are further identified as four main aspects of globalization by economists and sociologists (International Monetary Fund, 2002). With the fast development, globalization is still predicted to be a future trend over the next few decades (Aarts, van Ham, & Thomassen, 2017). Globalization provides individuals from different parts of the world with opportunities to freely travel, which encourages more and more students to study in different countries (Petersdotter, Niehoff, & Freund, 2017). For example, statistics from Canada showed that the number of Chinese students studying in Canada has increased from 56,906 people in 2010 to 83,990 people

in 2015 (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2015).

Studying abroad could greatly impact students' life and yield some long-term benefits. For example, a survey of 3,400 students who had studied abroad reported that personal growth, intercultural development, education and career attainment are three main benefits that studying abroad has brought to them (Mary & Courtney, 2013). To be more specific, 97% of them reported being more mature, 96% reported increased self-confidence, 98% of respondents reported that studying abroad helped them better understand different cultures and develop a more sophisticated way of looking at the world, and 75% reported that studying abroad influenced their career path and helped them find a satisfying job (Mary & Courtney, 2013).

Despite advantages that studying abroad brings, international students who have just started their life and study in new countries may face many challenges especially for those who also need to deal with onerous coursework and research tasks. Xu (2015) suggested that studying abroad can be risky because of language barriers, culture shock, and homesickness. If international students cannot effectively handle pressures from both study and life in new countries, then they are more likely to have mental health and emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, and higher risk of suicide (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004). This situation becomes worse for international graduate students, because they need to devote a large amount of time and energy to research and encounter research failures. Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, (2007) also investigated international graduate students' mental health reporting and use of counselling services at American universities; they found that compared with domestic students, international graduate students were less likely to report their mental health problems. They knew less information about counselling services provided on campus, and they were less likely to use these services. Therefore, how to help international graduate students fit into their new environment smoothly and deal with mental health concerns if they do arise is of deep concern for parents, counsellors, and universities policy-makers. Helping international graduate students will allow them to fully develop their potential and gain academic achievement in their new environment.

The purpose of this article is to present several tips on aspects of academic and conversational language improvements, accessing services and organizations catering to international students, program information searching, and consulting for help in troubled situations. These practical tips aim to provide ways for

international graduate students to get more familiar with the new environment, and prepare for their daily life and study in foreign countries. The utilization of these tips may help new international students fit into their new environments easier, which may help lead them down the right track in their academic life at graduate school.

### **Keep Polishing up Your Local Language**

Language is one of the biggest barriers for being in a new country. For most international graduate students who have never studied abroad before, language will be the main obstacle for future study and daily life (Louie, 2013). In order to quickly fit into the new environment, efforts should be made to keep polishing up the local languages skills. For international graduate students, academic reading and writing skills are particularly important because they are key to future success in all academic pursuits. If you are an international student, it might be worthwhile to try to read journal articles regarding your research field in your spare time. This could not only improve your language skills, but also help you develop new research ideas. You can also turn to the writing center for academic writing skill improvement and proofreading services. Some universities even provide graduate students with academic writing and presentation improvement courses to help them hone their academic presentation and writing skills.

Besides academic language skills, practicing your second language at a conversational level is also an effective way for you to adapt to this new environment. One suggestion is to contact the international student association at your university to see if there are any activities or events that can help you meet new friends in this new country. There are also some mentor-mentee programs for new international students to get conversational language help from the locals. Trying to make the most use of your university's resources is a good way to get more familiar with your university and also fit into the new environment.

### **Accessing Services and Organizations Catering to International Students**

New international graduate students often feel confused in the new environment because they do not know where to start in order to get more familiar with it. Organizations and services that cater to international students would be a good way to start off. Universities typically have a department or association that caters specifically to international students, providing information and resources related to studying, working and living in that country. For example, some



universities provide pre-arrival webinars regarding immigration documents and health insurance for incoming new international students. These webinars could provide some necessary instructions for graduate students before the start of the new semester. This department or association will also organize social events regularly for new international students to get to know students from different cultures and expand their social network. Some universities may also have a mentor-mentee program which match new international students with current students to help them get familiar with the new environment.

The career planning centre at each university can help international students develop work-related skills by providing services such as job interview rehearsal and cover letter writing workshops; it will provide useful information such as work permit application, internship and full-time job vacancy. For those who want to continue academia, the career planning centre can help with the statement of intent for PhD or postdoctoral fellowship application and also share research job opportunities such as teaching assistants or lecturer positions.

### **Checking Your Program Information Thoroughly**

Before starting your program, it is always a good idea to look up information thoroughly on your program website. In order to have a clear idea about what courses you want to register for and what trajectory you will be following over the next few years, it is important to find the program requirements, such as what credits you need to attain the full-time student status, or when is the deadline to complete your comprehensive exam. Typically, you should register for required courses as early as possible, whereas there is more flexibility around registering for complementary courses. Many international students may feel confused and overwhelmed in terms of course registration due to different educational system and course registration system. You can choose to register for courses based on your interests by looking at their descriptions. Universities normally would offer students various elective courses in order to enable students to fully develop their interests and potentials. Most universities would also have graduate student advisors who help students with the course selection in each department. Therefore, international students can register for courses they are interested in with the professional help from study advisors to ease the stress they have with coursework in the new environment.

It is also important to keep track of all key dates and deadlines, because you need to follow the predicted academic progression timeline for your pro-

gram of study to graduate in time. For example, when is the deadline to submit the ethics application? When is the deadline to submit your thesis? Because there might be many unpredictable factors when you are navigating graduate schools, it is always good to give yourself enough time before each deadline to thoroughly design and conduct your studies. Motivation to plan early and provide yourself with enough time before each deadline can help international graduate students succeed; even though being in a new environment may feel overwhelming at first, starting to plan as soon as possible can help reduce stressors later.

### **Talking to Your Supervisor and Senior Graduate Students in Your Lab**

When you face challenges and difficulties, do not hesitate to talk to your supervisor. As an experienced professor who probably went through similar setbacks and difficulties as you, he/she has the perfect qualifications and life experiences to guide you through this long journey. To be more specific, you could discuss your research ideas with him/her to see what they will advise and how they can help you polish your research project. You can send your manuscripts to them for further feedback and improvements. As new international graduate students, forming a close and open relationship with your supervisor will help you become more mature in your academic career, which will in turn allow you to explore more opportunities for research collaborations and publications.

You can also turn to senior students in your lab for help. They have more experience in preparing submissions for academic conferences, submitting manuscripts to journals and can give you practical advice on your academic presentations. Many labs are currently piloting lab mentor-mentee programs where senior graduate students mentor junior graduate students to help them get familiar with the environment and get ready for their incoming research career. International graduate students will gradually feel more confident in dealing with research tasks through the utilization of these resources.

### **International Graduate Students' Mental Health Issues**

New international graduate students can be more likely to experience mental health issues due to the multiple difficulties and challenges they encounter in their new environment (Hyun et al., 2007). Therefore, it is important for them to take initiative to learn more about mental health and counselling services that universities provide. Most universities have a student services department to organize regular mental health

workshops to inform students when and how to access these services; some universities also have student-led organizations such as a peer support group in each faculty or department, which could provide students with advice when they have emotional issues. International graduate students should also pay attention to the counselling centre at their universities, which can provide strong and effective support for international students who have mental health or emotional issues. Professional counsellors can listen to international graduate students' difficulties while giving reasonable advice; make sure to utilize such resources when you are not feeling well. Seeking timely and effective help can reduce negative consequences caused by these challenges by reducing their impact with effective coping strategies.

## Discussion

Being in a new country comes with lots of challenges and difficulties, most new international students who left their parents and friends to travel far away from home feel the homesickness, loneliness, and cultural shock during this journey. They may also feel stress caused from research tasks and coursework, and be likely to have emotional and mental health issues. Previous studies mainly focused on what mental or emotional problems international graduate students might have in the new environment (Hyun et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2004), but very few explored how to help them deal with these problems. This opinion piece aimed to provide several tips for new international graduate students to help them utilize different resources at their universities when they are in need. This article also has limitations; for example, how international graduate students can get help if resources at universities are not enough were not mentioned in this article. However, since the focus of this article was on providing information regarding services within universities, future investigation regarding these limitations could be conducted to help international graduate students. Overall, being in a new environment means opportunities; it allows you to leave your comfort zone and see the world differently. This can be a valuable asset for personal growth and career attainment. Try to be patient and keep an open-mind during this process because things are likely to work out if you have positive attitude and work hard.

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