



## EFPTA Newsletter January 2009

### Editor's note

This issue of the EFPTA's Newsletter focuses on the conference held in Helsinki, Finland, 7-8th of November 2008. Here you can read summaries of the various lectures, results from our workshop and an account of our visit to the International school of Tikkurila. Here is also the provisional programme of our next conference, to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland in April, 2009. First Jari Honkala, President of EFPTA, talks about the conference in Helsinki and some future plans of EFPTA.

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

Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir, editor, [harpah@mh.is](mailto:harpah@mh.is)

### A word from the ex-editor:

As ex-editor of the Newsletter I would like to express my thanks for good and interesting cooperation with all the people who contributed to the Newsletter during my editorship. For me it was a great pleasure that Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir was willing to take on the responsibility, and as you can see she is doing a great job.

I wish EFPTA and the Newsletter good luck in the future.

Annette Priskorn

## HELSINKI SEMINAR

Finnish Psychology Teachers Association invited European colleagues to Finland in November. Everything went fine and even the weather was nice. We have had a lot of rainy days but luckily during that seminar we didn't get wet.

Thursday evening we had a dinner together in Amarillo. It was a Mexican restaurant even though it sound Spanish. Some visitors came late in the night and I had a chance to meet them on Friday morning.

First we had a lecture by Phd. Sari Lindblom-Ylänne. She told us about psychology of learning. Then we went to lunch and after that we took a train to Vantaa. There is the International school of Tikkurila. Students told us many examples of how they study psychology and what kind of courses they have. I think that was the most interesting part of the seminar.

Then we went back to Helsinki and then President Tuomo Tikkanen told us about cooperation in Europe. His point of view was EFPA. After that we had a dinner in Sevilla.

Saturday morning we had a team work. I had divided participants in four groups, cooperation group, newspaper team, website masters and congress managers. They all produced good results except website masters because we had a little security problem at that time.

After lunch we had our first General Assembly. Unfortunately we had to take a little time out. We are going to finish that meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. There we are going to elect members to EFPTA Board for following three years.

Time went fast and I didn't have a chance to tell everyone what EFPTA is going to do next. Here it is. EFPTA is registered now. We had to make some changes for the request of Registration Authorities. Now I have done that. In January I'm going to make membership application to EFPA. Tuomo Tikkanen is going to help me with that. After that we can ask for help from EFPA. It is an official organization in EU and they listen to EFPA. And after we are members of EFPA they will support us in any way we want. I have also spoken with some MEP. And I'm going to use my position to make sure that Finnish MEP will find EU money for EFPTA.

International work is slow. Things don't happen very fast. I hope that during the following years we can finish the formalities that we have started.

Thank you all for the work for EFPTA in year 2008

In Tuusula 18.12.2008

Jari Honkala

Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. 2008

## Psychology of Learning

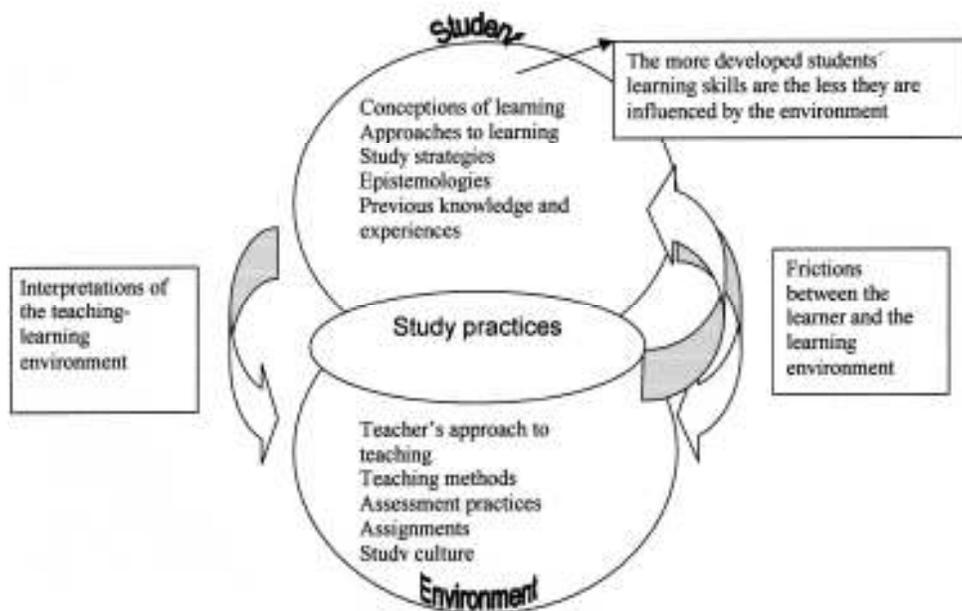
Aspects of learning, assessment, pedagogic...  
/ International research activities

**Sari Lindblom-Ylänne**

Professor of Higher Education

Helsinki University, Centre for Research and Development of Higher Education  
Faculty of Behavioural Sciences

Sari Lindblom-Ylänne started her lecture pointing out that the teaching – learning environment is thoroughly dynamic in nature and she gave an overview of the teaching-learning environment (graphic 1.1.) and of different learning approaches (graphic 1.2.)



[graphic 1.1]

Different approaches to learning	
Context- and task-specific and dynamic in nature	
Deep approach	Intention to maximise understanding Based on interest in the subject matter
Surface approach	Intention to cope with the course requirements Routine fact memorisation Related to an experience of high workload
Strategic approach	Organising studying Intention to succeed well

[graphic 1.2.]

To understand the relation of learning approaches (students), learning environment and outcome, there was research done at Helsinki University.

First step was a questionnaire on approaches to learning of students at the University of Helsinki and to dimensions of students' perceptions of their teaching-learning environment:

<b>Approaches to learning of students at the University of Helsinki - collected in a questionnaire</b>
▪ Argumentative and analytical approach
▪ Organised studying
▪ Aiming at understanding
▪ Surface approach

<b>Dimensions of students' perceptions of their teaching-learning environment</b>
▪ Teaching for understanding
▪ Alignment of expected learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment practices and criteria
▪ Staff enthusiasm and support
▪ Interest and relevance
▪ Constructive feedback
▪ Support from other students

**First results:**

- Discipline has an effect on approaches to learning:
- Argumentative and analytical approach was most common in Behavioural Sciences, Theology and Social Sciences.
- Meaning-oriented students were most common in Bioscience, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Arts, Agriculture, Science and Law.
- Reproduction-oriented students were most common in Science but rare in Behavioural Science.

For correlations between approaches to learning and the experience of the teaching-learning environment see scales below:

Correlations between approaches to learning and experience of the teaching-learning environment sum scales (N=2509)  $p < 0.000$

Scales	Teaching for understanding	Alignment	Staff enthusiasm and support	Interest and relevance	Constructive feedback	Support from other students
Argumentative and analytical approach	.37	.23	.29	.34	.27	.15
Aiming at understanding	.25	.27	.20	.32	.24	.20
Organised studying	.23	.30	.24	.42	.24	.20
Surface approach	-.33	-.38	-.30	-.38	-.16	-.15

That approaches to learning can predict study success was shown in first research results on law students:

- Students with analytical and argumentative approach succeeded the best: they had the highest grades, completed (and passed) more examinations than others and earned the highest amount of study points
- Reproduction-oriented students succeeded the worst

This is not really a surprise. Unfortunately no research has been done so far on how an analytical and argumentative approach can be developed with students as early as possible.

Renate Schrempf

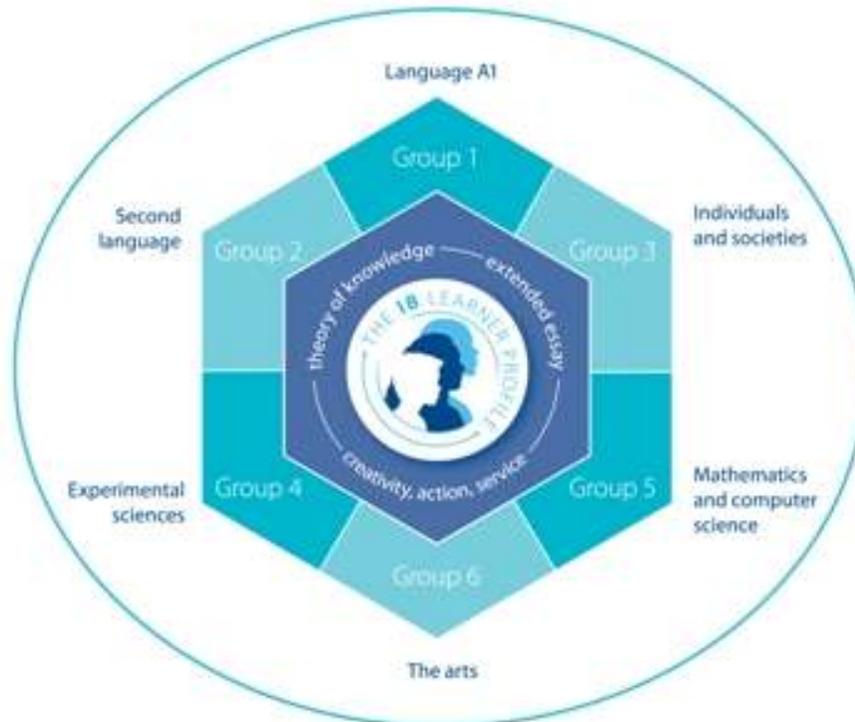
## **“There might be some subjects you want to skip if you have a headache, but psychology isn’t one of them!”**

Student of psychology - International School of Tikkurila

We visited the International School of Tikkurila and were greeted by students from the IB programme (The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme). The school has 1100 students and about 100 of them are part of the IB programme. The IB programme is a challenging two-year curriculum, which aims to prepare the students for university study and global citizenship. The IB works with 2,500 schools in 132 countries and the programme is taught in English, French and/or Spanish. The curriculum can be illustrated by a hexagon with six academic areas surrounding the three core requirements.

During the two-year program, students:

- study six subjects chosen from the six subject groups
- complete an extended essay
- follow a theory of knowledge course (TOK)
- participate in creativity, action, service (CAS)





Janina Granholm, Andra Nemtanu and Neha Sarin

The students, Janina, Andra and Neha, told us about the school and their favourite subject, psychology. They then showed us around the school. We visited classes of English Literature and Psychology, met some of the teachers and had the opportunity to speak with many students. We told the students about ourselves and the teaching of psychology in our countries and they told us about their studies.

Maija Ferchen, the IB psychology teacher, told us that one of her main goals is to teach the students things that are useful in their lives. She does not only want to teach them about problems and abnormal behaviour but also what they can do to make their lives better, help them understand themselves better and things that happen around them. One of the things that the students are interested in now are the recent school shootings in Finland. To better understand what happened they are trying to look at it from many different perspectives.

The visit was a success but I think we all agree that the very best part of it was meeting and talking to the students. They were so articulate, bright and funny and very enthusiastic about their studies, especially psychology! They talked much about how learning psychology had changed their way of thinking about a lot of things. They said they were more open-minded, less prejudiced and more likely to see things from many perspectives. One student said, "It is not a simple thing and you are not a simple person anymore, you have so many thoughts flowing." Another said, "You learn to see things as they are and to look at the big picture, we have many different explanations for things that are happening now." And a third student, "I'm now more open-minded and I analyze everything and get a flow of ideas".

To listen to these students glowing with interest when talking about psychology clearly shows how intriguing and significant our subject is and how important our goal is: To make the teaching of psychology offered in as many countries as possible.

Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir

## **Cooperation in Europe**

**Tuomo Tikkanen**

President of EFPA 1999-2007

EFPA - European Federation of Psychologist' Associations was founded in Germany in 1981. It provides a forum for European co-operation in a wide range of fields of academic training, psychology practice and research. There are 34 member associations of EFPA, representing about 200,000 psychologists. The goal is to get member associations in all 45 European countries. Only one national association from each country can be a member. In some countries there are many psychologists' associations and then it is necessary to identify the one that is the most representative of the country. In many countries it has encouraged psychologists to join forces and to develop national federations to promote co-operation among psychological associations.

Tuomo talked about the many EFPA benefits. One of the most important things is the opportunity for free and direct exchange of information and experience, for example about education and training, professional practice, legal regulations, working circumstances and salaries/finance systems

Another benefit of EFPA is the importing/exporting of best practices in Europe, for example the best legal regulations, the best professional status, the best working conditions, the best salaries and most influential associations.

Political contacts and influence are also an important aspect of the EFPA work, which includes assistance in negotiating with the European Commission, giving advice and assistance with letters to national governments, consultative status in relation to the Council of Europe and the development of EuroPsy. EuroPsy is a European standard of education and training which enables individual psychologists to be recognised as having a identical European standard of qualification in psychology. It is based on a 6-year-education and training in psychology which includes a year of supervised practice. 22 countries now use the EuroPsy model. One of the benefits is that it facilitates the mobility of qualified professionals across Europe.

Tuomo was president of EFPA for 8 years and said it was fun, very worthwhile and amazingly influential, yet sometimes very difficult and time-consuming. He said it was interesting to get to know the different cultures in our small continent, the differences in perspectives, in how close people are, how they express themselves and how committed they are in their work.

Tuomo's final advice for us in EFPTA was to go down a similar path as EFPA, focus on finding the best practices in psychology teaching and then find a way to share that among the countries.

Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir

**Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. 2008**

## **Comenius Projects**

**Auli Fagerström**

Headmaster of International Classes of  
Maunula Secondary School, Helsinki

Auli Fagerström told us about the Comenius Projects. Comenius enables students and staff from across Europe to work together on joint projects of various kind. It provides opportunities for schools and colleges to introduce or strengthen the European dimension in their curriculum. There are 31 countries taking part in the Comenius projects, all the present member countries of EFPTA included. In every country there is an agent who can help suggesting projects.

The projects have to run for at least 2 years and must have minimum 3 schools from different countries. Teachers and students from the schools participating visit each other and work on different projects. They usually get funding from the EU for 10,000-26,000 Euros.

Auli told us about a few projects she has been involved in in the past years and a current project. In the years 1997-2000 Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Germany and Italy worked together on a project called "*5 Cultures in the United Europe*". Other projects have been for example "*Sustainable development*" and "*Better schools in an enlarging Europe*". The present program (2008-2010) is called "*Europe and its many faces*". Finland is the coordinator and the other countries are France, Portugal, Greece, Germany and Italy. Over the 3 years there are 5 visits (2 teachers and 5-7 students) with different themes.

Auli believes that the Comenius Projects have a great impact on many levels. The students become more independent, confident and socially minded, and their language skills improve. The teachers of different subjects get an opportunity to work together and the visits give inspiration to their own teaching. Teachers also meet and get to know each other outside the school environment and their language skills improve. Last but not least it has an impact on the school environment. The European dimension can be seen in everyday school work, it enlivens school life and becomes a natural part of normal school activities.

It is clear that the impact can be great but in projects like these there are of course some difficulties too. One of the biggest problem is the language as it can be difficult to find a common language. It can also be hard to find the time for the cooperation since the countries have school holidays at different times. It can be difficult to meet deadlines and there are cultural differences that can be challenging.

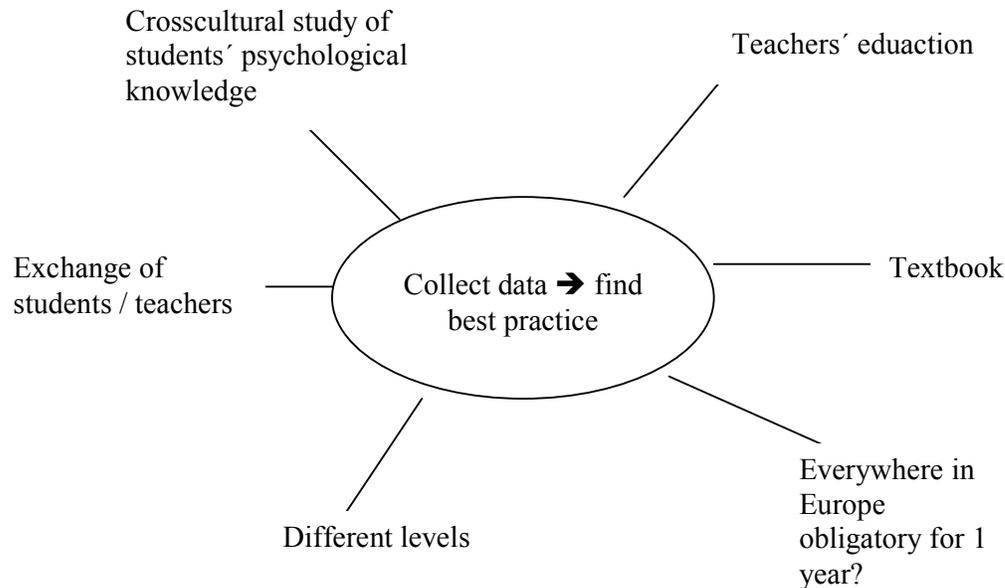
Auli gave us some good advise saying that a preparatory visit is advised and that the teachers involved should get to know each other well early in the process. Good planning is the key to success: "Well planned, half done!".

Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir

## Workshop results

### Cooperation team:

In our workshop we collected ideas of what can be done to promote psychology as an obligatory school subject everywhere in Europe and to share best practice.



- Montse and Hans agreed to think about the crosscultural study of students' psychological knowledge
- Morag, Lenka and Renate will work on a database on the situation of psychology as a school subject in Europe

### Newsletter team:

In the Newsletter group were Annette Priskorn (the ex-editor of the Newsletter), Camilla Norrko and Harpa Hafsteinsdóttir (the present editor). We all thought that we should continue to publish summaries of lectures from the seminars and the results of our work in the workshops. As the work of EFPTA continues to grow it will be interesting to publish stories of co-operation, various projects and research done by our members.

We also talked about the distribution of the Newsletter, how is it done in different countries? In some countries at least it is distributed to all psychology teachers through the national teachers' associations, and we feel that it should be the case in every country.

Of course there are many more ways to make the Newsletter even more interesting! A couple of years ago the Newsletter for example published interviews with students and teachers of psychology in various countries. It was very interesting to read about different views and situations in our countries and that could possibly be taken up in future Newsletters. We could invite teachers to write about interesting things they are doing in their teaching, exciting ideas of teaching methods or assessment or to give examples of great experiences in the classroom. We could ask our teachers to recommend or even review great books, articles or films, related to psychology, that they have come across. In the end it will be the interests of our members that will shape the future development of the Newsletter.

### **Seminar team:**

The group was built by Joe Cocker, Marjatta Lehtovirta, Udo Kittler and Jari Honkala. It was discussed, that we will need both: One day of the meeting with interesting seminars and one day only for administrative business.

The administrative business has always to follow the current agenda and the regularities of the EFPTA-constitution. The seminars should follow interesting and mostly interesting scientific questions and discussions according to both –the development of our school subject and development or trends in our science (research). The contents of seminars should follow:

#### **(like a mainstream of concentrated contential/potential insight)**

1. a general scientific topic (one theory) of
2. national research situation of
3. the meeting place with
4. an overview how the other nations think about this theory and
5. pointing out possible consequences for
6. our common curriculum in the future

#### **or like a more open discussion of different, but interesting open topics**

1. like overviews
2. combined with good reliable resources
3. perhaps with links to internet data bases
4. and analysing the consequences for teaching and instruction
5. to improve their necessity or use for instruction
6. on what level at school

Example: Can the Instructional Design (Robert Gagné) be useful and helpful to enhance learning outcomes in the lectures? How do the British, the Finnish, the German, the Romanian teachers value this “Learning theory”?

The seminars should deal with standards we prefer:

1. time: No report longer than 30 minutes
2. in English (otherwise with interpreter: 45 minutes at maximum)
3. support for audience by handouts and
4. PowerPoint presentation
5. perhaps presenting videos (like Luidmila did in Dortmund two years ago) combined with short introduction and short comment at the end and
6. some suggestions where this medium should be placed within the syllabus

Final consideration of the working group:

- (1) According to our two meetings each year the board should decide:**
  - a) one business meeting and one meeting for our scientific or practical abilities**
  - b) two meetings a year, each with one day EFPTA-business/decisionmaking and one day scientific programme**
- (2) Proposals for the next meetings:**

<b>2009</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Edinburgh</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Athena or Paris or Spain</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Amiens</b>
- (3) According to budget questions everywhere options of common travelling and suitable accommodations should be considered (lower expenses strategy)**
- (4) Information monthly should be considered**
- (5) Guideline for EFPTA-progress: Finland is the only country where ToP is a compulsory subject**

## EFPTA / ATPS Conference, 16-19 April 2009, Edinburgh, Scotland

### Provisional Programme

#### Thursday 16 April

Some delegates arrive, and meet for dinner at a restaurant.

#### Friday 17 April

**Venue: James Gillespie's High School, 57 Lauderdale Street, Edinburgh EH9 1DD**

##### Morning

- 9.00-10.00 Registration
- 10.00-10.15 Welcome by the President of EFPTA & ATPS Committee
- 10.15-11.15 Speaker: Carol Craig, Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing.
- 11.15-11.45 *Tea & coffee*
- 11.45-12.00 Darwin anniversary – Joe Cocker
- 12.00-12.45 EFPTA Survey project - report on progress

##### 12.45-13.45 Lunch

##### Afternoon

- 13.45-14.45 Student presentation
- 14.45-15.15 *Tea & coffee*
- 15.15-16.30 European collaborative workshops
- 16.30-17.30 EFPTA Council

##### Evening

*Dinner / entertainment*

#### Saturday 18 April

**Venue: Dynamic Earth, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AS**

##### Morning

- 9.00-10.00 Registration
- 10.00-10.15 Welcome by ATPS Committee
- 10.15-11.15 Speaker: Dave Perrett(?)
- 11.15-11.45 *Tea & coffee*
- 11.45-12.30 Workshop session 1 – choice of 2 workshops

##### 12.30-13.15 Lunch

##### Afternoon

- 13.15-14.00 Workshop session 2 – choice of 2 workshops
- 14.00-14.10 Presentation of prizes
- 14.10-14.45 Short items slot
- 14.45 *Tea & coffee*
- 14.45-15.30 ATPS AGM
- 15.30-17.30 EFPTA general meeting (all welcome), and wine reception.

##### Evening

*Dinner / entertainment*

#### Sunday 19 April

Optional sightseeing in Edinburgh, eg Museum of Scotland, Zoo (including primate research centre), historic underground tour, Edinburgh Castle, National Gallery etc.