



# *enPSYCHlopedia*

*A Standard Deviation Above the Mean*

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Editor: Mary W. Godwin, M.A.

## **Cross Cultural Psychology – An Experience to Remember**

**By Linda D. Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology**

**Teacher** (Noun): One who imparts knowledge; one who guides and instructs; one who oversees the transference of information to others

**Student** (Noun): The recipient of instruction

Yes, I am the teacher, the instructor. I put together the syllabus, lecture, and lead discussions. I write the midterm exam and assign final grades. I “teach” the class. The young people attending Belmont University are technically my students for all of 15 weeks. But these labels, with their dichotomous implications do not begin to describe the dynamic in my Cross Cultural Psychology classroom – excuse me, our Cross Cultures Psychology classroom I alone do not possess ownership of this class. This semester long adventure, and believe me it is an adventure, is a collaboration with my students. In sum, we are all teachers, and we are all students.

Cross Cultural Psychology, as defined by Matsumoto (Hill, 2000) is “a branch of psychology that examines cultural influences on human behavior via the mechanism of cross cultural comparison, where two or more cultures are compared against each other.” The purpose of the course is to teach students how to think critically about cultural differences and cultural influences on human behavior, and to help them understand, respect, and feel cultural diversity and its influence on human behavior. As originally conceived by Dr. Valjean Whitlow\*, this class offering was designed to offer the student a more experiential experience. Instead of solely relying on textbooks or activity manuals to describe how various psychological processes are similar or different in diverse cultures, the class has been intentionally set up as a field based class. While it is important to base the class on a sound theoretical foundation, relying on these materials alone does not promote an emotional connection to the material. As an instructor, I end up hindering my students’ potential and understanding if I choose not to go beyond the boundaries of the classroom walls. I might foster some individual development, but using the text alone would not teach empathy, change stereotypes, or force the student to confront past influences on present behavior. As Parker Palmer suggests, education is a way of guiding students on an inner journey which produces more truthful ways of seeing and being in their world. His definition of good teachers are those who are “deeply engaged” with their students and the subject matter and are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a web for themselves” (p. 11).

So practically speaking, what does this mean? How have Parker Palmer’s ideas been fostered in my Cross Cultural Psychology classroom? How have I challenged and engaged students (myself included) in such a manner that they are willing to take an inner journey to seek more truthful ways? First, it has been imperative to present information from the viewpoint that Cross Cultural Psychology is not some “quasi-science” course. As part of the discipline of psychology, it has to hold up to the rigors of the scientific method. Thus, we as students begin by examining research methodology. Many of the theories and ideals we hold to be truths are based upon Western standards. Am I implying that the data is flawed or incorrect – that information about psychological processes and human behavior from this viewpoint is wrong? No, not at all! I am merely suggesting that perhaps the cloth (i.e., the web, the outcomes, the data) has been tightly and sometimes simply woven. In encouraging critical thought, in assisting my students to weave their own web as they begin this journey, the question has to be asked: Is “the truth” “their truth” or one of many “truths?” Is the cloth (i.e., the web) strong enough to endure scientific scrutiny and yet flexible enough, pliable enough to adapt to other ways of being? For example, in exploring psychopathology, depression to be specific, symptoms of this disorder in Western culture are sometimes quite different from its’ expression around the world. Does this mean that one way of being depressed is superior to other ways of being depressed? No, quite the contrary! Of course we would expect peoples of the world to express depression in a different manner. Cross cultural research simply helps us to understand the diversity present in the world. As obvious as this sounds however, cross cultural research has not always been the norm in terms of examining various psychological processes. As we have grown as a discipline, so have our methods.

The second challenge in this course has been to establish trust and security in the classroom. Without these two factors present, there is nothing I could say or do that would promote honest discussion and self-revelation. Thus, I made the decision to become vulnerable to my students by sharing my own prejudices and stereotypes. I have been rewarded immensely! I will never forget the student who trusted me and his classmates enough to ask about the controversy surrounding the confederate flag. Not only did he feel

secure in not being attacked for his views, he was willing to listen to others. Being present to witness a student discover a new reality, that “a-ha” experience is what every teacher craves. Listening to a second student discuss her ability to express for the first time (her words) at Belmont some of the issues she confronts as part of a minority culture is gratifying. Watching another student discuss aloud her indoctrination of certain beliefs and then seeing her chip away at them little by little as she confronted different realities. It has been a challenge for me as well – my realities, even at this point in my life need continued refinement. However, this is not to give the impression that it has always been easy – a feel-good experience twice a week. Some of the class discussions have been controversial, with the tension electrifying. I have cringed with and for my students when we have listened to speakers go way beyond the sensitivities and sensibilities of political incorrectness. Despite our differences (from the most fundamental to the most liberal), we have been able to sit and talk, to speak and listen, and to divulge our own realities without negative repercussions. The theoretical and abstract have become concrete. This Cross Cultural Psychology class is still a work in progress. I am still working on the details, incorporating new activities and discarding others. What I can say with certainty though, is that in the two semesters I have “taught” the class, it has truly been an experience to remember.

### References

Hill, G.W.IV (2000). Incorporating a cross-cultural perspective in the undergraduate psychology curriculum. An interview with David Matsumoto. Teaching of Psychology, 27, 71-75.  
Palmer, P. (1998). The courage to teach. San Francisco, California; Jossey Bass, Inc.

\*I would like to thank Dr. Valjean Whitlow for her outstanding ideas and invaluable assistance.

### Student Research

This past spring our psychology majors presented their research at a number of conferences including the Middle Tennessee Psychological Association (Alissa Flory, Rose Brummett, Jacquelyn Pennings, Danielle Taylor, Meghan Kibler, Marsha Zurawicki, Luther Tanley, Josh Petersen, Ashley Lovell, Brenda Lee-Peery, and Shereen Haj-Hassan). The Southeastern Psychological Association (Posters: Alissa Flory, Jacquelyn Pennings, Erin Reed, & Danielle Taylor; Papers: Josh Petersen, Kelly Voss, Rose Brummett, Jacquelyn Pennings, Brent Brinkmeier, Nancy Conway, Jacqueline Wilson & Matt Workman ; Panel Presentation: Greer Patton & Josh Petersen), and The American Psychological Association (Rose Brummett & Kelly Voss).

In addition the following students participated in our own Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium (BURS):

- Rose Brummett & Jacquelyn Pennings, “Perfectionism: Relationships to Personal Responsibility and Achievement Striving” (Faculty Advisor: William N. Bailey)
- Alissa Flory, “Self-Monitoring In Dating Relationships: The Relationship Between Self-Monitoring and Awareness of Romantic Dating Relationships” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Amanda D. Krantz, “The Effect of Music Tempo and Volume on Anxiety” (faculty Advisor (Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Marsha G. Zurawicki, “the Perception of Self-Confidence Within Individuals” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Katy A. Blasingame, “Auditory Stroop Effect and Automatic Gender Stereotypes” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Erin C. Reed, “Do I Think You See What I See? A Study of Maternal Relationships and The Body Images of Females (Faculty advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Rebekah N. Harrison, “The Effects of Education about Sexual Bias Advertising on Body Image” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Meghan M. Kibler, “The Relationship Between racial Views and crime Sentencing” (faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Ashley E. Lovell “ Do ‘You Know’ What I Mean?: Evaluating the Perceptions of Tag Questions” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Brenda Lee-Peery, “Effects of Performance Anxiety on Perceptions of Performance and Participation within Collaborative Work-Groups” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Joshua B. Petersen, “Concomitants of Antisocial Behavior in Prison Populations” (Faculty Advisor: Valjean M. Whitlow)
- Michael Gregg, Melanie Morris, Stefanie Kibler, & Kelly Voss, “The Relationship Between Visual Capture and Two-Point Discrimination” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Danielle Taylor, “The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Conformity” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Luther C. Tanley, “The Relationships Among Procrastination, Low Self-Efficacy and the Inability to Delay Gratification” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Melissa A. Giorgi, “Effects of Pictures and Personality Information on Perceptions of Physically Disabled Children” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)
- Shereen Haj-Hassan, “Affinity for Fat in Restrained and Unrestrained Eaters” (Faculty Advisor: Lonnie R. Yandell)



**BURS Presenters, Spring 2001**

**Graduates since last issue:**

**December 2000**

Vara Castleberry  
Dabney Clarke  
Nancy Conway  
Jill Faccia  
Courtney Clarke Hensley  
Steven Hooper  
Pam Treakle

**May 2001**

Rose Brummett  
Dana Carter  
Angela Green  
Shereen Haj-Hassan  
Ashley Jones  
Amanda Krantz  
Adie Liace  
Jacquelyn Pennings  
Josh Petersen  
Chaeli Thomas

**August 2001**

Paige Resha

**Our Alumni –**

**Carol Galvin '86** is the Coordinator of Client Information and Court Services for the Domestic Violence Intervention Center. She received her masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy in '98. This past year she went bungee jumping in New Zealand.

**Cara (Butterworth) Aboona '95** is a corporate trainer for Bluestar.net and is pursuing a master's degree in education at Trevecca University.

**Christy (Davis) Allen '97** received her MS in Psych-Mental Health Nursing from Vanderbilt and is working at the Psychiatric Hospital at Vanderbilt.

**Ronald Samuels '71** is an employee benefits specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources. He became a grandfather in '99.

**Susan (Scott) VanDyke '99** is a law student at the University of Alabama. She married Will VanDyke in July of 2000.

**Megan (Jefferson) Verret '92** is a People Development Manager with Tricon Global Restaurants (KFC, Pizza Hut, etc.). She now has a Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

**Jacque Wilson '00** presented a poster at the APA meeting in Washington, DC last year. She is currently working as a Research Assistant for Drs. Wendy Stone and James Walker at Vanderbilt University Medical Center

**Amy Moore '97** is employed by Mercy Ministries of America

**Jennifer (Brumbelow) Lawrence '94** is living in Los Angeles working as the Web writer and editor for the California Science Center. She also is working as an editor for the Art & Science Studio, a program dedicated to exploring the relationship between art and science

**Jennifer Weiss '92** is an intern at the Minneapolis VA Hospital in their Health Psychology Track

**Michael Loftin '96** is living in Franklin and working for Sawyer & Associates, a small company which provides mental health services on a contract basis to small medical facilities that cannot afford full-time psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurse practitioners on their payrolls. He is working with nursing homes and rehabilitations centers. He received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Georgia in May (*see New Adjuncts*).

**Emily (Johnson) Hardcastle '96** is attending Columbia University where she is working on both an MSW and an MBA

### **Psi Chi and the Psychology Club**

This group got off to a great start for the year.

The officers for the year are:

- President: Kelly Voss
- Vice-President: Ashley Lovell
- Secretary: Melissa Giorgi
- Treasurer: Marsha Zurawicki
- Historian: Stefanie Kibler
- Reporter: Staci Roberts
- SGA Liaison: Luther Tanley
- Advisors: Dr. Giordano & Dr. Jones

We are continuing to use e-mail to announce all events. If you live in the Middle Tennessee area and would like to come to some events, please send your e-mail to [godwinm@mail.belmont.edu](mailto:godwinm@mail.belmont.edu) and we would be happy to include you on our list. All psychology students are encouraged to attend all events. Membership in Psi Chi is not necessary to participate.

**Dr. Giordano Is New Psi Chi President** -- Dr. Peter Giordano became the National President of Psi Chi at the APA meeting held in San Francisco in August.

### **PURS 2001**

The Psychology Department will be hosting the annual Psychology Undergraduate Research Symposium (PURS) in the morning of November 28, 2001. The symposium will be held in the Multimedia Hall of the Bunch Library. The program will begin at 9:00 AM with a keynote address by Dr. Stephen Davis, a nationally known educator in psychology. Dr. Davis earned his Ph.D. from Texas Christian University in General Experimental Psychology. He has published extensively on student cheating, conditioned taste aversion learning, and selected personality characteristics. A nationally recognized psychology editor, Davis has received virtually every honor possible for his teaching, including the American Psychological Foundation's Distinguished Teaching in Psychology Award, and the Teaching Excellence Award from Division Two of the American Psychological Association. In 1986, Davis received the first Florence Denmark National Faculty Advisor Award from Psi Chi. He has served as national President of Psi Chi, the Southwestern Psychological Association, the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, and Division Two of the American Psychological Association. In 1995, he led a contingent of psychology students from across the United States on a 15-day European tour to visit international psychologists in health service, industrial, and academic settings. Following the address by Dr. Davis will be research presentations by Psychology students. High school students taking AP Psychology at area high schools have been invited to attend and will be our guests for lunch.

### **Belmont Psychology Welcomes**

#### **A New Faculty Member**

#### **Dr. Michael Sullivan, Ph.D.**

Dr. Sullivan comes to Belmont as a graduate of Wabash College (AB 1995) and the University of Notre Dame (MA 1997, PhD 2000). Dr. Sullivan's area of specialization is in Social Psychology, an interest fostered during his undergraduate days as a History major. He found that psychology (especially social psych) offered an opportunity to address how and why "historical" events occurred by

focusing on how individuals might influence and be influenced by factors surrounding events. This type of questioning has led him to conduct research concerning how accurately members of small groups perceive others, effects of mixed motive situations (simultaneously competitive & cooperative goals – like aspects of “Survivor”) on people’s judgments, and social influences on abusive alcohol use by college students. It is also directly related to his current interest of identifying the process by which individuals are influenced by their role models, heroes, or celebrities. Dr. Sullivan, who grew up in Indiana, and his wife Sabina Gesell, who grew up in Germany and Boston, have one dog and are happily adjusting to life in the South.

#### **And Two New Adjuncts**

##### **Dr. Michael C. Loftin, Ph.D.**

Dr. Loftin earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Georgia, graduating in 2001 with a specialization in behavioral medicine. He has a B.S. in psychology from Belmont. His research and clinical interests include the areas of: chronic pain, medication compliance, and alcohol-related aggression. He currently is employed as a clinical psychologist in Middle Tennessee, working primarily with geriatric patients, but enjoys teaching on a part-time basis at Belmont. He is a member of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, American Pain Society, and American Psychological Association. Other interests include: art history, military history, and SEC sports. He and his wife Robin also enjoy spending time with their beagle.

##### **Dr. Lynn Nielsen-Bohlman, Ph.D.**

Dr. Nielsen-Bohlman received her BA (1983) in Psychobiology from the California State University at Long Beach, where she participated in animal learning research and was a science tutor in the Educational Opportunity program. She completed her doctoral research (Physiology 1994) on frontal cortical contributions to memory with R T Knight at the University of California, Davis, and became active in elementary and middle school science outreach. Her postdoctoral research in inferior posterior cortical involvement in unconscious memory was carried out with A P Shimamura at the University of California, Berkeley. During her fellowship in Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, she continued to study memory mechanisms in neurological patient populations. She moved to Tennessee, joining the Vanderbilt Psychiatry faculty, to take advantage of the opportunity to study memory mechanisms in normal and pathological aging, and joined Belmont to have the opportunity to teach at the undergraduate level. While in Nashville Dr. Nielsen-Bohlman has developed a successful program of science outreach in conjunction with the Brain Awareness Week program. She is an avid computer geek and gamer, interests she holds in common with her 18 year old son Daniel.

#### **Events in Spring 2002**

- March 21-24 – Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) will meet in Orlando, Florida. A number of our majors have sent in letters of intent to present at this conference. We will have more information about this in our spring issue.
- April 12 – Belmont’s Psychology department will be hosting teaching workshop for high school teachers of Advanced Placement Psychology. It is sponsored by the Teaching of Psychology for Secondary Schools (TOPSS) a part of APA. High school teachers from around this area will be attending.
- April 20 – Belmont will once again host the Middle Tennessee Psychological Association (MTPA) annual spring meeting. Keynote speaker will be Dr. David Myers of Hope College. Dr. Myers introductory textbook is the best selling textbook in the nation, and he has authored a number of other textbooks. This meeting attracts both undergraduate and graduate researchers from schools in this area, including MTSU, Austin Peay, David Lipscomb, Trevecca and others

#### **Dean’s List – Psychology Majors – Spring 2001**

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Kari Basden        | Sarah Osborne          |
| Brooke Berrie      | Heena Patel            |
| Katy Blasingame    | Terri Patterson        |
| Rose Brummett      | Jacquelyn Pennings     |
| Bethany Flowers    | Joshua Petersen        |
| Melissa Giorgi     | Mary Margaret Phillips |
| Beth Griffin       | Katherine Ranganath    |
| Issac Harper       | Erin Reed              |
| Rebekah Harrison   | Augusto Ricciardi      |
| Stacy Hill         | Brittany Shupe         |
| Jennifer Jones     | Gregory Sullivan       |
| Kate Kelsey        | Emily Tanner-Smith     |
| Meghan Kibler      | Chaeli Thomas          |
| Stefanie Kibler    | Kelly Voss             |
| Ashley Lovell      | Marsha Zurawicki       |
| Marilyn McAllister |                        |

#### **Psi Chi Is Ten Years Old**

Psi Chi, The National Honor Society in Psychology is celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the Belmont campus. They will hold the fall induction on November 28 in the Belmont Mansion. Dr. Stephen Davis will speak at the induction. (See *PURS 2001*) He assisted in the induction of our chapter ten years ago.