
Psi-Conductive Practices and Issues: Introducing Invited Papers

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The following section of this issue of the *EJP* contains six invited papers, all dealing with topics related to psi-conductive experimenter practices and issues. These papers stem from a panel at the 1996 Convention of the Parapsychological Association. One goal of the panel was to make explicit information about psi conductive experimenter practices and issues which too often exists only in the realm of tacit knowledge. Contributors were encouraged to present their personal thoughts and insights about psi conductive issues and to share laboratory lore gained from their experimental experience. In this way it was hoped that anecdotal and/or subjective knowledge that may sometimes be seen as unsuitable for inclusion in experimental publications, could be shared with others. Thus much of the following is offered not as 'hard facts', but rather as a sharing of perspectives and insights that may be helpful to other psi researchers, and that may shed further light on the presence of experimenter effects in parapsychological work. Furthermore, it is hoped that some of the ideas presented herein may prompt future experimental examination.

Four members of the PA panel have contributed papers: Kathy Dalton, Deborah Delanoy, Gertrude Schmeidler and Russell Targ, whose contribution is co-authored with Jane Katra. These papers range from specific suggestions for potentially psi-conductive experimental behaviour, to more conceptual considerations of experimenter effects. Rhea White, who was invited to join the panel but was unable to attend the Convention, kindly contributed her thoughts and insights to this issue as well. John Palmer was invited to write a paper expanding upon a commentary he offered about experimenter effects during the panel's discussion period.

Important Psi-Conductive Practices and Issues: Impressions from Six Parapsychological Laboratories

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Abstract: In 1989 six U.S. parapsychology laboratories were visited to gain information relevant to the development of the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology's new research laboratory facilities. Information was gathered via observation and interviews with laboratory researchers; that related to the largely anecdotal, tacit area of psi-conductive practices is presented herein. The obtained information deals with four broad categories of psi-conductive considerations: laboratory design; orientation towards participants; participant/experimenter interactions; and experimenter orientation and preparation. Some of the general principles that emerged included: tailor the laboratory environment to create a comfortable, supportive and welcoming environment for your typical participant; spend time chatting with participants to put them at ease, make them feel valued, win their confidence and provide success-oriented expectations; choose participants who appear to be stable and open to/curious about psi; choose experimenters who have good conversational and social skills; and experimenters should have successful expectations of each session, making sessions the focal point of the day, and they should have a positive, welcoming orientation towards psi in their daily lives.

Six U.S. parapsychology laboratories were visited by the author (DD) in 1989 to collect information relevant to the construction and use of a new laboratory facility, being built by the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology, in the Psychology Department at the University of Edinburgh.¹ This information was gathered via informal, semi-structured interviews with researchers, and by personal observation. Information was gathered about a wide variety of topics, ranging from laboratory design and management to good research practices. Of

special interest were thoughts and practices stemming from tacit, largely anecdotal sources, about which little can be found in the field's literature. It was recognised that this information would be highly subjective, and that there would likely be many differences between the laboratories and researchers. Furthermore, the validity of such largely anecdotal information has not been established. Nonetheless, it was thought that some consensual ideas and/or practices might emerge that could beneficially inform the Koestler Chair research efforts.

The following represents a compilation of obtained information, focusing primarily upon areas of agreement, and/or upon factors observed at several labs. No single comment should be viewed as coming from or being representative of any specific laboratory or researcher, and no individual or laboratory is directly associated with any specific item. Of the information gained during the laboratory tour, that most di-

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rectly relating to psi-conductive practices and issues is presented herein.

The six sites visited were: the Psychological Research Laboratory (PRL) in Princeton, NJ; the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) laboratory at Princeton University; the Foundation for Research into the Nature of Man (FRNM, now the Rhine Research Center) in Durham, NC; Mind Science Foundation (MSF) in San Antonio, TX; Science Unlimited Research Foundation (SURF) in San Antonio, TX; and, the facilities at SRI International (SRI), located in Menlo Park, CA. The laboratories were generally visited in the order listed above. The duration of each visit ranged from one day (i.e., PEAR and SRI) to 3-5 days (i.e., PRL, FRNM, SURF and MSF). DD observed and/or served as a participant in on-going study sessions at PRL, PEAR, and FRNM, and was given detailed descriptions and/or demonstrations of various experimental procedures by all the labs. It should be noted that two of the labs, PRL and SURF, had lost their funding and were in the process of closing, so observations stemming from these sites may not reflect their usual operation under more normal circumstances.

For convenience the following information has been divided into four general content areas: a) laboratory design; b) orientation towards participant; c) participant/experimenter interactions; and, d) experimenter preparation and orientation.

Lab Design

Many researchers mentioned the importance of the physical laboratory environment in setting the stage for psi-conductive interactions. Of course, laboratory design and environment varied greatly between the different sites, and was often dictated by practical constraints, such as available space and building layout. Despite the many differences imposed by such considerations, some common factors were generally viewed as important.

Many laboratories appeared to tailor their environment to their typical participant population (hereafter particip-

ant/participants will be abbreviated to: Pp/Pps). Generally, laboratories wished to create an environment that their predominant Pp population would view as comfortable and reassuring, while also conveying a sense of professionalism and competence. For example, some researchers who worked primarily with mature, unselected members of the general public, mentioned the possible advantages of having Pps' first impression of the laboratory be that of a professional, business environment, e.g., a typical office suite setting, with a staffed reception area, etc. The reasons given for this involved the possibility that when coming to the laboratory for the first time, these Pps may have some concerns about 'what they were getting themselves into', given the relatively unusual type of research in which they were about to participate. It was thought that such concerns might be reduced by initially presenting the Pp with what they would be likely to regard as an ordinary, non-threatening working environment, staffed by 'reassuringly normal' looking people. In contrast, laboratories working primarily with a younger student population appeared to recognise that while an office suite environment may be reassuring to more mature Pps, it could well be alienating to younger ones. Accordingly, these laboratories seemed to favour a more casual, less structured setting.

Some laboratories had created a 'special' area where the forthcoming session would be discussed with Pps. Sometimes these areas conveyed an ambience which differed greatly from the rest of the facility and/or surrounding building environment. Some researchers mentioned that such marked differences in ambience might help foster the sense in Pps that they had entered a 'different' place, one in which special, psychic things could easily happen.

These conversation areas tended to have a casual, private, warm, 'at home' atmosphere, and often contained personal decorative touches. It was thought that such settings may help Pps to relax and become comfortable with the experimenter(s) and with the experimental exper-

ience. Also, such an ambience might help encourage open, informal communications. These environments were sometimes dedicated rooms or comfortable sitting areas within an experimenter's office. Facilities for providing refreshments for Pps were often found within or adjacent to these rooms.

Orientation Towards Participant

Most laboratories ensured that either a receptionist and/or the experimenter awaited the arrival of scheduled Pps, as a matter of common courtesy and for security reasons. Furthermore, several researchers specified that they did not leave Pps alone or unattended once they arrived at the laboratory (until the experimental session actually began). Some reasons offered for this included: a) security precautions; b) keeping Pps busy would avoid leaving free-time in which they might develop concerns or insecurities about the forthcoming session; and, c) being the focus of attention could help Pps feel important and appreciated, thereby potentially increasing their confidence and motivation to succeed.

The desire to make Pps feel comfortable and appreciated was frequently mentioned by researchers. Towards this end, many researchers would set aside 'chat' time prior to the start of a session. During this period, Pps would usually be offered refreshments, with some laboratories routinely providing special home-baked cookies/cakes, and so on. Some researchers would spend considerable time talking with Pps before the actual experimental session, trying to ensure they were relaxed and positively oriented towards the session.

Several researchers appeared to go to considerable lengths to make their Pps feel highly valued, e.g., stating they 'bend over backwards' to ensure their Pps felt comfortable, appreciated and well-looked after. Specific means of accomplishing this varied, and were somewhat dependent upon familiarity with the Pp. If deemed helpful, Pps would be offered transportation to and from the laboratory, be reimbursed for any travel expenses, and where appropriate, be

met at the bus/train station. However, it should be noted that laboratories working with a largely unselected Pp population would not usually provide any payment for participation in their studies, preferring their Pps to be motivated by personal interest, as opposed to monetary gain. Once a Pp became known to a researcher, they might be provided with favourite cookies/refreshments, and after the session might be taken out for a meal and/or drinks. Some commented how they had developed close friendships with some Pps. Others viewed and treated all Pps as 'members of the (research) family'. One laboratory wanted to make each Pp feel they were centre of all attention and activity at the facility. To accomplish this, they avoided exposing Pps to any other on-going business at the laboratory, or to any personnel who were not involved with the session or joining the pre-session conversation. As this involved notifying everyone at the laboratory when a Pp was due to arrive, it could also have had the effect of focusing the attention of the entire staff of the laboratory upon the specific session, whether or not they were directly involved with it.

If a Pp had taken part in previous studies at the laboratory, most experimenters would be familiar with the details of their earlier contributions, even if they had not served as an experimenter in those sessions. Details from previous sessions would be discussed, with similarities and differences highlighted, as deemed helpful in increasing Pp expectations of success in the forthcoming session. If other experimenters, who were not involved in the current session, had previously worked with a Pp, they might be included in the pre-session conversation, or make a point of 'dropping in' during this time to say hello.

Some researchers noted that when conveying appreciation and a sense of importance to Pps, care was needed to ensure there was no accompanying pressure to 'perform' well during the session. Similarly, it was thought desirable to encourage Pps to be motivated to succeed in the experimental task, and to have positive

expectations of success, without introducing any attendant stress or anxiety. To accomplish this, some recommended mentioning how many people have succeeded in similar experiments and/or emphasising that the specific experimental technique (in and of itself) worked very well. Also, Pps could be instructed just to let things flow in the session, and may be asked to avoid effortful striving (in ESP tasks). Where the experimental procedure involved more than one Pp, the session would be presented as a joint, mutual venture, where responsibility for the outcome was shared, to help reduce any performance anxiety and/or ownership resistance that might be felt by a Pp.

Participant/Experimenter Interactions

The development of a friendly, comfortable, open, trusting, and supportive rapport between Pps and their experimenters was typically viewed as an important psi-conductive factor. Many researchers thought a pre-session 'chat', covering topics beyond the usual experimental instructions, was a necessary component in establishing such interactions. Thus the benefits of having likeable experimenters, with good conversational and social skills, was frequently mentioned. Experimenters were advised to be good listeners, skilled at quickly connecting to/creating bridges with others, and genuinely interested 'getting to know' others. Several stressed the need to 'read' the psychology of each Pp and respond appropriately. Some experimenters tailored their description of procedures, goals and/or implications of the study to the specific interests of the Pp. Several researchers stressed the importance of clearly explaining experimental procedures to Pps so they had no doubts as to what would happen during a session, what they were to do, when they were to do it, etc.

Many of the laboratories had potential Pps complete a 'Participant Information Form' (PIF) before a session was scheduled. PIF forms served several purposes, including: a) providing useful experimental information, e.g., sheep/goat scores; b) asking questions to help determine what

type of study (e.g., ESP or PK) a participant might be best suited for and most enjoy; and c) initial screening of Pp to avoid bringing potentially disturbed individuals into the laboratory. With first-time Pps, information from the PIF could be worked into the pre-session conversation. Thus PIFs would not only provide the experimenter with helpful information about the Pp, but would also help convey to the Pp that due attention was paid to information they provided.

Some researchers encouraged participants to describe any previous psi experiences, and responded to such stories in a positive, supportive manner. Most researchers stressed the importance of never rushing Pps. Some would let the pre-session conversation extend as long as the Pp wished, or until they thought the Pp was relaxed and had a positive attitude towards the session. However, a few researchers thought it best to save potentially lengthy and/or emotional conversations about previous psi experiences until after the experimental session had been completed, to avoid any possible cross-pollution.

There was almost universal support for the need to present any given experimental procedure in a positive, 'this works and you can do it' manner. When describing the desired outcome of a session to Pps, there was fairly wide-spread support given to the idea of 'keep it simple', i.e., Pps should have one clear aim in mind, such as obtain images to the picture, or interact with the monitor display in the prescribed manner, without being distracted by a variety of possible, secondary psi outcomes. Also, it was thought beneficial to keep the session fun; everyone involved should have a good time and enjoy themselves, each other and the experimental session.

Experimenter Orientation and Preparation

Many researchers mentioned that experimenters should be very familiar with all aspects of the study, including having been a participant themselves, i.e., they should know the procedure 'inside out' and not ask

a participant to do something they hadn't done themselves. Several experimenters stated that each session should be the 'highlight' of the day; some saying an experimenter should only have one session per day. Some researchers noted the benefits of clearing some relatively free time prior to a session and immediately following it, to ensure that they were never rushed to start or end a session. Some noted that they avoided unpleasant tasks on days when they had experimental sessions (see Schlitz, 1986, for more detailed information about the preparations of some successful psi experimenters).

It was frequently commented that all equipment should be checked and fully prepared for the session well before Pps arrived, as malfunctioning equipment, or lengthy fiddling with sensitive 'gadgets' could shake Pps' confidence in the experimenter's competence and/or their trust that the session would 'work well'. Several researchers stressed that as a general rule, anything that can be readied in advance of the Pps arrival, should be thus prepared. Such preparations ran the gamut from refreshments (cookies laid out, coffee/tea ready to be made, etc.) to experimental equipment (paper and pens are laid out, any needed tapes are in place, lights are working, computer programs primed, etc.) to the experimenter having reviewed the Pps previous session details and/or their PIF information.

It appeared that usually successful experimenters (i.e., those who frequently obtained significant study outcomes) seemed to genuinely expect that any given experiment could and would produce a significant psi outcome. Furthermore, such successful experimenters appeared to have a very high degree of emotional and intellectual acceptance of psi, experiencing it as an integral part of both their professional and personal lives. These researchers seemed to respect and honour psi, without viewing psi events as unduly important; psi was seen as special, but not extraordinary.

Discussion

As the intention of the laboratory tour was to gain first-hand and tacit information, these comments are largely derived from subjective and/or anecdotal sources. They do not constitute an experimentally proven 'recipe for success' or established facts. This status awaits further experimentation, aimed specifically at examining the utility of these ideas.

Nonetheless, they are the thoughts and insights generously contributed by a large number of experienced researchers, many of whom have long track records of obtaining significant, above chance psi-scoring in their studies. Given the evidence of experimenter effects found in parapsychological research (e.g., Wiseman and Schlitz, 1996), arguably it would be most foolhardy to disregard such potential 'words of wisdom'.

As noted in the introduction this laboratory tour was undertaken in 1989, to gather information to help the research efforts of the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology. For all practical purposes, the Koestler research unit started business in Nov. 1985 when Prof. Robert L. Morris took up the Chair. Prior to this time, there had been 20 years of parapsychological research conducted in the Department under the supervision of Dr. John Beloff. This earlier research had been notable for its frequent failure to obtain any extra-chance psi-scoring. Since the Chair was established there have been many changes made to the ongoing research activities, e.g., the hiring of research staff, a growth in postgraduate numbers from the pre-chair average of one or two students to the current average of approximately 10, the support and supervision of numerous undergraduate projects (studies), etc. Also a new laboratory facility has been built, and its design and the research carried out there, has been influenced by the laboratory tour findings. While it is impossible to establish which of the many changes, or what combination thereof, may be responsible for the change in experimental fortunes at Edinburgh, significant psi-scoring outcomes are obtained

by many of the studies conducted there now.

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**Belangrijke psi-bevorderende factoren:
indrukken uit zes parapsychologische laboratoria**

Samenvatting: De auteur bezocht in 1989 zes labs voor parapsychologisch onderzoek in de VS, om informatie te vergaren die belangrijk zou kunnen zijn bij de inrichting van het nieuwe lab van de Koestler Chair in Edinburgh. Zij bekeek de labs en interviewde onderzoekers. Dit artikel behandelt de informatie over de veelal anekdotische en onuitgesproken psi-bevorderende factoren. Daarbij worden vier categorieën gehanteerd: lab-inrichting, houding ten opzichte van deelnemers, interacties tussen onderzoeker en proefpersoon en ten slotte de instelling van de onderzoeker en zijn voorbereiding. Als algemene principes kwamen onder meer naar voren: richt het lab zo in dat een voor de gemiddelde proefpersoon aantrekkelijke, uitnodigende en geruststellende sfeer ontstaat, stel de proefpersoon op zijn gemak door een praatje, zorg dat hij zich gewaardeerd voelt, win zijn vertrouwen en roep op succes gerichte verwachtingspatronen op. Kies deelnemers die stabiel lijken, open staan voor en nieuwsgierig zijn naar psi. Kies onderzoeksmedewerkers met goede sociale omgangsvormen en die zich goed kunnen uitdrukken. Zorg dat de onderzoeker zelf positieve verwachtingen over het succes van elke sessie heeft en dat hij die sessies als het belangrijkste werk van de dag ziet. Zoek de medewerkers die in hun dagelijkse leven positief en open denken over psi.

Prácticas y Problemas Importantes para la Facilitación de Psi: Impresiones de Seis Laboratorios Parapsicológicos

Resúmen: En el 1989 visitamos seis laboratorios de parapsicología para obtener información relevante al desarrollo del nuevo laboratorio de investigación de la Cátedra Koestler de Parapsicología. La información que presentamos se recopiló a través de observaciones y de entrevistas con investigadores de laboratorio. Ésta estaba relacionada con prácticas para facilitar a psi mayormente anecdóticas y tácticas. La información obtenida trata sobre cuatro categorías generales de aspectos que facilitan a psi: diseño del laboratorio; orientación de los participantes; interacciones entre los participantes y los experimentadores; y la orientación y preparación del experimentador. Algunos de los principios generales que surgieron fueron: preparar el ambiente del laboratorio para crear un ambiente cómodo, de apoyo, y agradable para el participante típico; tomar tiempo para conversar con los participantes para que éstos se sientan bien, sientan que son apreciados, para ganar su confianza y para proveer expectativas de éxito; seleccionar a los participantes que parezcan ser estables, abiertos y curiosos a la idea de psi; seleccionar

experimentadores que tengan buenas habilidades de conversación y habilidades sociales; y, los experimentadores deben tener expectativas de éxito para cada sesión, de forma que las sesiones experimentales sean la actividad principal del día, y deben tener una orientación positiva y agradable hacia psi en sus vidas diarias.

**Wichtige psi-fördernde Verfahren und Fragestellungen:
Eindrücke aus sechs parapsychologischen Labors**

Zusammenfassung: Die Autorin besuchte im Jahre 1989 sechs parapsychologische Labors in den USA, um sich Anregungen und Informationen für die Entwicklung des neuen Forschungslabors am Koestler Chair of Parapsychology zu verschaffen. Die Informationen stammen aus Beobachtungen und Gesprächen mit dem Forschungspersonal. Diejenigen Informationen, die sich auf weitgehend anekdotenhafte, oft unausgesprochene psi-förderliche Praktiken beziehen, werden hier vorgestellt. Die erhobenen Angaben haben vier breit gefasste Kategorien psi-fördernder Überlegungen zum Gegenstand: Anlage der Laboratoriums; Einstellung zu den Versuchsteilnehmern; Interaktionen zwischen Versuchsperson und Experimentator; und Einstellungen und Vorbereitung des Experimentators. Zu den ermittelten Grundprinzipien gehörten: Gestalte das Laborumfeld so, daß eine bequeme, förderliche und einladende Umgebung für den typischen Teilnehmer entsteht. Nimm dir die Zeit, dich mit den Versuchsteilnehmern zu unterhalten, damit diese sich unbeschwert fühlen; gib ihnen das Gefühl, daß ihre Mitarbeit geschätzt wird; gewinne ihr Vertrauen und schaffe erfolgsorientierte Erwartungen. Wähle Teilnehmer aus, die emotional gefestigt scheinen und die offen für Psi oder an Psi interessiert sind. Wähle Versuchsleiter mit guten Konversations- und sozialen Umgangsformen aus. Experimentatoren sollten mit Erfolgserwartungen an jede Sitzung herangehen, diese zum Kernpunkt des Tages machen und in ihrem täglichen Leben Psi positiv und offen gegenüberstehen.

**Pratiche e questioni rilevanti che favoriscono la psi:
Impressioni tratte da sei laboratori parapsicologici**

Sommario: Allo scopo di acquisire informazioni importanti ai fini dello sviluppo delle attività nel nuovo laboratorio della cattedra Koestler in parapsicologia, nel 1989 sono stati visitati sei laboratori parapsicologici. Le informazioni sono state raccolte guardandosi intorno e conversando con i ricercatori di questi laboratori e qui viene riportato ciò che riguarda il tema implicito e in larga parte aneddotico delle pratiche che favoriscono la psi. Le informazioni ottenute appartengono a quattro classi di considerazioni sulla produzione della psi: la configurazione del laboratorio; l'atteggiamento verso i partecipanti; le interazioni partecipante/sperimentatore; l'orientamento teorico e la preparazione dello sperimentatore. Tra i principi generali emersi figuravano: predisporre lo spazio del laboratorio per creare un ambiente confortevole, incoraggiante e accogliente per il partecipante tipico; dedicare un po' di tempo per parlare ai partecipanti, al fine di metterli a loro agio, farli sentire considerati, ottenere la loro fiducia e favorire un atteggiamento tendente al successo; scegliere partecipanti che appaiono stabili e aperti o curiosi nei riguardi della psi; scegliere sperimentatori con buona abilità di conversazione e di rapporti sociali; gli sperimentatori, infine, dovrebbero essere ottimisti negli esiti delle singole sessioni, rendendole il momento culminante della giornata, e mantenere un atteggiamento positivo e aperto alla psi nella loro vita quotidiana.

Questions et pratiques psi-conductrices importantes:
Les impressions de six laboratoires de parapsychologie

Résumé: En 1989 six laboratoires américains de parapsychologie ont été visités afin d'acquérir des informations pertinentes pour le développement des nouveaux équipements du laboratoire de recherche de la Chaire Koestler de Parapsychologie. Les informations ont été recueillies via observation et interviews avec les chercheurs de laboratoire; celles concernant le domaine tacite des pratiques psi-conductrices largement anecdotiques sont présentées ici. Les informations obtenues ont trait à quatre grande catégories de considérations psi-conductrices: l'organisation du laboratoire; l'orientation vis-à-vis des participants; les interactions participant/expérimentateur; et l'orientation et la préparation de l'expérimentateur. Certains des principes généraux qui ont émergés incluait: façonnez l'environnement du laboratoire afin de créer un environnement confortable du point de vue du soutien et de l'accueil pour votre participant type; prenez le temps de bavarder avec les participants afin de les mettre à l'aise, leur faire ressortir leur valeur, gagner leur confiance et fournir des attentes tournées vers la réussite; choisissez des participants qui semblent stables et ouverts au/curieux du psi; choisissez des expérimentateurs qui ont de bonnes aptitudes à la conversation et sociales; et les expérimentateurs devraient avoir des attentes de réussite pour chaque session, en faisant des sessions le point focal du jour, et ils devraient avoir une orientation positive, et accueillante envers le psi dans leur vie de tous les jours.

Práticas e questões psi-conducentes importantes:
Impressões sobre seis laboratórios de Parapsicologia

Resumo: Em 1989, seis laboratórios de Parapsicologia foram visitados a fim de se obter informações relevantes para o desenvolvimento das novas instalações do laboratório de pesquisas da Koestler Chair of Parapsychology. Apresenta-se as informações colhidas através de observações e entrevistas com pesquisadores dos laboratórios relacionadas à área tácita e empírica das práticas psi-conducentes. As informações obtidas envolvem quatro categorias amplas de considerações psi-conducentes: o modo como o laboratório foi projetado; a orientação para os participantes; as interações participante/experimentador e a orientação e o preparo do experimentador. Alguns dos princípios gerais que imergiram incluem: adaptar o ambiente laboratorial para criar um local confortável, favorável e acolhedor para o participante típico, conversar por um bom tempo com os participantes para deixá-los mais à vontade, fazê-los sentirem-se mais valorizados, ganhar sua confiança e estabelecer expectativas de sucesso; escolher participantes aparentemente estáveis, abertos e curiosos a respeito de psi; escolher experimentadores que tenham boas habilidades sociais e saibam conversar de forma agradável; e experimentadores devem ter expectativas de sucesso em cada sessão, tornando-as o ponto central do dia, além de ter uma orientação positiva e acolhedora quanto a psi em suas vidas diárias.

Is There a Formula to Success in the Ganzfeld? Observations on Predictors of Psi-Ganzfeld Performance

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Abstract: In order to understand the apparent psi conducive experimenter factors at work in ganzfeld research, it is first necessary to understand what other factors may also come into play that could be considered 'psi conducive'. Included in these factors are physical variables, participant characteristics, and the social setting of the ganzfeld, as well as successful techniques used by experimenters to enhance the performance level of their participants. This report builds on a panel presentation on psi conducive experimenter practices during the 1996 annual parapsychology convention, and presents an exploration of the characteristics and variables indicated by past ganzfeld research to contribute to the success of the ganzfeld technique.

Introduction

Given the increased interest in ganzfeld-psi engendered by the publication of the Bem and Honorton (1994) paper, and the effects of the increasing strength and consistency of recent ganzfeld research, perhaps the most important question one can ask of the ganzfeld technique is, 'What have we learned about reliably predicting psi performance in the ganzfeld?' Observations made from my own experimental work, and that of other ganzfeld researchers, have led me to speculate on the factors that may contribute to achieving a successful result in a ganzfeld setting. In many aspects, these speculations are also applicable to other kinds of ESP work. To that end, even at this early stage of examining the data, several observations can be made.

The ganzfeld research at Psychophysical Research Laboratories (PRL) by Honorton and his colleagues was aimed, in part, at identifying those characteristics that seemed to facilitate psi success in the ganzfeld. Since the PRL series there have been many replications of its successful results (a 33% hit rate overall), many of which were in themselves quite successful (Broughton & Alexander, 1995; Dalton, 1994; Johansson &

Parker, 1995; Morris, Cunningham, McAlpine & Taylor, 1993). The ganzfeld technique as applied to parapsychology originally grew out of research attempting to identify factors that seemed to facilitate successful identification of psi material, that then led to the development of a noise reduction model involving perceptual. This identification of psi facilitative factors is ongoing in psi research.

The relationship between ESP performance and individual differences in psychological traits has been examined in many studies since the 1940s. Numerous variables have been explored, and it appears that several may be consistent in their predictive value (Braud, 1977; Honorton, 1977; Rhine, 1955). In examining the various bodies of ganzfeld research that have been done over the last decade or so, there seems to be a pattern emerging, one that may indicate a formula for success, and that may be translatable to other ESP research. It is hoped that it will not be viewed as premature to list these variables here. They are presented as factors for consideration and exploration in future ganzfeld studies. As levels of importance may vary with study design, the variables are not listed here in order of importance.