

December, 2010

Staff

Katie Kenefick
-Fundamental Attribution

Errorist

Megan Peterson
-Contributing writer with
20/10 hindsight

Eric Nead

-The Stroop Effect

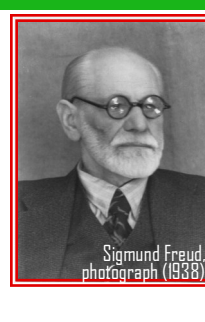
Elizabeth Hanzlik
- Researcher Extraordinaire

The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter



College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University



Sigmund Freud
photograph (1938)

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SPAIN PROGRAM OF 2010

by: Elizabeth Hanzlik
—Researcher Extraordinaire

Dr. Michael Livingston spent the semester abroad last spring, leading a group of 29 CSB/SJU students to Segovia, Spain. The trip enabled the students to immerse themselves in a new culture by living with individual host families and taking classes in Spanish at a local university. Livingston led one other trip to Segovia in the spring of 2000, and was eager to return for his love of the city, the opportunity to stretch and grow as a teacher, and the ability to live close to his daughter who would be spending the semester in Madrid.

Although quite different from his usual psychology classes at St. Ben's/St. John's, Dr. Livingston still incorporated psychology into many aspects of the program. The senior seminar class he taught to CSB/SJU students in Spanish, "Collective Memory of the Spanish Civil War," informed students of the impact of collective memories on individuals and groups. Through film, literature, and discussion, the students learned how people

remembered - or tried to forget - parts of this meaningful history, and how these events have had an impact on Spanish society today.

In the preparation process, Livingston used psychological tactics through forming group goals, anticipating social situations, and setting a serious tone in the interviews. Students then had a better idea of the culture they were about to be a part of, and understood that the trip was more of an adventure than a vacation. Students were also required to keep a memory journal as a culture adaptation tool which included personal experiences, thoughts, and reflections.

Although busy with classes, weekend trips, and an exciting Spanish culture, there was still time for research. While in Segovia, Dr. Livingston examined the impact of ideology and social context on psychology. He explored the history of psychology in Spain during and after the civil war by talking with Spanish psychologists and historians, researching the two leading psychologists during the war, locating two archives on the civil war,

and more. He plans to continue his research on this topic here in the U.S.

One of the trip's psychology majors, Kaitlin Andreason, also found time in her busy semester to conduct research for her senior honors thesis. Andreason's main focus was a "Cross-Cultural Study of Implicit Hair Color Biases and Ambivalent Sexism". She collected data by administering implicit association tests to 61 students at IE University in Segovia, and plans to compare the data with that of CSB/SJU students. Kaitlin's advice on researching abroad is to start early by planning the thesis at least one semester before leaving.

Psychology found its way into the 2010 Segovia program, just as it does in most aspects of everyday life. Livingston hopes to lead the 2012 Chile program and teach two psychology courses as well as conduct research on the history of Chile during the Pinochet era. Eventually, he'd like to return to Spain one last time with a group of CSB/SJU students, and then spend half of his years living with his wife in the beautiful city of Segovia.

Page 1

A CATCH-22: THE DILEMMA OF CHOICE

by: Megan Peterson
—Contributing Writer

Consider this: You want to buy a stereo system for your room, so you decide to go to Best Buy and scout out the many options. You get there and one of the workers comes up to you and volunteers his time to help you find what you need. You tell him some of the things you are looking for in your stereo system and he proceeds to show you 30 different ways to build the stereo system you are looking for. There are such things to consider as price, sound quality, color, design, CD and/or radio features, whether it needs other input sources (such as for an iPod/MP3 player), and other special features to "make life easier". But do all of these choices really make our lives easier? And secondly, do all of these options make our lives more enjoyable?

In general, having the ability to make our own

choices is a good thing; it gives us freedom and, in the long run, lets us guide our lives in the direction we want them to go. However, research has shown that the amount of options we have to choose from in areas such as electronics, cars, apartments, and even simple things like candy, has risen dramatically in past years. Many view this as a good thing, in that it theoretically allows them to pick an option that will fit really well with them. However, research has shown that the many things we have to choose from actually increases regret and decreases happiness in our decision (Schwartz, 2004).

When confronted with something that requires one to choose something from a large number of options, some people feel they need to consider all of

the options before making a choice. They research all of the possible choices and try to find the "best" one; this is known as a maximizing strategy (Schwartz, 2004). When there are so many options to consider, this way of going about making a decision is time-consuming and potentially confusing. People are also more likely to feel regret afterwards, since they knew about other good options but didn't choose them (Schwartz, 2004). In this case, they are personally responsible for the feeling of regret, since they should have known better, based on their research and extensive consideration of all of the options.

Research in the field of choice suggests that being satisfied with something that fits our needs, even if it isn't necessarily the best option, is a better way of approaching decision-making. This "satisficing" strategy is more

likely to bring happiness and less likely to lead to regret, compared to the maximizing strategy described above (Schwartz, 2004). Being satisfied with something that is "good enough", even if not all of the options have been considered, seems to be better than trying to use our freedom of choice to its greatest potential. Something to consider the next time we have to choose what kind of chocolate we want for dessert...

NEW BUILDING PROMISES AN INTEGRATION OF DEPARTMENTS AND IDEAS

by: Katie Kenefick
—Fundamental Attribution Errorist

Currently, the Psychology department is split between the CSB and SJU campuses. Professors typically teach classes and have offices on one campus over the other. This is all about to change though – the Psychology department is coming together in 2015!!

Plans are in the works to create a new academic building on the CSB campus that will house the entire Psychology department, along with the Mathematics, Computer Science, and Economics departments. In conjunction with the architects commissioned to design the new building, faculty members representing each department, students, and staff have been asked to provide their input. The collaboration between the CSB/SJU campuses and the architects will inspire a tailor-made building, meeting (and exceeding) the needs of the faculty, students, and staff who will work there. Central to the design of the building is a layout that will encourage greater faculty-student interaction, integration of the disciplines housed in the building, and state-of-the-art design in sustainability efforts.

Faculty, students, and staff are eagerly awaiting the opening of the new building. Dr. Rodger Narloch, Psychology Department Chair, expresses this excitement: "the new building will provide us with much more lab space so students and faculty have the facilities to engage in a wider variety of research. We are also happy that the building will bring all of the psychology professors together on one campus." The services it will provide in the classrooms, offices, common areas, and laboratory spaces will promote an atmosphere of both community and academia. By bringing the departments together under one roof, the new building will foster creativity, cooperation, and integration among all those who enter its doors.

Page 2

College of Saint Benedict
37 S. College Ave. St. Joseph, MN 56374
320-363-5139

Saint John's University
PO Box 2000 Collegeville, MN 56321
320-363-3195

