

Thinking Skills Newsletter

May 2014

This month:

Late in May we provided a Thinking Skills introductory session to members of the Royal Navy/Commando/Royal Marines, with the aim that they can cascade the information more widely. There are plans to follow this up with a masterclass in support of concepts development.

Planning for our congress on 4th July is going well, and we have speakers from the Army, RAF and the Cabinet Office to tell us about some of their experiences developing Thinking Skills. We also have a Keynote presentation from Baroness Susan Greenfield about what Neuroscience tells us about how to improve thinking.

We have plans to expand our range of activities, including a video with the Officer Tutors from Army Headquarters, discussing Thinking Skills and the 7 Question Estimate. We will also have a Thinking Skills presentation at Civil Service Live, explaining what the programme is and how it is currently working at the Defence Academy, as well as looking more broadly at how it can help as a part of personal and professional development.

We have arranged to make Thinking Skills resources available to all via a 'Guest' access on Cranfield University's VLE. This has several practical advantages over using the Defence Learning Portal. Anyone will be welcome to share their own material via this means, should they wish to. The link to this will be sent out to you all in the next couple of weeks

Current Issues:

There are a lot of things that affect decision making. Many are obvious, for example time pressures, mental state, confidence in the subject, but other are not so obvious. A study published in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* suggests that different lighting conditions can have a major impact on mood and decision making. They reported that bright light can cause more intense emotions than dim light, for example depressed people become more depressed when exposed to bright lights, or rating certain words as making them feel more positive or more negative than they do in dim lighting.

The researchers reported that under bright lighting our decisions will be more emotionally charged, and suggested that turning the lights down may result in more rational decisions and calmer negotiations.

Xu, A. J., & Labroo, A. A. (2013). Incandescent Affect: Turning On The Hot Emotional System With Bright Light. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

Book corner

Mind, brain and consciousness —Baroness Susan Greenfield

In the run up to her Keynote presentation, we want to share an interesting short paper by Baroness Susan Greenfield. This paper proposes that consciousness and the mind are two distinct entities, and this has implications for how we understand the nature of thought and the self. Susan Greenfield has aired a number of challenging ideas about how we think, stimulating debate about consciousness, the effects of technology on the mind, and the causes and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. A controversial publication in 2003 was the book 'Tomorrow's People', which suggests that technology is changing the way we think, and not necessarily for the better.

Mind, brain and consciousness (Editorial),

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2002) 181: 91-93

<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/181/2/91.full.pdf+html>

Brain Teaser

Dingbats

What phrase does this represent?

draob gniward eht ot

Answer to May's brain teaser:

J31—the pattern was the first letter of the months in order, followed by the number of days in that month.