

mentally handicapped has largely consisted of protection i.e. the 'eternal child' cocooned by the 'eternal parent'. The only legal yardstick was for the professional to act in good faith according to current ideals. The goal of self-determination for the client is a modern development which raises complex dilemmas of conflicting 'rights'.

The process of letting go of the mentally handicapped adolescent and the acknowledgement of his adulthood albeit incomplete is peculiarly difficult when complicated by cognitive deficits and incapacity to plan long term. Yet paternalism rather than parenting may be protecting him from those very experiences from which he can learn those personal strengths inherent in successful adulthood.

**Susan Blackmore** (S14) Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol

#### ACCOUNTING FOR OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES

The out-of-body experience (OBE) is defined as an experience in which a person seems to perceive the world from a location outside his physical body. It has long been studied by parapsychologists but often dismissed by others as hallucination or imagination. Reasons for giving it serious study are (1) it is common, about 15 per cent of people report one; (2) it can profoundly affect people's beliefs; (3) accounts are remarkably consistent.

It is argued that parapsychological theories are weak and that it is better to view the OBE as the natural result of the cognitive system trying to maintain a workable 'model of reality' when sensory input is inadequate.

**Susan Blackmore** and **Tom Troscianko** Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol

#### A BABY OPERATED TAPE PLAYER

Commercially available tapes and other devices produce sounds supposed to send babies to sleep, but it is not known whether babies would choose to listen to

them for long periods.

A device was developed which allows a baby to listen to either of two tapes for any length of time by pulling handles suspended in the cot. Experiments with a baby from age four months showed that she would play various tapes for long periods and could express consistent preferences between tapes.

The device allows for many experiments on auditory preferences in infants. Its possible role in learning and in comforting babies during the night is discussed.

**M Boekaerts** (S10) University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

#### TELIC DOMINANCE AND CLASSROOM LEARNING

A children's form of the Telic Dominance Scale constructed by the author was administered to children in the classroom in Belgium and the Netherlands. The results are discussed with particular reference to differences between the scores of the Belgian and Dutch children, and the light this throws on educational practice in the two countries.

**Geoffrey Brown** (S12) University of East Anglia

#### METACOGNITION: NEW INSIGHTS ON OLD PROBLEMS?

Of recent years few works on the development of cognitive processes in the child have been without at least one chapter on metacognition. One influential volume, addressed to the question 'Children's thinking: what develops?' concluded that the answer was primarily to be found in increasing metacognitive skill - the ability to monitor and reflect upon one's cognitive processes.

Examination of the literature, in which seminal articles are few, suggests that the concept is not only confused and confusing, but prone to very similar criticisms as theories of its putative precursor, cognition.

Siegler, R (ed.) (1978). *Children's Thinking: What Develops*. Hillsdale, NJ: LEA.

mentally handicapped has largely consisted of protection i.e. the 'parental child' cocooned by the 'eternal parent'. The only legal yardstick was for the professional to act in good faith according to current ideals. The goal of self-determination for the client is a modern development which raises complex dilemmas of conflicting 'rights'. The process of letting go of the mentally handicapped adolescent and the acknowledgement of his adulthood albeit incomplete is peculiarly difficult when complicated by cognitive deficits and incapacity to plan long term. Yet paternalism rather than parenting may be protecting him from those very experiences from which he can learn those personal strengths inherent in successful adulthood.

**Susan Blackmore (S14)** Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol

#### ACCOUNTING FOR OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES

The out-of-body experience (OBE) is defined as an experience in which a person seems to perceive the world from a location outside his physical body. It has long been studied by parapsychologists but often dismissed by others as hallucination or imagination. Reasons for giving it serious study are (1) it is common, about 15 per cent of people report one; (2) it can profoundly affect people's beliefs; (3) accounts are remarkably consistent.

It is argued that parapsychological theories are weak and that it is better to view the OBE as the natural result of the cognitive system trying to maintain a workable 'model of reality when sensory input is inadequate.

**Susan Blackmore and Tom Troscianko** Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol

#### A BABY OPERATED TAPE PLAYER

Commercially available tapes and other devices produce sounds supposed to send babies to sleep, but it is not known whether babies would choose to listen to

them for long periods.

A device was developed which allows a baby to listen to either of two tapes for any length of time by pulling handles suspended in the cot. Experiments with a baby from age four months showed that she would play various tapes for long periods and could express consistent preferences between tapes.

The device allows for many experiments on auditory preferences in infants. Its possible role in learning and in comforting babies during the night is discussed.

**M Boekaerts (S10)** University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

#### TELIC DOMINANCE AND CLASSROOM LEARNING

A children's form of the Telic Dominance Scale constructed by the author was administered to children in the classroom in Belgium and the Netherlands. The results are discussed with particular reference to differences between the scores of the Belgian and Dutch children, and the light this throws on educational practice in the two countries.

**Geoffrey Brown (S12)** University of East Anglia

#### METACOGNITION: NEW INSIGHTS ON OLD PROBLEMS?

Of recent years few works on the development of cognitive processes in the child have been without at least one chapter on metacognition. One influential volume, addressed to the question 'Children's thinking: what develops?', concluded that the answer was primarily to be found in increasing metacognitive skill - the ability to monitor and reflect upon one's cognitive processes.

Examination of the literature, in which seminal articles are few, suggests that the concept is not only confused and confusing, but prone to very similar criticisms as theories of its putative precursor, cognition.

Siegler, R (ed.) (1978). Children's Thinking: What Develops. Hillsdale, NJ: LEA.

**Sue Buckley** Dept of Psychology, Portsmouth Polytechnic, King Charles St, Portsmouth

#### THE EFFECT OF HOME TEACHING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL DOWN'S SYNDROME CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES - AN INTERIM REPORT

During the past three years, two groups of Down's Syndrome children (aged two to four years at outset) have received intensive home teaching. One group received weekly visits and the other group fortnightly visits. Data illustrating the IQ gains and skill gains of the two groups is presented for the first two years of the study. These results are critically compared with similar data from other intervention programmes for Down's Syndrome children. The implications of the data for evaluation of Portage programmes are highlighted.

All the parents were interviewed towards the end of the period and their responses to working with their children, the demands this made on themselves and their families and their attitudes to alternative models for such early intervention will be discussed.

**Peter Bull (S22)** Dept of Psychology, University of York

#### THE COMMUNICATION OF EMOTION

The most influential theory of emotion expression stems from Darwin, who argued that the facial expressions of emotion constitute part of an innate, adaptive, physiological response. If this hypothesis is valid, it would suggest that the face constitutes an important means of communicating information about emotion. Evidence is discussed which is consistent with the innate hypothesis of emotional expression and which also suggests that facial expressions are perceived as more important in judgments of emotion than other sources of information such as gaze, pupil dilation, speech content and situational context. On the basis of these studies, it is argued that facial expressions constitute the primary means of communicating information about emotion, and hence must occupy a central place in any comprehensive psychological theory of

emotion.

**David Canter (S6)** University of Surrey  
DEVELOPMENTS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO PSYCHOLOGISTS

A very brief review of the technical and organizational developments in Information Technology over the past three years is presented with special emphasis for the activities of those interested in essentially applied psychological research which will contribute to the development of this field and the enrichment of psychological theory. The 'fifth generation' discussion and the emergence of the Alvey Report, with its 'enabling technologies' together with the commercial developments of distinctly user-oriented microprocessors are all noted. The issues of special significance to psychologists will be emphasized under three headings: (i) current institutional constraints on research definition and support, (ii) areas of potential application and (iii) some emerging psychological problems central to the development of IT such as relational data base navigation and intelligent front ends.

**Bruce Christie (S6)** Human Factors Technology Centre, IIT Europe

#### THE INFORMATION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Emerging information technology has given new meanings to terms such as 'icon', 'mouse', 'word recognition', 'knowledge' and 'intelligence'. Whereas in the past it may have been sufficient for many purposes to think of information in terms of a reduction in uncertainty, for the psychologist working in information technology it is now necessary to go far beyond this general abstract concept to develop a psychological theory that deals with information as it is found in concrete specific instances. This paper does not present such a theory but it does outline some of the key conceptual elements that must appear in an adequate theory.