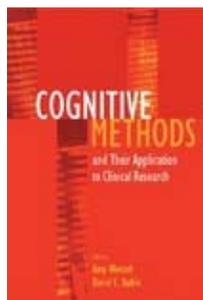


## The Intersection Between Cognitive and Clinical Psychology

A Review of



### **Cognitive Methods and Their Application to Clinical Research**

by Amy Wenzel

David C. Rubin

Washington, DC: American

Psychological Association, 2005.

289 pp. ISBN 1-59147-185-0.

\$59.95

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Reviewed by

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Psychology has been criticized for being a fragmented discipline (e.g., Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). Although this fragmentation may be partly due to the breadth of psychology and specialized areas of research, there are numerous points of intersection between the various subdisciplines that can serve as fruitful areas of discovery and collaboration. In the introductory chapter of *Cognitive Methods and Their Application to Clinical Research* Wenzel and Rubin note two trends. One is that clinical psychologists often adapt standard laboratory tests to examine information processing (David, Miclea, & Opre, 2004). The second trend is that cognitive psychologists are using clinical populations to extend their theories. This interaction between cognitive and clinical psychology provides a variety of possibilities for discovery.

Unfortunately, this interaction between subdisciplines in psychology is fairly uncommon. A PsycINFO database search on memory and clinical psychology or measurement or assessment produced 3,655 articles and chapters. This number represents only 7.65 percent of the

published research on memory. Furthermore, the percentage of memory articles also dealing with clinical psychology has increased only slightly since 1980. A somewhat similar pattern exists for the area of attention and clinical psychology. Attention articles dealing with clinical psychology representing 9.56 percent of all attention articles with little increase in the percentage of articles focusing on clinical issues over the last 20 years. However, this lack of interaction between subdisciplines is not limited to areas of cognitive and clinical psychology. A PsycINFO search produced only 29 articles addressing both memory and social psychology and 129 articles dealing with memory and social cognition.

— Therefore, *Cognitive Methods and Their Application to Clinical Research* represents a significant contribution to the field. The book is organized into five parts corresponding to five tasks in cognitive psychology: the Stroop task, selective attention tasks (e.g., flanker task, attentional blink), implicit memory tasks (e.g., word-stem completion, word association), directed forgetting, and autobiographical memory. Each part is made up of three chapters. The first of the three chapters provides an overview of the selected task. The second chapter is essentially a review article of the selected task, summarizing the design as well as important methodological considerations. A summary of how the task has been used in clinical research is presented in the third chapter. Each of the chapters reviewing how the tasks have developed over time and the appropriate methodological concerns organize the key considerations as well as methodological nuances realized over many years of research into a compact and easy-to-read format. In fact, these chapters are not only informative for clinical psychologists interested in using a selective attention task in their research but are also informative for cognitive psychologists interested in incorporating other cognitive tasks in their research repertoire. Similarly, the chapters summarizing clinical research using cognitive methods provide succinct, although noncomprehensive, reviews. For instance, the Stroop chapter does not address clinical or forensic applications of the original

color-word Stroop task. Potter, Jory, Bassett, Barnett, and Mychalkiw (2002), for example, used the computer and card-based Stroop tasks to examine head injuries. Overall, however, the chapters are well organized, informative, and highly readable.

▬ The five selected cognitive tasks were well chosen given their importance to cognitive psychology and applicability to clinical psychology. However, there are other areas of intersection between cognitive and clinical psychology. In particular, one area not addressed by Wenzel and Rubin is assessment. Assessing intelligence, reasoning, and so forth are certainly areas in which the cognitive methods can be used to enhance clinical research. In fact, Embretson (1998) and Guyette and Koch (2002) have suggested that cognitive theory should be used to help improve the validity of various assessment measures.

▬ Chao (2003) suggested that psychologists need a metaframework or metatheory to allow for communication between subdisciplines. Although *Cognitive Methods and Their Application to Clinical Research* is an extremely useful resource for clinical psychologists interested in using cognitive tasks in their research, a framework or theory unifying cognitive and clinical psychology is not provided. Therefore, this work clearly shows the benefit of applying cognitive research methods to address clinical issues but does not provide a macrolevel account (Gilbert, 2004; Henriques, 2004) to foster the interaction between cognitive and clinical psychology beyond the five areas specifically addressed in the book.

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March 23, 2005 Vol. 50,  
No. 12, Article 4

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