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Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 758094031]

Publisher Psychology Press

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## International Journal of Psychology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713659663>

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Online publication date: 14 March 2011

**To cite this Article** Bullock, Merry and Soygüt, Gonca(2011) 'Report on the Advanced Research and Training Seminars (ARTS) 2010', *International Journal of Psychology*, 46: 2, 153 – 158

**To link to this Article:** DOI: 10.1080/00207594.2011.553121

**URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.553121>

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# INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

## Report on the Advanced Research and Training Seminars (ARTS) 2010

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*T*he 2010 Advanced Research and Training Seminars (ARTS) program is described, with a history of the ARTS program, its reorganization in 2009, and implementation in 2010. ARTS is held every two years at a major international congress, and is designed to enhance research skills, promote attendance at international congresses, and provide networking possibilities for scholars from developing countries. From over 85 applicants, 46 psychologists from 18 countries, with a median age of 34, were selected to participate in one of three ARTS seminars, held in Melbourne, Australia in the summer of 2010. Each seminar was evaluated by participants and conveners. Program details and future directions are discussed.

### THE ARTS PROGRAM

The Advanced Research Training Seminars (ARTS) program, co-sponsored by the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP), and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), provides training in research methodologies and new directions in psychological science to scholars from low-income countries. The ARTS program has been held biennially since 1992, in conjunction with major international congresses of psychology (the International Congress of Psychology, the International Congress of Applied Psychology, and the International Congress of Cross-Cultural Psychology).

Typically, there are three separate seminars in each ARTS program, spanning 2–3 days. The close conjunction to an international congress facilitates congress attendance for ARTS participants, recognizing the value of congresses as important venues for presenting scholarly work and developing collaborations and contacts.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARTS

Since its inception in 1992, ARTS has pursued a set of complementary objectives: (i) to enhance the research skills and knowledge of scholars (normally early career) from low-income countries through training; (ii) to bring to international

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congresses scholars from low-income countries who might otherwise be financially unable to attend; and (iii) to provide a space where researchers from different countries may learn from each other, develop collaborative networks, and foster international understanding. Thus, in addition to capacity-building activities, ARTS work toward building a community that will extend the reach of the ARTS experience temporally, as each participant returns to their home institution with new skills and transmits them to colleagues and students; and spatially, as participants form international collaborative relationships in research, teaching, and scholarship.

ARTS activities were traditionally organized by one or two coordinators who, at times, worked almost single-handedly to recruit conveners, recruit and select participants, solicit funding to cover seminar costs and modest support to ARTS participants, and organize on-the-ground logistics. Not surprising, coordinating a multi-year and logistically complicated program, as well as finding funding, taxed the volunteer coordinators, who consistently called for a broader institutionalization of the program and mechanisms for consistent funding. Although ARTS was regularly supported by a number of small grants from UNESCO, from the American Psychological Foundation (APF), from a number of IUPsyS National Members, and from the contributing organizations, these funds were never sufficiently large or sufficiently consistent for long-range planning or coordination.

These organizational challenges were addressed concretely by the sponsoring organizations through a reorganization of the ARTS structure and management. The sponsoring organizations developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provided guiding principles, an operational framework, and a commitment to institutionally based management and financial stability. As part of this new arrangement, they formed an ARTS Steering Committee to assume the functions of determining ARTS themes, recruiting ARTS conveners, recruiting and choosing ARTS participants, and developing medium- and long-range ARTS follow-up activities. Administrative and management functions for ARTS were assumed by the IUPsyS. The first ARTS coordinator served from May 2009 to August 2010. The IUPsyS Executive Officer, who attended the 2010 ARTS and then assumed the position of ARTS coordinator for follow-up and future ARTS planning. The MOU also specified that local logistical support would be provided by local Congress organizers.

## ARTS 2010: A CULMINATION OF A RAPID LEARNING PROCESS

The new ARTS structure began its activities in May, 2009, when the ARTS Steering Committee met for a brief, one-day orientation. At that meeting, the newly appointed ARTS Coordinator (Xianghong Sun, China) and the newly designated steering committee members from IUPsyS (Gonca Soygüt), IACCP (Nandita Chaudhary), and IAAP (Tom Oakland) met with IUPsyS officers and one of the past ARTS Coordinators, Heidi Keller. The group had a dense agenda—to gain an overview of past ARTS structure and procedures, to review the draft Memorandum of Understanding that specified ARTS procedures as well as principles and organization, to discuss policy issues about the structure and decision-making process for ARTS, and to begin the process of developing and implementing the 2010 ARTS, which would occur in less than 15 months' time.

After the May meeting, ARTS Coordinator Xianghong Sun convened a series of Skype conference calls with the ARTS Steering Committee and the IUPsyS Deputy Secretary-General to develop topics and recruit conveners for three seminars, to develop a call for applicants, to devise an acceptance decision policy, a funding policy, funding appeals, and plans for long-range outreach to ARTS alumni.

These were tall tasks that the group accomplished over a very short period of time. Planning for the 2010 ARTS was put in place, and policy decisions were taken. Funding solicitation remained a challenge that was somewhat alleviated by the availability of additional capacity-building funds that had been specifically allocated for this transition period (see below for funding issues).

### Selection of topics and conveners

The general aim of the ARTS program is to provide three different but complementary seminars in each two-year cycle. Typically at least one seminar is focused on basic science or methodology, at least one addresses a substantive topic of relevance to potential participants, and the third rounds out the selection. Because of the timing of the 2010 ARTS planning process, the ARTS Steering Committee gathered ideas for seminar conveners and topics from the executive committees of the sponsoring organizations rather than through a call for conveners, as had been the norm in earlier years.

Three ARTS were offered for 2010, spread in time before and after the two 2010 Congresses, the International Congress of Cross-Cultural Psychology, and the International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP), each in Melbourne. The three seminars were:

- Cultural and Social Cognitive Neuroscience Research (July 5–6); Conveners and Speakers: Shihui Han, China & Yina Ma, China
- Test Development and Adaptation (July 9–11); Convener: Thomas Oakland, USA; Speakers Barbara Byrne, Canada, Ronald Hambleton, USA, Dragos Iliescu, Romania, and Thomas Oakland, USA
- Discourse Analysis (July 10–11); Convener and Speaker: Caroline Demuth, Germany

### Recruitment and selection of participants for ARTS 2010

The ARTS website was redesigned and updated and material describing the ARTS programs, general information about ARTS, and an ARTS application packet were posted (see [www.iupsys.net/arts](http://www.iupsys.net/arts)). The program was advertised through notices sent to individual associations of psychology, published in newsletters of international and national associations, and sent to selected individuals for further dissemination. Links were provided on the IACCP2010 Congress websites and ICAP2010.

A total of 86 applications for ARTS were received. Applications were reviewed and ranked by the ARTS convener and by each member of the ARTS Steering Committee according to a number of criteria, including perceived match between the applicant's credentials and the ARTS topic, substantive expertise and relevance, few prior opportunities for international experience, no prior ARTS experience, and probability of multiplying the ARTS training further in their home institutions or countries. Final selections were made by the ARTS Steering Committee, using criteria that included the rankings and geographical distribution.

The final set of participants selected for ARTS included 46 scholars from 18 countries: Brazil, Chile, China, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Latvia, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand and Zambia. The median age was 34 (75% were under age 40; 28% were under age 30), meeting the ARTS goal of supporting younger psychologists.

### Evaluation of ARTS 2010

Each ARTS program was evaluated on the final day of the seminar by means of questionnaires given to ARTS conveners and participants. The questionnaires included quantitative ratings and open-ended questions about participants' and conveners' expectations and reactions to the seminars, and also gathered information about ARTS publicity and financial support. Participant questionnaires were completed by 38 of the program participants (11 participants in the ARTS Cultural and Social Cognitive Neuroscience; 12 participants in the ARTS Test Development and Adaptation; and 15 participants in the ARTS Discourse Analysis). The convener questionnaire was completed by conveners or speakers in each of the three seminars. Details of the evaluations are given below.

#### Participant evaluation

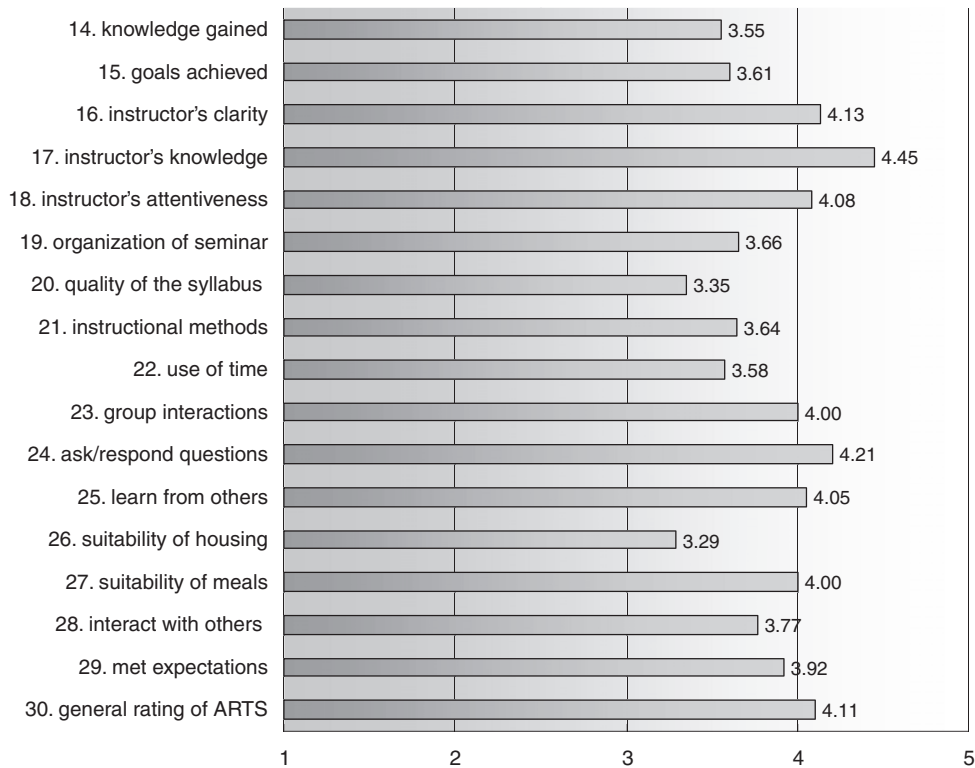
##### *Program evaluation*

ARTS participants came to the program with high expectations (average rating 4.4 of 5) and modest levels of prior knowledge of the topics (average rating 3.0 of 5). The overall ranking for whether they would recommend ARTS to others was 4.8/5 (scale from "would not" to "definitely would")—98% of the participants answered that they would recommend ARTS—and that they anticipated that what they had learned would be useful in their research and teaching, and would be taken forward to their students and colleagues. ARTS participants gave the instructors overall very positive ratings. Several participants appreciated the fact that the training included material from concrete research projects. Some suggested that material from ongoing research projects of the participants themselves might also be used in the exercises. There was also a general wish for more time to practice methodological techniques, and to have available research tools on-site. Overall, the open climate and opportunities for establishing networks with other participants were highly appreciated.

Figure 1 shows participants' ranking of various aspects of the ARTS seminar on a scale 1 (poor) to 5 (outstanding).

##### *Open-ended comments*

Participants were also asked to answer open-ended questions about what they saw as strengths



**Figure 1.** Participants' ranking of the ARTS seminar, on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (outstanding).

of their ARTS seminar and what they would like to see done differently. Strengths included the broad range of skills addressed, the opportunity to interact with other participants, instructors' knowledge, and the opportunity to interact with a diverse set of colleague participants.

Suggestions for improvement included a variety of logistical strategies to improve communication and preparation. Participants suggested that ARTS programs be developed earlier to enable participants to prepare for their time in the seminars most effectively. They suggested that participants be given assignments prior to arriving at the seminars, and that participants engage in activities to introduce themselves, their backgrounds, and research interests. Many participants called for a faster in-seminar pace, increased hands-on activities, and mechanisms for follow-up projects and activities after ARTS. They also suggested increasing the financial support, and housing that was close to the seminar location and that afforded privacy (the 2010 ARTS participants were housed in a student hostel with shared rooms and baths).

### ***Finding out about ARTS***

As in earlier years, ARTS participants primarily learned about the program from seeing it

announced on the web (58% saw it on one of the sponsoring organization websites; 50% saw it on one of the Congress websites). In addition participants heard about ARTS from their colleagues (37%) and the organizers (26%). Dissemination through national associations and email listservs appeared less effective.

The issues of dissemination remain a challenge, and it is clear from participants' responses and suggestions that it is particularly important to find a variety of dissemination outlets for reaching potential participants, particularly in developing countries. These include improved strategies for engaging national psychology organizations and psychology departments, as well as professional organizations in related fields for those countries where psychology is not well developed, and consistent and broad publicity through the websites of the sponsoring organizations and the congresses. It was agreed that early dissemination of ARTS information is an important goal.

### **Convener evaluation**

Overall, conveners were positive about the 2010 ARTS and especially appreciated the ways that the groups coalesced over the course of the program. Conveners reported that they generally found

information about ARTS and participant applications useful in planning their own seminar and in selecting participants. They appreciated the multicultural diversity of ARTS participants and active involvement from the ARTS steering committee members. Conveners did ask for more accessible facilities and organizational support on the ground, as well as more convenient housing during the seminars.

The challenges mentioned included insufficient English proficiency for classroom discussion, and variability in participant background knowledge.

## ARTS SUPPORT

### Support for the ARTS program

ARTS participants are supported for seminar costs (course materials, seminar room), and accommodation and meals during the seminar. For the 2010 ARTS, the Steering Committee agreed to additionally provide each ARTS participant and convener with a base travel stipend of \$500. Applicants were then invited to apply for limited additional funding. Supplemental travel grants ranged from \$200 to \$1000, and were based on expressed need and travel distance/cost to the ARTS venue. These additional funds only partially covered travel costs to the ARTS venue in Australia.

ARTS participants were asked about their financial support in the evaluation questionnaire. Eighty-seven percent reported relying on the grant from ARTS (although all received this); 32% also received support from their university or employer, but for most (58%) this was not sufficient for attending ARTS and was supplemented with personal funds. Only three participants reported receiving funds from national sources or their national psychology organization, a source that earlier ARTS reports had suggested as an important resource. Participants generally ranked the support received as very important to their ability to attend.

### Support for congress attendance

Every ARTS participant was encouraged to attend at least one of the two international congresses (IACCP, ICAP). Although no direct support for congress attendance was available from ARTS, the MOU among the sponsoring organizations specifies that ARTS participants will receive waived congress registration. In 2010 this was partially successful. Congress

registration fees were waived for ARTS participants who attended the ICAP congress. Because of financial constraints expressed by the IACCP congress organizers, ARTS participants who attended this congress were required to pay congress registration fees, but did receive a complementary one-year membership in the IACCP organization. The question of implementing the registration concession policy specified in the MOU is still a matter for discussion, because of its financial implications to congress organizers.

### Fundraising

The cost of the ARTS program is close to three times the funds provided by the three sponsoring organizations. Offering ARTS thus requires active fundraising from individuals and organizations. Fundraising for ARTS has always presented a major challenge, and 2010 was no different. Because of the transition in ARTS coordination, fundraising efforts were delayed, and usual organizational donations were smaller than in earlier years. The ARTS program funds supplied by IUPsyS, IAAP and IACCP were supplemented through support from a Jacobs Foundation grant for capacity-building activities in 2008–2010. One of the major tasks for the 2012 ARTS and beyond is to develop a consistent and stable funding stream.

In addition to program funds, the 2010 ARTS received funds from the following organizations:

- British Psychological Society; Canadian Psychological Association; Chinese Psychological Society; German Psychological Society.

In addition, the University of Melbourne provided a reduction to their facilities fee, and the ARTS conveners and their home universities gave very generously of their time and efforts.

### Developing the ARTS infrastructure: Alumni program outreach

Former ARTS participants (about since 1992) form an important reference group for understanding the impact of ARTS and for planning its future directions and implementation. One of the priorities for the ARTS Steering Committee after its first 2009 meeting was to develop an ARTS alumni network for consultation.

To begin, the Steering Committee searched for email contacts for all ARTS participants

1992–2008, and sent a welcoming letter and request to respond to a brief survey to gather feedback about the ARTS program and its longer-term impact.

### **Survey: ARTS alumni**

The ARTS survey was sent to 105 ARTS network participants, of whom 16 (15%) responded. Respondents were from ARTS programs from 1994 (2), 1998 (2), 2000 (3), 2002 (2), 2006 (3) and 2008 (5) (one had attended programs in 2 years). Survey respondents were asked to describe and rate the benefits of ARTS, especially to their research and teaching.

Most reported that ARTS had been useful to their professional activities, including teaching skills (“new contents and topics; enriching teaching practices; providing content and methods for research training”); research skills (“facilitating collaboration, guidance for publications, learning new methods”), and scholarship (“enhancing interest in cross-cultural studies; increasing networking, broadening perspectives and resources”). In addition, the large majority reported that their ARTS experiences were carried forward in their work with undergraduate and graduate students, and through subsequent research projects, conferences presentations, and publications. The most important features of ARTS cited by survey respondents were meeting scholars from different regions, becoming informed about and developing research skills, and interactions with the ARTS conveners

### **ARTS 2012 AND BEYOND: MOVING FORWARD**

Following the 2010 ARTS program, there was an opportunity to consult with ARTS alumni from the 2010 ARTS as well as earlier ARTS seminars.

### **Roundtable discussion: ARTS participants, conveners, and alumni**

At the 2010 ICAP Congress, IUPsyS–ARTS Liaison and Steering Committee member Gonca Soygüt chaired a roundtable discussion attended by about 30 2010 ARTS participants, conveners, and alumni. This session provided ideas for future topics and program implementation, and plans for further developing the ARTS network.

Roundtable participants supported the ARTS network that could serve as a collaborative

network of scholars, and as a resource for ARTS planning.

### **Suggestions for future ARTS topics**

Participants suggested a number of methodological topics, including discourse analysis; quantitative and qualitative methodologies; advanced data analysis: (e.g., SEM); Cross-cultural research methods; e-research methods (internet sampling, survey sampling); action research and teaching; eye-tracking; fMRI; software training. They also suggested a range of topical areas, including crisis-intervention research; micro-emotion research, including methodology; neuroscience (they recognized the need for equipment); genocide/terrorism research; cross-cultural topics; environmental psychology; developing a National Peace Index

This information will be of use to the Steering Committee as it develops the ARTS 2012 program.

### **ARTS network**

The ARTS network includes a listserv and website to increase the possibilities of information sharing and future collaborations. A model for follow-up activities is a collaborative group research project begun by participants in the 2010 Test Development and Adaptation ARTS seminar. Nine of the 15 ARTS participants agreed to participate in a multi-country test adaptation study under the guidance of ARTS lecturer Dragos Iliescu.

### **SUMMARY**

The 2010 ARTS was the first under a new management arrangement that has moved the program to a sustainable, institutional basis. Despite the challenges in planning and implementing the ARTS in a short period of time, the seminars were fully subscribed, and were positively evaluated by participants and conveners. The ARTS Steering Committee and ARTS Coordinator will build on the ARTS 2010 experiences and feedback in planning for ARTS 2012. A challenge for the program continues to be fundraising and maximizing impact. The development of follow-up activities is under way through the ARTS alumni network and cross-national study on test adaptation.

ARTS, a flagship capacity-building activity of the three international organizations, will have come of age to enjoy its 10th program year in 2012. For further information about ARTS, please see the IUPsyS website, [www.iupsys.net/arts](http://www.iupsys.net/arts).