National Youth At Risk Conference
Las Vegas

Alcohol Literacy Challenge™
Expectancy Theory & Practice

Peter DeBenedittis, Ph.D.
“Alcohol Expectancies”

are your beliefs about alcohol

Find out yours by answering this question:

How do you think people feel after a few drinks?
Physical Effects & Mental Effects
Physical Effects & Mental Effects

Physical Effects: Direct pharmacological or biological effects of a drug
Physical Effects & Mental Effects

Physical Effects: Direct pharmacological or biological effects of a drug

Mental Effects: Effects people associate with a drug, whether or not the drug actually causes this effect
The Physical Effects of Alcohol

Physical Effects Drinkers Call Good:

Physical Effects Drinkers Call Bad:
The Physical Effects of Alcohol

Physical Effects Drinkers Call Good:

A Buzz – but only at low doses

(After 1 or 2 drinks the buzz effect diminishes for most people. If they continue to drink after this, they’ll feel worse than before their buzz started)

Physical Effects Drinkers Call Bad:
The Physical Effects of Alcohol

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The Physical Effects of Alcohol

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Neurological Breakdowns
The Physical Effects of Alcohol

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Neurological Breakdowns

Poison
Alcohol Expectancies
Alcohol Expectancies

- Exist Before a Person Begins Drinking
Alcohol Expectancies

• Exist Before a Person Begins Drinking

• Predict How Old a Person is When He or She Begins Drinking
Alcohol Expectancies

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- Predict How Old a Person is When He or She Begins Drinking
- Distinguish Light Drinking Children From Heavy Drinking Children
Alcohol Expectancies

- Exist Before a Person Begins Drinking
- Predict How Old a Person is When He or She Begins Drinking
- Distinguish Light Drinking Children From Heavy Drinking Children
- Mitigate the Influence of Other Factors such as Family History, Drinking History, or Belief in the Negative Consequences of Drinking
Medical Placebos
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- Cure between 30% and 70% of all illnesses
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- Purple Dye cured 70% of patients with worts
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• Placebos are getting stronger
How can it be possible for people to get “drunk” without drinking alcohol?
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How can it be possible for people to get “drunk” without drinking alcohol?
How can it be possible for people to get “drunk” without drinking alcohol?

It’s the thinking, not the drinking!

You can get all the positive effects of drinking without alcohol.
Placebos Are Getting More Effective. Drugmakers Are Desperate to Know Why.

By Steve Silberman  08.24.09
Yellow pills make the most effective antidepressants, like little doses of pharmaceutical sunshine.

Why.

By Steve Silberman 08.24.09

ZINE: 17.09

The Getting More Effective.

Are Desperate to Know

REAL.

FAKE.

BOTH CAN CURE DEPRESSION.
Yellow pills
make the most effective
antidepressants, like little doses of
pharmaceutical sunshine.

Why.

By Steve Silberman 08.24.09

ZINE: 17

Red pills
can give you a more stimulating kick.
Wake up, Neo.

REAL.

BOOTH CAN CURE DII

FAKE.
Yellow pills make the most effective antidepressants, like little doses of pharmaceutical sunshine.

**Why.**

Red pills can give you a more stimulating kick.

WAKE UP, NEO.

The color green reduces anxiety, adding more chill to the pill.
Yellow pills make the most effective antidepressants, like little doses of pharmaceutical sunshine.

**Why.**

By Steve Silberman 08.24.09

Red pills can give you a more stimulating kick. Wake up, Neo.

The color green reduces anxiety, adding more chill to the pill.

**White tablets**—particularly those labeled “antacid”—are superior for soothing ulcers, even when they contain nothing but lactose.
Yellow pills make the most effect antidepressants, like pharmaceutical suns.

Why
By Steve S

More is better, scientists say. Placebos taken four times a day deliver greater relief than those taken twice daily.

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You a more stimulating kick. Neo.
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Clever names can add a placebo boost to the physiological punch in real drugs. Viagra implies both vitality and an unstoppable Niagara of sexy.

The color green reduces anxiety, adding the pill.

Branding matters. Placebos stamped or packaged with widely recognized trademarks are more effective than “generic” placebos.
Sensory Transmission Model of Experience

Physical Stimuli

Reality

You
Sensory Transmission Model of Experience

Physical Stimuli

You

Reality
Sensory Mastery Model of Experience

Physical Stimuli

You
Sensory Mastery Model of Experience

In Honor of Protagoras
“Man is the Master of Experience”
Sensory Mastery Model of Experience

In Honor of Protagoras
“Man is the Master of Experience”
Sensory Mastery Model of Experience

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In Honor of Protagoras

“Man is the Master of Experience”
Physically, your eye has a blind spot.

The diagram shows the eye with labeled parts:
- **Fovea Centralis**: spot of maximum acuity and maximum color sensitivity.
- **Retina**
- **Blind Spot**
- **Optic Nerve**
What are you seeing in your blind spot?

Fovea Centralis, spot of maximum acuity and maximum color sensitivity

Retina

Blind Spot

Optic Nerve
What are you seeing in your blind spot?
Your Miraculous Brain

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second
Your Miraculous Brain

Senses

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second
Your Miraculous Brain

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Your Miraculous Brain

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second
Your Miraculous Brain

No Difference

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second
Your Miraculous Brain

2000 Bits

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second

No Difference

Reality
PBS: The Brain Fitness Program

Neurons that Fire Together Wire Together
PBS: The Brain Fitness Program

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This is why the question “How do you think people feel after a few drinks?” is important to challenging expectancies.
It determines the mental constructs built around alcohol.
Influences on Beliefs: Traditional Sociology

- You
- Family
- Church
- School
- Media
Influences on Beliefs: Media Scholars

- Media
- Family
- Church
- School
- You
PBS: The Brain Fitness Program

What We’re Bombarded By Becomes Our Reality
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Remember, the environment alcohol marketing creates results in a half million repetitions of neural pathways being stimulated with messages about drinking.
Memory Map of Alcohol Effects

Arousal/Sedation Dimension

Positive/Negative Dimension

Hyper       Cool

Crazy       Talkative

Forgetful   Active

Dizzy

Loud

Stupid

Sick

Sleepy

Slow

Less Nervous

Outgoing

Sexy

Relaxed

Sad

Relaxed

Scared

Happy

Fun

Smart

Quiet

Sick

Sleepy

Slow

Less Nervous

Outgoing

Sexy

Relaxed

Sad

Relaxed

Scared

Happy

Fun

Smart

Quiet
Brain Science Rules

To help you read the Alcohol Memory Map

Memory Map of Alcohol Effects

Arousal/Sedation Dimension

- Scared
- Dizzy
- Slow

Positive/Negative Dimension

- Sexy
- Relaxed
- Sleepy

- Scared
- Slow
- Sick

- Happy
- Quiet
- Smart

- Carefree
- Less Nervous
- Funny

- Active
- Friendly
- Talkative

- Dizzy
- Stupid
- Loud

- Cool
- Less Nervous
- Funny

- Scared
- Slow
- Sick

- Happy
- Quiet
- Smart
Neurons that Fire Together, Wire Together
When two things happen at the same time, your brain makes one thing out of it
Neurons that Fire Together, Wire Together
When two things happen at the same time, your brain makes one thing out of it.

The Active Part Wins
whatever part of your brain you’re using determines your behavior.

Brain Science Rules
To help you read the Alcohol Memory Map.
Alcohol Memory Map

Arousal/Sedation Dimension

Positive/Negative Dimension

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Sick

Dizzy

Crazy

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Funny

Less Nervous

Outgoing

Fun

Happy

Relaxed

Sad

Explicit

Quiet

Smart
NIAAA Endorses Challenging Expectancies
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- An extensive construct validation network has evolved that supports expectancies as an important influence on drinking (Goldman 1999)
Challenging Alcohol Expectancies are 1 of 3 Programs Recommended by NIAAA for alcohol prevention on College Campus

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Challenging Alcohol Expectancies are 1 of 3 Programs Recommended by NIAAA for alcohol prevention on College Campus

Reduced Drinking still found after a 10 year follow-up!
Classroom Based Interventions

- Reduced Positive Expectancies for 4th Graders
  (Cruz & Dunn 2003)
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- Reduced Positive Expectancies for 4th Graders (Cruz & Dunn 2003)

- Reduced Drinking and Positive Expectancies for High School students (Cruz 2005 & Sivasithamparam 2011)
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- Reduced Drinking and Positive Expectancies for High School students (Cruz 2005 & Sivasithamparam 2011)

- Reduced drinking for College students (Sivasithamparam, Hall & Dunn 2008 & Schreiner, Fried, Sivasithamparam & Dunn 2009)
Classroom Based Interventions

- Reduced Positive Expectancies for 4th Graders (Cruz & Dunn 2003)

- Reduced Drinking and Positive Expectancies for High School students (Cruz 2005 & Sivasithamparam 2011)

- Reduced drinking for College students (Sivasithamparam, Hall & Dunn 2008 & Schreiner, Fried, Sivasithamparam & Dunn 2009)

- Also found effective in large classroom lectures given in only 30 minutes (Fried, Sivasithamparam, Schreiner, Boucher, Dunn & Hall 2010)
NREPP REVIEWED
Reviewed in June 2012

- 3.3 Quality of Research
- 3.5 Readiness for Dissemination
  (out of 4 points)
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**Outcomes**

- Reduction in expectancies of positive social and arousing effects of alcohol.
- Increase in expectancies of negative sedating and antisocial effects of alcohol
- Reduced instances of drinking
- Reduced amounts consumed when drinking
- Lower overall BAC levels when drinking
- Fewer instances of binge drinking
Share the Knowledge

Let your peers know they can visit medialiteracy.net for a free 2 hour on-line class that will earn 2 CEUs.
For More Information about Challenging Alcohol Expectancies, please call Dr. DeBenedittis @ (505) 670-9797