Measuring implicit mentalizing through eye-tracking

Mentalizing is the ability to represent another person’s mental states (thoughts, beliefs, desires etc.) as distinct from one’s own mental states. Explicit measures of mentalizing have been used for over 30 years and tend to involve verbal responses justifying people’s actions or explaining what they were thinking (e.g. Baron-Cohen et al., 1985; Happé, 1994). More recently, implicit measures of mentalizing have been developed (e.g. Senju et al., 2009), although these methods have also been criticized in the literature (e.g. Heyes, 2014).

In this project, you will develop an existing eye-tracking measure of implicit mentalizing to address methodological criticisms, as well as trialing a novel eye-tracking measure of implicit mentalizing. This project will involve creating video stimuli, programming the task, testing typical adults, processing and analysis of the data, and writing up the final results.

Project supervisor:

Sarah White

Senior Research Fellow

Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL

17 Queen Square

020 7679 1168

s.white@ucl.ac.uk

www.minifish.net