Lifecycle of a research project
TIFF[©] – ten years on

It is a decade since **SUSANNAH TEMPLE** completed her PhD research.
Here, she considers completion of the whole project having successfully
brought her research findings 'to market'.

T HIS POTTED HISTORY and reflection offers a glimpse of the process of bringing a social research endeavour 'to market' – what happened, how and when, what issues had to be addressed and what lessons learned. It raises the questions of what the purpose was for doing the research in the first place, and what motivated the journey to market – so people could benefit from the findings. What has been learned along the way, and at what point could the purpose be said to have been achieved? Paradoxically, the decade since I completed my PhD research and exam in May 2002, has been ten years packed with further exploration, experiments and seemingly endless vertical learning curves. The researching process has continued – maybe there is no ending.

Motivation for starting the Functional Fluency research
Originally, in the 1990s, there were three strands to my desire to create a TA psychometric tool that would help people grow their self-awareness, understanding and the courage to change their behaviour.

1. I was goaded by colleagues who wanted to use such a tool with their clients or members of staff. They sensed from studying educational TA with me that there could well be such a tool and were impatient with the fact that none existed.

2. I was deeply curious about the potential scientific validity of the embryonic model I had developed to attempt to cope with the conceptual confusions between structural and functional models of ego states that I, and many others, experienced over the years.

3. In 1997 Fran Lacey died after just a short illness and I was completely outraged with grief over my loss both of her, my supervisor, colleague and friend, and of all our plans to train together creating a combination of educational and psychotherapy training.

I combined these three strands when I decided to take action and create the wanted tool (no. 1), basing it on my Functional Fluency model (no. 2) in order to do something worthwhile in Fran's memory (no. 3). I didn't

> **What is Functional Fluency?**
> Functional Fluency is the art and skill of interpersonal effectiveness. It is the use of those positive and flexible ways of responding to each other that help us to communicate well. It is about how to 'respond' more and 'react' less. It is about increasing our 'response-ability'.
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> **What is the Temple Index of Functional Fluency?**
> TIFF is a well researched personal development tool based on the Functional Fluency model. It is a self-report questionnaire that provides a profile of a person's patterns of social behaviour. Using TIFF promotes the self-awareness and understanding that enhances emotional literacy. Expert feedback offers support, discussion and guidance for how to make use of the TIFF Profile.
>
> NB: TIFF does not measure abilities or type people in any way. Feedback is collaborative with a focus on what people already do well. It is designed to boost morale and the courage to make the changes chosen for developing effectiveness.
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notice how grandiose this was because I didn't know how to create a psychometric tool and had no idea of the demands of the task. I discovered I had to complete a research degree, but only slowly realised what I had taken on. This was just as well or I would never have started.

The five years of study – I was horror-struck when I discovered I would have to convert to a PhD – answered my research questions: 'Is it possible to create a psychometric tool using the Functional Fluency concepts as a base?' and 'Would this tool work as an effective stimulus for personal development?'. (The chart on page 14 briefly describes the 1997-2002 research project outline.) It was possible, and the tool clearly had valid and reliable psychometric potential. The newly research-based Functional Fluency model was validated as part of the process (Temple 2004).

FUNCTIONAL FLUENCY INDEX RESEARCH PROJECT OUTLINE 1997 – 2002

STAGE 1 Conceptualisation of Constructs
1997 to 1999
90 descriptors collected over many years to trial for the 9 constructs
Descriptor Sort Exercise using 36 expert judges (Plus 20 more German)
Creation of a 6-word picture for each construct (nine 6-word pictures)

STAGE 2 Generation of Behavioural Indicators
1999 to 2000
7 groups made up 2 sentences for each of the 54 words in the word pictures
Delphi technique used by the groups, to access wide ranging creativity,
        culminating in voting exercise to indicate preferred sentences
Creation of a pool of 540 indicators, 60 for each of the 9 constructs
10 for each of the words in the 6-word pictures
Selection of the 4 'best' sentences for each of the 54 words

STAGE 3 Creation of Test Items
2000
4 sentences for each of the 54 words converted into 216 test item 'questions'
Test Item Validation Exercise using 20 expert judges
        to test how the items match the constructs
Selection of appropriate range & number of the items
        which best indicate the original 9 constructs
Parallel lists A & B created 108 items each

STAGE 4 F.F.I. Test Construction
2000 to 2001
Questionnaire format designed – including introduction, instructions, examples and item answering layout
Scoring methodology planned for the 9-scale index
Results format drafted
Scoring system & framework for feedback process drafted
Preparation for Pilot Study with 302 participants

STAGE 5 Pilot
2001
The 302 participants were all people whose work was with people
The 20 sub-groups came from a variety of contexts within overall population
Aims were: to make a data collection in order to do relevant statistical analyses, to refine
        all materials, investigate the effect of personal variables, affirm reliability and validity through
cross-data, and triangulation studies.

STAGE 6 Data Analysis
2001 to 2002
Quantitative analysis was followed by rigorous qualitative analysis to explore how the
        data illuminated TA theory and illustrated psychometric potential.

STAGE 7 Discussion, conclusions and plans for refinement
2002 and onwards
Write up completed, exam passed and full refinement in place for follow up studies to assess
        effectiveness in various contexts and with different populations.

'The whole TIFF experience accounts for people's basic emotional needs and aims to meet these appropriately.'

This meant the foundations had been laid. It was just the end of the beginning. Now, for me, the real task had to start. The tool needed a name and it had to incorporate the research findings so that it would be as effective as possible. I agreed to the suggestion of 'The Temple Index of Functional Fluency' on the basis that including my name made the tool less 'nickable', and it did make a real word – TIFF – that was short and easy to use and remember. The next stage had to start the process of making sure TIFF was fit for purpose and really could bring benefits to clients in the real world.

Starting the journey to market
So, far from a feeling that the job was done in 2002, my overriding urge immediately was to action the research conclusions; to update the model and its terminology and refine the TIFF questionnaire according to the analyses of the pilot results and all the evaluations.

When this work was completed, and incorporated into the paperwork, it was time to embark on follow up studies. Some of these were 'replica studies' to check the efficacy of the refinements. It was a case of finding a set of groups to match some of the original pilot groups, for example a new cohort of educational psychology MA students and another team of similar management trainees. Results were compared with the originals to confirm the validity and reliability of the changes.

It was also necessary to run TIFF with different populations, to check the range and detail of TIFF's accuracy, for instance patients receiving in or out-patient psychiatric treatment, men in an open prison coming to the end of their 'life sentences', fourth year degree students, psychology A-level students. Further groups needed to be trialled. The evidence so far is that TIFF profiles are uncannily accurate. They invite curiosity and exploration, which makes the collaborative feedback sessions really intriguing and exciting.

Using TIFF professionally
Initially I felt very tentative about asking people to trial TIFF or making any claims about its usefulness. Everything was an experiment and I was bowled over by people's generosity with their interest, time and effort. This was a key learning time for me about how best to deliver TIFF, how to develop a methodology of practice. Gradually I gained confidence that TIFF does do 'what it says on the tin'. However, in order to be able to rely on it

doing so, it was clear that a consistent and appropriate methodology was essential. As more people became interested in using TIFF themselves in their own professional practices, the time had come to consider the matter of TIFF Provider Training. We collaborated over how best to prepare each other for delivering TIFF effectively. As we gained experience, so we realised what needed to go into the training and how it should be delivered. This process continues.

The important thing to remember about TIFF is that it is not a test or an assessment; nor is there any 'typing' of people. The TIFF experience is collaborative, a genuine cooperative exploration of the meanings and significances of the profiles. Together, both parties can learn a lot. The feedback is a mutual engagement, first with the Functional Fluency model and how it outlines the key aspects of human social functioning in general, and then focusing on the client's unique TIFF profiles, his/her 'snapshot' of present behaviour patterns, as illuminated by the model (Gopnik 2009 pp 39-41). The whole TIFF experience accounts for people's basic emotional needs and aims to meet these appropriately. The feedback process itself is designed to tap in to the client's own natural human resources for meeting such needs, as outlined in the Human Givens (Griffin J. Tyrell I. 2003 pp 93-4). This is what is meant by saying that TIFF is a tool for empowerment. In order that this process can lead towards self-awareness and understanding in a way that is empowering, encouraging and practically useful, the relationship between Provider and client is of crucial importance. The training, therefore, needs to enable people to put Functional Fluency into practice – to become functionally fluent themselves.

Involving others in TIFF delivery
From the beginning people came from a variety of contexts and roles wanting to be involved in developing the wider use of TIFF, for example: local authority management development, further education adult guidance, social work (child protection), psychotherapy and business consultancy and training. Some had strong TA connections; some were new to TA. Then there were those who took on the tasks of translation. They were heroic in their motivation, skill and sheer endurance in seeing the job through.

Launching TIFF Online
During this time I worked with an experienced IT colleague on creating an online version of the TIFF questionnaire as part of a whole administrative system for users. In 2005 TIFF Online was launched and the training of TIFF Providers took on a new technical aspect. There was now a practical, central hub for administering both the business side of organising TIFF sales, and the professional side of TIFF delivery, the scoring and

creation of profiles ready for TIFF Providers' feedback to clients. The German translation was added (and later on a Dutch one) so that there was eventually a choice of three languages for doing TIFF online.

Another valuable addition was a tool for doing instant data analysis of TIFF results for ease of ongoing research possibilities.

Developing processes to support the 'Functional Fluency provision' enterprise

The TIFF Provider training process has been, and will continue to be, refined and developed to help people meet the criteria for becoming a TIFF Provider. The quality of this training is crucial to the successful delivery of TIFF. For ongoing support and development all Providers belong to the TIFF Network, where they can share ideas, find mutual inspiration and learn from each other. By the end of 2007 there were eleven German Providers and twelve in the UK. By the end of 2009 there were also 13 Providers in Holland.

There were many issues to address, such as confidentiality and data protection, contracts and quality assurance. All required consultation and learning in order to develop systems fit for purpose and I began to feel dizzy with so many balls in the air. There were times when things went wrong and I found the value of having contracts in place, and legal support to draw on. The responsibility began to feel heavy though and I was glad to have access to business support networks where I could learn from fellow sole traders and meet experts in their respective fields. It was in this way that I found computer help, a specialist in business legalities, a graphic designer and a coach among others.

Using TIFF in the real world

The joys were in finding so many wonderful, talented people who saw the point of TIFF and how it worked and wanted to be able to use it themselves. Especially rewarding was, and is, the fact that these people could also pass on the benefits of TIFF to others in ways that empower and help people make the changes they want, ways that give a morale boost and the possibility of life enhancing insights. (I had been alerted by an expert in the psychometric field to the fact that some tools only really work well when used by their creator.)

We gained much evidence of how TIFF can be of value to clients both in the commercial sector and in therapeutic contexts, including EU funded projects undertaken over several years in Cornwall.

Slowly I gained confidence that TIFF could work in the ways that I had imagined and that, not only was it OK to be up front about the benefits of TIFF, but it was an essential part of helping the networks to grow and develop so that more people could enjoy those benefits.

The need to share the responsibility

At the start of 2008 I voiced my concern at the huge responsibility I carried as the whole enterprise grew. I was greeted with the idea that we should therefore get TIFF Network members together to consider what to do about it. This we did with the aim of finding or creating a business structure that would hold and contain the enterprise so that it could continue to grow and flourish. With various ups and downs of exploration through 2008 and 2009 we found ways to articulate and agree on what we valued and what we wanted to achieve, preserve and avoid. I felt grateful to all the TIFF Network members involved, and excited by their commitment and enthusiasm. Secretly, I found the idea of starting some sort of company scary. Business isn't my thing and I was faced by more steep learning curves – not alone any more however.

Becoming a social enterprise

With help from Social Enterprise Works in Bristol, an agency for supporting new social enterprises, we had to decide what sort of business we wanted to become. The global downturn was having its effect and we had to create a structure for survival, but with the potential for immense development. In the end the choice for us became clear. The new company structure called a 'Community Interest Company' (CIC) fitted well for us with our 'hub and spokes' business model. A simplistic but accurate enough way to describe CICs is to say they are a cross between a charity and a limited company. They have a declared charitable goal and have to report annually to Companies House, with whom they are registered.

We achieved our registration in December 2009 as 'The Fluent Self CIC' and were then into the whole thing of branding, logos, straplines and a new web site www.fluentself.org which has all the details for anyone to see and which links directly to the original www.functionalfluency.com site for convenience.

The Fluent Self CIC gets under way

The launch party for The Fluent Self in Bristol in June 2010 celebrated the possibilities of a whole new way of working. The responsibility load is shared within a secure structure that encourages collaboration. The Fluent Self is eligible for funding for some of its projects and for partnering in funded programmes. This means that members can be paid through the company for project work. An important aspect is that it also makes possible working with, and for, people who cannot pay market rates. Each TIFF Provider continues to use TIFF as much as possible within his/her own professional context. The company helps as appropriate. TIFF Providers are company members (unless they opt out) and others who have done basic training can become Associate members.

Many contribute help, support and expertise to the Fluent Self, some of course are Board members. Specific pieces of work for the company can be paid. It is not yet three years since we became a company and already Functional Fluency is adopted as a core model in various organisations; a counselling training company, hospice care, county school advisory work and others. There is so much potential as interest increases and one thing leads to another. I am comforted and glad to know that Fran Lacey's immediate enthusiasm for the new term, Functional Fluency, for my developing model in the 1990s is echoed now by the enthusiasm of clients and trainees when they learn about how to use Functional Fluency in their lives and professional practice.

Becoming joyfully redundant
I think it is only now that I have a sense that the whole research project is finishing. The essential academic foundation took place in order that the learning could be put to use. Organising and learning how to put that learning to use in the real world was really another chapter in the same research story. Part of my work and my leadership role is now to share what I do with others, so I don't continue to hold the know-how and experience of how things work. I am steadily handing over particular roles and tasks. My aim in doing this is for the enterprise that is The Fluent Self CIC should be able to run and to develop according to our declared goals without me.

As to the question about when is the purpose for doing the research achieved, I'm tempted to say that the answer right now, in 2012, is 'not yet', because I'm not redundant in the way I intend to become. However, the process of writing this has made it clear to me that in fact that's not right. There are so many people now out there nationally and internationally using the Functional Fluency model, and TIFF, in ways that help people build effective personal and professional relationships that, yes, I think the purpose is actually being achieved already.

It's not possible to mention everyone by name, but I can only marvel at all the help I have had at every turn. I thank from the bottom of my heart the ITA who helped to fund my academic work, all those in the TIFF Networks and beyond who have made things possible along the way, and especially those who continue to help and support by holding the vision of the mutual benefits that can be created by enabling people to become more functionally fluent.

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Dr Susannah Temple's 'beginning research' gems:

ONE THING PEOPLE need to keep in mind – useful advice I think – is to be clear about what you are doing the research for, what's your reason and what's your purpose?

You have got to know what you are curious about, or what you have a conviction about. The question then is how are you going to satisfy your curiosity or test that conviction?

The project needs to have an inner energy, that 'umph' from inside about the curiosity and conviction.

What evidence would you need to have, to satisfy that curiosity?

The hunt for evidence is where the discipline comes in, and making sure that the evidence you get is going to be worthwhile.

So often people set out to prove something or not, looking for a 'yes' or 'no' answer – but the world is not black and white and dichotomous thinking is not very helpful. You need an understanding of meaning; the making of clear definitions; and plotting a pathway.

It is detective work, and it is exciting.

I think the laboriousness of collecting data is what has put people off, but now the reality with technology is that, that part is so much easier and it doesn't need to be laborious. If someone like me can learn to do statistical analysis there's hope for anyone... I don't retain it all in my head, but I don't need to – I can look at the 'instructions'. It is learning to understand the analysis that is the key.

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