

# Psychics fail tests of their abilities in academic setting

November 1 2012, by Bob Yirka

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Credit: Wikipedia

(Medical Xpress)—Researchers from Goldsmiths, University of London, in an attempt to prove or disprove the notion that some people have the ability to read the thoughts of others, set up a structured environment to test such abilities – but after inviting many well known British psychics to take part in the study, only two agreed to participate: Patricia Putt and Kim Whitton. After performing blind "readings" of five hidden volunteers each, the psychics produced just one reading that was identifiable to the volunteer. A rate the researchers described as a failure due to it being equal to chance.

The test was designed by Chris French, leader of the Anomalistic

[Psychology Research](#) Unit at Goldsmiths who described the test in detail in a [post](#) to the Guardian. In it, each psychic was asked to sit in a chair and perform readings (capture [thoughts](#)) on individual volunteers who were seated behind a curtain. No oral or [visual communication](#) was allowed between the two. As a reading progressed, the volunteer was asked to think about things that might help someone identify them. The psychic wrote down what they believed to be the thoughts of the volunteer. Both Putt and Whitton performed readings on all five volunteers. After all of the readings had been performed, the [volunteers](#) were invited back to try to identify which of the written commentaries were based on a reading of their thoughts. Of the ten readings performed by the two psychics, just one was identified by the volunteer as describing them and their thoughts. The researchers concluded that the results failed to show any psychic abilities in the two mediums as a single correct match of reading with volunteer was no better than chance.

When told of the results, both Putt and Whitton expressed sadness at having failed the test but suggested that the inability to see the person they were reading might have prevented them from getting accurate results despite both having rated their [feelings](#) of success highly after the completion of each reading. Each was asked to describe their confidence in the reading on a scale of 1 to 7. Whitton's confidence averaged 5.2 while Putts' came out to 5.8.

French concluded his post by acknowledging that the psychic challenge didn't prove that some people can read minds, or that such abilities are non-existent, but insists it does show that at least some of the people who claim to have psychic abilities are fooling not only themselves, but those that pay them for readings.

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