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LANG'S IMAGERY TRAINING PROCEDURE:

A CLINICAL STUDY.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Psychology at the Australian National University. 1986.



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**Disclaimer.**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference to such material is made in the text.

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### Abstract

Imagery has become one of the major tools in the armamentarium of the clinical psychologist. It enables the clinician to work within an environment that is almost as close to reality for the client as reality itself. Part of the reality of an image for the client lies in the client's responses to the image. The greater the fear aroused by a frightening image the more likely it is that the image more closely approximates the client's behaviour in real life.

Lang( 1979(a),1984) argues that images are networks of natural language propositions which represent three aspects of a situation. These are the stimulus elements, the meaning or interpretation of the stimuli, and the response elements. Lang argues that response propositions are the most important aspect of an image because they represent the persons actual behaviour to the stimuli and it is this behaviour that clinicians attempt to change in therapy. Lang has been able to establish that the use of explicit response elements in imagery scripts is more effective at producing physiological arousal to imagery than the use of stimulus elements alone. He has also found that training people to focus on the response elements of imagery scripts increases their physiological arousal.

But Lang has paid little attention to his imagery training procedure. This thesis was aimed at replicating Lang's findings with regard to the procedure and also attempting to delineate the parameters of the procedure with regard to its application in a clinical setting.

This involved the intensive study of eight pre-selected subjects, using a single-subject methodology, to provide a picture of the processes that were operating during the training procedure itself. Both the outcome of the training and the nature of the changes involved during training were considered.

The data generally replicated Lang's findings with regard to the effect of training on physiological arousal. But some inconsistencies in the way that subjects responded during the course of the training raised the question as to whether Lang's theoretical framework could be supported by the type of data that was gathered.