



More than words: The experiential versus didactic delivery of ACT metaphors

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Introduction

Previous research has found that in therapeutic sessions where metaphors were used were rated as more memorable (Martin et al., 1992)

Moreover, the presence of common physical properties when delivering metaphors increased:

- Psychological flexibility (Sierra et al., 2016)
- The impact of metaphors (Criollo et al., 2018)

However few studies have explored the impact of specific metaphors within an acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) context in relation to specific ACT processes

The present study aims to compare the effect of experiential versus didactic delivered ACT metaphors on measures of ACT processes, memorability, helpfulness and comprehensibility

Results

Table 1.
Analyses conducted for each variable

Variable	Analysis
ACT processes	Two-way repeated ANOVA
Memorability	Content analysis
Helpfulness	Independent <i>t</i> -test
Comprehensibility	Independent <i>t</i> -test

No statistical significant differences were found between participants in the didactic and experiential delivered conditions on measures of psychological flexibility, self-as-context, awareness, acceptance, memorability, helpfulness and comprehensibility

Abstract

Aim: Compare the effects of delivering experiential versus didactic acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) metaphors. **Method:** 87 participants randomly received experiential or didactic delivered ACT metaphors and completed a delayed recall task and self-report measures to assess the metaphors' efficacy in communicating ACT concepts and promoting psychological flexibility processes. **Results:** The interactions between the two conditions were analysed using two-way repeated measures ANOVAs, content analysis and independent *t*-tests. No statistical significant differences were found between participants in the two conditions. **Discussion:** Results have clinical implications for the delivery of ACT metaphors in therapeutic practice.

- Experiential condition
- Didactic condition
- Missing Didactic
- Missing Experiential

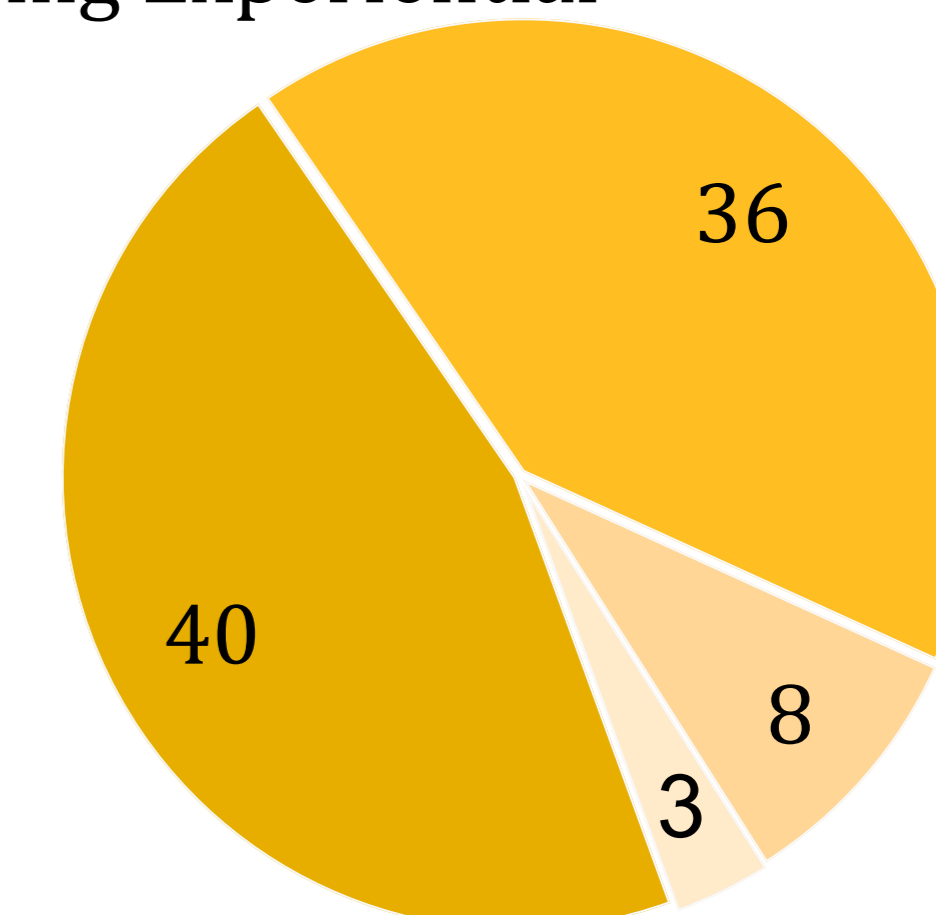


Figure 1. Sample breakdown

Method

Participants: 87 adults (female: 53, male: 34) aged 18-54 ($M = 25.6$, $SD = 8.7$)

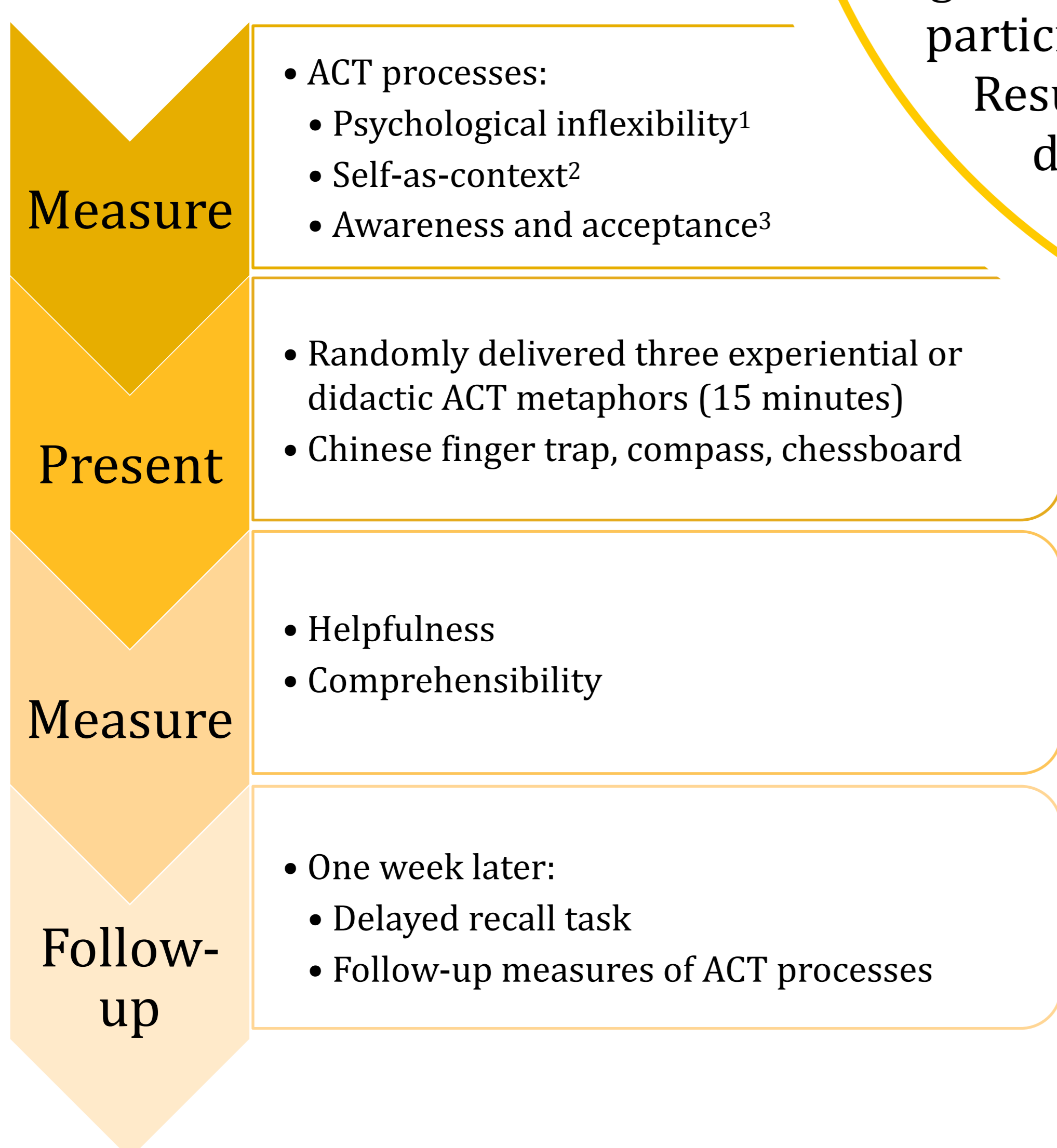


Figure 1. Procedure flow diagram

Discussion

Based on these results, there seems to be no difference between delivering ACT metaphors experientially or didactically. **However**, the attrition rates for the didactic condition is much higher than the experiential condition, suggesting higher engagement in the experiential condition. Furthermore, the period of time given to participants to process the metaphors was much shorter than it would have been in a true clinical setting.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that in therapeutic contexts clients may not significantly benefit from being presented metaphors experientially compared to didactically.

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References:

