

Department of Psychology

Greetings from Colchester!



Welcome to our second special edition newsletter! We hope that you are enjoying your summer. For many of us, the past weeks passed by way too quickly and it is hard to believe that a new academic year will start again soon! But until then, let's enjoy the sunshine as much as possible and let's only occasionally think of the work lying ahead of us.

While many of our undergraduates are indeed enjoying their well deserved break, our current Master students have been busy working on their dissertation which they have to submit in early September. Many of them will then start exciting careers using the skills they acquired over the last year. We wish them all the best and much success!

Speaking of careers: as you know, the newsletter team has been compiling tips and tricks on how to kick-start your future careers. In this special summer edition, we will again provide you with ideas about what you can do upon graduating from Psychology at Essex. We hope that you find these sections helpful when deciding what you want to do later in life.

As always, please get in touch and let us know what you think of this issue. We also look forward to hearing from you about all the things you would like to get covered in future issues. Enjoy the rest of your summer, everyone!

Judgment and Decision Making (JDM) Summer School

From Tuesday 28th August until Tuesday 4th September, the Department of Psychology will host the JDM Summer School for PhD Students. The event is sponsored by the European Association for Decision Making (EADM).

Even if you are not enrolled in a PhD programme (or haven't registered to attend the event), you can still enjoy some of the sessions held at the Department since the Summer School programme includes a number of sessions that are open to all to attend! For instance, you have the opportunity to listen to Dr. Mitch Callan (Justice motive effects in temporal discounting) and Dr. William Matthews (The language of comparative judgement) who will talk about some of their research findings. All talks will take place in room 4.722 which is located at the top floor of the Psychology Department.

For more information go to <http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/department/news/> or contact Dr. Tim Rakow.



A Different view on video games

by Natalie Kwok



The words 'video games' to most parents echoes a negative sound of addiction and obsession but to our new lecturer he sees an alternative association to video games. Before the academic year starts I have the privilege of presenting to you the work of Dr Andrew Przybylski. Previously a research fellow but now a lecturer, he explores the literature on human mo-

tivation by looking at video gamers. Dr Przybylski explains

"I think questions of motivation are central to most of what people find compelling about the study of psychology. Why people do things, the fundamental reasons individuals have, or think they have for acting underlies most topics that psychology is interested in. I like that you can apply a motivational perspective to impasses in other areas of psychology and generate novel hypotheses and findings. My own research is an example of this. Most studies of computer games and virtual environments in the social sciences focus on concerns about aggression and addiction. Examining these contexts from a motivational perspective allows me to study something very different: Why people play".

Although previous research generally focuses on negative behaviours caused by video-games, Dr. Przybylski demonstrates that studying motivation in gamers is a creative way understanding an abstract concept. One's reason to play video game is highly associated with short term psychological satisfaction.

Finally, as a new addition to the academic family, Dr. Przybylski looks forward to working with "students who have interests that span the gap between psychology and computer game design".

If you would like to understand in depth of Dr. Przybylski's research here is an interesting article for you to read:

Przybylski, A. K., Rigby, C. S., Ryan, R. M. (2010) A motivational Model of Video Game Engagement *Review of General Psychology* 14, 154 - 166.

What to do with a degree in Psychology?

by Lisa Phillips

The BPS accreditation of the Department means our students can follow widely varied career paths including careers as clinical, educational, forensic or occupational psychologists. Psychology graduates also work in related fields such as special educational needs, social work, or mental health care. However, many achieve success in very different fields, working in areas like management, personnel, financial services, the media, information technology, and market research. Work placements in the media and financial services are highly competitive, but small and medium sized enterprises often look for psychology students to help with marketing and social media.

During your degree you will develop a wide range of skills which employers will value, including communication skills, problem solving and confidence. An Essex Psychology degree means that you will have improved your clear and accurate writing skills; can present yourself in a fluent and engaging manner; are able to design experiments and interpret them; can use statistical analysis of data; can critically evaluate and assess theories, arguments, and evidence; have a good understanding of people and their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours; are a team-player.

If you need more information about where a psychology degree can take you, All About Careers can help <http://www.allaboutcareers.com/campaigns/what-can-i-do-with-a-psychology-degree>

If you need more real-life inspiration read the next two pages where we are introducing two possible career choices for psychology students.

Introducing Possible Career Paths for Psychology Students I

by Lisa Phillips

Carole Heddle works as a self-employed Counsellor. She has shared a day in her life with us. I'm sure that many Psychology graduates will find this an interesting insight into a possible career path.

What are some of the day to day activities/tasks you do?

No two days are the same! If it is a day that I see clients, I try and make sure I am prepared the night before. I have my process notes relating to the particular clients so that I can refer to them prior to the counselling session. After seeing clients I try and write a few basic notes as soon as possible. When I get home I write up my formal notes and update my log and client payments etc. I am a bit of a stickler for keeping my admin up to date. Notes are always non identifiable in line with data protection. Most days I try and do some reading, either around particular issues that a client may present with or areas that I am interested in. I go to monthly continuous professional development meetings. I also do courses that further my development. I am required to complete a minimum of 30 CPD hours per year. This is also a BACP requirement for accreditation which I am working towards. I have monthly supervision which is another BACP requirement. As counselling can sometimes be an isolating profession, this is a great help.

I get client referrals through Counselling Centres and GP referrals. The paper work around GP referrals has recently increased and is part of the Government

process of measuring outcomes. This can seem onerous at times, but is manageable if you keep paper work up to date.

What would you say are the pros and cons of your job?

I suppose the main pro for me is the privilege of being trusted enough by clients for them to be able to reveal their difficulties. Because I am self-employed I can work as few or as many hours as I wish.

To be honest I am finding it hard to think of any cons! Occasionally, if a client fails to turn up without letting me know of course - but that does not happen very often. A very important aspect of any counselling work is 'self-care'. At times we can feel overwhelmed by our clients' issues. We also have our own issues! A requirement of training is to have our own personal counselling. Although I am not having any counselling myself at the moment, it is something I am always willing to consider if I think it is necessary.

It is important to have a life outside of counselling (as part of our self-care) and I think I have mainly got the balance right for me. I enjoy family life and I do voluntary work in the community (some of this involves baking cakes every week therefore using my creative side!). I also have an allotment which although a commitment, it provides me with both 'thinking space' and 'being space' -- both very necessary (to me anyway!). It is also very good for keeping fit and active and involved in the community and we

get to eat lovely fresh veg and fruit!

How exactly do you help people?

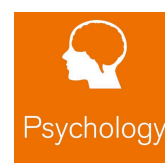
Well as far as I am concerned I don't see counselling as an 'exact' science. Despite the Government trying to 'measure' everything! If I was just offering CBT and doing measurement scales then I suppose I could say that when a client started they were say a 3 and when they left an 8. To be fair I do sometimes use a mood chart and this can be quite enlightening for both client and counsellor. I take the view that it is the relationship that helps most. If you get a chance have a look at Yalom's books - I think his work has been the most influence on me. He is an existential counsellor (works in the 'here and now').

Do you feel this is a rewarding job?

Yes I do feel that it is a very rewarding job although I would describe it as a vocation.

Would you recommend this career path and who to?

I would recommend counselling as a career and even a course on skills can be very helpful for many careers, especially those in the caring professions. I do worry that so many people are being trained and there may not be enough work. Ironically the Government wants to train more for NHS work! Have a look at Benjamin Fry's work and 'Get Stable' - he is trying to increase access of counsellors to NHS clients.



Introducing Possible Career Paths for Psychology Students

II

by Lisa Phillips

Lisa Britton is employed as a Play Therapist. As this area of employment may be of interest to Psychology students, Lisa has kindly answered some questions about her career for the Newsletter.

What are some of the day to day activities/tasks you do?

I work partly in schools either commissioned by Social Care or through my work with children's charities. I also have private clients... so I go into the venue, set up the play room and spend about an hour playing therapeutically with the child. I write notes, submit invoices, plan training and marketing, visit my supervisor. I use all the classic Play Therapy 'tools' such as paint, sand tray, clay, puppets, role play, sound and movement, and also things like the punch bag and sometimes kicking a football around!

What would you say are the pros and cons of being a play therapist?

It's a job with real ups and downs as one witnesses the exhausting

and frustrating journey of families as well as some magical breakthroughs. I find the hardest part is often dealing with the other adults around the child, e.g. Social Care professionals, teachers, parents, all of whom have an agenda and a vested interest in the child behaving in this or that way which is often contrary to the child's own healing needs. It takes a little learning how to diplomatically, yet assertively, deal with these in the best interest of the child. It's also a rather financially tight environment at the moment so schools are not spending so much money on children's emotional well-being - my own hours have been halved since the election, so it is a case of not having all your eggs in one basket - being innovative, flexible and keeping your morale.

How exactly do you help the children?

Partly it's about forming a healthy attachment, partly an opportunity for expression, partly exploration and self-knowledge and learning strategies for self-regulation. I believe that the relationship is key and what nurture

and security is offered through the therapeutic relationship is transformative.

Do feel this is a rewarding job?

Absolutely! But also heart-wrenching and tough at times. Also it is often misunderstood and undervalued by other 'professionals' such as social workers and teachers so it can be a bit of a battle trying to convince them that the work really is worthwhile and will have a beneficial effect on academic achievement and family dynamics!

Would you recommend this career path to those who want to help and support troubled children?

Yes! I would also recommend that you enter into at least a year of your own personal therapy so that you have a really good idea of your own demons and what it's like being on the vulnerable end of the relationship!

Interested in joining the Psychology Newsletter Group or in becoming a Social Media Student Ambassador?

We are always looking for motivated students to help designing or writing for the newsletter. We are also currently looking for students who would enjoy helping us with our facebook page. Interested? Get in touch with Dr. Silke Paulmann to find out more.

Join us on
facebook:

[www.facebook.com/
psychologyatessex](http://www.facebook.com/psychologyatessex)



Some come...

60 seconds with new lecturer

Dr. Andrew Przybylski



If you have to become a movie character, who would it be?
Any func-

tionally immortal character -- having the staying power of Mr. Data would allow me to run some pretty awesome longitudinal studies.

What's your favourite book of all time?

American Gods.

If you had a time machine, where would you go?

Nice try, but I'm not gonna let the Timecops know what I will be doing. If I come into posses-

sion of a time machine I'll make it count.

Who influences you the most and why?

Fritz Perls. His writings and my experiences applying his work in my own life has let me figure out what I really want out of life.

If you can do whatever you want right now, what would you be doing?

I'd probably be at Glastonbury 2013 or wandering around the NYC Museum of Natural History.

Some go....



Wendy Lecluyse obtained her first degree in 'Speech and Language Therapy' at the University of Ghent in Belgium. In 2005 she started a PhD here in the Psychology department in the Hearing Lab with Prof. Meddis. Her PhD research mainly consisted of developing a new test protocol for detailed assessment of hearing impairments. Wendy finished her PhD in 2008 and stayed on in the Hearing lab as a post-doc until last June.

Wendy now works at University Campus Suffolk (Ipswich) as a Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies. From October onwards she will be teaching on the module Research Methods and the

module Communication and Creativity and will also be supervising final year projects. Wendy very kindly agreed to answer some questions for the Newsletter about her chosen career path.

How did you hear about this job?

I heard about this job via jobs.ac.uk.

What aspect of the work are you looking forward to the most?

I am looking forward to teaching and seeing students progress through the course. I love being able to explain complex concepts in a simple way and making people understand what it is all about (and why we should care).

What do you think will be the most challenging aspect of your role?

I think the challenging thing about the job will be to juggle many tasks and responsibilities at the same time, and doing a good job at all of them.

Which of the skills that you got from your study will you use most in your work?

What I have learned from my PhD and doing research is to be critical, cover all angles and think my way around a problem. Also that it is important to be thorough in what you do, attention to detail can be very important.

What advice would you give to students interested in pursuing this kind of work?

My advice to anyone stepping into the big world looking for a job: when you apply for a job make sure you have an eye for details! Think about silly things like the formatting of your letter, make sure there are no typos or different fonts (cutting and pasting can be dangerous), get the date right, or even more importantly, the name of the company... When you are invited to an interview do your research, make sure you know what the company does, what they are looking for and how you would fit in.