Victory for Staff at Annual Staff vs Student Rounders Match!

On Thursday 27th May Psychology staff and students met on the Pavilion Sports Field for the third annual rounders match!

Despite the drizzle earlier on in the day, the weather vastly improved in time for the match and many staff and students turned out to play. Although some students preferred to cheer on their peers from the sidelines and often laugh at the players’ expense!

Both teams had two turns of batting and fielding but the staff team won the coin toss and set the standard with some great start to the match. Although hitting the ball wasn’t a challenge for staff including Mario Weick, Heather Ferguson and Dave Langdale, the pitch was very slippery resulting in many near collisions and floundering on the grass. Final year student Dan Dyball did a great job of bowling and was very resilient after a mishap where Dinkar Sharma struck the ball straight ahead.

Only a few very talented students, namely Luke Buckley and Lydia Creasey managed to surpass David Wilkinson and Jared Piazza’s highly efficient fielding system which caught many students out at first base. However, when it came to the staff’s second turn at batting the students grew more savvy; in particular second year student Bianca Serwinski and postgrad student Rose Meleady made some impressive one-handed catches. However, despite these efforts, the likes of support staff Lisa Clark, Jonathan Beer and Jason Marshall notched up a number of rounders.

At the end of the game, it was up to umpires Georgina Randsley de Moura and Lizanne Alloock to relay the good news that the staff team had won!

Staff and students enjoyed a well-deserved free BBQ outside the Pavilion after the match and some went on to Woody’s to round off an energetic evening.

The School of Psychology would like to thank all those staff and students who took part and made the event much fun!

More pictures from the match can be viewed at the School’s Facebook page: Kent Psychology.

You can also keep up-to-date with what goes on at the School of Psychology by following us on Twitter. Links to both can be found on our homepage.

Child Development Unit Needs More Volunteers

Following successful recruitment at the April NCT sales, in the City centre and at the Gulbenkian, there are now 748 children on the Kent Child Development Unit database. However, only 42 of these are monolingual five-year-olds who are needed for the current Verb Learning Study. Kirsten and Amanda are therefore desperately looking either for parents who are willing to bring their children in for a 25 minute visit or for a primary school which is willing to host Amanda for three mornings.

Those children who have taken part in the study have found it an enjoyable experience, with one Dad reporting that when they got home, his son said “that he would like to do it all over again a hundred times!”

To help with the study, please contact the Child Development Unit on Tel: 827424 or email child@kent.ac.uk
Annual Division of Forensic Psychology Conference 2010

Over 200 forensic psychology professionals gathered at the University of Kent for the British Psychological Society's Division of Forensic Psychology's 2010 Annual Conference between 22 and 25 June. The event took place at the School of Psychology Canterbury campus and covered various elements of the latest forensic research and its application in forensic settings.

The conference reflected the eclectic nature of the Division of Forensic Psychology and embraced the many areas of research and practice of interest to the Division, as well as supporting the importance of networking to enhance multi-disciplinary/agency working. Hosted by the Forensic Psychology Group at the University of Kent, the conference covered a range of themes including sexual offenders, aggression, gangs, domestic violence, arson, legal processes, terrorism and rehabilitation issues.

The conference attracted psychologists, psychiatrists, solicitors, barristers, police, social workers, academics, researchers and students. Keynote speakers included Supervisory Special Agent Andrew Bringuel, from the USA's FBI Academy and leading figures in Sexual Offending (Professor Tony Ward - New Zealand), Domestic Violence (Professor Amy Holtzworth-Munroe - USA), and Law (Professor Jennifer Temkin - UK).

Welcome to New Lecturers and Research Staff

The School of Psychology welcomes new members of academic staff at the beginning of the year, Dr Erika Nurmsoo, Dr Markus Bindemann and Dr Nic Hooper.

Erika was awarded an M.A. in Cognitive Psychology from the University of Arizona and completed a Ph.D. in Psychology at Yale University under the supervision of Paul Bloom (2006). She went on to be a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Warwick (2006-2008) and then a Research Associate in the Bristol Cognitive Development Centre.

Erika's primary interest is in children's understanding of symbolic meaning. An understanding of what others perceive, believe, and know, bears on our understanding of the meaning of the symbols they use. Children's developing social cognition can provide us with a glimpse into their understanding of symbols, and their understanding of symbols can similarly provide a means to explore their related social and other cognitive skills.

In this line of enquiry, Erika has investigated children's comprehension of how a symbol's meaning is determined by – and sometimes limited by – the creator of the symbol, and how children use information about others, including gaze information, to determine a symbol's referent.

Markus obtained a BSc in Psychology from the University of Stirling in 2001 and then a PhD at the University of Glasgow investigating "The Role of Attention in Face Processing". From 2004 until 2006, he continued to work on this topic as a post-doctoral research assistant on a Wellcome-funded project at the University of Glasgow, followed by a personal Wellcome VIP award in 2007. He was subsequently funded by the ESRC to investigate human face detection in natural scenes, before joining the Psychology Department at Essex as a Lecturer on July 1st 2009.

Markus' primary research interest is in Cognitive Psychology. He is particularly interested in various aspects of face and person perception, including the detection of people in natural settings, person memory and eyewitness identification, familiar face recognition, the perception of eye-gaze and emotion from faces and other aspects of social cognition. His work to date has combined a wide range of experimental paradigms with reaction time, EEG and eye movement measures.

Nic has begun work with Dr Ulrich Weger and Dr Tim Hopthrow on a project entitled 'Practising Mindfulness to Prevent Premature Judgements'. Essentially, human beings tend to make quick, rigid and lasting judgments about others and themselves that may have unfortunate consequences. For example a teacher may ignore a student because they 'know' that that particular child will not know the answer, or a person who 'knows' that they lack social skills will slowly narrow the amount of social activities they engage in. Specifically, this project aims to investigate whether it is possible to bypass these quick judgements by increasing people's situational sensitivity via the clinical technique of mindfulness.

Nic attained his PhD from Swansea University with a thesis which investigated the maladaptive effects of thought suppression. Specifically the thesis discovered that avoidance based techniques like thought suppression tend to enhance psychological suffering. On the flip side of this it was found that acceptance based techniques, like mindfulness, which encourage people to act in a value consistent manner whilst allowing unwanted thought to be present, may be a more viable approach in the management of unwanted thoughts. This principle forms the basis of a third wave behavioural therapy named Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) which is currently gaining a large evidence base in the States. ACT is underpinned by a theory of language and cognition named Relational Frame Theory (RFT). My hope over the coming years is to develop research which integrates both RFT and ACT into mainstream psychology.

All three are really looking forward to joining the School and students will benefit from the injection of new expertise.
Congratulations

Many congratulations to Dominic Abrams for being awarded the BPS President’s Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge.

This prestigious award is given as a mid-career recognition of the achievements of those who are currently engaged in research of outstanding quality.

Well done to Theresa Gannon who has been awarded £563,311 from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a research grant into “The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Specialist Treatment Programme for Criminal Firesetters”.

This is an outstanding achievement - it is the largest grant the University has ever won from the ESRC, and it is double the value of any previous ESRC grant to Kent. In fact, it is one of the top ten biggest grants that the university has ever won.

Recent Publications


Launch of the ICE

Psychology lecturers Dr Mario Weick and Dr Letitia Slabu assisted at the launch of the Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise Training programme on 22nd June.

The event allowed professional organisations to sample and experience inspiring training and to connect with the University of Kent and other local, national and international businesses.

Letitia advised organisations about the psychological science of goal setting and goal pursuit and innovative ways to set goals that increase the likelihood of success.

Mario discussed the characteristics that enable people in powerful positions to act effectively in a business environment and signal competence and leadership to other people.

Both Letitia and Mario are running workshops to suit business needs in 2011. Please see http://www.kent.ac.uk/enterprise/ice/ for further details.

The grant is great news for Theresa especially as it comes hot on the heels of a £324,000 Ministry of Justice tender that she and her colleagues in forensic psychology won just a few months ago, and her edited book on female sexual offenders out this month (pictured below).

Robbie Sutton and Theresa Gannon who have been awarded £1,214 from Kent County Council for a project entitled “Consultancy on Changing behaviour Programmes – Psychological perspective”.

Letitia Slabu has been awarded £4,907 for a project entitled “Overcoming Action Crisis: Goal setting and Goal Disengagement for Business”.

Mario Weick has been awarded £4,981 for a project entitled “The Power to Succeed”.

The School of Psychology is very pleased to announce that both Theresa Gannon and Roger Giner-Sorolla was promoted to Reader while Ulrich Weger was promoted to Senior Lecturer. Congratulations to all three of them!
My placement with the Enterprise Team at Kent - Lynsey Mahmood

Having a very strong interest in organisational psychology my placement options were fairly limited. I was tempted by work in HR and personnel but was won over by the opportunity to get behind the scenes of the psychology department here at Kent. I took a placement in the Enterprise team, which meant working as a research assistant. The work at Enterprise varies greatly; ranging from research on stereotyping in children, to the effects of omega 3 fatty acids on pregnant women. Two projects are rarely the same!

My first day I was thrown in at the deep end, collecting data from managers of an international pharmaceutical company. The role of Enterprise was to give a psychological perspective of a communication course, evaluate what had been learnt and how effective the exercise was. By 11am I was in a room full of professionals handing out copies of questionnaires, to say I felt out of my depth would have been an understatement! The other members of the Enterprise team, who had obviously been in my shoes before, really helped and I immediately felt like part of the team. Afterwards I had the opportunity to see the raw data and assist with inputting it to SPSS.

The general role of the research assistants within Enterprise is to search for work via government and council bodies who require the assistance of a psychologist to run analysis, carry out a literature review or do research for a project. I have the opportunity to assist in the running of experiments within the department or researching work for other projects, and having a go at running analysis. I have had the benefit of almost one-to-one supervision and so any statistical analyses I have run have been checked and errors re-worked, I’m now friends with SPSS!

This year I run my own mini-project relating to a topic covered by Enterprise- I have chosen one relating to students understanding of personal development planning in higher education. It’s almost like a dress rehearsal for next year, a much needed first attempt at carrying out research, analysing it and then writing it up. This is only one of the many benefits of my year at work, not mentioning the increased confidence in statistics, sophisticated research and writing skills and most of all a years’ worth of experience with a team of professional psychologists. It has given me a taste of what the world of work as a researcher is like and what I can look forward to after graduation, as well as an insight into the workings of a psychology business. It is an experience I would recommend to all psychology undergraduate students whatever your area of interest.

Inter-School Football Match Update

Psychology continues its winning run. The final score was 3-0. So this is the third time we have played Biosciences in the last three years and the third time we have won. Our players are predominately those who played during our weekly Psychology football games (which has been running since 1993).

This year the team was made up of psychology staff and postgraduates, ex-psychology students, and other staff and postgraduates (Schools: European Culture and Languages, History & Business ; and Canterbury Christ Church University ).

If any student wants to join us then they should contact Dinkar Sharma (D.Sharma@kent.ac.uk).

Players: -

Goalie: Alessandro Paoliieri
Defenders: Dennis Nigbur, Robbie Ivermee, Ben Elliot & Stephan Loughnan
Midfielders: Dinkar Sharma (captain), David Wilkinson (vice captain), Antonio Lazaro-Reboll, Sam Patel, Matthew Lombart
Forwards: Andy Russ, Jon Dean, Andrew Lombart

The goals were scored by Andrew Lombart, Andy Russ and David Wilkinson (who not only deceived the keeper from a long range free kick to score the third goal but was inspirational both in midfield and in the choice of substitutions).

A special mention should also go to Sam Patel, Robbie Ivermee, Jon Dean and Antonio Lazaro-Reboll who stepped in at the very last minute as a result of injuries to some of our players (Ben Weeks, Jamie Ryan, Christian Sears and Calem De-Burca).

The School of Psychology would like to thank all of its students for a very successful academic year! Special congratulations to our 2010 graduates!

Farewell Ros!

The School of Psychology wished farewell to Ros Beeching, former PA to the Head of School, this summer.

Ros has been at the heart of the support team in the School for many years and will no doubt become an invaluable asset as the University of Kent’s new Graduate School Coordinator. Congratulations Ros!

Need Help/Advice?

If you have any personal or academic issues that may affect your ability to study you can talk to Lisa Clark, Student Advisor for Psychology.

Please email her at: psychadvisor@kent.ac.uk

There is a range of services available to all Kent students including the following:

- Careers Advisory Service
- Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
- International Students
- Counselling
- Chaplaincy
- Medical

Plus many more...

You can find more out about Student Services from the following webpage:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/

Any Suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions for the staff in the School of Psychology, then you can feed these back to us by using our suggestions box located outside the Psychology Student Office (Keynes M1.13).

Kent Psychologist

The School of Psychology’s Newsletter is for students and staff. We welcome contributions from both staff and students for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Bloomfield.

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