



Psychology *for students*



London Lectures

Monday 6 December

Kensington Town Hall

Starts at 10.30, Closes 16.10

Registration fee: £12.50 per person

For group bookings 1 free tutor place
per 10 students booked

Professor Helen Muir, *Cranfield University*
Human behaviour in emergency situations

Professor Martyn Barrett, *University of Surrey*
Sense of national identity in children

Professor Sergio Della Sala, *University of Edinburgh*
Anarchy in the brain: Disowned actions and free will

Professor Christopher French, *Goldsmiths College*
Weird science: The psychology of anomalous experience

Professor Dave Collins, *University of Edinburgh*
Creating champions: Psychology of peak performers

For further information please contact:

The Conference Office, The British Psychological Society
St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East
Leicester LE1 7DR

Tel: 0116 252 9555 Fax: 0116 255 7123

E-mail: londonlectures@bps.org.uk Website: www.bps.org.uk/events





STUDENTS



Associate Editor: Nicola Hills

Short articles (around 600 words), news, tips, quotes, cartoons and other contributions of particular relevance to students are most welcome. Send to: Nicola Hills, c/o the Society's Leicester office. E-mail: Nicola_Hills@hotmail.com

Sandwiches are good for you

If you're a student, perhaps the world of full-time work looms inevitably at the end of the course and you're quite happy to leave it there. But have you considered a sandwich degree? This pattern – a work experience filling sandwiched between second and final years – is followed at Bath University by all psychology undergraduates, and by the majority at Aston University.

At both universities the sandwich year is for a minimum of 30 weeks. At Bath it is compulsory, and students work in an apprentice role with a professional psychologist. At Aston two thirds opt for it with about half of these taking psychology-specific placements like the Bath students, and the other half doing broadly psychology-related placements. The distinction is important. Psychology-specific placements are mostly unpaid but come with full or half student loan eligibility. Psychology-related placements are mostly paid – many organisations are happy to offer competitive benefits if it ultimately helps to recruit the right graduates. There are far more psychology graduates than professional opportunities and Bath's approach is to help aspiring professionals reach those coveted and much-competed-for chartered careers. Aston's approach responds also to psychology graduates wanting careers outside professional psychology, in business and the civil service for example.

So can a sandwich year offer a fast track to the career of your choice? We think that it can, mediated by a range of factors: personal development, graduate attributes and skills, a higher degree grade, inside knowledge of jobs available and knowing how to impress.

Let's unpack this. Graduate competition for entry into professional psychology is stiff, as it is with leading employers. In both cases your first graduate job may powerfully influence your future career. Take clinical psychology; becoming an assistant psychologist is a key first step and the competition is intense, but if you have successful sandwich-year experience you will certainly stand out. Similarly in business, sandwich experience can greatly strengthen your application, and if a

BY PETER REDDY & JULIA TYTE

company has employed you for a year (effectively on an extended trial) they may want you back as a graduate. The Association of Graduate Recruiters reports that one third of their members would offer

a graduate job on the basis of a successful placement.

What are the other benefits? First, it makes you career-minded. You spend a good part of your second year on careers inventories, application letters, preparing CVs and interview technique, so when you apply for jobs in earnest you have already done the spadework. Second, you get an extra bite at the careers cherry when you return for your final year if (like many) you don't hit on the right career first time.

You are also likely to impress potential employers with your enhanced graduate qualities. Dr Simon Barrie of the Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Sydney, suggests that 'graduateness' is supported by five clusters of skills and abilities: research and enquiry; information literacy; personal and intellectual autonomy; ethical, social and professional understanding; and communication. It is easy to see how this mix of the academic, professional and personal will benefit from sandwich-year experience, and research at Aston suggests that the sandwich year develops confidence, teaches students to be proactive and improves communication, time management, teamwork, academic

skills and self-presentation. Non-placement students view their colleagues with sandwich experience as more focused, confident and aware of their own skills, and think that they present their research proposals more professionally and manage their time better. Furthermore, in a blind task, dissertation supervisors rated the academic skills of their ex-sandwich-year students significantly higher than those who had not taken a sandwich year.

What are the tangible results of doing a placement? Degree grades for a start: 88 per cent of Bath students gained a first or 2:1 last year and the mean degree grade for Aston sandwich students is well into the 2.1 band, with non-sandwich students consistently and significantly behind. Benefits also show up, not surprisingly, in graduate employment. In the *Guardian* university league tables this year Bath and Aston came second and third respectively out of 97 psychology degrees for graduate employment.

The message is clear: if you are aiming high go to work on a sandwich.

■ *Peter Reddy is at Aston University. E-mail: P.A.Reddy@aston.ac.uk. Julia Tyte is at the University of Bath. E-mail: J.B.Tyte@bath.ac.uk.*

BEHIND THE NAME

by Noel Sheehy

FRANCIS GALTON pioneered the study of differences between individuals and developed a theory that explained those differences with reference to their genetic origins. He invented composite photography and pioneered the use of fingerprints for identification purposes. Galton introduced the concept of 'regression' to describe the phenomenon whereby the offspring of parents who fall at the extremes of the distribution in the general population (e.g. tall or short) tend to be average. His enthusiasm for surveying individual differences inspired his creation of an anthropometric laboratory at London's International Health Exhibition in 1884, as well as efforts to quantify the relative beauty of women from different regions of Great Britain.

Further reading: Bulmer, M. (2003). *Francis Galton*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.