

Newsletter March 2016

## Our Headlines!

### **Welcome Dr Eilidh Cage to the Social Development Lab**



In August 2015 we welcomed [Dr Eilidh Cage](#) to the Lab. Eilidh is a Teaching Fellow at Royal Holloway, with a focus on teaching Developmental Psychology. Eilidh completed her PhD at the Centre for Research in Autism and Education at the UCL Institute of

Education and looked at reputation management in autistic and non-autistic individuals. Specifically, Eilidh was interested in finding out whether autistic people are concerned about their reputation, and if they try and change what other people think about them. She found that some autistic children, adolescents and adults *could* be concerned about their reputation, but had difficulties with managing their reputation. Eilidh is currently planning to carry out some new research looking at autism acceptance and the mental health of autistic individuals. She is interested in understanding – and hopefully changing – the way non-autistic people think about autism.

### **Welcome new students to the Social Development Lab**

We recently welcomed to the lab Ellie Cordell-Edwards (second year), Jessica Di Monaco (second year), and Victoria Newell (third year) as research assistants. Ellie will be working with Dawn investigating reputation management, while Jessica and Victoria will be working with Eilidh looking at autism acceptance.

### **Schools Evening, October 2015**

In October, Dr Alana James organised a schools evening event, hosted by the Department of Psychology. Sixth form students had the opportunity to take part in psychology activities and research and attend talks throughout the evening. This event happens annually so please email Alana ([Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk)) if your school may be interested in attending.

### **Dr Alana James joins student support Advisory Board**

Dr Alana James has recently joined the Advisory Board for the Students Against Depression website. This website is part of the Charlie Waller Trust and provides evidence-led guidance and resources for students experiencing mental health difficulties, as well as student-led support. Find out more here: <http://studentsagainstdepression.org/>



### **The Social Development Lab joins Twitter**

The Social Development Lab now has its own twitter account, follow [@SocDevLabRHUL](https://twitter.com/SocDevLabRHUL) for updates and opportunities to get involved.



## Upcoming Events

### **Science Day @ Royal Holloway, University of London**

Our annual [Royal Holloway Science Festival](#) is taking place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2016. This is a great opportunity to discover and become inspired by science research. This event is free of charge, all ages welcome. The Social Development Lab members will be hosting activities throughout the day in the Windsor building. Alana James will be hosting a range of psychology challenges and games. Dawn Watling and Rachel Nesbit will be hosting emotion recognition based tasks and Eilidh Cage will be exploring what you think psychologists do and what they look like. Please pop by for a chat!

## Research in progress

### **Teachers-What do you think about bullying?**

[Dr Alana James](#) would like to find out teachers' perspectives on bullying amongst children young people. How do you define bullying? What strategies do you think young people can use when they experience bullying? This is part of a wider project which has also surveyed pupils about their perspectives on bullying. If you'd like to take part please email Alana: [Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk)

### **Investigating attitudes towards autism.**

[Dr Eilidh Cage](#), Jessica Di Monaco and Victoria Newell are currently examining autism acceptance and are interested in young people's attitudes towards autism. If you would like to know more about this project please contact [eilidh.cage@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:eilidh.cage@rhul.ac.uk).

## **Emotion Recognition: Where are individuals attending when making decisions of facial affect?**

[Rachel Nesbit](#) is examining, using eye-tracking, where individuals attend to in a face when making decisions about the emotions of faces. Rachel is interested in if how an individual thinks and feels in social situations, as well as how they process emotions, influences where they will look when deciding what emotion a face might be displaying. This study takes place at Royal Holloway, University of London. If you/your child would like to be involved, please contact Rachel on email [Rachel.Nesbit.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.Nesbit.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk)

## **Psychology Mentoring Project.**

[Dr Alana James](#) is running a university-school project, where undergraduate students mentor A-level Psychology pupils, to boost their engagement and understanding about going to university. The project is in its third year and runs between January and March. If your school is local to Royal Holloway and you would be interested in having pupils take part in the 2016-17 please contact Alana for more information: [Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Alana.James@rhul.ac.uk)

## **Understanding tactics for reputation management.**

[Dr Dawn Watling](#), Rachel Nesbit, and Ellie Cordell-Edwards are exploring 8- to 15-year-olds understanding of the role that verbal tactics may play in making positive impressions. We are currently recruiting year 10 students. If your school might be interested in participating please contact Dawn on email: [Dawn.Watling@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Dawn.Watling@rhul.ac.uk)

definitions of bullying tended not to include key criteria used by researchers such as persistence over time. It also supported previous research that around 5% of students experience bullying whilst at university. Alana also presented preliminary findings from a study, completed in collaboration with Dr Marco Cinnirella, into *parents' use of online parenting support forums*. A survey of UK parents showed that many parents are using such forums to gain reassurance and advice about their child from other parents, and that they may have both positive and negative experiences of such online support.

## **Publications**

Burkitt, E., & Watling, D. (2015). How do children who understand mixed emotion represent them in freehand drawings of themselves and others? *Educational Psychology*. In Press.

Cage, E., Bird, G., & Pellicano, E. (2016). "I am who I am": Reputation concerns in adolescents on the autism spectrum. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 25, 12-23.

James, A. (2nd March, 2016). How do children learn to form social bonds? The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/how-do-children-learn-to-form-social-bonds-55192>

Leman, P., Skipper, Y., Watling, D., & Rutland, A. (2016). Conceptual change in science is facilitated through peer collaboration for boys but not girls. *Child Development*. In Press.

## Recent Presentations and Publications



The  
British  
Psychological  
Society

In September the **Social Development Lab** presented recent research at the BPS Developmental Section Conference in Manchester.

Dawn presented work completed with her undergraduate students, Rachel Nesbit, Dorte Sorensen, Lilian Li and Natascha Ahmed that explored *children's understanding of disclaimers with familiar and unfamiliar audiences*. This presentation highlighted how children's understanding of disclaimers can be influenced by the familiarity of the audience; findings pointed towards the positive nature of how we judge our friends.

Alana presented research conducted with Hanna Böck on *university students' definitions and experiences of bullying*. This found that students recognise a range of harmful behaviours can be involved in bullying, but their

## Get involved!

The Social Development Lab at Royal Holloway is constantly recruiting local schools, students and families to partake in our research projects. If you are interested in you and/or your child/children taking part in research at the Developmental Studies Centre, then you can register at the following link. Alternatively, if there is a particular project you wish to be involved in, please contact the researcher directly.

<http://tinyurl.com/DSCregistration>

On completion of a project we contact schools to provide a summary of the finding for staff and parents. Further, we often give school talks and have participated in INSET days. Please let us know if there is anything that we could offer that would be of benefit for your school, staff, or students!

## **We hope to hear from you soon!**

Dr Dawn Watling

Dr Eilidh Cage

Dr Alana James

Rachel Nesbit

(To the right is a picture from our Social Development Lab Christmas lunch!)

