

Hi my name is Harnit and I'm here, at Royal Holloway, as a Nuffield Research placement student. I was here for 4 weeks to help Dr Robin Walker and Dr Eilidh Cage with their research. My background with psychology is very limited when it comes to certificated education, at sixth form I study German, Maths and Chemistry and even at GCSE I didn't do Psychology as a subject. However, in my own time I was looking at possibly doing a psychology degree and looking at different extracurricular things that could get me into that field, plus doing research and learning about psychology (mainly mental health) in my own time.

Therefore from this placement my main expectation was to understand a bit more about psychology and whether or not I wanted to do psychology at university. I also expected that I wouldn't enjoy it because for the first 3 weeks I'd be working on something that I didn't really know about and didn't have a prior interest in.

I worked with Dr Robin Walker and his PhD student Hannah Harvey for the first 3 weeks with her research about scrolling text helping people with hemianopic dyslexia, which is when one side of your visual field has been obstructed. This makes it really hard to read as different things associated with our eye movements make it subconsciously easier for us to read. To test the theory "*does scrolling text help readers with hemianopic dyslexia read more efficiently and if so why does it do this?*" we used a mask which moved according to where you are looking on the screen to imitate having hemianopia and asked our participants to read 30 sentences in each block with four blocks: two without the mask (static and scrolling text) and two with the mask (static and scrolling text). They also had comprehension questions and we used the eye tracker to record different things related to eye movements. The results that we found proved our hypothesis to be true when it comes to several different things, for example the speed of reading and answering the comprehension questions correctly.

For this past week I have been with Dr Eilidh Cage and have focused on things that I had more of a prior interest in which is mental health. With Eilidh I was looking into her research about autism and autism acceptance plus the affect that being accepted has on one's mental health.

I have learnt a lot from these 4 weeks. Generally I have looked into a new field of work and believe it could be something I want to do in the future. With Eilidh I have learnt more about Autism and the different experiences and opinions that some autistic people have. I have come to understand that mental health isn't just about the main things that you think about when you hear "mental health" but broadly has a lot to do with each person and their experience. Working with Hannah made me realise that there are so many different fields in psychology that could be of interest to me, but because of experiences that have affected me either directly or indirectly I thought that mental health was the main thing that psychology was about. I realised that being narrow minded in your career choice may not be the best thing to do because there are so many options in the world that you cannot ultimately know what you want to be at such a young age, especially if you haven't experienced the field before a lot.

Because of this experience I have decided a lot more things about my future. It has affirmed my decision to study psychology at university. I have gained insight into being a research assistant and believe this is now my career goal but it has also made me wary to have a tunnel vision view about psychology and think that mental health is what I want to research, as there could be so much more that I don't know about.

Overall, this experience has given me a lot and I want to thank Hannah, Robin, Eilidh and all the other people that made this amazing experience possible for me and also so amazing.