



Newsletter March 2017

Our Headlines

The Social Development Lab has a new logo!



Social Development Lab welcomes placement students!



In July - August 2016 we welcomed two Nuffield placement students to the Lab, and [Dr Dawn Watling](#) was awarded funding from the British Psychological Society to support Pancy Poon on an 8

week Undergraduate Research Assistant placement! See more about their projects below.

Exploring Psychology

In March this year over 150 A-level pupils visited the Exploring Psychology at Royal Holloway taster day organised by Alana and Eilidh. Pupils heard taster university lectures and participated in real psychological studies, including research by Dawn and Rachel on recognising emotions.

Upcoming Events: Free CPD events for school staff

On **Tuesday 4th July** the [South East Research Network for Schools](#) (SERNS) will run an event for practitioners and teachers on Pupil Diversity. Find out more at: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/psychology/research/serns/home.aspx>

The next day, **Wednesday 5th July**, will be the Royal Holloway Teachers and Advisors Conference on. This year focuses on 'Transitions: how to support students from school to university'. If you would like to attend please sign up here: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studyhere/schools-and-colleges/teacher-zone/teachers-conference.aspx>

Opportunities for engagement

Schools competition

A-level pupils are invited to enter the inaugural Royal Holloway Psychology competition, run by Eilidh and Alana. Teams are challenged to answer the question 'How can you use Psychology in your everyday life?' through 3 minute videos and a poster presentation. All teams will present their work at an event on campus on Friday 30th June. Find out more at: bit.ly/psychcomp

If you would like to know more about this project please contact eilidh.cage@rhul.ac.uk. If you'd like to take part please complete the form [here](#).

A new way to engage adolescents with research...

[Rachel](#) has been providing an opportunity for Year 12 students to engage in research by helping with collecting data in schools. Students from Surbiton High School were trained on the project and had a chance to put their researcher skills to use as they ran sessions with younger students in the schools. We received positive feedback from both staff and students and are currently arranging further opportunities to give more students the opportunity to get involved. If you want to hear more about the opportunities we offer for schools, please get in touch!

New projects

Schools' Biodiversity project

Dr Dawn Watling and Dr Deborah Harvey (Biological Sciences) received funding from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) to investigate the effect of a pupil-led project to monitor and improve biodiversity in school grounds on well-being, mood, attention, and attainment. They are currently running a pilot study focusing on Year 5 and 6 students. This project will not only identify whether such a scheme can improve wellbeing, but will help to build resilience to cope with the stresses of adolescence.

Postgraduate research projects

The Social Development Lab team are supervising a number of Masters and Clinical Doctorate students on a wide range of exciting projects. This includes projects on bullying, university staff and students understanding of mental health, the development of a group intervention for expectant mothers, how adolescents on the autism spectrum develop their identity, and how using social media can influence our mood.



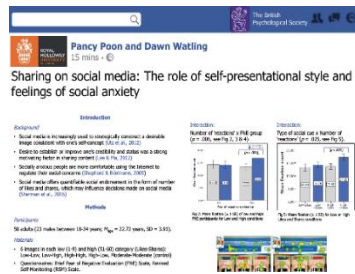
Recent research

Nuffield Research Placement students

Last summer [Dr Alana James](#) and [Dr Eilidh Cage](#) hosted two A-level students as part of the “Nuffield research placement” scheme. Mursal and Harnit from Swakeleys Schools for Girls spent four weeks in the psychology department, helping Alana and Eilidh with their research on bullying and autism acceptance respectively. Find out more about their experiences on [our website!](#)

How do we decide what to ‘like’ or ‘share’ on Facebook?

Pancy Poon completed her project exploring how much we pay attention to the number of “likes” and “shares” images have on Facebook before deciding whether to share the image. Pancy will be presenting her work at the BPS Annual Conference in Brighton, May 2017.



Undergraduate projects completed

This academic year, Alana, Dawn and Eilidh supervised many third year Royal Holloway psychology students, as part of their final year research project. One of Alana’s groups looked at the strategies children and parents think work best for tackling bullying, and her other group looked at how university students react to different bullying situations. Dawn’s group looked at how children and adults use self-presentational tactics (such as “blasting”), and how this might relate to personality traits. Finally, Eilidh’s project group looked at whether young children and autistic children become more prosocial when they think they are being watched by others. We wish all our students the very best for their final exams, and soon we will have new third year students who will be looking for schools to take part in their research.

Recent Presentations and Publications

Social Development Lab present at BPS conference

In September, the *Social Development Lab* presented recent research at the BPS Developmental Psychology Section Conference in Belfast. The whole Lab went to Belfast to present at the BPS



The British Psychological Society

Developmental Psychology Section Conference! Rachel presented interim findings from her PhD on emotion recognition, Dawn convened symposiums on social relationships and emotional functioning, Eilidh discussed autistic adolescents’ reputation concerns, and Alana ran a workshop on mentoring to support disabled students’ transitions into university.

Our other research presentations include invited talks where Eilidh discussed autism acceptance and mental health at the University of Chester, Dawn presented on children’s understanding of reputation management to the University of Warwick Psychology Society, and Alana took part in a BPS sponsored seminar on tackling school bullying. Rachel also presented at her research at the PsyPAG annual conference and was awarded a bursary to attend.

Our talks in schools include Alana’s in British Science Week with SETPOINT Hertfordshire, and Rachel developing a research methods game for A-level pupils.

Publications

Cage, E., Bird, G., & Pellicano, E. (2016). Reputation management in children on the autism spectrum. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46 (12), 3798-3811.

Lucas, R. & James, A. (2017, in press). An evaluation of specialist mentoring for university students with autism spectrum disorders and mental health conditions. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.

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!

Follow our work on Twitter [@SocDevLabRHUL](#)



Visit our Website at:

http://www.pc.rhul.ac.uk/sites/social_development/site/