



Student Cognitions: Thinking Outside the Classroom

Jordan Neusch

For the second time, I had the pleasure of helping with *Psychology in a Box* (PiaB). PiaB is an annual event put on by the RMU chapter of Psi Chi. Local high school students come to campus and are exposed to various fields of psychology (social, clinical, perception, sport, gender, & cognitive) by students on our psychology program.

relied on having the students feel and become fully engaged. We tried to make sure that all students shared their opinions, ideas, and answers throughout the session. I think we were 100% successful in doing so!

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Important Dates

- ◆ Spring Finals: 4-29-2014
- ◆ Commencement: 5-10-2014
- ◆ 5-week Session: 5-12-2014
- ◆ 8-week Session: 6-9-2014
- ◆ Graduation Application Deadline: 6-16-2014
- ◆ Fall Semester: 8-25-2014
- ◆ Labor Day: 9-1-2014
- ◆ Drop Deadline: 10-25-2014
- ◆ Last Day for W: 10-31-2014
- ◆ Spring Registration: 11-3-14
- ◆ Fall Break: 11-24-2014

The event gave me the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge. Preparing for the event started weeks in advance. Learning the material and practicing demonstrations took time and effort, but it was worth it to see the results.

The event began as the high school students entered Sewell to be greeted by RMU students and staff. I was one of a group of four RMU students trained to demonstrate topics from Cognitive Psychology. (*That's me in the photo below: back row, 6th from the left.*)

Although a little nervous, I was enthusiastic to interact with our guests. Everything went smoothly and the students seemed genuinely interested in all of our presentations.

I believe that the interactive style of our box helped to keep everyone interested and engaged. Our approach was to teach through demonstration not just lecture. And, our demonstrations

Part of our box involved showing students ambiguous figures and having them tell us what they saw (*top-down vs. bottom-up processing*). It was amusing and interesting to learn how one student saw a dog and another saw an elephant. Having the students get involved was a major goal; we did not want them to feel like they were just sitting in class. It was also great to see how much knowledge they brought with them.

Another one of our demonstrations (*change blindness*) involved a card trick, and every student was shocked that they could not figure it out. At the end of each session (six total!), we asked if they enjoyed it and if they had any questions. It was gratifying to get their reactions. Many wanted to know more about Psychology and how they could apply it to careers.

Overall, PiaB was a great success, and I look forward to participating again next spring!



Alumni Interview with Eric Levine (class of 2013)

By Stephanie Sims

Eric Levine graduated in May of 2013 and has been pursuing a career in pro-hockey. Stephanie Sims is a psychology major who will be graduating this May.

Ψ: When you were at RMU, what was your area of concentration?

EL: I was an Applied Psychology major with a sports psychology concentration.

Ψ: I know you play professional hockey, how do you use psychology in hockey?

EL: I used psychology a tremendous amount this past year. I used sports psychology in the obvious ways one might expect as a professional athlete such as mental preparation, imagery, overcoming injury, bouncing back after a tough game, etc. But I found myself using social psychology because I played for five different teams this year. Every team brings 18 new personalities, and with that, 18 new relationships. Some teams I went to had a hierarchy of "leaders" that people followed and listened to. Other teams were more democratic, more collectively decision based. I became friends with players that had families and kids, so learning what values they had compared to friends who were less encumbered was an interesting dynamic to see. The fact I met so many different people and I fit in differently with each team was neat to see. I would say the coolest thing to observe was my personality in relation to the group I was surrounded by. My actions varied with the presence of different groups of people. It isn't always an intentional thing, it's based off a lot of psychological principles and I found it interesting to notice how I held so many different types of relationships throughout the year.

Ψ: When using your psych knowledge in hockey, how do you apply it to yourself and your team mates?

EL: I tried to help teammates via sports psychology, and in the case of a few, I made a positive impact on their season. One of my best friends in Peoria was struggling with self-confidence so we had weekly sessions where I'd go over a prompt with him to direct his self-talk from negative to positive. We went through his most honest self-images of



in different situations (practice, games, in game scenarios, etc.) and by the end of the year he went from being nearly cut to one of our best players. So that was cool to see such a drastic change in his on-ice performance just from a change in his attitude and self-image.

Ψ: Before a game, do you use psychology to motivate team mates?

EL: As goalie, I'm usually the quiet one. I like to keep to myself and start in my own bubble. I guess goalies are weird like that and I'm certainly no exception. Just ask anybody who has played with me and they'll probably laugh!

Ψ: Do you see yourself furthering your career in psychology?

EL: Yes, 100%. I was promoted to director of the goalie school I teach at in the summer. In the near future when I plan to own the company, I intend to incorporate sports psychology into my business model.

Ψ: Do you want to further your education in psychology?

EL: Yes, I hope to obtain a masters in sports psychology when my professional hockey career finishes.

Ψ: With a degree in psychology, where do you see yourself in five years?

EL: Owning my own business that allows me to work with goalies in the Chicago

"I would say the coolest thing to observe was my personality in relation to the group I was surrounded by."

New Psi Chi Members!

- ◆ Beard, Samantha E.
- ◆ Bracken, Andrea J.
- ◆ Davis, Carrie S.
- ◆ Gorog, Diane M.
- ◆ Jackson, Randi D.
- ◆ Malone, Michael P.
- ◆ Neusch, Jordan D.
- ◆ Peoples, Samantha C.
- ◆ Peterson, Alissa R.
- ◆ Scanlon, Maria R.
- ◆ Taormina, Sarah E.
- ◆ Wallace, Laura E.

area on both the on-ice techniques and off-ice sports psychology practices.

Ψ: What psychology theories do you feel relate to hockey?

EL: Zimbardo said that smart people sometimes do things out of character (irrational, dumb, etc.) because of the presence of others: A type of self-fulfilling prophecy. We often do things because we think others want that (good or bad). I try to use that to my advantage because it's amazing what some players are capable of when someone believes.

Ψ: Best experience at RMU?

EL: It's a three-way tie. Being president of Psi Chi for two years, playing division 1 hockey and winning the inaugural 3 rivers classic tournament at the Console Energy Center, and knowing Dr. Paul.

DP: I see you that you listed me last, Eric...

Student Cognitions: *Pranking with Psychology*

Catherine Scherer

As April 1st passed, which is traditionally known as April Fool's Day, many pranks and tricks were played on and by people of every age. Pranks are light hearted jokes played on people to fool them and bring laughter and enjoyment to the prankster as well as the person being pranked (hopefully).

People probably do not think about the psychology behind some of the pranks played. To fully understand the idea of psychology pranks, imagine seven of your friend or classmates and



you standing in the middle of a pathway between classroom buildings outside. Now you and all your friends start to stare up at a certain point in the sky or in a tree. Some of your friends might point at something up there. And what is everyone looking at, you may ask? Nothing. Have a person stand back from the group to observe and record the reactions of students on their way to class. Some may stop and look up with the group to try and see what is being viewed. Even as people continue to walk to class, others will try to catch a glimpse of whatever the group of people is starring at! What is interesting is that some of them might actually think that they see something in the tree!

People conform. Following a crowd is a societal norm. Stopping to look up because others are doing so is conforming to a group when in reality there is no obvious reason to stop and

stare just because others do so.

Another "prank" a person can individually test is by sitting really close to another person while talking. Lean toward the person until you see the other person lean back or take a few steps away. In America, people tend to prefer a large personal space gap compared to other cultures. When a stranger invades our space, we tend to get uncomfortable and lean away from the close talker. See if you can maneuver a person around the room simply by invading their personal space!

Another "prank" that might make a person behave unusually is a variation of polite behavior. When you open a door, it is common courtesy to hold it for the person walking behind you. But what if that person is still a great distance behind? Can you make them rush to the door?! Yes! It may require a bit of practice to get the timing right, but watching the results is quite hilarious! In my personal experience, I have been that far away person and have even caught myself starting to jog lightly toward the door! I felt bad that I might be

"It is important to evaluate your goals before you take them on."

making someone wait for me. So to avoid the awkward long walk towards the "polite person" waiting, I thought jogging was the right thing to do.

This is called social reciprocity. When a person does a kind act we feel we should return the favor. Jogging to the person holding the door in this case is a walker's kind act in return.

These are pretty harmless pranks that can make a walk across campus more interesting. Don't wait for April Fool's, though! Find some time to try one of these and see what happens! Maybe even become more aware of your own behavior and see if someone is trying to catch you with a psychological prank!

RMU Psychology Club Update (Emily Brazeau)

The RMU Psychology Club was highly involved with a number of community service, professional development, and social activities. The Club teamed up with "Hope Grows", a non-profit organization in Moon Township whose aim is to provide support and wellness opportunities to caregivers of those with mental, chronic, or terminal illness, or developmental disorders. In October members of the Club served as trail leaders for the first annual "Hike for Hope" fundraising event at Raccoon State Park where they helped hikers navigator the event's courses. Both Psi Chi and Psychology Club members teamed up to host the 2nd annual *Psychology in a Box* event. The Club invited Holly Harmon (LSW), Director of RMU Counseling Center to speak about the new campus counseling center and her path to becoming a licensed social worker. The Psychology club also conducted its first annual Practicum workshop designed to inform students of the requirements of the practicum, assist with the search for placements, and connect students with upperclassmen in the program. A panel of five current and former RMU psychology students talked about their practicum experiences. Johnna Haller, Director of Social Services at Caring Heights Nursing Home and RMU alum, spoke about transitioning from a practicum student to a full-time employee. The Club also hosted four social events (the Psychosocial; Psychology Trivia Night; and two movie nights) to obtain a greater presence on campus and provide a place where psychology members can meet one another.

Interested in joining? Please contact Dr. Monda (monda@rmu.edu)!

Psi Chi FYI

Psi Chi traces its origins to a brief late-night conversation between two students at the University of Kansas in 1927. The formal charter creating Psi Chi was signed at Yale University in 1929.

A Hole in the Head (54 minutes)



This documentary traces acts of trepanation from early history through modern day. Trepanation (or trephining) is the deliberate drilling of a hole (or holes) into the skull with the goal of releasing cerebrospinal fluid. Why? Those who engage in trepanation believe that this is a viable path toward the attainment of higher levels of consciousness.

Essentially the result is “explained” through a boosting

of brain function due to increased brain blood volume.

The documentary includes interviews on both the history and perceived efficacy of the procedure ranging from the novice view up to expert commentary from experts in the fields of neurosurgery and anthropology.

Interested in seeing this documentary? See Dr. Paul.

WARNING: Graphic Content!

Dr. Paul

Psychobabbles! A silly interview with Professor Lynn Allen

Aubree Ray

Professor Allen completed her BS in Psychology at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. She was an English major and a psychology minor but she really enjoyed her psychology courses best! So, she switched to psychology going into her junior year and has never regretted it! After she graduated, Professor Allen moved to Pittsburgh and completed her Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at the University of Pittsburgh.

In addition to teaching at RMU, Professor Allen has a small private practice in Dormont where she sees children and families in an outpatient mental health setting. She works with children and families to have improved relationships and she works to educate parents about ways to better manage their child’s behavior.



AR: Why did the chicken cross the road?
 LA: *It was probably running away from something scary. A snake perhaps...*

AR: What is your favorite movie quote?
 LA: *It must be a fragile system if it can be brought down by just a few berries. (The Hunger Games)*

AR: Favorite song to sing in the shower?
 LA: *Depending on my mood, I have*

various ones that I make up.

AR: If you could only eat 1 food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
 LA: **CHEESE!!!**

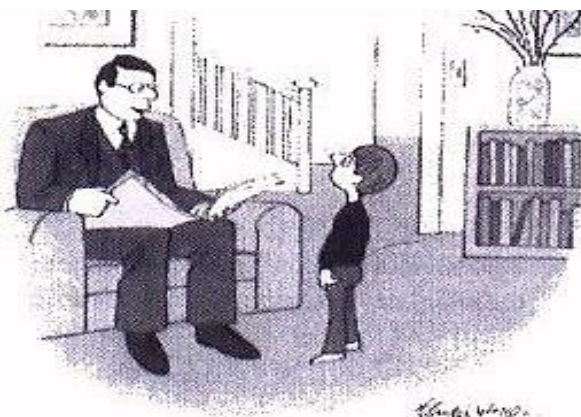
AR: If you swapped lives with someone with your name, who would it be?
 LA: *Someone named Lynn something...*

AR: One Direction or Justin Bieber?
 LA: *One Direction!*

AR: Would you rather grow a mustache or a beard?
 LA: *A mustache, but I don't know why.*

AR: Would you rather be a baseball or a football? Why?
 LA: *Baseball. It's more likely to go further if given enough of a hit!*

AR: What do you like most about being a psych professor at RMU?
 LA: *I enjoy the students and helping them along their path in life, whatever that may be.*



"I'm a social scientist, Michael. That means I can't explain electricity or anything like that, but if you ever want to know about people I'm your man."

extrovert



introvert



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