March, 2019

The Perception Zone was a themed zone for sixth form students, supported by the British Psychological Society. There were six psychologists in the zone:

- Vassilis Sideropoulos, the zone winner, is a laboratory technician looking at how the brain saves information and solves problems.
- Tirso Gonzalez Alam uses MRI machines to scan the brain and work out which parts are responsible for which actions.
- Matthew Longo is a professor of cognitive neuroscience who is studying how we perceive and experience our body.
- Jane Aspell is a senior lecturer in cognitive neuroscience who looks at how the brain experiences body illusions.
- Dawn Rose researches the link between music and wellbeing, particularly in people with Parkinson’s.
- Alexandra Quigley is a psychologist for the NHS helping people who are experiencing pain.

Key figures from the Perception Zone and the averages of the March zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE VIEWS</th>
<th>PERCEPTION ZONE</th>
<th>MAR ‘19 ZONES AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total zone</td>
<td>10,969</td>
<td>15,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASK page</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>1,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAT page</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTE page</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>1,327</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION ZONE</th>
<th>MAR ‘19 ZONES AVERAGE</th>
<th>IAS 2012-19 AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception Zone Schools</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students logged in</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions approved</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers given</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live chats</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines of live chat</td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>6,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average lines per live chat</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>352</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Popular topics

Students had in-depth conversations with the psychologists about their work, frequently asking Alexandra about pain, Jane about the link between music and health, and all about psychology and neuroscience.

‘Brain’ was a word commonly used in both ASK and CHAT, relating to questions such as: “Why do some people who suffer from migraines have brain waves which appear like someone with epilepsy?”

Students also asked about careers within psychology, and where a psychology degree could lead for them. They also wanted to know about the psychologists’ personal opinions on current affairs and more controversial topics.
School data at a glance

Active users

Questions approved

Lines of live chat

School | Year/s | Classes
---|---|---
A | Dame Alice Owen’s School, Potters Bar | Y12, Y13 | 5
B | Cleeve School, Cheltenham, U | Y12 | 3
C | South Wilts Grammar School for Girls, Salisbury, U | Y12 | 1
D | Queen Mary’s High School, Walsall | Y13 | 3
E | Wigan and Leigh College, Wigan | Y12 | 2
F | The Deanery Church of England Sixth Form College, Wigan | Y12 | 2
G | Hylands School, Chelmsford, WP/U | Y12 | 3

We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups going into STEM careers. Find out what we mean by our under-served (U) and WP schools (WP), and how you can support us in working with more of these at [about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp/](about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp/)

Psychologist activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSYCHOLOGIST</th>
<th>PROFILE VIEWS</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vassilis Sideropoulos</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>Winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Rose</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Longo</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Quigley</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirso Gonzalez Alam</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Aspell</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you think feminism is needed in western society’s?
Do you think equality of outcome is a good thing?
Working in the NHS, how often do you see patients where their pain is purely psychological and not due to any physiological reasons?

Is working in the NHS stressful, and, given the opportunity, would you ever 'go private'?

Is it true that the options for jobs after a psychology degree are narrow and limited and what different types of employment opportunities are available with a psychology degree?

What A levels did you do? And what motivated you to do well in them?

What advances in psychology give insight into pain that isn’t common knowledge?

Has there been any evidence which suggests that certain genres of music can help people with parkinson's more than others?

Find out about how we've coded the questions at about.imascientist.org.uk/what-do-students-ask-about/

Top Keywords of questions approved in the Zone
Area represents frequency of use

Question themes and example questions in the Zone

Science topics
Working scientifically
Careers and Education
Personal
Event/other

Science and Psychology ▌
Being a Psychologist ▌
Other ▌

Science and Psychology
Being a Psychologist
Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NHS</th>
<th>health</th>
<th>pain</th>
<th>psychology</th>
<th>work</th>
<th>politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brain</td>
<td>human body</td>
<td>mental health</td>
<td>science</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>gender</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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MangorollaCIC
01225 326892 | amy@mangorol.la
Examples of good engagement

Students were interested in the psychologists’ routes to their current careers, and discovered that the path to Tirso’s job was winding. Tirso explains he ‘felt everyone knew more than me’ when starting to work in his field, helping to show the students that you don’t have to know everything to be a scientist.

“Tirso did you start out in cognitive neuroscience or another field?” – Student

“I started in Communication Science because I wanted to be a film director! :O Switched to psychology, then did neuropsychology and then came here after working in hospitals and universities for a while” - Tirso, Psychologist

“How did you find neuropsychology?” – Student

“Fascinating. I got to see cases that you wouldn’t believe, like someone who had forgotten how to read but could still write. He could write something and then not be able to read what he wrote! It started my passion for neuroscience.” - Tirso, psychologist

“Which aspect of your work in neuroscience/neuropsychology do you find the most challenging?” – Student

“At first working with magnetic resonance imaging was a nightmare for me. I never did it before and I felt everyone knew more than me and I was really dumb compared to them and didn’t understand anything” - Tirso, psychologist

In the ASK section there was interest in the subject of psychology in education and its future:

“How relevant do you think psychology as a subject will be in 100 years?” – Student

“I think that psychology will always be important as a subject, since our mental lives are at the
core of who we are. However, it is very possible that we will see changes in what sorts of things people consider to be psychology. Cross disciplinary research is becoming increasingly important, and its easy to imagine that the boundaries between psychology and related fields such as neuroscience, economics, and education may change or become blurred.” – Matthew, psychologist

“Psychology is really embedded in our lives so I think it will stay relevant. For example, al those ‘other people don’t drop their litter, so why would you’ adverts are based on ‘nudge’ psychology – and loads of stuff about how we use the internet is informed by psychology...and even if we had a catastrophic event that meant we lived differently (like climate change) we would still need psychology to work out new ways to live!” – Dawn, psychologist

“Psychology will always be a relevant science, mainly because Psychologists are studying human behaviour and thought and action. For this reason Psychologists will always have to research about something new related to human behaviour – for instance even if we find the cure to all the mental health related disorders and learn how to treat cognitive impairments, we will still need to find better ways of doing things. I think Psychology is like Medicine, they both become irrelevant when there’s not form of life.” – Vassilis, psychologist

“Completely agree with all of the other answers. Psychology helps people to get over emotional troubles, but it also guides advertisers, medics, business, technology, sports, and sooooo many other arenas of life.

The science of why people think and behave in the way that they do, and how to influence that, will never be redundant!” – Alexandra, psychologist

**Psychologist winner: Vassilis Sideropoulos**

Vassilis’s plans for the prize money: “I want to spend it on organizing different types of events, conferences, practical classes or informative seminars, to showcase how Psychologists are not only doing one thing. These events will inform people, but particularly inspire young students!”

Read Vassilis’s thank you message.

**Student winner: Cathryn**

Cathryn from The Deanery was nominated by the psychologists for their “brilliant questions and commanding the sole attention of three scientists at the same time.” They came across as keen and polite and interested.

As the student winner, Cathryn will receive a certificate and a gift voucher.
Feedback
We’re still collecting feedback from teachers, students and psychologists but here are a few of the comments made about March’s I’m a Scientist activity...

It was fab! The children were engaged, there was a buzz around the room! What a pleasure to witness and inspire them! – **Teacher**

[I have learnt] a lot really about the level I should keep in a conversation to keep interest and how to give students little snippets of info so they do become curious... a crash course in communication really.

And I think I just became passionate about them, who they are what they think, what interests them – **Silvia, scientist**

[I have learnt] scientists are normal people aswell not just nerds – **Student**

Thank you very much for answering all of our questions. we have learnt a lot today and we really appreciate it because it has truly inspired us to follow our dreams and not worry about all the bumps in the way – **Student**

I sign up every term as it is a great addition to help students engage with science. It also ticks an Ofsted box of helping disadvantaged students to relate what happens in the classroom to the real world. – **Teacher**

love the live chats! It gives students the chance to ask anything and they really do! I have grown so much through my participation in this event! Thank You! – **Scientist**