November 2019

The Society Zone was a themed psychology zone, supported by the British Psychological Society. There were six psychologists taking part in the zone:

- Phil Agnew runs a podcast called Nudge, which looks at behavioural science and consumer psychology
- Liam Wignall is researching how people interact with each other in different settings, with a focus on social media
- Kohinoor Darda has recently completed a PhD on the neural mechanisms of how we interact and imitate in the social world, but unfortunately had to drop out at the start of the event
- Karolina Urbanska is a research associate currently exploring how funny images or videos can affect our feelings and behaviour
- Jack Joyce, the winner of this zone, is a conversation analyst exploring how people use language and what that language can tell us about their culture
- Debbie Kinsey is studying for a PhD exploring how museums can help people with dementia to live a good life

Key figures

This zone had some very active live chats, with an above average number of lines per chat.

Even more significantly, 78% of the scientist contributions to live chats came from Jack and Debbie.

Unfortunately, one psychologist had to drop out early in the event and was unable to take part.

	SOCIETY ZONE	NOV '19 ZONES AVERAGE	2012–19 ZONES AVERAGE
Schools	9	10	10
Students logged in	378	368	389
% of students active in ASK, CHAT, VOTE, or comments	90%	91%	87%
Questions asked	465	571	659
Questions approved	165	262	291
Answers given	329	457	525
Comments	24	45	69
Votes	299	294	307
Live chats	17	18	17
Lines of live chat	6714	6334	5771
Average lines per chat	395	352	356

Scientist activity

Answers: 30%, 28%, 28%, 10%, 4%

Lines of live chat: 49%, 29%, 11%, 11%
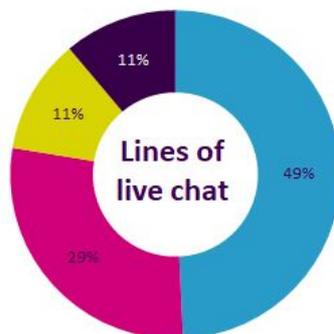
PSYCHOLOGIST	PLACE
Jack Joyce	1st
Debbie Kinsey	2nd
Liam Wignall	3rd
Karolina Urbanska	4th
Phill Agnew	5th

School activity
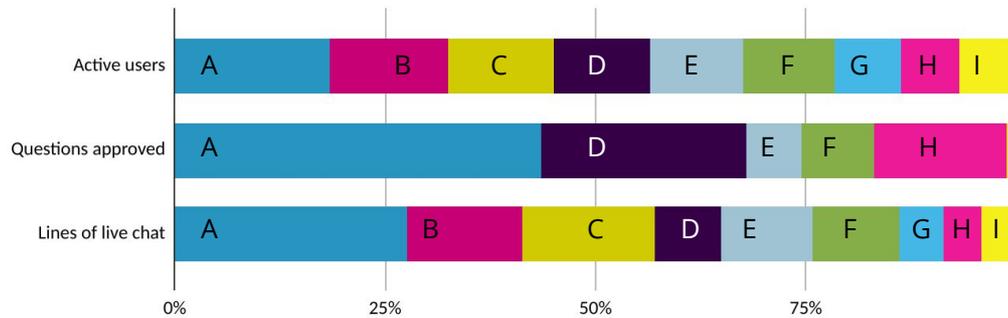
		YEAR GROUP(S)	CLASSES
A	Allerton High School, Leeds	7	2
B	Queen Mary's High School, Walsall	12	2
C	Gordano School, Bristol	8	3
D	Lady Lumley's School, Pickering (U)	8	2
E	The James Hornsby School, Basildon (WP/U)	9	2
F	The Charles Dickens School, Broadstairs (WP/U)	9, 10	2
G	Cleeve School, Cheltenham (U)	12, 13	2
H	The Wren School, Reading	8	1
I	The Burton Borough School, Newport (U)	10, 11	2

We have found that schools that are more than 30 minutes travel time from their closest Higher Education Institution are less likely to receive visits and benefit from engagement activities. We give priority to underserved (U) and widening participation (WP) schools when allocating places. Find out more about our research at **https://about.imascientist.org.uk/2017/school-engagement-in-stem-enrichment-effect-of-school-location/**

Popular topics

Popular topics in this zone were related to the theme and the psychologists' research, particularly Debbie's work with dementia and museums. Students had lots of questions about the disease, asking generally how people can become ill and if there will be a cure, as well as about how museums can help and how Debbie finds working with people with the condition.

Students were interested in how we use social media, in relation to Jack's work, especially about the ways people portray themselves online compared to their real lives.

There were many questions about working as a psychologist, such as the differences between different areas of psychology, what the psychologists find hardest about their jobs, and whether they find their work interesting and fulfilling.

Frequent words used in live chats by students and scientists

Chat 💬

university
psychology social
kind
money school talking person brain project students society
learning
studying
study studying behaviour
museums
research language feel psychologist
media fun world talk
dementia

Question analysis

Ask ?

What causes anxiety and paranoia?

Do you think that choice is a factor in stress? People sometimes get slightly stressed when they have too much choice at a supermarket or general shop.

When you watch people what are you actually looking for?

How do you feel about your illness and disability?

What are the similarities between cognitive psychology and structuralism psychology?

Has anyone in your family had dementia and did they get your support?

How come you don't choose a job that has more sciencey things in it?

What grades do you need in your GCSEs to become a psychologist?

1%
13%
24%
23%

- Science topics
- Working scientifically
- Careers and Education
- Personal
- Event/other

39%

4%
16% 31%
29% 19%
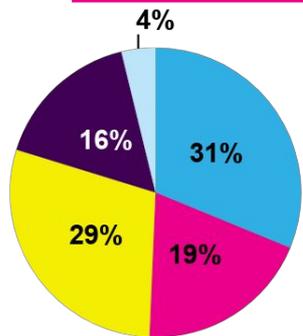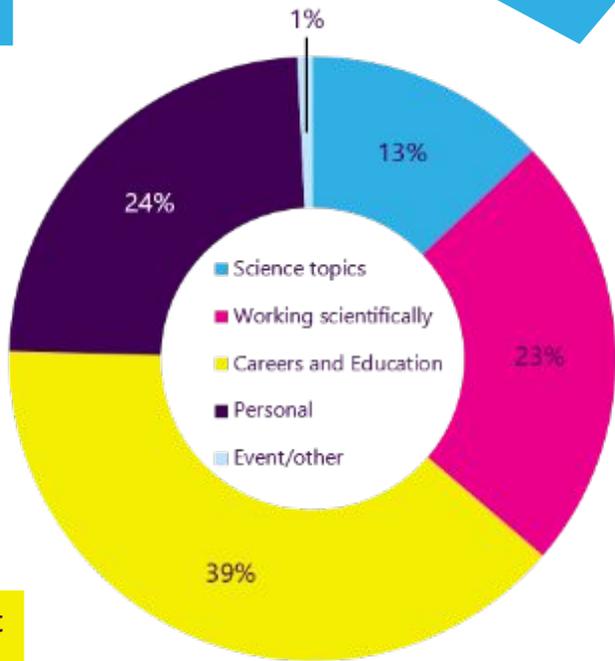
Historic Per-Zone Average (Themed Zone)

Examples of good engagement

Many of the conversations within chats were around the theme of 'society', with students seeking an understanding of different aspects of society such as in this chat about the psychology behind swear words:

> *"Why do we tend to be ruder when chatting online?"* – **Student**
>
> *"I guess it's to do with the context -- being online means we can be anonymous and so there's no relationship at stake with you and the other person, so being rude doesn't have much of an impact."* – **Jack, Scientist**
>
> *"Do you know why the 'swear words' are considered bad or rude?"* **Student**
>
> *"As a society we just decide that those things are bad! in other countries different symbols have different meanings and they're considered bad. it just depends -- all words, and symbols have 'cultural' meanings that we, as a society attach to them"* - **Jack, Scientist**
>
> *"Would that mean that swearing could possibly be polite in some cultures or am stretching it?"* - **Student**
>
> *"That's exactly right!"* - **Jack, Scientist**

There were many questions about the psychologists' research areas, much of which students could personally relate to such as in this example about Liam's opinions about social media:

> *"In your opinion and off research which is the worst social media site is the best or safest to be on?"* - **Student**
>
> *"I think it depends on your knowledge of the security features on each site. One could argue that Facebook is "safer" because of the focus of only interacting with family and friends, but there are potential issues with linking Facebook up with games or other apps, and those apps using your data in ways you weren't aware of. Snapchat's focus on the temporary pictures/conversations might mean that people feel safer because their data can't be used against them, but that could lead to riskier behaviour. Twitter allows a global conversation to happen, but is also known for trolls and had the possibility that conversations can be taken out of context. Overall, I'd suggest keeping on top of security features under settings options."* – **Liam, Scientist**

Scientist winner: Jack Joyce

Jack's plans for the prize money: *I'd design an event with other researchers for the Festival of Social Sciences to show the value of learning about talk — lots of people think that communication is mostly body language and that's wrong! (how would we ever talk on the phone? 🤔). Specifically, I'd talk to people about how they can resist — that is, in arguments or when someone is trying to get you to do something — what can you do to get them to stop?"*

Read Jack's **thank you message**

Student winner: beep370web

As the student winner, beep370web 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 November's *I'm a Scientist*...

Both classes absolutely loved taking part and my class actually clap at the end of the live chat...This project encourages a greater understanding and interest in science. Pupils see scientists as real people with interests like their own. It breaks down the stereotypes around the career. Taking part also encourages the pupils to think about the world of work and future careers.
— Teacher

I particularly enjoyed the live chats with classes because the engagement was totally led by them and it was a lot of fun to chat about such a variety of things, from being a researcher, to their questions about dementia, to our favourite snacks, to Netflix - I'll miss doing them a lot! And, in chats, there were some questions that came up frequently, which has given me a better idea of some of the concerns/questions of younger people.
— Scientist

We had our first live chat today and the students loved it!! It was so lovely to see them so engaged with the live chat and some of their questions were fab!
— Teacher

I'm a Scientist has changed my perspective on science
— Student