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## Message: The Value of a Psychology Degree

Psychology encompasses many areas of study. As such it is sometimes hard to pin down. A view of its early history would lead you to believe it is a division of philosophy. Now it is a branch of science. Research in psychology contributes to advertising, education, placebo effects, criminal interventions, how we make decisions, how we motivate ourselves and others, how we see and hear and make sense of sensations, how human behavior has evolved, and why cultural differences have come about. All these areas require thinking critically, and training in thinking critically (i.e., scientifically), is what makes psychology a valuable major.

Many psychology majors do not become professional psychologists. Rather they use their knowledge of behavior and their training in critical thinking in other professions and, especially, in their daily lives. Psychology majors often go into medicine or medical research; critical thinking helps them know what facts to gather and how to evaluate those facts to make a good diagnosis and choose the right treatment. Similarly, a career in law involves gathering facts, evaluating possible courses of action, and devising an argument that will convince a jury. Businessmen and entrepreneurs must evaluate markets and predict human choices. Teachers must critically analyze the behavior and misbehavior of their students to evaluate potential approaches to improve their learning. Parents, and even animal trainers and pet owners, must think critically about behavior to evaluate how to bring about a contented and well organized household—all the way from children who keep their rooms clean to pets that don't bark at neighbors or meow in the kitchen.

Critical thinking is emphasized, for example, in PSY 1010 (Introductory Psychology). For every topic we ask:

*"What is the evidence?"*

*"Did the scientists consider alternative explanations?"*

*"Are all factors properly identified and operationally defined so that the hypothesis is truly testable?"*

*"There is a correlation (i.e., a relationship), but did one factor cause the other or was something else affecting them both?"*

*"Are these claims extraordinary? If so is the evidence equally strong?"*

*"Is this explanation too complicated? Or are we perhaps missing an important idea that will simplify it?"*



Although critical thinking may begin in the first General Education Psychology course (PSY 1010), it continues throughout the major. The required courses in our curriculum emphasize research design and data analysis—skills useful in any profession. They help students apply theories to situations encountered in working with children, interpersonal and group interactions, and malfunctions of behavior, to name a

## Message: The Value of a Psychology Degree (continued from page 1)

few. Students come to recognize that, just as in science, it is important to consider alternative interpretations of behavior in their everyday personal interactions. Many psychology majors even take advantage of opportunities to carry out research and create theoretical interpretations of their own. When students learn to think critically, it becomes second nature. When they hear advertising claims, they ask, "What are they really saying? What is the evidence?" When they read a story in the newspaper or online, they ask, "What is behind this? What are we not being told?" Thinking critically doesn't come easy at first, but once students practice for a semester and then another and another, they discover a feeling of power over their world. They don't just passively

believe what they hear or read or even see. They realize that psychology is about behavior and how to understand it, and that the only way to do that is to keep asking questions and analyzing the answers. And they've been properly equipped to do just that. Their scientific training has instilled them with a highly skeptical, critical attitude. And they now have the ability to evaluate the evidence of others, create their own empirical studies (if needed), draw appropriate conclusions, effectively communicate the results to others, and apply the conclusions to solving both theoretical and real world problems.

*Dr. Rickye Heffner*

*Associate Chair & Director of Undergraduate Education*

## Majors Making an Impact: Psychology as a Pathway to Other Disciplines

Dr. Jason Levine, Assistant Professor

Psychology is one of the most popular undergraduate majors. In fact, it is reliably chosen as one of the top three majors across universities nationally. It seems that most people have an inherent interest in human and animal behavior, and many ultimately decide to devote their undergraduate career to studying psychological science.

Despite several misconceptions about the utility or value of a psychology major, pursuit of a psychology major is well-founded and justified by its broad-based application. Some of the benefits include obtaining specific skills that prepare students for living more effectively, and being better prepared for the workforce. For example, while universities receive pressure from outside stakeholders to emphasize learning specific skills applicable to a narrow-band career, the psychology major enhances employability through teaching skills that are valuable to employers within a broader-scope. These skills include applying principles of critical-thinking, problem-solving, hypothesis testing and systematic-style writing and rhetoric, project management, and interpersonal relations. Psychology, at the University of Toledo (UT), represents the true essence of the liberal arts and science education and performs well as a "hub science".

The Psychology major positions students well for pursuing graduate school and professional training. According to the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), approximately 25% of students with undergraduate psychology degrees pursue graduate school with 4-6% going on to doctoral study and another 20-22% working on master's degrees. The Psychology major also prepares students to pursue graduate training in medicine, law, social work, education, and business. For instance, data show that undergraduate students in the social sciences perform equivalently to those who major in more traditional pre-medicine areas (Hall et al., 2014, Halonen, 2011). In fact, we have had numerous alumni from the Department of Psychology go on to pursue graduate training in fields outside of professional psychology. The following students' stories are just two examples of how the

psychology major applies to a broader range of disciplines and can prepare an ambitious and hardworking student for graduate studies.

### **Katarina Truss:** **Psychology laid the foundation for my medical school training**

I graduated from the University of Toledo in the Spring of 2014 with a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology, and minors in Chemistry and Biology. I am in my first year of medical school at Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. Although I chose to pursue what would be considered a "non-traditional" major area of study for medical school, looking back I believe that I was very well prepared and had a good foundation of knowledge needed for my graduate studies. UT's psychology program offers several classes that are not only interesting but also applicable to my future career as a physician. Specifically, I greatly enjoyed abnormal, cognitive, and psychobiology. These courses strengthened my science background and also furthered my interest in the clinical aspects of medicine. I also had the opportunity to participate in clinical psychology research with Dr. Jason Levine. In the Health Psychology Lab, I gained valuable research experience by performing experiments, collecting and analyzing data, and discussing topics with my peers. Overall, I believe that my psychology studies at UT have been very beneficial. I would consider myself to have a more balanced knowledge base because of the broad bio-psychosocial model I was





## Major Making an Impact: Psychology as a pathway to Other Disciplines (continued from page 2)

exposed to, which has increasing value in medical training. Evidence of this, is in the MCAT, an examination needed prior to medical school. The MCAT has recently been adapted to include more social sciences such as psychology and philosophy. Psychology majors should be well-prepared in these subject areas. Most people do not realize that you do not need to major in a core “hard science” in order to attend medical school. I strongly encourage anyone with an interest in psychology and medicine to consider studying psychology.

**Amal Mohamed:**

### Why I chose to be a Psychology major as a premed student

To be completely honest, I never had an intention to major in Psychology. My interests had always lied in subjects such as chemistry and biology, because I was curious in the science of life and had a passion for problem solving. I always identified as a person who was passionate about science, and was under the impression that psychology was more of a humanity than a science. However, in my freshman year I took introduction to psychology as an elective requirement, and it made me realize what the science of psychology entails. I enjoyed the material in the course and it inspired me to minor in the subject. After taking a cognitive psychology with Dr. Jasper, I realized that psychology was applicable to almost any career, especially for people interested in the medical field.

Understanding human behavior and underlying neural processes are not only fascinating to study, but they expand our understanding of human suffering and creates opportunities to ameliorate suffering in the world. Physicians assume responsibility for “convincing” their patients to live a healthy lifestyle.

Understanding principles (and barriers) of behavior change is essential to providing effective treatment and counseling.

For example, being a psychology major has given me the opportunity to complete an honors research project. I have chosen to focus my research on the decision-making processes accompanying the rise of stimulant addiction in younger adults. This research can potentially inform health professionals to better tackle addiction. My minor in psychology provided me with useful knowledge through didactic instruction, as well as practical scientific skills through research practica.



## Grad Life: The Clinical Internship Process

Lindsay Roberts, Graduate Student

Clinical psychologists frequently provide valuable services to people in need, often balancing clinic responsibilities with research, teaching, or mentoring. Engaging clients in therapy can be very rewarding for both clinician and client, and the benefits that clinical psychologists offer to society are immeasurable. However, the road to becoming an independent psychologist is not an easy one. In addition to rigorous coursework, tracking the hours spent in therapy with clients, and publishing their research, students in clinical psychology are required to complete an internship in their final year of graduate school. Students on the experimental side of the department often see their friends anguish over cover letters, worry about interviews, and bemoan the application process... but the specifics of internships are often unclear to those outside of clinical psychology. What exactly is the clinical internship? Why is it valuable and why on earth is it so stressful? To find out, I talked with a few of UT's clinical graduate students.

According to the American Psychological Association (who oversees internship accreditation), the internship experience “provides high-quality training in clinical practice and specialties.” So what makes the internship different from the training that students get during their graduate degree? Tory Durham, a fourth-year clinical psychology student, says: “We get a taste for clinical work and training during

graduate school through university practica and externship placements. However, these are part-time and one may not get all the experiences they want during graduate school. For example, you may want VA training but your graduate program is nowhere near a VA, and thus you can't get this experience until internship. Also, clinical training during graduate school is part-time whereas internship is full time so we finally get a taste of the 40-hour work week that ‘real world’ people keep talking about.”

Internships are necessary and valuable, and applying is quite competitive. The application process is quite rigorous and is often compared to applying to graduate school, although the stakes may be a little higher when it comes to internships. For many, the application process begins long before they actually apply and is informed by their long-term career goals. Specifically, students often structure their graduate training according to the type of internship they'd like to land, taking the relevant classes, conducting certain kinds of research, and attending seminars and workshops when available. Clinical students are advised to select internship sites that align with their interests or provide training that they desire, in contrast to the “shotgun approach” many students take when applying to graduate school. Once the applications are submitted, internship

## Grad Life: The Clinical Internship Process

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applicants wait to hear back from sites that are interested in them; if there's substantial interest, they will travel to the internship site for an interview. The interview process can be exhausting, expensive, and exciting, but it can also provide valuable insight. According to David Medved (a 5th year clinical student): "I found the interview process exciting because it is a validation of your training to this point—you can see how everything you've done matters and that it has qualified you for internship. I tried to see each interview as less of an evaluative process and more as a chance to improve the clarity and precision of how I talk about my clinical work and interests."

After the onsite interviews, the real stress begins: matching. The matching process for clinical psychology internships is similar to the process that medical schools use, in that it relies on a computer-based service to match applicants and sites. This system can become quite complex, but many regard it as a more fair approach since match notifications can be released simultaneously. Waiting for "Match Day" can be quite stressful and talking about matching internships with applicants is generally a big no-no. Over the past three

years, every department clinical student that has applied for an internship has matched, and this year was no exception. Tory and David each matched to separate programs in Tacoma, WA, and John VanDusen and Andrea Kiss matched to programs in Philadelphia, PA, and Syracuse, NY, respectively. Great work, everyone!

So, is there life after the clinical internship? What happens after the final step to earning a Ph.D. for clinical students? Look for jobs, of course! Some newly-minted clinical psychologists will search for long-term employment in private practices, hospitals, or here in academia, but others will return to obtain further training. Some internship sites also offer postdoctoral opportunities—necessary for subfields like clinical neuropsychology. As a graduate student on the experimental side of the department, I learned quite a bit about the mysterious internship process by writing this article. Each clinical student who leaves for their internship is missed by the friends and colleagues they leave behind, but we're always excited to see them off on the next exciting leg of their graduate school journey. Andrea, David, John, and Tory: We all wish you the best and know you'll do great things. If you make cupcakes to celebrate your accomplishments, be sure to save one for me.

## Lab Gab: The Learning & Behavioral Microbiology Lab

By Eric Prichard, Graduate Student

UT Psychology's Harvard Armus has the longest active research career in the department. After completing his PhD at Iowa in 1955, Dr. Armus worked at the Indiana University Medical Center before moving to UT. After more than 50 years at the University of Toledo, Dr. Armus is still engaged in research. We caught up with him and asked him a few questions about his current work:

**Recently, you have been studying learning in paramecia. What got you interested in paramecia and what have you discovered?**

When I was very young, perhaps as a freshman in high school, I read a popularized history of early work in what is now known as microbiology, but was then called bacteriology. The book was "Microbe Hunters" by Paul de Kruif. That was truly inspiring, and I decided to specialize in "bacteriology" in college and beyond. Well, that didn't happen; I was seduced into psychology by one of my professors at NYU, Howard Kendler. But why the switch to Paramecia? As I spent most of my psychological life studying basic learning processes (mostly with rat subjects) I was interested in seeing how far down the phylogenetic scale organisms could exhibit learning. That resulted in attempts to condition a plant species, the sensitive plant *Mimosa pudica*, which did not succeed, and the current work with a single-celled critter, *Paramecium caudatum*.

**Many of us have been taught to think of learning as something which can only occur in multi-celled organisms. Has the way contemporary psychologists come to define**

**and think about learning become too narrow?**

I don't know that the thinking about learning has narrowed, perhaps the opposite, as there seems to be an increase in the study of learning in a variety of organisms, such as bees, amphibians, insects, etc. Cathy Mingee is now involved in a project with elephants. Then, of course, there is the work with primate sign language, which was begun by R.A. and B.T. Gardner at the university of Utah (Reno) and has progressed beyond there.



Dr. Armus observing paramecia in a learning task.

**You currently have the longest active research career among psychologists at Toledo. What is the most startling/interesting/counterintuitive thing you have discovered?**

As to discoveries, I have demonstrated that Paramecia are capable of simple discrimination learning. This work is, of course, carried out under a microscope, as the paramecia are not (or barely, for the larger ones) visible to the naked eye. Using a small, water-filled trough with one half under high illumination and the other half, under low, we have demonstrated that *P. caudatum* can learn to associate illumination level with either attractive (cathode) or aversive

(anode) electrical stimulation, in other words, with reward or punishment. This is pretty good for an organism without a nervous system.

Other work in my lab has involved stimulus generalization (by Rebecca Gurney) and memory (by Cathy Mingee). Current research is focused on memory in paramecia, but using a different technique from that used by Cathy Mingee, who found a maximum duration of between 15 and 60 seconds, still pretty good.

**Do you have any advice for researchers in training?**

Advice? Not really, except do what you are interested in and damn everything else. It does help, of course, to have a stable job.

## New Face Comes Home

By Ashley Murray, Graduate Student

In the past, the Psychology Department at the University of Toledo has provided undergraduates with class advising by having graduate students work in the advising office (under the supervision of Dr. Rickye Heffner) as part of their assistantships. However, this spring, the college of LLSS hired Alexandria Harris to be a full-time advisor for psychology students. As a person who has been in the helping profession for several years as an administrative director of a non-profit organization, and then as a manager of the Gateway to College program at Owen's Community College, Alexandria is highly qualified to continue helping students achieve their own academic goals and helping them define what they need to do to get there.

Alexandria completed her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Toledo and is familiar with the required coursework and many of the faculty members both in the department and across the university. Alexandria then went on to complete her Master's in Organizational Leadership at Lourde's University in Sylvania, which also has helped her to be an excellent academic advisor. Alexandria says that she enjoys being able to apply her skills that she learned in both her bachelor's and master's programs to help students develop themselves to their fullest potential; she does this by helping students to identify and break down goals in their academic dreams and by helping students assess how to build a foundation for building skills to achieve their goals.

"Honestly, when I applied here, it just felt like going home," said Alexandria. By being someone who has gone to school at UT and is now the primary person providing academic advising to students, Alexandria feels like she is able to provide stability to students and help them to build the realistic goals, self-esteem, and self-confidence that students often need. "Even myself as an undergrad, I didn't understand that there are different avenues and paths to achieving my goals." Alexandria often finds that helping students identify the first and second layers that make up

academic goals is enough to kickstart students into diving deeper into their major. As a former psychology student, she often knows how to find people to help students understand the deeper levels of being a psychology major.

Alexandria though doesn't just help students decide which classes to take. She also helps students find practicum opportunities, internships, externships, research opportunities, and other ways to push students to get the most out of their undergraduate experience - regardless of their future goals. In fact, she gets excited when provided an opportunity to connect students with programs and people; one program is the Study Abroad program that UT offers (and for grad students reading this, Alexandria told me that there are even opportunities for grad students!).



If you haven't already made an appointment to meet with Alexandria, make a list of questions you might have and contact the advising office to set up an appointment to meet Alexandria and chat with her about what classes to take and how to best achieve your academic goals! Alexandria can be contacted at: [Alexandria.Harris@utoledo.edu](mailto:Alexandria.Harris@utoledo.edu) or 419-530-2355.



## Community Minded: UT Family Medicine Center

By John Van Dusen, Graduate Student

The Family Medicine Center at 3333 Glendale Road is part of the University of Toledo's medical network, and offers clinical psychology students an externship opportunity in integrated behavioral healthcare, a dynamic new sub-specialty of psychology where the psychologist, or behavioral health provider (BHP), works in close collaboration as part of a medical team in a primary care clinic.

**What is integrated behavioral healthcare?** Integrated behavioral healthcare is when mental health professionals (psychologists, social workers, counselors, psychiatrists) are integrated into a primary care clinic, or when a primary care team (doctors, nurses, MAs) is integrated into a traditional mental health center. The BHP (psychologist, social worker) works closely with the rest of the primary care team, and is able to step right into a medical appointment or consult with a primary care provider. The BHP is trained in a variety of brief, empirically supported treatment and techniques, such as motivational interviewing, behavioral activation and problem-solving therapy. The BHP is able to help with mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety, as well as with health behavior change for chronic medical issues such as diabetes and chronic pain. An integrated healthcare team may include a consulting psychiatrist, who advises primary care providers on medication issues and can personally address any difficult or severe cases.

**Why do we need integrated behavioral healthcare?** Access to mental health care is sorely lacking in our current system. About one in three individuals who present to a primary care clinic have some sort of diagnosable mental health difficulty, such as depression or anxiety, and having an untreated mental health diagnosis increases the cost and difficulty of treating chronic medical conditions by 100-200%. Despite this, out of all individuals who need mental health services, only about 20% receive treatment and only half of these people (10% overall) are treated by a therapist or a psychiatrist. People who are referred by their doctor to a provider in a different location often never follow

through, and high demand for mental health services means patients can wait for months before seeing a provider. Ignoring the link between physical and mental health increases costs and reduces efficiency in public health, while perpetuating suffering for the patients! This issue is particularly visible for individuals with severe mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder: these individuals are dying 20 years on average before the general population, primarily due to preventable medical causes such as heart disease and illnesses related to smoking. Integrating medical and mental healthcare has been shown to improve both physical and mental health outcomes for patients, and reduces costs in a society where healthcare already costs too much for everyone.

**Ok, what about UT Family Medicine?** This is an exciting time for UT Family Medicine, as they are in the process of transitioning to a fully integrated model with the help of Dr. Lori Raney, a nationally recognized expert in integrated healthcare. The psychology extern performs the functions of a BHP in the clinic, seeing patients in the context of their medical appointments and conducting short-term follow-up therapy. The extern is supervised by Dr. Julie Brennan, a counseling psychologist and dietician with years of experience working in medical settings. Dr. Brennan is the center's behavioral health specialist, and her days are packed with a diverse array of activities such as seeing patients, providing advice and supervision to residents and externs, leading shared medical appointments, conducting research, and providing resiliency training seminars for the residents.

Integrated behavioral healthcare is an exciting new frontier for medical and mental health professionals, and will be a valuable experience for any clinical psychologist hoping to work in a medical setting! For more information, take a look at Dr. Raney's book *Integrated Care: Working at the Interface of Primary Care and Behavioral Health Care*. In fact, the information and statistics in this article are based on information from her book.

## Ask a Psychologist: Are You Analyzing Me?

By Lindsay Roberts, Graduate Student

Regardless of whether you're just starting out as an undergraduate psychology major or have been a tenured professor for 20 years, we've all heard some version of the following:

*"Psychology, huh? Can you read my mind?"*

*"Let me tell you about my aunt... she's so crazy! My family is super-dysfunctional."*

*"You do research? So you study depressed people, right?"*

...or everybody's favorite:

*"Are you analyzing me right now?"*

While some clinical psychologists may work with depressed patients or dysfunctional aunts, the types of questions we

get from the lay public show a lack of understanding of our field. Psychology is a broad, interdisciplinary content area and has ties to business, biology, the justice system, education, neuroscience, and many other domains. So why do people immediately assume that all psychologists are trying to get inside their heads? One reason is certainly how psychology is portrayed in the media. TV shows like *Frasier*—where Frasier Crane dispenses "common sense" advice while his own life is far from perfect—and *Lie to Me*—where Cal Lightman reads body language to catch criminals and save the day—inaccurately represent many psychological

## Ask a Psychologist

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concepts and fail to show the full spectrum of our discipline. However, another important reason places the onus on us: We're not very good at communicating our findings to the public. After all, when we receive comments like those above, it can get frustrating to repeatedly explain what we really do! However, it's important for us to correct these misperceptions and communicate the variety of subfields within psychology. I asked several current graduate students how they respond to these types of questions (or try to avoid them in the first place):

*"I tend to say that I'm a health researcher that studies how to get people to engage in more healthy behaviors... If they seem particularly interested (or ask what degree program I'm in) I'll very carefully tell them that it's experimental psychology, but for the most part people don't ask."* –Ashley Murray, 2nd year grad student in social area

*"I usually deal with these questions by rolling my eyes, laughing, and walking away. Or I say 'No, I'm a research psychologist. Not a clinical psychologist. I don't have patients or patience for them.'" –Jaclynn Sullivan, 3rd year student in cognitive area*

*"I refer to myself as a clinical psychologist. Fortunately for me the 'don't analyze me' response is somewhat relevant since I actually do therapy... I'm not even convinced my parents know EXACTLY what I do and I think I have given up really trying to tell them."* –Tory Durham, 4th year student in clinical area

*"People ask a multitude of questions basically indicating that they think I am a psychoanalyst, with which I reply: Oh no, I am a researcher primarily focused on how people make legal decisions about criminal and civil cases. And then the conversation goes cold..."* –Alissa Anderson, 2nd year student in developmental area

*"I just say 'I really like statistics' to scare them off and then they don't ask any more questions about it."* –Olivia Aspiras, 2nd year student in social area

When we try to explain our research or daily routines, sometimes it seems like people don't always understand the jargon that comes out of our mouths (even clinical

psychologists aren't immune to these kinds of misperceptions). This is frustrating for everyone involved: We feel like our exciting work is misunderstood and undervalued, and our conversational partner might think that we're pretentious or out of touch. We can angrily shake our fists, cursing the educational system for not teaching members of the public about framing effects or factor analysis, but a more pragmatic approach might be for us to learn how to communicate our research and what we do on a day-to-day basis. Tory might have the right idea: "I take any opportunity, depending on how much time I have, to educate anyone on the different subfields within psychology and the different hats I wear as a clinical psychologist."

So how do we start? After all, it can be pretty daunting to concisely describe your research to another psychologist, let alone a stranger on an airplane or your extended family! Our goal is to communicate that psychology is a multidisciplinary science, and from there we can give a very broad description of what we do. Ashley's description (above) might work for someone who studies health, but this general idea can be applied to other domains too. Even if you are a clinician, taking a moment to briefly describe what you do can help dispel the notion that you're a mind reader. Try something like this:

*"I work with [insert your population here] to study how they [insert a 3-5 word description of one of your research interests]."*

*"I examine the science behind [insert one of your interests] so we can [insert an applied example of your research]."*

Personally, my approach has been to tell people that I'm a 'behavioral scientist;' if they're interested, I mention that I study how people's social environments impact their ideas about their own health. This seems to be working reasonably well—I haven't gotten too many comments like the ones that opened this article—and it's also a strategy that my non-academic fiancé has adopted when explaining my work to his friends and family. Regardless of our own interests and career trajectories, we should all see questions like "Are you analyzing me?" as an opportunity to educate our conversation partner of how interesting (and fun!) psychology can be.

## Profiles: Dr. Peter Mezo

By Joanna Piedmont, Graduate Student

Professors can sometimes seem like an enigma. How did they get where they are? What was their path to becoming a professor? Why did they choose psychology? What do they do for fun? Thankfully *PsyConnect* is here to answer all these pressing questions, one faculty member at a time. This semester, I got the chance to sit down with Dr. Peter Mezo and learn more about him.

Dr. Mezo began his career trajectory at the University of Toronto for his undergraduate degree (that's right, he's

Canadian!), followed by graduate school at the University of Hawaii. He completed his internship in St. Joseph's Health Center in Canada, working in anxiety and depression (see the article by Lindsay Roberts for more information on what an internship is). His favorite class was a tie between a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) course by a famous eating disorder researcher, which was outside of his previous exposure to CBT and had an emphasis on Motivational Interviewing (MI), and a behavioral couple's therapy course. After internship, Dr. Mezo returned to



## Profiles: Dr. Peter Mezo

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Hawaii as a research associate where he worked in the Virtual Reality Behavior Center. Following this, Dr. Mezo did a Post-Doc/Lectureship at Yale Anxiety Mood Services, which then led to an assistant professorship at Memorial University of Newfoundland. He is now an assistant professor at the University of Toledo, and is very excited to be here. Dr. Mezo shared that if he could move anywhere in the world, he would choose Toledo since it's close to everything, is a great place to raise a family, has four seasons, and is a nice mid-size city.

Growing up, Dr. Mezo was always interested in working with people, and "always thought that the most powerful experience for human beings is being around other human beings and being in a social context". He also had an interest in philosophy, but the empiricism of psychology won him over. His favorite part of being a psychologist is the diversity of activities he gets to be involved in – teaching, research, and clinical supervision.

In terms of research, Dr. Mezo is interested in investigating and applying principals of adaptive behavior to common mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. He looks at how concepts such as self-regulation and self-management may suggest coping skills, which can be applied on a daily basis to help with anxiety and depression. Dr. Mezo is currently developing his lab, looking at coping skills and adaptive regulation. He hopes to collect measures through both questionnaires and lab-based work, possibly using some of his virtual reality expertise. He currently is analyzing data from UT's SONA system, and hopes to present some of his findings at his favorite two conferences - Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) and Association for Psychological Sciences (APS).

Another passion of Dr. Mezo's is teaching. At the undergraduate level he teaches Lifespan Development, Abnormal Psychology, and Principles of Psychology. His favorite undergrad classes to teach are Lifespan Development, since he thinks representing the entire lifespan in one semester is interesting and fun, and Abnormal Psychology, as it is a form of public education for

students not going into psychology to get familiarity with mental health issues. Dr. Mezo also works at the graduate level, teaching CBT didactics and practicum. He enjoys working at the graduate as well as the undergraduate level, since it lets him be more specialized in terms of his interests. If he could teach one class, he said he would teach Ethics, which he will get the opportunity to teach at the graduate level next semester. I asked Dr. Mezo what students can do to impress him as a teacher, and he said that students should be excited and interested, saying that "precociousness serves well". He also encouraged students to think of education as a lifelong pursuit, to find out what stimulates them, and go out and get it.



I also got the chance to ask Dr. Mezo about some of his interests outside of school. He has two young girls, and enjoys spending time with them, repairing small things around the house, and biking. Dr. Mezo also shared with me some of his favorite bands (The Beatles, U2, and Nirvana when he was younger), books (Catcher in the Rye), and movies (The Godfather and Falling Down). I also asked Dr. Mezo what superpower he would choose if given a chance; he responded with "be[ing] able to read people's minds, but be[ing] able to selectively turn on and off this power." Finally, I asked Dr. Mezo to share with us his favorite quote – "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can".

## The Lighter Side: PsyWord Puzzle

By Ashley Murray, Graduate Student

### ACROSS

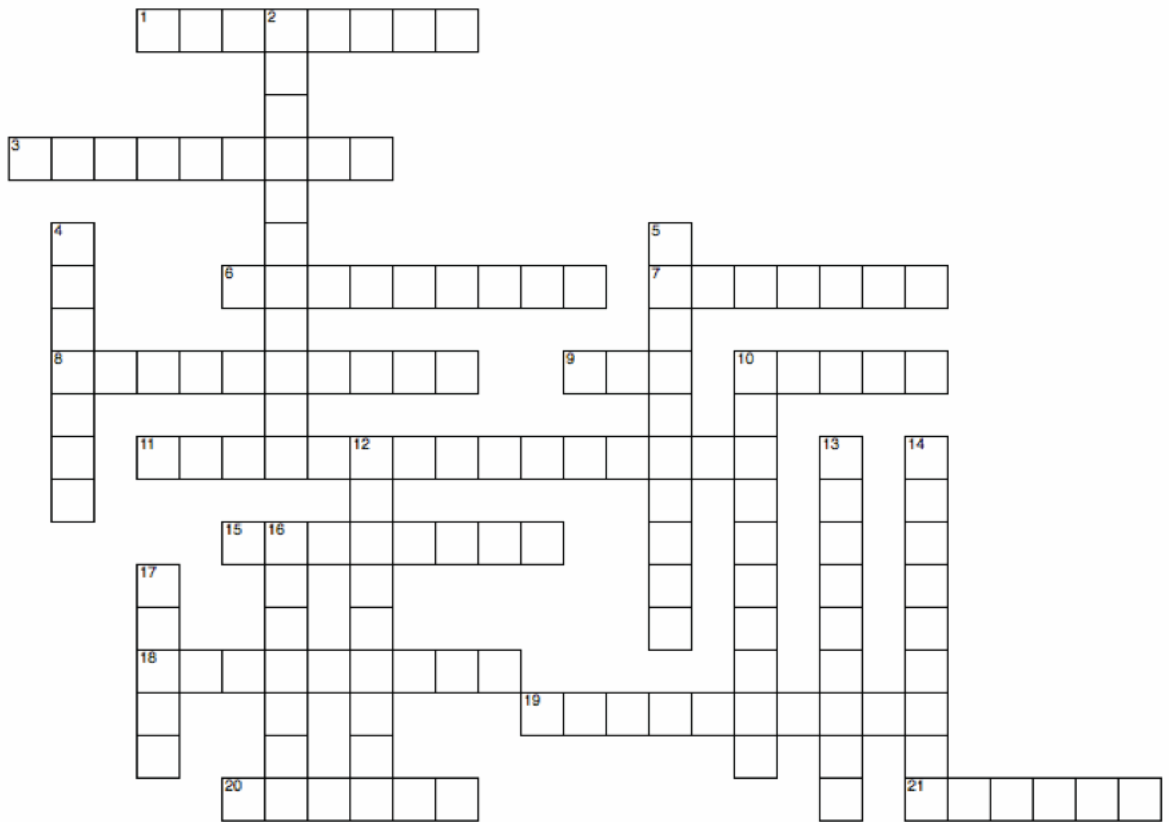
- 1 the tendency to repeat wrong solutions or faulty responses
- 3 the study of meanings in language
- 6 memories created at times of high emotion that seem especially vivid
- 7 in thought, the terms in which a problem is stated or the way that it is structured
- 8 \_\_\_ conditioning is another term for classical conditioning
- 9 acronym for the tendency to attribute the behavior of others to internal causes

- 10 visual receptors for colors and daylight visual activity
- 11 reducing fear or anxiety by repeatedly exposing a person to emotional stimuli
- 15 the ability of a test to measure what it purports to measure
- 18 a sudden temporary paralysis of the muscles
- 19 a compulsion by members of decision-making groups to maintain agreement, even at the cost of critical thinking
- 20 a word or sound used as the focus of attention in concentrative meditation
- 21 the condition that occurs when a challenge or a threat forces a person to adjust or adapt to the environment



**DOWN**

- 2 mixed positive and negative feelings or simultaneous attraction and repulsion
- 4 \_\_\_\_ conditioning is learning based on the consequences of responding
- 5 a visual sensation that persists after a stimulus is removed
- 10 bringing one's behavior into agreement or harmony with norms or with the behavior of others in a group
- 12 a substance that produces a temporary increase of activity in the body and nervous system
- 13 a negative attitude or prejudice held against members of a particular group of people
- 14 \_\_\_\_ area is an area of the brain related to language comprehension



16 a speech disturbance resulting from damage to language areas on the temporal lobes of the brain

17 \_\_\_\_ dream is a type of dream in which the dreamer feels awake and capable of normal thought and action

**Psych Talk: News about our Students, Faculty and Alumni**  
 By J.D. Jasper, Editor & Professor and Andy Geers, Professor

**UT Psychology Department in the News**

Dr. Jason Rose was recently interviewed by the Toledo Blade to discuss research on happiness across cultures. Here's the full link:  
[www.toledoblade.com/Medical/2016/03/07/Researching-happiness.html](http://www.toledoblade.com/Medical/2016/03/07/Researching-happiness.html)

Dr. Jared Skillings, a graduate of the University of Toledo clinical psychology Ph.D., program, has become an integral part of an organ transplant team at Spectrum Health System in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. Skillings conducts presurgical psychological evaluations of adults who need heart or lung transplants and children who need kidney transplants. Dr. Skillings and his path on a new frontier involving psychologists in medical care was recently the topic of an article in the American Psychological Association publication "Monitor". His story can be found here:  
[www.apa.org/monitor/2016/01/transplant-psychologist.aspx](http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/01/transplant-psychologist.aspx)

**Recent Faculty and Student Publications**

In 1979, Cornell University researchers showed that homing

pigeons could hear much lower-frequency sounds than humans. These researchers proposed that pigeons use infrasound for navigation, even perhaps sensing barometric pressure changes. However, surprisingly, for 35 years, no one thought to test other birds for infrasound sensitivity. At UT, Professors Henry and Rickye Heffner along with colleagues Evan Hill and Gim Koay decided to do just that – explore infrasound hearing in birds. After confirming that pigeons do indeed have better low-frequency hearing than humans, they found that chickens have even better infrasound hearing. However, they argue, that since chickens do not fly, navigation is an unlikely basis for evolving good low-frequency hearing (Hill et al., 2014, *Journal of Comparative Physiology*). More recently, Dr. Hill (now at the University of Nebraska at Kearny) is finding that mallard ducks, which migrate long distances, do not hear infrasound, while the Heffners and Dr. Koay are showing that parakeets, too, do not hear infrasound. Thus, they have a puzzle. Why do some birds hear infrasound and others do not? That question remains under investigation at UT.

## Psych Talk: News About Our Students, Faculty and Alumni (continued from page 9)

### Graduate Student Lands Job

Cathy Mingee recently accepted a full-time job, training elephants at Busch Gardens in Tampa, FL. Cathy's advisor at UT was Dr. Harvard Armus. She reports: "I've only been here a month but so far I really like my job. We work with the elephants protected contact so we don't ever share their space, and their participation is voluntary (no bull-hooks, chains, tethers, etc). The training is done with only positive reinforcement and sometimes a lot of patience. My boss is really into research ideas, especially cognitive projects so they just finished a study on means-end and we are in the beginning stages of a gaze/point study to see if elephants can follow human gaze/pointing to indicate importance (building off this paper: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0061174>). We also hope to teach the elephants to indicate choice, maybe with a touch screen of some sort, and eventually lexigram training. The means-end work is hopefully being presented at CO3 this spring."

### Research Talks and Presentations

Members of the Decision Research Lab, under the supervision of Dr. J.D. Jasper, recently presented at the Society for Judgment & Decision Making conference in Chicago. Fifth year graduate student, Ryan Corser (now a postdoc at Vanderbilt University) presented a poster examining the effects of cognitive resource depletion on risky decision making. Chandrima Bhattacharya, also a fifth year graduate

student (now an assistant professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University), shared her work on constructing and testing a new adaptive information search scale. Fellow fourth year Stephen Prunier presented a poster assessing the effects of information format on risk choices in the cups task. Finally, Ray Voss, a third year graduate student presented his work on the effects of fear on decision making, while undergraduate honors student Dani Kwiatkowski shared her results on the effects of increased saccadic eye movements on choices in the Asian disease task, a famous risky choice paradigm. Great job guys!



Dr. Jasper's Lab Group. Back Row (left to right): Stephen Prunier, Dr. Jasper, Jon Westfall (former graduate student), & Ray Voss. Front Row: Ryan Corser & Chandrima Bhattacharya.

## Contact Us

### PsyConnect Editorial Board

J.D. Jasper (editor), Jason Levine (associate editor), Eric Prichard, John Van Dusen, Joanna Piedmont, Michelle Beddow, Ashley Murray, and Lindsay Roberts (contributors).

To send us news for inclusion in a future newsletter, please write, e-mail ([psyconnect@utoledo.edu](mailto:psyconnect@utoledo.edu)), or fax (419.530.8479). Tell us what you are doing; feel free to include professional information and whatever you think would be of interest to fellow alums. You may also send high-resolution photos, preferably digital (at least 900 KB file size), for possible use.

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(Or by fax to 419-530-8479  
or email to [psyconnect@u-toledo.edu](mailto:psyconnect@u-toledo.edu))



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