

INPSYGHT

*Department of Psychological Science Newsletter
for Students, Alumni, and Faculty*



How Studying Psychology Has Changed Me

By Kathleen Loder

Psychology fascinates me, and if you're reading this right now, I have a feeling you understand. It's not only interesting, but also so impactful to learn about. I'm somehow still often surprised by how accurately psychological concepts describe my own thoughts and experiences. I love taking what I learn in class and noticing it in my everyday life experiences.

When I think about the impact of this understanding provided by psychological research, I first think about my time in Introduction to Psychology. I remember sitting in Dr. Minervini's class learning about confirmation bias and thinking, "Wait, I've done that." At the time, I felt called out, as if I were being exposed. I recognize that this isn't a personal flaw unique to me, but rather an empirically supported natural human tendency.

Admittedly, learning about confirmation bias didn't immediately make me immune to it, but it did make me more aware of how I seek out information. I began noticing this bias in the phrasing of my Google searches and the results I was then inclined to read. I became more intentional about seeking out information that went against my existing assumptions, and I challenged myself to be more open and receptive to those perspectives. This concept didn't just sit in my notes; it followed me outside of the classroom and changed how I approach information.

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The same thing happened when learning about the bystander effect. I found it shocking that more bystanders present during an emergency didn't ensure more help for the victim. However, understanding the diffusion of responsibility and the assumption that "someone else will help" has changed how I would act in an emergency. I am aware of my own instinct to fall prey to this diffusion of responsibility and recognize that others feel the same, so I must be the one to act. This awareness felt powerful and showed me how important understanding can be to combat it.

Taking Organizational Psychology provided me with a new understanding of motivation. Thanks to Dr. Fairchild, I view motivation as the driving force behind my actions. Now, when setting goals for myself, I apply the goal-setting theories we discussed in class to create goals I am more likely to pursue and achieve. I have also developed a new appreciation for the complexities of the workplace and the factors that influence success. I got my first job the day I turned 15 years old, and I have found it very interesting to look back on myself as an employee through a scientific lens. It has helped me gain insight into how my personal knowledge, skills, and attributes, as well as my supervisor's behaviors and workplace culture, shaped my job performance and attitude. I will carry what I have learned in Organizational Psychology into any job I'm in, regardless of my role.

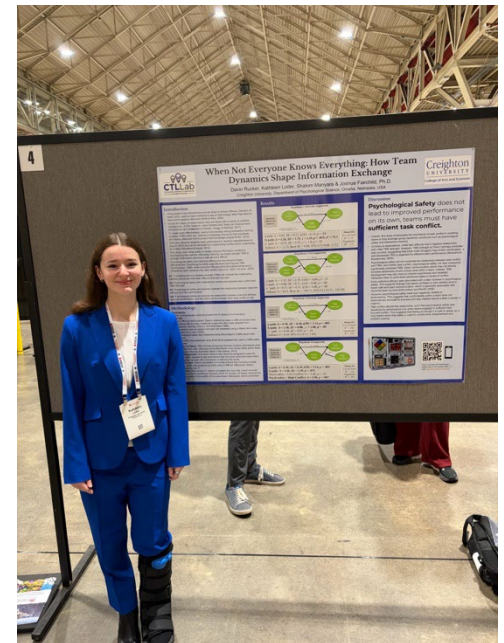
Right now, I'm taking Social Psychology with Dr. Guenther, which has given me abundant opportunities to connect what I'm learning in class to my own experiences. In class, we learned that others serve as a source of self-knowledge and that more proximal comparisons have a stronger influence on self-evaluations. Essentially, comparisons with individuals closer to oneself have a greater impact on self-views. After learning about this, I reflected on my first year at Creighton. As a part of the honors program, I lived on a floor with other first-year honors students in a living-learning community. Students often discussed their high grades, extensive involvement, and other achievements. Looking back, I can see how much those comparisons influenced the way I saw myself. I had inadvertently adjusted my expectations and standards based on those closest to me. Learning about social psychology didn't alter my past experience, but it did help me reframe it and provided a new understanding of my own feelings and behaviors.

I also enjoy sharing what I have learned in my psychology courses with my friends. They have heard "I learned about this in class..." and "Did you know..." more times than I can count. At this point, I feel obligated to ensure I'm accurately understanding what I'm learning in class so as not to become a massive source of misinformation. Even more so after learning about belief perseverance and understanding that what I share with them may really stick, regardless of its accuracy or later disconfirming evidence.

I am excited for the future opportunities I will have through the Psychology Department to learn more about the different facets of psychology and continue evolving my understanding of others and myself. I am especially excited about taking Psychology of Personality and the insights it may provide. I will continue to apply what I learn in the classroom to my experiences.

Although studying psychology hasn't drastically changed who I am as a person, it has changed how I approach and understand my own experiences and the world around me. Most of all, I have learned to never underestimate the power of the situation and that correlation does not equal causation.

Kathleen Loder pictured below presenting her research at the annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology in New Orleans, LA in May 2026.



Chrono: Psychology Edition

Below are six influential psychological studies. Place them in chronological order from earliest (1) to most recent (6).

- ___ The Stanford Prison Experiment
- ___ The Hawthorne Studies
- ___ The Milgram Experiment
- ___ The Little Albert Experiment
- ___ The Bobo Doll Experiment
- ___ The Asch Conformity Study

Solution: 6 (1971), 2 (1924-1932), 5 (1963), 1 (1920), 4 (1961-1963), 3 (1951)

The Reality of Autism Spectrum Disorder

By Taylor Buckley

Temperate golden rays bathe the school children as they play a game of tag on the playground outside of the small elementary school in rural, Nebraska. It's recess, the best time of the day and everyone is quick to engage their friends in a game. Ben is no exception to this, but he does not know how to approach the other kids. He has trouble conversing with them. Instead, he decides its best to play in the sandpit under the watchful eye of his para-professional, Ms. Nina. Maybe tomorrow he will try again to play with the kids. Or maybe not.

Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD occurs in about 1 in 31 children who are eight years old (Shaw et al. 2022). Recent trends show an increase in those numbers due to a culture of overdiagnosis and misdiagnosis within the United States. As a result, there is a significant demand for services to treat the condition. However, there are really only so many resources available to those with ASD. In fact, there is only one mainstream therapy to treat ASD and that is applied behavioral analysis therapy.

As a registered behavior technician, I am a trained professional in providing ABA therapy and collect data for many individuals with ASD, tracking the progress they make in their programs. These programs are highly based on behavioral psychology with a lack of cognitive or social psychology influence. To be clear this is not a bad therapy and maybe that would be ok if the current rates of independence that individuals with the condition weren't so low. However, it is obviously missing something considering that while 62 percent of individuals with a learning disability have gained independent living, according to research study done by Drexel University, only 19 percent of individuals with ASD have done the same. This is in part due to statistics like the one found by the A. J. Drexel Autism Institute, which found that 26 percent of adults in their early 20s with ASD receive no resources concerning employment, education, or independent living.

While this lack of resources is in part due to lack funding it's also due to lack of research. ASD is a spectrum and as a result there are many different cognitive profiles to be discovered, but currently there is only one major umbrella diagnostic criteria. A more accurate and diverse understanding of what the ASD condition is will lead to not only better diagnostic procedures but also the development of more diverse resources, ones that will increase independence rates for those with ASD.

So undergraduates, I would encourage you to pursue research in this area so that individuals with ASD might get the resources they need.

Reference

Shaw KA, Williams S, Patrick ME, et al. Prevalence and Early Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 4 and 8 Years — Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 16 Sites, United States, 2022. *MMWR Surveill Summ* 2025;74(No. SS-2):1–22. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss7402a1>

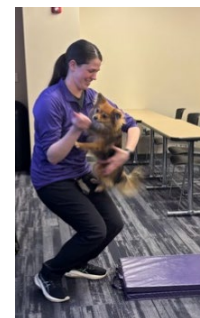
Learning in Action



Students explored tactile perception by conducting the two-point threshold test, discovering how sensitivity varies across different areas of the body. Through hands-on experimentation, they connected course concepts to real-world sensory experiences and gained insight into how the brain interprets touch.



Students observed a live dog training demonstration that highlighted how behaviors can be shaped using the power of positive reinforcement. The session brought learning principles to life, showing how to build increasingly complex behaviors.



Beatlemania: Understanding Group Identity Formation in Fan Culture

By Anna Schmeer



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I love The Beatles! When I listen to their music, I feel deeply connected to the generations before me who were fainting and screaming at concerts. This level of fan behavior and “hysteria” was termed “Beatlemania,” but alongside this diagnosis came a string of harmful stereotypes about young women and their attitudes toward pop culture that still are in effect today. “Beatlemania” was largely misunderstood at the time, yet we know now that it was highly influential in creating modern fan culture and behavior. In 1966, a study was published in the *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* in which researchers surveyed three hundred and forty-six Beatles fans who had gathered outside of the airport and hotel before the Beatles concert in 1964. The survey included personality tests, clinical hysteria, and neurosis, as well as “The Beatles Fan Scale” created specifically for this study. They found that younger adolescent women had a higher tendency to exhibit behaviors of “Beatlemania,” but not because of any pre-existing mental illnesses (this was in the 60s, so the standards were different). Various claims about the religious and moral implications of “Beatlemania” were circulating in the United States, urging parents to destroy their children’s records so as to not let the music corrupt their children, but there was no substantial evidence to back this up.

This study was revisited in 2014, which seems fitting given the popularity of yet another British band: One Direction. The behaviors exhibited during the height of One Direction’s fame were eerily similar to “Beatlemania,” but now there was one key differentiating factor: social media. Social media, and media in general, has played a crucial role in the formation of group identity. In the 1960s, media outlets such as tabloids and newspapers, as well as fan-created newsletters, contributed to the spread of “fandom” but were relatively limited to reaching those who were actively seeking out Beatles-related content. While newspaper headlines had potential to reach those in the “out-group,” they came from the “out-group”—from news reporters and not from the fans themselves. With social media, this script has been reversed. In 2014, I was eleven years old and *deep* into One Direction fan culture. I knew what was happening on Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram, even without being allowed to have accounts on those platforms. I gladly called myself a “Directioner.” A 2017 study breaks down the formation and maintenance of modern fan identity through social media, crediting interaction with a celebrity’s public persona as a factor. Direct access and possibility of interaction with, say, Harry Styles, online was not something that seemed accessible to Beatles fans in the 60s. In order to talk to Paul McCartney, one would have to break into his house to do so (and some did!). However, this level of access hasn’t changed public behavior; people still try to break into celebrity houses, to talk to them and approach them in the wild.

What social media has done is change the manner in which fan identity is created. Instead of being centered on the product of a person or group (ie. music), it is now focused on the persona of the person themselves. Celebrities can serve as a cultural “glue” that is foundational to national and personal identity, but the question I want to raise is should this “glue” be what they produce or their public personas? The Beatles were referred to, together, as England’s pride and joy, while each member of One Direction was lauded in their own personal way. Maybe a return to “Beatlemania” is needed for a shift in identity centralization. Music is the mediator in these “in-groups” and personal formation of fan identity centralized around music can still be centered upon the individuals who create the music, but with less pressure on the public persona and maintenance of selfhood by the celebrity. This allows for “fandoms” to extend temporal and national boundaries; as much as I wish I could have been alive when The Beatles were at their peak, I can still enjoy and relate to their music today, in the same way my 11-year-old self was obsessed with One Direction.