



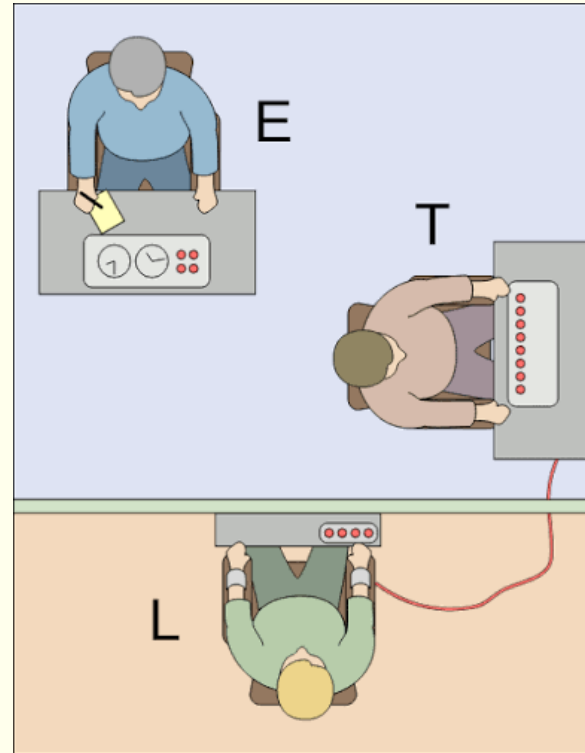
ECPS4022 Skills for Success in Psychology

Week 1: Why Are You Here? Becoming a Psychology Student

"Success in psychology is not about collecting information; it is about learning how to think."

Memory Test: Obedience Studies

- Milgram (1963, 1974)
- Participants at Yale University laboratory took part in 'electric shock' research
- No-one was expected to give shocks beyond 300v
- Over 60% went up to the fatal 450v shock
- Ordered to do so by experimenter
- Suggests people will obey high-authority figures
- Questions about ethics of the study



Session 1 (2 Hours): Why Are You Here? Developing a Psychology Student Identity

Session Aim

- To help students understand the purpose of university study, the expectations of a psychology degree, and begin reflecting on who they want to become academically and professionally. This directly addresses personal development, motivation, coaching and mindset.

University Learning versus School Learning

- Independent learning
- Self-regulation
- Time management
- Learning agility

Uncertainty is a normal and important part of higher education.

School/College	University
Learning content	Learning how to learn
Teacher-led	Student-led
Correct answers	Critical evaluation
Knowledge recall	Knowledge application

Growth Mindset and Academic Resilience

"Good students find things easy".

How true is this statement?

Growth Mindset and Academic Resilience

- Fixed mindset vs Growth mindset (Dweck, 2006).

Feature	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Core Belief	Abilities are innate and unchangeable	Abilities can be developed over time
View of Failure	An identity statement ('I am a failure')	A source of informative feedback to adjust course
Handling Challenges	Avoided out of fear of looking incompetent	Embraced as necessary opportunities to learn
Response to Criticism	Viewed as a personal threat or insult	Welcomed as a constructive tool for mastery
Effort	Seen as a sign of low natural talent	Understood as the path to gaining competence

Growth Mindset and Academic Resilience

- Productive struggle
 - Engaging with complex problems that are just beyond current capabilities
 - Be challenged but possess the tools and knowledge to find a path forward
 - Deepens resilience, promotes retention and understanding
- Unproductive struggle
 - Feel overwhelmed, high anxiety, because task is too far beyond current capabilities
- We scaffold, You solve

Growth Mindset and Academic Resilience

- Help-seeking behaviour (three types)
 - Adaptive help-seeking – makes genuine independent effort, identifies where stuck, ask for feedback to help master concept. Pairs growth mindset with sustaining productive struggle
 - Expedient help-seeking – asks directly for answer or gets someone else to complete task. Aims for completion over learning or comprehension
 - Avoidant help-seeking – needs help but refuses to ask for it until too late

Psychological Stages of Seeking Help

Acknowledge the problem	Individual notices a cognitive or emotional gap
Determine needs	Individual decides whether issue can be solved through independent effort or if external resources are required
Weigh the costs	Individual evaluates social factors, calculating if value of getting help outweighs the social cost (e.g., embarrassment, looking incompetent, etc.)
Execute the request	Select target and articulate need

- Yang and Stefaniak (2024)

Setbacks

- Poor marks
- Difficult/critical feedback
- Time management failures
- Anxiety around assessment

These things will happen... how will you/do you deal with them?

Activity 1: Why Are You Here? (10 mins)

- Why did I choose Psychology (with Counselling/Criminology if applicable)?
- Why do I want a degree?
- What am I hoping will be different in three/four years?

Activity 1: Why Are You Here? (10 mins)

- Extrinsic motivation (grades, money).
- Intrinsic motivation (curiosity, growth, purpose).
 - Neither is right or wrong
 - Although intrinsic motivation has been linked with increased perseverance
- Now... find someone in the room and discuss your motivations with them
 - Do they have the same/different motivations? If different, might they also apply to you?

Activity 2 (MLA1): Skills Audit and Goal Setting (40 mins)

- You have some skills that will be vital for your study and beyond
- You have no skills in some areas that will be vital for your study and beyond
- You have skills that need to be developed
- You have skills that are fully developed
- Identifying the above is key to success – and it involves critical reflection and honesty with yourself

Session 2 (2 Hours): Knowledge, Belief, Evidence and AI

Session Aim

- To introduce critical thinking and challenge students' assumptions about information, evidence and modern technologies including generative AI. This links directly to critical thinking, research principles, knowledge, belief and doubt.

How Do We Know What We Know?

- What separates knowledge from belief?
- Intuition – ‘I just know’
- Common sense – ‘Everybody knows’
- Personal experience – ‘I have experienced this’
- Scientific evidence – ‘The evidence suggests it is this’

How Do We Know What We Know? Intuition

- Pattern recognition
- Expertise

- Confirmation bias
- Availability bias
- Correlation versus causation
- Doesn't allow evaluation of evidence

Psychologists should be sceptical of intuition

How Do We Know What We Know? Common sense

- Time-saving
- Shared rules and baselines
- Resists new facts
- Often culturally bound
- Fails at scale – cannot deal with complex issues
- Prone to bias – mistakes biases for universal truth or logic

Psychologists should be sceptical of common sense

How Do We Know What We Know? Personal (lived) experience

- High retention of information, far greater than memorised facts
 - Provides context because of links to other issues that are known
 - Drives targeted solutions and validates marginalised voices over the application of often detached academic theories
-
- Sample size of one/a few – can mistake an individual's life path and situation for a universal rule of how the world works
 - Risk of anecdotal fallacy – can mistake limited perspectives for the definitive reality of an entire group
 - Resists objective data – weight of evidence against broader statistical evidence may be skewed

Psychologists should be sceptical of personal and lived experience

How Do We Know What We Know? Scientific evidence

- Minimises bias – systematic testing to filter out bias
- Replication – establishes theories and methods that enable verification and additional testing
- Measures of scale – draws upon data rather than anecdote
- Lack of nuance – focuses on the broad, which may not apply to unique individual situations
- Slow to evolve – can lag behind fast-moving real-world problems
- Prone to reversals and change – theories adapt and change as new evidence is found

How Do We Know What We Know? Scientific evidence

The Scientific Method

Observation	Notice a specific phenomenon or event in the world
Question	Ask why or how this phenomenon occurs
Hypothesis	Formulate a testable, educated guess to explain it
Prediction	State what will happen if the hypothesis is true
Experimentation	Test the prediction by gathering data under controlled conditions
Analysis	Review the data to see if it matches the prediction
Conclusion	Accept, reject, or modify the original hypothesis
Replication	Share results so other scientists can test them independently

Core Principles

Empiricism: It relies on direct, measurable evidence rather than pure logic or theory.

Falsifiability: A scientific statement must be framed in a way that it could potentially be proven wrong.

Objectivity: The process aims to remove personal biases, emotions, and expectations from the results.

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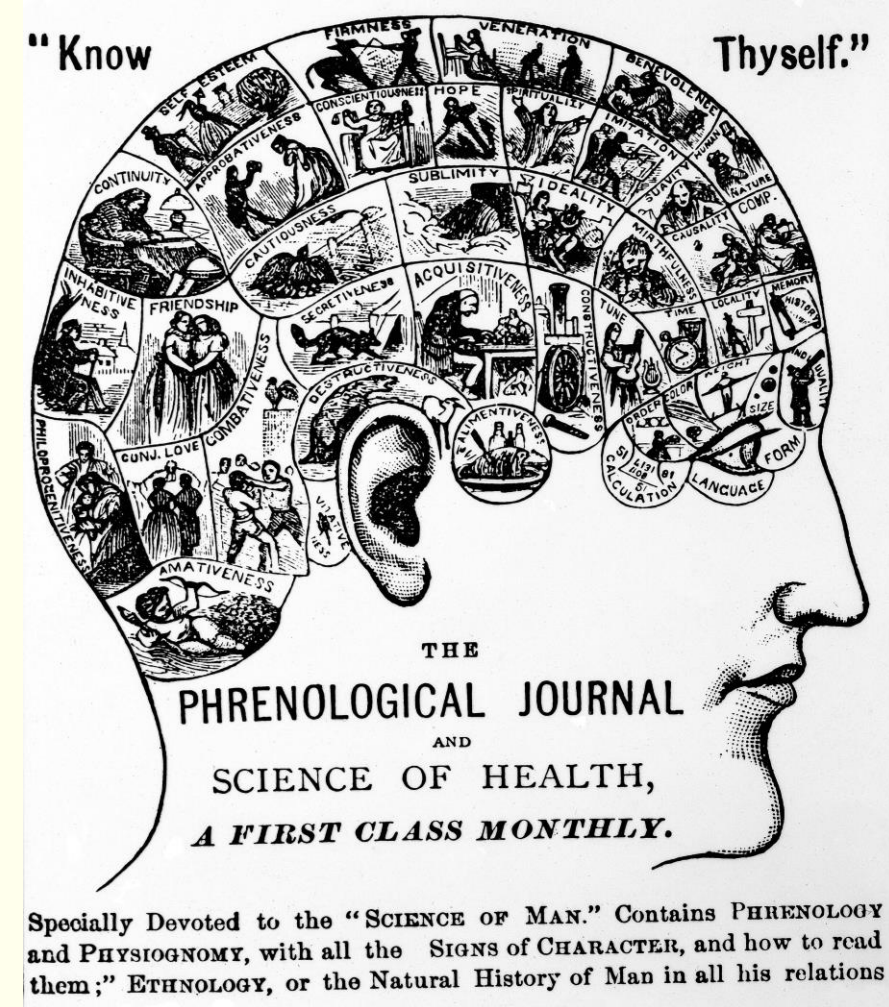
A highly publicized paper kicked off this controversy.

In 1998, UK doctor **Andrew Wakefield** published a Lancet paper describing 12 children, eight of whom the parents reported developing autism after getting the MMR vaccine.

From a scientific perspective, the paper didn't actually show much.

But Wakefield traveled the world to promote his findings, meeting with parents eager for **answers** about what caused their children's autism.

Psychologists should be sceptical of scientific evidence



AI in Higher Education

- **Artificial Intelligence exists, and it is here to stay**
- In a future session we will discuss:
 - What generative AI can do.
 - Strengths of AI tools.
 - Limitations and inaccuracies.
 - Hallucinations.
 - Ethical use.
 - Academic integrity.
- We will focus upon using AI to **support** thinking rather than **replace** thinking

Activity 3 (MLA2): Psychology Myth Busting (45 minutes)

- Some of these may be true, some may be popular myths not supported by scientific evidence.
 - In your groups, provide an argument for or against the statement assigned to your group
 - You can use any resources available to you (including AI)
 - You should make arguments that are based on scientific evidence and should say what this evidence is.
 - As a group create a plan of your argument, what you would include in it, and how you would structure it to address the issue in a 500-word written piece (you can then use this to write the written piece for your portfolio submission if you wish to for assessment)
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1. We only use 10% of our brain
 2. Learning styles improve learning
 3. Opposites attract
 4. Body language reveals our thoughts

Session 3 (2 Hours): Finding, Evaluating and Using Academic Sources

Session Aim

- To introduce information literacy, source evaluation and academic integrity whilst beginning preparation for future psychology assessments.

What Counts as Evidence?

- Compare:
 - Journal articles.
 - Books.
 - Media reports.
 - Blogs.
 - Social media posts.
 - AI-generated content.

Activity 4 (MLA3): Source Credibility Ranking (30 mins)

- Using the links in the document, rank the sources for credibility and justify your decisions:
 - Youtube video
 - News article
 - Psychology journal abstract
 - Blog post
 - NHS webpage
 - AI-generated answer

Finding Information Efficiently

- In academic writing we rely on two primary sources:
 1. Journal articles
 2. Textbooks
 - In both cases these are peer-reviewed; leading academics in the field have independently reviewed the work to ensure it is correct and of a suitable standard (as much as is possible)
- Where do we find these sources?
- Library databases.
- Google Scholar.
 - Search terms.
 - Boolean operators.
 - Filtering results.

Library databases (and much more).

Digital Learning & Library Services Support for Staff Cymraeg

 Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Using our Libraries ▾ Academic & InfoSkills ▾ Strategies & Policies ▾ Special Collections & Archives Open Access & Research ▾


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Academic Integrity

- Plagiarism.
 - Collusion.
 - Contract cheating.
 - Ethical AI usage.
 - Referencing as academic conversation.
 - Integrity as professionalism rather than rule-following.
- [Referencing and Plagiarism | Digital Services | University of Wales Trinity Saint David](#)

Reading Critically

For everything that you read, watch, listen to, apply these simple rules:

- Who wrote/recorded this?
- What evidence supports the claim?
- What limitations exist?
- What might be missing?

Activity 5: Academic Treasure Hunt (30 minutes)

- Locate as groups but write up individually on the topic of **eyewitness memory**:
- One peer-reviewed psychology article.
- One review article.
- One professional website.
- For each source explain:
 - Why it is credible.
 - How it might be used in psychology assignments.
 - How it would be cited and referenced correctly in academic writing



Percentage of Subjects Remaining in Experiment



WHEN INDIVIDUALS DELEGATE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO AN AUTHORITY, CORRUPTION SPREADS UNHINDERED.

THE TYRANT SLEEPS WELL AT NIGHT, NEVER HAVING DONE THE DIRTY WORK HIMSELF. THE PAWN BURIES HIS GUILT BY CLAIMING HE WAS JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS.



Evil doesn't always look like a monster. Sometimes, it looks like someone just following orders

EU CORNER / SCIENCE AND NATURE PAGE



3. AGENCY THEORY

FACTORS INFLUENCING OBEDIENCE

ES TWO
ONOMOUS
PLAIN THE
MENTS.

THE THEORY POSITS THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO OBEY WHEN THEY VIEW THE AUTHORITY AS LEGITIMATE AND BELIEVE THAT THE AUTHORITY WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

Activity 6 (MLA4): Reflection and Feedback (20 mins)

- Students to discuss in groups:
 - What challenged my thinking this week?
 - What surprised me?
 - What skill do I most need to develop?
 - What will I do differently next week?
- Take notes if you want to use this as one of your portfolio pieces

Week 1 Potential Portfolio Evidence (MLAs)

- Possible portfolio artefacts:
 1. Initial skills audit (Activity 2).
 2. Psychology Myth-busting (Activity 3)
 3. Source credibility ranking exercise (Activity 4).
 4. Reflection on the session (Activity 6).

- The overarching Week 1 question that will continue throughout the entire module is:

"How do I know whether something is true, and what kind of learner must I become to answer that question well?"

"Success in psychology is not about collecting information; it is about learning how to think."