

2020, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences, Homerton College

My interest in psychology began when we organised activities for a special needs school's students. While teaching dance to children living with Down syndrome, I noticed that they seemed to be happier than the average person. I was interested in why – or whether – this might be the case.

As psychology is not taught in my school, I read online articles about Down syndrome and later about other types of disorders. Eventually, I read Aronson's *Social Animal* and Atkinson & Hilgard's *Introduction to psychology*; discovering the diversity of the field of psychology motivated me to learn more about this subject.

This summer I attended an English-language course on social and experimental psychology, which provided insight into the paradigms of psychology as a science. I even tried the Wason test on my classmates, while measuring their accuracy and response time. At the research methodology seminar, I learned about correlation, causation, independent and dependent variables. I regularly attend seminars, for example, Hungarian criminal investigator Peter Doszpot's 'The psychology of lying'. Inspired by the topic, after researching scientific studies and articles, I wrote essays on the reliability of eyewitness testimonies; how both nature and nurture may contribute to criminal behaviour; and the role of the suspects' cultural background in the harshness of their sentences. I have learnt that it is pre-emptive socialization, rather than stricter sentences that will help reduce reoffending rates.

My affinity for natural sciences led me to participate in an English-language summer course at the Semmelweis Medical University Budapest. At its Department of Physiology I carried out laboratory experiments using the Western blot technique, examined the working of the human heart with ECG, learnt about laboratory animals (rats, mice, frogs), and got to know the University's imaging facilities such as MRI. The exploration of the unknown fascinates me, thus getting first-hand experience on how research is carried out was inspiring to me.

Music plays an important role in my life. I have been a member of our school's folkdance group, as well as of a guitar orchestra, both of which developed my teamwork skills. Reading Dick Swaab's *Our Creative Brains*, I learned about the effects of music on the brain and now I view music from a scientific point of view as well.

Having passed my higher-level English Erettsegi (97%), I am taking higher-level Biology and Mathematics Erettsegi exams. I regularly attend math competitions. I am most proud of my team's 2nd place in the Bolyai Mathematics Competition out of 900 teams, and our national 16th place in the Bolyai Hungarian Language Competition out of 300 teams.

I am the founder as well as president of my school's debate club which has now been running for 3 years. Usually we have a main topic for each session proposed by a member. Managing upcoming presentations, meetings and dealing with problems and ideas brought

forward by members provides me with experience in leadership and organizing. I feel elated when members tell me that the debate sessions are their favourite events each week, let these be on politics, economics, or other themes.

Apart from my scientific curiosity, I feel psychology as a helping profession also close to me. Responsibility and caring have always been important in my life; apart from nurturing my little brother, I taught 7-year-olds to swim at a summer camp. The emotional reward far exceeds the physical fatigue I experience during these life events.

Overall, I spent more than a month in Germany throughout several student exchange programmes. I wholly enjoyed immersing myself in a foreign culture and improving my German, of which I took a B2 language exam.

My affinity for sciences, inquisitiveness, sensitivity towards social issues and caring personality have led me to study psychology. I look forward to studying and later pursuing a postgraduate degree in the UK.