A Conversation with Dror Ben-Zeev

As a new clinical and undergraduate faculty member at IIT’s Institute of Psychology it would be helpful for our students and alumni to get to know you better. Can you tell us about yourself?

I’m Israeli but my father is a diplomat so consequently I grew up in a number of different countries. I was born in the Philippines and my family lived there for the first few years of my life. After that we moved to Israel only to move shortly after to Los Angeles when I was five. I lived there for 4.5 years before returning to Israel, where I stayed until my early twenties. After completing my military service in Israel, I backpacked through Central America and South Africa for a year only to return to Israel to do my undergraduate studies. When I graduated I spent the next year traveling and working in Australia after which I moved to Chicago to start my doctoral studies in clinical psychology at IIT. I’ve been in the U.S. ever since.

When did you decide that Psychology was for you?

I had a relatively unconventional childhood living in a number of different countries, so I think I’ve been a keen observer of human behavior and interpersonal interactions since very early on. In order to successfully adapt to new cultures you have to be able to observe and understand the human dynamics around you, so in a sense I was an informal “behavioral scientist” at a very early age. I decided on Clinical Psychology during my first year of undergrad. Once I decided on the clinical direction, I tailored all my course electives to be clinically oriented, but also actively pursued clinical research and training opportunities that were beyond the scope of what was offered as a formal part of my degree – I volunteered at a psychiatric hospital in Israel working with patients with severe PTSD and Schizophrenia, in addition to working as a Research Assistant to one of Ben-Gurion University’s faculty members who was examining memory impairment models in rodents. Working with a faculty mentor was extremely instrumental in getting “hands on” research experience and learning how the different stages of a study are conducted. My work eventually led to a scholarship for excellence in the field of brain research and my faculty mentor was a strong supporter when I applied to graduate programs in

Golden Alumni Luncheon

Four Psychology alumni attended IIT's Golden Alumni Luncheon in September, hosted in conjunction with Homecoming, the luncheon recognized and honored graduates from 1959 or earlier, who received a medallion and met IIT President John Anderson. A campus tour and financial seminar also were offered to more than 160 guests. Psychology alumni included (left to right) Charles “Arch” Pournian (M.S. PSYC ’51, Ph.D. ’60), Robert Greitzer (PSYC ’59), Vin Rosenthal (M.S. PSYC ’51, Ph.D. ’55), and Robert Yufit (PSYC ’51, M.S. ’82).
From the Dean

I would be remiss if I did not begin by thanking Bryan Dunn for all of his dedication, hard work, generosity, and steadfast support of the Institute of Psychology as chair of the Psychology Board of Overseers. As one of the founding members of the Psychology Board, he has contributed in multiple ways from which many have benefitted. Thinking back over the 13 years of his chairmanship, I can recall a few key events for which we owe him our deepest thanks. Bryan represented Psychology on the IIT Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, making the case for the startup funds to launch the now wildly successful Center for Research and Service. He hosted fundraising events and introduced others to us who became supporters. He gave generously of his time, his talent, his financial support, and enthusiasm, even allowing himself to be the brunt of humor at the very first PsychNite at Second City (who can forget Lemonne Zello?). His contributions funded students, new initiatives, equipment, and more; his humor, intellectual acumen, and steady thoughtfulness will be missed. On behalf of all of Psychology, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude and best regards. We hope and expect that our association will continue for many years. Thank you, Bryan, from all of us.

Every fall is a whirlwind and this year is no exception. The president unveiled the university strategic plan, which will chart our course, and we are in the midst of revising the Psychology plan to more closely align with the university. There are so many things happening that it is tough to mention them without this becoming something of a laundry list, but a few include: Patrick Corrigan landed an incredible grant from the National Institutes of Health to support a national center on adherence and empowerment. Frank Lane is continuing groundbreaking work on a device that will allow the visually impaired to swim. Michael Young was promoted to full professor. We welcome Dror Ben-Zeev back as an assistant professor to head the undergraduate effort.

In the process of forwarding the interests of Psychology across the campus and with potential donors, I have found that many folks do not know what psychology actually is; if you have suggestions on how to communicate this we would welcome your ideas. So much of psychological science has integrated with the general knowledge base of the public that we are almost background. As well, psychological research reaches into so many domains (business, health, education, etc.) that our distinctiveness is diluted. Moreover, Hollywood is killing us and making it impossible for the average person (or even professionals) to distinguish the hype from the knowledge.

It also is our challenge to support the next generation of professionals; we have had deep budget cuts and graduate school is tough. Most of you received partial funding when you were here and the value of your IIT education is the basis for your current success. With this perspective in mind, we ask that you consider giving generously this year to support psychology students. We want to honor your wishes, so please be explicit about where your dollars should be directed, be it to the university broadly or to Psychology.

Stay in touch. This fall I visited John Scott, Michael Asher, and Steve Godin—what fun it was to hear about their work, families, and time since leaving IIT—and I would like to hear from and about more of you. Please make an effort to reach back to us.

See you all at Margaret Huys’s retirement party April 22!

— M. Ellen Mitchell

Due to budget constraints we have been forced to reduce the size of our printed newsletter. Full versions of the stories mentioned here are available online at http://www.iit.edu/psych/notables/newsletters/.

Dror Ben-Zeev continued

the states. We still stay in touch to this day. I guess it just goes to show you that sometimes the most rewarding and educational experiences are not necessarily the ones that are structured for you, rather, the ones that you seek or create on your own.

Tell us a little about your college experiences and what you did after IIT.

I got my BA in behavioral sciences at the Ben-Gurion University. The degree was essentially a double major in Psychology and Anthropology/Sociology.

During my tenure in the clinical program at IIT, both my Masters and Doctoral dissertation focused on the retrospective recall of emotional experiences and symptoms in clinically depressed individuals, a population that is known for various cognitive biases and deficits. One of the most common questions clinicians ask their patients is “How did you feel this week?” Well I wanted to examine whether the weekly summaries that patients provided truly reflected their actual experiences, or if they were somehow biased. I did this by using the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), in which I gave depressed participants and healthy controls Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to record their emotional experiences and symptoms as they occurred in their daily life, multiple times a day, for one week. At the end of the week I asked the participants to provide a retrospective summary of how they felt, and compared these summaries to the

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From the Chair

As this is my first correspondence with you, let me first introduce myself and tell you how excited I am to serve as the new chair of the Institute of Psychology Board of Overseers.

I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to build on the great work accomplished by the board, and my colleague and friend Bryan Dunn, since the inception of the board in 1996. As you know, Bryan served as chair during IIT’s transformation and restructuring from the Department of Psychology to the Institute of Psychology. He led the board from its very first meeting until now—13 years later. His leadership has been exemplary, and we owe him a debt of gratitude for staying the course. Though his leadership will be missed, I’m happy to share that Bryan will remain a member of IIT’s Board of Trustees, and he has pledged his continued unwavering support of Psychology.

I joined the IIT Board of Trustees in 2008 and have thoroughly enjoyed my work with the university. I find the challenges of leading an academic institution both daunting and energizing at the same time. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the ongoing transformation of this great institution. I have already enjoyed meeting many of the university’s staff, faculty, and students. IIT has a tremendous program of events that builds on its core curriculum, and I have had the privilege of attending numerous activities, including the PsychNite event celebrating Psychology’s 80/10 Anniversary, a White Sox game as part of IIT’s Homecoming for alumni, and several university-wide special programs. I also had the pleasure of meeting Psychology students during our last Board of Overseers’ meeting; it was motivating to hear about their interests, ongoing research, and concerns about future funding.

IIT has a gem in its Psychology program. As the staff, faculty, and board work to sustain the academic excellence for which the institute and IIT are known, we will continue to build on our efforts to further enhance Psychology. We will reconnect with more alumni, expand the undergraduate program, and respond to the concerns of our students as they face funding limitations. While much has been accomplished, a great deal of work remains. I am truly delighted to have the opportunity to build upon the achievements of Bryan and the board, and I look forward to partnering with you to further foster IIT’s legacy of excellence.

— Joe Calabrese

Professor Pat Corrigan was awarded a $5 million grant from National Institute of Mental Health, the largest of his career. The grant supports the creation of a National Research Center on Adherence and Empowerment and is comprised of researchers from IIT, Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Rutgers. The center will study why most people with mental illness who might benefit from treatment never obtain it, and why, of those people who do begin mental health care, more than half drop out prematurely.

Psychology Professor Chow Lam received a five-year, $600,0000 Rehabilitation Services Administration grant that will be used to support rehabilitation training for part-time M.S. students and Ph.D. Rehabilitation Education students.


MORE ONLINE: See the I/O newsletter for more papers and presentations from the I/O program. http://www.iit.edu/psych/admission/graduate/industrial-organizational/newsletters_index.shtml

Supreme Court Finds I/O Solutions’ Firefighter Exams Fair, Valid, and Non-Discriminatory

I/O Solutions Chief Executive Officer Fred Rafelson (M.S. PSYC ’90, Ph.D. ’96) agreed to share this press release with PsychLink.

Chicago, August 10, 2009—In its recent ruling in the Ricci v. DeStefano case, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed that the firefighters’ promotional exams developed for the City of New Haven, Conn., by I/O Solutions, Inc., the leading public safety human resources consulting firm, were fair, valid, and non-discriminatory.

The case, which became an issue in the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Sonia Sotomayor, dealt with the question of whether the exam was discriminatory against minorities and whether its results should be discarded by the City of New Haven. In its ruling, the court noted that the exam was “painstakingly developed to test relevant material” and that the city could not discard the results of a valid test simply because it didn’t like the results.

“The court affirmed a basic tenet of test development: that validity is the primary objective of a testing process,” said Chad Legel (M.S. PSYC ’00), I/O Solutions’ president. “The work we did for the City of New Haven, and that we do for all of our clients, resulted in well-developed, valid tools that are able to predict who will succeed on the job, without disparate impact on minorities.”

In its majority opinion, the court praised the I/O Solutions’ job analysis process, saying, “At every stage of the job analysis, IOS, by deliberate choice, oversampled minority firefighters to ensure that the results—which IOS would use to develop the examinations—would not intentionally favor white candidates.”

“Over 1,000 public safety agencies across 40 states and Canada have used our services to help them meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Justice that every examination process be valid, reliable, fair, and defensible against Title VII and EEOC challenges,” Legel added. “The Supreme Court’s recent ruling gives our clients full confidence that they are using the best public safety human resource tools in the industry.”

For more info about I/O Solutions, visit www.iosolutions.org.
Alumni Spotlight: John Scott

Born in Cuba, NY, on April 6, John first earned his Master's degree in Clinical Psychology. While working for the City of Alexandria, VA, providing therapy for a substance abuse population, he also worked with a colleague doing group facilitation around the MBTI. This ultimately started John down the I/O path, graduating from IIT's I/O graduate division in 1985. John chose IIT due to location and quality of education. “Chicago was a great city with many opportunities and benefits. Looking back on my decision, it was one of the smartest moves I ever made.”

John fondly remembers Nam Raju as most influential to his graduate experience and career. “Nam was a complex thinker who knew how to communicate in simple terms. His wisdom, humility, sense of humor and practical, common-sense approach continues to serve as an inspiration to me. I will never forget him. Jack Edwards was also extremely influential to me as both coach and mentor.” John’s most memorable class experience was Nam’s Personnel Selection seminar in a group project to conduct a validation study and present the results to the class as if presenting to a client. “They say you learn more from your mistakes than your successes and that certainly held true as we learned during our presentation about the need to thoroughly understand client needs before formulating and implementation plan. We got the correlation, but missed the big picture, which became painfully obvious during the presentation. That lesson has stayed with me throughout my career.”

John’s I/O career began in 1982 with the Riverside Publishing Co., where he managed the design, development and research for the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th edition), an impressive accomplishment, especially so early in his career. John then became a Research Psychologist at Wisconsin Electric Power Company (1985-1990). In 1990, John joined HRStrategies, a human resources consulting firm directing a team of I/O psychologists. When Aon purchased HRStrategies in 1995, John co-founded APT Inc., a human resources consulting firm with partner Kathleen Lundquist. "We began with 4 employees and an intern. Today, we have 54 full-time employees, 29 of whom are I/O psychologists. We have five U.S. locations providing a full range of talent management services. We have grown 20% a year over the past 5 years and have a very ambitious plan for growth over the next 5.”

Scott was asked what advice he would give to upcoming graduate students, and he says, “My advice would be to take one or two writing courses from the English department. It will be money and time well spent. I would also advise taking a finance course from the business school. The most effective way for I-O psychologists to win the hearts and minds of their clients is to speak the language of their clients’ finance people. If you cannot show how your service or product will have value and impact the bottom line, you will seldom be asked to sit at their table.”

John is also very active in the publishing arena. He is currently co-editing a SIOP Professional Practice Series book with Doug Reynolds entitled: Handbook of Workplace Assessment: Selecting and Developing Organizational Talent. He is also co-authoring a “Foundations of Measurement” chapter with Alan Mead and co-authoring a chapter with Dan Lezotte on web-based assessment for the Oxford Handbook of Assessment and Selection.

John lives in Ridgefield, CT with his wife Kim. He has two sons, Justin, 27, a graduate of Haverford College and Emory University Law School, and Jeremy, 24 a graduate of Lafayette College. Justin is an employment attorney in Atlanta and Jeremy works on Wall Street as a Financial Planning & Analysis Associate.

When asked about “rules to live by,” John offered the following, “1) Think positively and always assume that you are going to succeed. 2) Value your family and friends. 3) Exceed expectations. 4) Take on as much as you can, but also try to relax. 5) Stay open to experience and knowledge. 6) Give back.”

In summary, John had one final comment to share “This has been an amazing ride, none of which would have been possible without the absolutely solid and forward-looking training that I received at IIT. The current faculty and leadership in IIT’s graduate program is as strong as ever and I am quite proud to say that I graduated from and continue to support IIT.”

Psychology is on the Road

Dean M. Ellen Mitchell traveled to the east coast in September and visited with three alumni. Michael J. Asher Ph.D. ’89 is co-author of two books concerning ADD. He is ABPP Board certified in Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology and has a private practice. Michael works with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Steven W. Godwin MS ’83, Ph.D. ’89 is on faculty at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania. He is also a consultant to a large number of school systems. John C. Scott Ph.D. ’85 serves as a member of the Center for Research Advisory Board and is currently COO and Partner of Applied Psychological Techniques, Inc. in Connecticut. His oldest son is a lawyer practicing employment law. His other son is a financial analyst living and working in Manhattan. John enjoys golfing and relaxing at his get-a-way home in Georgia. M. Ellen is interested in reconnecting with alumni in Chicagoland and around the country to hear the accomplishments of former students and learn more about the lives of Psychology graduates. She also plans to share some of the new initiatives outlined in IIT’s strategic plan.
actual weekly recordings. I found that both depressed and healthy controls tended to retrospectively exaggerate the intensity of their emotional experiences and symptoms, but controls tended to have an overall positive bias when summarizing their week, while depressed individuals did not. In essence, this suggested that having some “positive illusions” in the way we recall our experiences may be adaptive.

Completing my graduate training at IIT in 2007, I moved to California to do a year long clinical internship at the University of California San Diego/VA San Diego Healthcare System. After finishing my year of clinical internship and graduating from IIT in 2008, I stayed on as a postdoctoral research fellow at UCSD’s Department of Psychiatry. There I worked as a project coordinator for the Schizophrenia Psychosocial Rehabilitation program and helped design an interactive cellular phone assessment and intervention program to improve patient coping with auditory hallucinations, medication adherence, and participation in social activities. Truly fascinating stuff. The experience I gained at IIT using ambulatory assessment strategies really helped inform my work at UCSD, and now the expertise I acquired working with patients with severe mental illness at UCSD informs my own research endeavors after returning to IIT.

Why did you come back to IIT and what do you like most about IIT and its students?

After a couple of years in San Diego, I really missed Chicago weather (laughs). What brought me back was the rather unique opportunity to head the undergraduate program in psychology. I’ve always appreciated the great training, clinical experiences, and research opportunities I had as a graduate student in clinical psychology, and knew that I would feel right at home if I were to return. The faculty and students at the Institute of Psychology tend to not only be highly intelligent and motivated, and just as importantly, very friendly, collaborative, and flexible.

You have talked about the wonderful experiences you have had as a graduate student and research, what made you decide to work with undergraduates?

When I was a graduate student here, I had the opportunity to teach several undergraduate courses and loved it. As I was preparing to conduct my doctoral research, I realized that Experience Sampling Method (ESM) studies are very labor intensive and that I would really need some reliable research assistants to help me complete the project in a timely fashion. Therefore I created a psychology IPRO (Interprofessional Project) that focused on using advanced communications technologies in clinical research and recruited students from the various courses I taught. It turned out to be the most rewarding experience I had at IIT. I had 10 highly motivated students who helped in all stages of the study over a year—participant recruitment, clinical screenings, data management, you name it. They were all involved and did a fantastic job.

Together, we managed to complete a fairly complex project faster than anyone would have imagined, and I also had the rewarding experience of mentoring my students in research, clinical interviewing, leadership training, and teamwork. They won a whole string of awards for their efforts but more importantly, they appreciated the opportunity to do things that most students undertake much later in graduate school. It taught me a very important lesson: do not underestimate undergrads!

Since returning to IIT I’ve created my own psychopathology lab that consists entirely of undergraduate students and have appointed a student with an interest in clinical psychology as my lab director. As part of their tenure in my lab, all students are required to lead weekly scientific journal club discussions, help work on research proposals and IRB documents, design recruitment strategies, and screen potential research participants. Some are working on research posters they plan to present in upcoming professional conferences. Obviously, there are some tasks that students can’t do without more extensive graduate coursework. That said, my experience is that in a motivating atmosphere, and given the right training, high expectations are usually met with high performance. That is part of the focus I intend to bring to the undergraduate program.