Zoo Visitor Psychology
Social & Environmental
Real world case studies of psychology in context

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of the session:
 ✓ All students will understand that psychology concepts can be applied to real life situations
 ✓ Most students will know some ways of collecting data from zoo visitors, including qualitative and quantitative methods
 ✓ Some students will understand how Colchester Zoo uses Environmental and Social psychology in order to meet the needs of their visitors

Session Outline:
The session starts with Colchester Zoo’s mission statement, and the goal of ‘being a great visitor attraction’ is explored in detail through Social and Environmental psychology. Various peer-reviewed, published studies are used as the basis for concepts and ideas explored throughout the session. These studies illustrate the importance of visitor profiles, and we discuss how Colchester Zoo learns about our visitor through primary and secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is introduced and we discuss how we meet visitors’ deficiency needs and provide opportunities to meet growth needs. We then discuss the difficulty of measuring emotions, and the larger question of what is happiness and how to measure it. The session ends by examining zoo enclosure design, and how these design choices, through environmental psychology, can influence our visitors.

Please note, no live animals are used in this session.