

Laidlaw Scholarship- Final Reflections

Entering a room of scholars I was yet to meet, nervous, yet excited to share research proposals, and discuss expectations of the upcoming scholarship. This memory encapsulates the core of my Laidlaw experience. Sharing ideas and learning from a diverse group of others with one thing in common- potential. I subsequently reflect on how Laidlaw has shaped not only my personal development, but also my ability to be part of a wider network of leaders who make positive and sustained change.

Laidlaw facilitated my personal development in research and leadership, illuminating how my values and integrity can be at the heart of these practices. Leadership workshops helped me gain awareness of my values and understand how these can be incorporated into my work. As a psychology student, I am trained to remove myself from the equation, ensuring the work I conduct is objective. I still emphasise the importance of an objective analytic approach, however I understand that I can integrate my values (e.g., connection) into a research context. When conducting my project, I was able to connect well with both my supervisor, and the participant I was conducting a case study of. This led me to extend the research beyond the six-week programme. Our study is now published in the journal of cognitive neuroscience. It has been a privilege to contribute to the clinical literature investigating acquired prosopagnosia, and to learn how working in line with my values can facilitate research.

During my LiA, I was able to grow within a team of leaders, a group of international scholars, with different skill sets, and personalities! I was previously not confident sharing my ideas in a new group, however, led by my personal value of ambition, I advocated for extending our initial project of marketing. I suggested we could increase the impact we created by combining marketing with an outreach event. This event educated local individuals on issues faced by rural populations, and gave the NGO a larger online following, increasing the reach of our marketing materials. The NGO still has a wider follower count and continues to share the materials we curated via social media and in local events. I now realise the importance of both creating space for others to be heard, but also advocating for my ideas. Seeing this

collaborative project come to life has shown me the value of my insights alongside other peoples, as this is where a team is able to maximise their impact.

My Laidlaw experience marks a period of concentrated leadership and research development, a process which is just beginning. I am still learning to integrate my values into my work, as I embark upon a research project with service-users at a local charity. I continue to see the value in my own experience, and apply this to the wider community, as I begin a mentoring programme for young LGBTQIA+ people. I express my gratitude towards the Laidlaw Foundation for making this experience possible, and the University of York for their unwavering support.

