



Lincoln-Way District 210

News Release

From: Taryn Atwell

Date: May 2, 2017

RE: Lincoln-Way graduate examines accuracy of eyewitness testimony while pursuing psychology degree

On Tuesday, April 25, 2017, former Lincoln-Way Central student Zack King presented his research at his senior psychology research symposium at Wabash College. King invited his former AP Psychology teacher, Bobbi Pehle, to observe.

"I am always honored when students contact me to update me on their lives," says Pehle. "Teachers always hope that they impact students in positive ways. When Zack identified AP Psychology as a course that has lead him to strengthening critical thinking skills and effective communication, my heart swelled with pride."

King graduated from Lincoln-Way Central in 2013, continuing on to Wabash College. "After Mrs. Pehle's AP Psychology course, I knew I at least wanted to explore the psychology major at Wabash," he says. "After taking a Child Development course the first semester of my freshman year, I was hooked. People often underestimate the amount of empirical research that is involved in psychology and some even forget that it is a science. Studying psychology has taught me how to think critically, communicate effectively, and conduct research ethically. Thanks to Mrs. Pehle laying the groundwork, I am very proud to be graduating with a degree in psychology."

King's research investigated the inaccuracies in eyewitness testimony. He examined differences in identifying suspects in same-race lineups and lineups made up of different races. Previous research has shown that eyewitnesses have incorrectly identified suspects roughly 75 percent of the time; King's research reflected this fact. King also investigated whether the authority's implications that suspects "may have changed their appearance" impacted the eyewitness's ability to correctly identify the suspect. Conclusions from this variable showed that a greater number of inaccuracies occur when authorities suggest to the eyewitness that the suspect's appearance may have changed. King hopes that by continuing to work with his professor after graduation, he will be able to publish his findings.

"I am so proud because he plans to continue to explore these issues and hopefully change the criminal justice system to make it fair for everyone," says Pehle. She continues, "Zack, like so many of my students, walked into my classroom with a passion for learning, and I like to think that my class can be a place for students to learn about a passion not yet realized. I truly love what I do every day, and when a student comes back to say thank you is icing on the cake!"

