American Psychological Association Education Directorate

FOR TEACHERS OF INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY
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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN STRESS RESEARCH:
How Women Do It (Cope) Better

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Stress is one of the most popular topics in the college classroom and is also of great interest to students in high school, given the busy nature of contemporary adolescence. A number of recent discoveries in stress research shed new light on both the process of scientific discovery and the nature of differences between men and women. I will first briefly describe three theories in stress research that have dominated the field and then describe a relatively new theory that is generating frenetic research activity.

Stress can be defined in many different ways. Many early definitions of stress relied heavily on biological activity. Cannon (1929) viewed stress as the biological mobilization of the body for action, involving sympathetic activation and endocrine activity. Selye (1956) similarly saw stress as the activation of a host of physiological systems. Later theorists added more psychological components to the process of stress (e.g., Lazarus, 1966). The later and more psychological theories defined stress as being caused when the perceived demands on the organism exceeded the resources to meet those demands (Gurung, 2006). Although these different definitions have all been well supported, the easiest way to define stress and one that allows for subjective differences and physiological and psychological components is: stress is the upsetting of homeostasis (Cannon, 1929).

EARLY THEORIES

Walter Cannon applied the concept of homeostasis to the study of human interactions with the environment (Cannon, 1914). The basic idea is intuitive and can be remembered by a simple example. Imagine finding yourself face to face with a menacing thug who is armed and dangerous. You can probably guess what your

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PTN
PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER NETWORK

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With this issue, APA is pleased to unveil a new design for the PTN *newsletter. We hope the readers will enjoy the new format. (*PTN *design by Liz Woodcock, Graphic Designer, APA Editorial and Design Services)*

ANNOUNCING NEW PT@CC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) is delighted to welcome two new members who will join the committee beginning in 2008. **Wynn W. Call, PhD,** of Mesa Community College and **Julie Penley, PhD,** of El Paso Community College were elected to the committee in the 2007 elections.

Drs. Call and Penley will fill the positions left vacant by off-going committee members **Susan K. "Skip" Pollock, PhD,** of Mesa Community College and **Ladonna Lewis, PhD,** of Glendale Community College. The PT@CC Committee and the APA staff extend thanks and appreciation to Drs. Pollock and Lewis for their service to PT@CC and their commitment to excellence in the teaching of psychology.

APA 2008 CONVENTION

The APA annual convention will be held on August 14-17, 2008, in Boston, MA. Check the APA Web site for more details at **www.apa.org/convention**.

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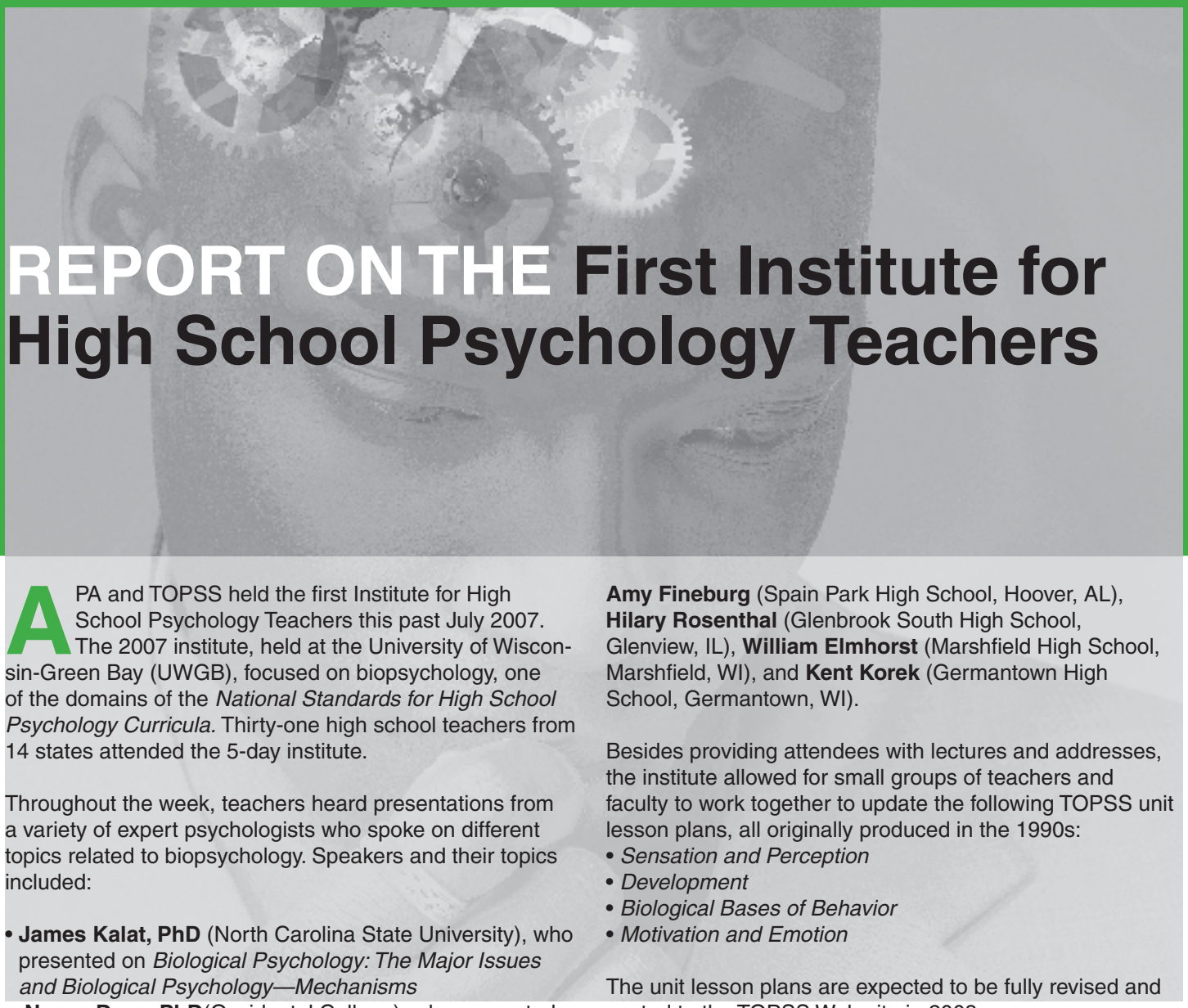

REPORT ON THE First Institute for High School Psychology Teachers

APA and TOPSS held the first Institute for High School Psychology Teachers this past July 2007. The 2007 institute, held at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (UWGB), focused on biopsychology, one of the domains of the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula.* Thirty-one high school teachers from 14 states attended the 5-day institute.

Throughout the week, teachers heard presentations from a variety of expert psychologists who spoke on different topics related to biopsychology. Speakers and their topics included:

- **James Kalat, PhD** (North Carolina State University), who presented on *Biological Psychology: The Major Issues and Biological Psychology—Mechanisms*
- **Nancy Dess, PhD**(Occidental College), who presented on *Feelings on the Tip of the Tongue: Taste, Emotion, and the Organization of Behavior*
- **DeanVonDras, PhD** (UWGB), who presented on *Aging: Promoting Awareness and Advocacy*
- **Eric Chudler, PhD** (University of Washington), who presented on *Neuroscience in the Psychology Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities* and *Neuroscience in the Psychology Classroom—Journey Into the Brain*
- **Cynthia Belar, PhD**(APA Education Directorate), who presented on *Health Psychology*
- **Regan Gurung, PhD**(UWGB), who presented on *Advances in Stress and Coping (and Why Women Do It Better)*

In addition to these biopsychology sessions, **Kristin Vespia, PhD,** and **Georjeanna Wilson-Doenges, PhD,** both of UWGB, presented special sessions on careers in psychology and environmental psychology.

Each day, four master teachers also presented on pedagogy, activities, and resources. The master teachers were: **Amy Fineburg** (Spain Park High School, Hoover, AL), **Hilary Rosenthal** (Glenbrook South High School, Glenview, IL), **William Elmhorst** (Marshfield High School, Marshfield, WI), and **Kent Korek** (Germantown High School, Germantown, WI).

Besides providing attendees with lectures and addresses, the institute allowed for small groups of teachers and faculty to work together to update the following TOPSS unit lesson plans, all originally produced in the 1990s:

- *Sensation and Perception*
- *Development*
- *Biological Bases of Behavior*
- *Motivation and Emotion*

The unit lesson plans are expected to be fully revised and posted to the TOPSS Web site in 2008.

Along with the excellent sessions and group work, highlights from the week included:

- Visits from two representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Education
- An opening dinner overlooking the bay
- A tour of Lambeau Field (complete with cheeseheads!) and a dinner at Curly's Pub
- A closing reception on the UWGB campus

PowerPoint presentations given at the Green Bay institute, photographs, and more details are posted to the TOPSS Web site.

The TOPSS Committee hopes that the 2007 institute was the first of many teaching institutes to come. Look for information about the next institute, to be held in 2009, on the TOPSS Web site and in the *PTN*. **PTN**

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body does: Your heart pumps faster, your blood pressure rises, you breathe faster, you may be a little flushed, and your palms may be sweaty. All these reactions are caused by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) that prepares the body for action. Activation of the SNS increases circulation, respiration, and metabolism, all factors that fuel your body to ready it either to fight the thug or flee, escaping as fast as you can. Voilà, the classic fight or flight response.

Lazarus saw stress as the imbalance between the demands placed on the individual and that individual's resources to cope.

Some years later, Hans Selye argued that organisms have a general way of responding to all stressors, what he called a general adaptation syndrome (GAS, Selye, 1956). When faced with a stressor, whether a wild animal, a threatening mugger, or intense cold, the body first goes into a state of alarm: hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) activation takes place, and the body attempts to cope with the stressor during a period of resistance. If the stressor persists for too long, the body breaks down in a state of exhaustion. Many acute or short-term stressors can be successfully dealt with in the resistance stage. Chronic or long-term stressors drive us to exhaustion. Chronic stressors can exert true physiological and psychological damage on human bodies (McEwen, 2002). Both of these models were primarily physiological.

Richard Lazarus (1966) devised the first psychological model of stress. Lazarus saw stress as the imbalance between the demands placed on the individual and that individual's resources to cope. He argued that the experience of stress differed significantly across individuals, depending on how they interpreted the event and the outcome of a specific sequence of thinking patterns called *appraisals.*

Lazarus suggested that we make two major types of appraisals when we face any potentially stressful event: primary and secondary. During primary appraisals, we ascertain whether the event is positive, negative, or neutral, and if negative, if it is harmful, threatening, or challenging. After we make a primary appraisal, we assess whether or not we have the necessary resources to cope with the event. During secondary appraisal, we essentially determine whether we can deal with the event and how we can cope. We may think about the social support we have, who can help us, and what exactly can be done. We are asking ourselves the question, "Do I have what it takes to cope?" The answer is critical. If our answer is no and we appraised the event as harmful and threatening and determined that we do not have the resources to cope, then we appraise the event as a stressor. If we appraised the event as a challenge and feel we have the resources to deal with it, the event remains just that, an event. All along this process there is often cognitive reappraisal taking place where we can change how we view the situation.

TEND AND BEFRIEND

Shelley Taylor and colleagues (Taylor, Gruenewald, Klein, Lewis, Gurung, & Updegraff, 2000; Taylor, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, Updegraff, & Klein, 2002) suggested that there are sex differences in stress responses and that women may tend and befriend in addition to fighting or fleeing. Taylor et al. (2000) noticed that diverse findings in the stress literature just did not go together with the fight-or-flight model. The fight or flight model assumes that men and women faced the same challenges in our evolutionary history. However, this was not true. Females have always been primary caregivers of infants due to their greater investment in giving birth (a minimum investment of 9 months for women versus minutes for men). Men have easily been able to fight or flee, but women often had to look after infants. If women fought and lost, they would leave their infant defenseless. If women ran, they would either have to leave their infant behind, or the weight of the infant would surely slow them down and lead to capture. Instead, Taylor et al. (2000) argued that women developed additional stress responses aimed to protect, calm, and quiet the child, to remove it from harm's way (i.e., tending), and to marshal resources to help. Essentially, women create social networks to provide resources and protection for themselves and their infants (i.e., befriending). The tend-and-befriend response, thus, provides more reasonable stress responses for females than the basic fight-or-flight theory. This new theory builds on the brain's attachment/caregiving system, which counteracts the metabolic activity associated with the traditional fight-or-flight stress response—increased heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels—and leads to nurturing and affiliative behavior.

Existing evidence from research with nonhuman animals, neuroendocrine studies, and human-based social psychol-

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The Psychology of GOSSIP

Frank T. McAndrew, PhD
Knox College

About 10 years ago, a few of my colleagues and I were wondering why so many people buy the supermarket tabloids that focus almost exclusively on gossip about celebrities. After all, the celebrities are strangers who have little impact on our day-to-day lives. Yet, it appears as if we cannot get enough information about them. All available historical and cross-cultural data suggest that gossip has always been an integral part of human social life, and so it seemed that the study of this ubiquitous human trait might potentially reveal a great deal about human psychology. This brief conversation inspired me to undertake a series of experiments on gossip that eventually led to several publications, dozens of interviews with the media, and invitations to speak at conferences and universities across the United States and Europe. In short, it has been great fun! I hope that by sharing some of the things I have learned about the psychology of gossip I might spark some new ideas for helping teachers engage their students with psychology.

WHAT IS GOSSIP?

Let me begin by defining exactly what I mean when I use the word "gossip," as the term gets used in a variety of different ways, sometimes interchangeably with terms like "rumors," which I think are quite different. For information to qualify as gossip, it needs to have a few key features.

1. It must be about a person, usually someone who is not present at the time the information is being discussed.
2. It must be something that is not widely known and usually something that a person might make a moral judgment about.
3. It is inherently entertaining and often irresistible.

IS GOSSIP ALWAYS A BAD THING?

No one wants to be labeled "a gossip," and our initial inclination is to describe people who gossip in a very negative way. However, research has indicated that a predisposition toward gossip is an innate, normal part of human nature. As such, it might be better to think of gossip as a social skill rather than as a character flaw, because it is only when we don't do it well that we get into trouble. Sharing intimate information with another person is a sign of trust, and being included in the gossip network is a sign of a person's acceptance by a group and a measure of that person's status in the eyes of others. Gossiping creates bonds between people and increases the cohesiveness of groups. Basically, we like people who share gossip with us, as long as we can trust them to keep information about us private.

HOW DID GOSSIP BECOME PART OF HUMAN NATURE?

Our ancestors lived their lives as members of small cooperative groups that were in competition with other small groups (Dunbar, 1996). To make matters more complicated, it was not only necessary for our ancestors to cooperate with in-group members for success against out-groups, but they also had to recognize that these same in-group members were also their main competitors when it came time to divide limited resources. Living under such conditions, our ancestors faced a number of consistent adaptive problems that were social in nature: obtaining a reproductively valuable mate and successfully managing friendships, alliances, and family relationships. The social intelligence needed for

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success in this early environment required a person to have an ability to predict and influence the behavior of others. Any process that would have provided fitness-relevant information would have been strongly selected for, and an irresistible interest in gossip would have been very handy indeed. In short, people who were fascinated by the lives of others were simply more successful than those who were not. And, it is the genes of those individuals that have come down through the ages. Like it or not, our inability to resist gossip is as much a part of who we are as is our inability to resist doughnuts or sex, and for the very same reasons.

WHY THE INTEREST IN CELEBRITIES?

Even if we can explain the intense interest that we have in other people who are socially important to us, how can we possibly explain the seemingly useless interest that we have in the lives of celebrities? One possible explanation may be found in the fact that celebrities are a recent occurrence, evolutionarily speaking. In the ancestral environment, any person about whom we knew intimate details of his or her private life was, by definition, a socially important member of the in-group. According to Barkow (1992),

> *There never was any selection pressure in favor of our distinguishing between a genuine member of our community whose actions had real effects on our lives and those of our kin and acquaintances and the images and voices with which the entertainment industry bombards us (p. 630).*

Thus, the intense familiarity with celebrities provided by the modern media trips the same gossip mechanisms that have evolved to keep up with the affairs of in-group members. After all, anyone who we see that often and know that much about must be socially important to us. This is especially true for television actors in soap operas that are seen on a daily basis. In fact, it has been documented that tabloids prefer stories about television actors who are seen regularly to movie stars who are seen less often. These famous people become familiar friends whose characters take on a life of their own (Levin & Arluke, 1987). The public's interest in these high-status members of our social world seems insatiable; circulation of tabloids and magazines such as *People* and *Us* run into the tens of millions per week. People seem to be interested in almost all aspects of celebrity lives, but unflattering stories about violations of norms or bad habits are most in demand.

In our modern world, celebrities may also serve another important social function. In a highly mobile, industrialized society, celebrities may be the only "friends" we have in common with our new neighbors and coworkers. They provide a common interest and topic of conversation between people who otherwise might not have much to say to each other, and they facilitate the types of informal social interaction that help people become comfortable in new surroundings. Hence, keeping up on the lives of actors, politicians, and athletes can make a person more socially adept during interactions with strangers.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF GOSSIP?

Researchers sometimes make a distinction between "good gossip," which serves the interests of the group rather than the interests of individuals, and "bad gossip" that is nothing more than an individual's selfish efforts to further his or her own reputation and interests at the expense of others. When used properly, "good gossip" can be a positive force in the life of a group. It can be a way of socializing newcomers into the ways of the group and an efficient way of reminding group members about the importance of the group's norms and values. It can also be an effective deterrent to deviance and a way of punishing those who flout the standards of the group. Research has confirmed that gossip that occurs in response to violations of social norms is indeed looked upon more favorably than self-serving gossip (Wilson, et al., 2000).

A colleague of mine, Charlotte DeBacker (2008) of the University of Leicester in England, has also made a distinction between strategy-learning gossip and reputation gossip. Strategy-learning gossip can be interesting no matter who it concerns because it teaches valuable lessons about how to live our own lives. For example, my students might be very interested in a story about a recent college graduate who got fired from her job because she had an affair with her boss, even if they do not personally know that individual. This occurs because the information provided by the gossip might be directly applicable to their own lives. Reputation gossip, on the other hand, is only interesting because of the information that it supplies about specific individuals. For example, hearing that my friend Larry had a drink at a party last Saturday night should only be interesting to people who already know Larry and know that he never drinks.

WHAT KIND OF GOSSIP IS MOST INTERESTING TO US?

The gossip studies that my students and I have worked on over the past decade (e.g., McAndrew & Milenkovic, 2002;

McAndrew, Bell & Garcia, 2007) have focused on "bad gossip," and more specifically, on uncovering what we are most interested in finding out about other people and what we are most likely to spread around. We have had people of all ages rank their interest in tabloid stories about celebrities, and we have asked college students to read gossip scenarios about unidentified individuals and tell us which types of people they would most like to hear such information about and who they would gossip about. We have consistently found that we are most interested in gossip about people of the same sex as ourselves who also happen to be around our own age. We have also found that information that is socially useful is always of greatest interest to us. Hence, we are most interested in information about the misfortunes and scandals of our rivals and high-status people, since this information might be exploited in social competition. Positive information about such people tends to be uninteresting to us. Conversely, positive information (good fortune, sudden elevation of status) about our friends and relatives is very interesting and likely to be used to our advantage whenever possible.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, I think that you will find that gossip is a topic that will be inherently interesting to your students and something that can be used as a springboard to discussing a variety of theoretical and methodological issues in psychology. It might be especially fun to explore how the latest social networking tools, such as *Facebook* and *MySpace,* are driven by our thirst for gossip and how these 21st century technologies enable us to sharpen the very same human tendencies that evolved around the campfires of our prehistoric ancestors so long ago.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 2004, 3.057 million high school students graduated from public and private high schools (compared with 3.176 million in 2006). Also in 2004 (the most current year for which data was available), about 726,100 seniors had taken a psychology course sometime during their 4 years in high school, or, roughly, 26% of the senior class of 2004 had some coursework in psychology on their high school transcript (NCES, 2004).

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ogy support this new theory. Neuroendocrine research shows that although women show the same immediate hormonal and sympathetic nervous system response to acute stress, other factors intervene to make fight or flight less likely in females. In terms of the fight response, while male aggression appears to be driven by hormones such as testosterone, female aggression is not. In fact, a major female hormone, oxytocin, actually counteracts the effects of stress chemicals such as cortisol and the catecholamines. Oxytocin inhibits flight and enhances relaxation, reduces fearfulness, and decreases the other stress responses typical to the fight-or-flight response. Supporting the role of oxytocin in befriending, blocking oxytocin in women actually makes them spend less time with their friends (Jamner et al., 1998).

Tending is observed in animal studies when rat pups are removed from their nest for brief periods—a stressful situation for pups and mothers—and then returned. The mothers immediately move to soothe their pups by licking, grooming, and nursing them (Meaney, 2001). Similar behaviors are seen in sheep (Kendrick et al., 1997) and monkeys (Martel et al. 1993). In humans, breastfeeding mothers are found to be calmer (Ulvas-Moberg, 1996), and mother–infant contact has been shown to soothe both the mother and infant (Field, 1999). In clear support of the theory, Repetti (1997) showed that after a stressful day on the job, men want to be left alone and often fight with their spouses and kids; women actually tended when stressed, spending more time with their kids and having more physical contact with them.

Sex differences in social support also strongly support the idea that women are more likely to develop social networks, and befriend, than men. Both studies of rodents and humans show that females prefer being with others, especially other females, when they are stressed. Males prefer to be alone. Women are much more likely than men to seek out and use social support in all types of stressful situations, including health-related concerns, relationship problems, and work-related conflicts.

Although it is still too early to say whether this new theory should be emblazoned right next to the fight-or-flight idea, the 7 years that have elapsed since its publication have seen it cited close to 400 times (a testament to its credibility). Good theories need to stand the test of time and rigorous empirical testing. A good case exists for females having a different stress response than males, but only direct tests of this theory will let us know for sure. Research is actively putting tending and befriending to the test. Stand by.

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Introductory Psychology, Then & Now

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APA Education Directorate

It is 6:00 a.m. and I awake to the sound of the coffeemaker gurgling in the kitchen. Fortunately, last night I had the foresight to prepare the coffeemaker and turn on the automatic timer that makes possible my jolt of caffeine promptly at 6:00 a.m. On my way to the kitchen I groan as I pass the bedroom window and notice that it has snowed during the night. Another 2 to 3 inches are covering the 10 inches that fell yesterday. I pour my first cup of coffee and wonder why I agreed to teach an 8:00 a.m. section of introductory psychology, especially during the worst snow months of the year, January through March. The contemplative calm of the early morning hours also inspires reflection on the fact that I have not taught an intro course for 20 years. Interesting question…how is my current introductory psychology teaching experience different from that of 1987?

An easy answer to this query for many academics is to talk about the differences in students, after all, I am teaching a new generation of psychology undergraduates whose parents could have sat in my classroom 20 years ago. Discussing how students have changed over the years is a favorite topic of the more senior members of the professoriate. One of the most famous recurring efforts in this area is the *Mindset List* (http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/2010.php) produced each year by staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin. In case you are not familiar with the *Mindset List,* it is announced yearly in August, and it describes the factors that affect the worldview of 18-year-old students entering their first year of college or university. For example, items on the 2006 list remind us that students born in 1988 have not lived in the era of the Soviet Union, of financially solvent airlines, or of carbon copies. The *Mindset List* authors contend that their yearly exercise is meant to convey a sense of the ever-changing nature of our society, but, for those of us who teach these 1988 newborns, it also conveys the distinct message that 50- and 60-something professors have perspectives on contemporary culture that may have little in common with those of their 18-year-old students. As I pour my second cup of coffee, my thoughts turn to other then-and-now differences in the introductory teaching experience, affected, but not totally determined, by the obvious differences in the student generations.

Twenty years ago I was teaching in a psychology department at a mid-sized comprehensive university. Our department appointed one faculty member to coordinate the four large-enrollment introductory psychology sections. This job involved organizing the efforts of four to eight faculty members and several teaching assistants so that the 1,200 to 1,300 students enrolled in the course during the semester experienced similarity of course content, including the assignment of a uniform textbook. The coordinator position was not highly sought after, but, fortunately, our department had a senior faculty member who was devoted to the teaching of introductory psychology. He was especially committed to the idea that the course should have intellectual integrity and be taught by the most qualified and experienced faculty members in the department. Needless to say, graduate students were not invited to apply to be instructors.

In 1987, the lecture format was, and perhaps still is, the staple of university teaching styles. I can remember the red flush of anger on the face of the senior faculty coordinator

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when I sat in his office at the beginning of the semester and announced that I was going to lecture during only two of the three class sessions held each week. My plan was to devote the third class session to a film or other demonstration on content relevant to the topic under discussion. "If you're going to show a movie every week, why do the students need you?" was his irritated response. His comment was typical of the 1987 attitude toward the use of visual aids in teaching. If you used visual presentations as part of your teaching repertoire, it was because you were too lazy and disinterested to engage in "real" teaching, meaning preparing and giving a lecture. I remember being grateful for my tenured status as I eyed his angry face. I also remember being saddened and hurt that my effort to find high-quality visual material for my introductory course, which took considerable amounts of time in 1987, was not going to be rewarded or viewed as progressive, but rather was going to be seen contemptuously as "dumbing down" the course, while I slacked off.

Let's fast forward to 2007. I am now teaching at a regional campus of a large land-grant university. My current department has many fewer faculty and students than my previous one, but there are still many sections of the introductory course each semester with 25 to 40 students enrolled in each section. There is no required commonality of content or textbook. The only uniform requirement is that the students enrolled in the introductory course participate for course credit in the research being conducted in the department. The majority of the sections of the course are taught by part-time and relatively junior faculty.

The sole use of the lecture method is viewed as regressive, and instructors are encouraged, based on feedback from student course evaluations and/or university-wide curriculum reform, to use a variety of instructional techniques. Instructor copies of introductory textbooks arrive in my office with PowerPoint presentations, CDs, DVDs, computerized demonstrations, and voluminous instructor's manuals with examples of how these materials can be integrated into the course. Our classrooms are equipped with the full range of visual display equipment coordinated through a computerized control panel that allows all formats of visual material to be projected onto a large screen. Instructional designers are available to assist in the use of instructional technology, and there is a course management program that allows a professor to establish a course Web site where she/he can administer quizzes, set up chat rooms, and post announcements and links to Web sites that expand on the content of the course. In the midst of all this technological wizardry, my recollections of 1987 and of carefully threading a reel of film through the spools of an ancient movie projector perched on a table in the center of a large lecture hall while keeping my fingers crossed that the film stayed in one piece and the projector bulb remained lit seem like events that never happened.

One thing remains constant. The introductory course is still taken by large numbers of undergraduates on all campuses in North America. It remains a popular course because students continue to be interested in psychology and are curious about what the field is all about. For many, it will be the only time in their undergraduate years that they will be exposed to psychology as an academic discipline. In a study conducted in my first department (remember we had a faculty member who made the introductory course the focus of his career), we found that only 40% of those enrolled in introductory psychology took another psychology course during their undergraduate years. For this reason, I see the attention and resources that I expend on the introductory course as, perhaps, my only opportunity to convey the excitement and relevance of psychology to a large number of future engineers, business executives, and physicists. How they may benefit from and use the course information in their future lives and careers will always remain unknown to me, so I feel a responsibility to be up to date, thoughtful, and thought-provoking in my presentation of the course content.

I notice that the clock is edging past 7:00 a.m. My early morning reflections have shifted my mood in a positive direction, and I prepare for my snowy drive to campus. As the sun rises, I have a PowerPoint to prepare and engineers to teach. **PTN**

Recent, continued from page 8

Taylor, S. E., Klein, L. C., Lewis, B., Gruenewald, T., Gurung, R. A. R., & Updegraff, J. (2000). *The female stress response: Tend and befriend not fight or flight. Psychological Review, 107,* 411-429.

Taylor, S. E., Lewis, B., Gruenwald, T., Gurung, R. A. R., Updegraff, J., & Klein, L. C. (2002). Sex Differences in biobehavioral responses to threat: Reply to Geary and Flinn. *Psychological Review, 109,* 751-753.

Uvnas-Moberg, K. (1996). Neuroendocrinology of the mother–child interaction. *Trends in Endocrinology and Metabolism, 7,* 126-131. **PTN**

Reflections on the APA/Clark University High School Teachers' Workshop

Mary Jean Voigt
Boylan High School, Rockford, IL

top Amy House and Mary Jean Voight (*l-r*) bottom Clark workshop participants collaborate on an activity.

The weather was hot, humid, and stormy, not what we expected for Worcester, MA, in midsummer. This past July, 21 psychology teachers arrived at historic Clark University to participate in the third annual 3-day APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation's (APF) Lee Gurel Fund, Clark University, and APA. On Sunday, July 8, we gathered at a local restaurant for a lovely dinner and introductions. Dr. Gurel was with us for the 3 days, citing his reason for joining with APA, APF, and Clark to sponsor the workshop: to support the teaching of high school psychology.

The participants were filled with enthusiasm and eager to absorb the latest research being conducted by Nancy Budwig, PhD, on the *History of Psychology;* Michael Addis, PhD, on *Masculinities and Human Well-Being;* and Michael Bamberg, PhD, on *Qualitative Methodology: Interviewing.* Drs. Budwig, Addis, and Bamberg are all members of the Clark University Psychology Department. Judith Miller, PhD, the associate dean for Special Academic Initiatives, presented on inquiry-based learning. Additionally, the participants were both enlightened and entertained by Keynote Speaker Dr. Charles Brewer from Furman University in Greenville, SC. Dr. Brewer offered the participants insights regarding the misbehaving life of the behaviorist John B. Watson, who was a graduate of Furman. Dr. Brewer also shared his views regarding the joys of teaching during a second keynote talk. Participants were encouraged to ask him questions, and his responses reinforced the principles around which he has modeled his career: practice, practice, and practice some more.

We began our first session on Monday, July 9, in the psychology building in a conference room that was lined with photographs of all the graduated doctoral students from Clark. The history of Clark came alive with a visit to the Clark University Archives and a tour of the psychology facilities (including a replica of G. Stanley Hall's office). The historic beginnings of psychology that teachers talk about to their students were seen first hand. Many of us could not resist having our picture taken with the life-sized bronze statue of Sigmund Freud commemorating his only visit to the United States.

Reflections, continued on page 12

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULA REVISION IN PROGRESS

The *National Standards,* first released in 1999 and revised in 2005, is undergoing its second revision for release in 2010-2012. The National Standards Working Group, charged with revising the document, met in November 2007 to discuss the revision and review feedback that was collected 2006-2007.

National Standards Working Group members are Amy Fineburg, Chair, Spain Park High School, Hoover, AL; Debra Park, West Deptford High School, Westville, NJ; Hilary Rosenthal, Glenbrook South High School, Glenview, IL; James Freeman, PhD, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; and David Myers, PhD, Hope College, Holland, MI. An Advisory Panel of 10 experts (two per each domain: Methods, Biopsychological, Development, Cognitive, and Variations in Individual and Group Behavior) has also been selected to provide input into the revision process.

The *National Standards* is a living document, and feedback is always welcome. Feedback on the second revision will continue to be solicited from APA boards, committees, and divisions over the next few years as the Working Group ensures the document best represents the science of psychology for high school curricula. The revised draft will likely be written by 2009 (approximate date), and TOPSS members also will be invited to provide feedback on the draft before it is finalized. Feedback can be submitted to the Working Group in care of the APA Education Directorate at education@apa.org or 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.

The *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* is designed to express learning goals for students and to enhance quality psychology curricula. The *National Standards* provides content outlines, performance standards, and performance indicators, which describe what high school students should learn in the high school psychology class. The document is currently available in print format and online via the APA Web site at http://www.apa.org/ed/natl-standards.html.

Reflections, continued from page 11

As high school presenters, Amy House and I offered the teachers a variety of best practices, alternate assessments, and demonstrations, including our favorite activities that reinforce key concepts outlined in the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* (APA, 2005). Dr. Miller and Amy partnered to present a session entitled *From Activity to Inquiry,* helping the participants recognize how important it is to evoke a connection between concepts and demonstrations. The new TOPSS *Social Psychology Unit Lesson Plan* was introduced with an activity supporting inquiry and thinking outside the box. It was fun to watch Drs. Gurel and Brewer try to untangle themselves from a set of strings while working as a team to demonstrate creative thinking. Cooperation versus competition was explored along with a corresponding activity.

Teachers were given two CDs with activities and content information on topics ranging from the history of psychology to social psychology, including particular Web sites that support teachers in preparing for particular content areas. We presented on the general use of technology in the classroom and had the participants share with others their personal Web sites and other Web sites they have found to be helpful. Michael Krikonis advised the participants of their ability to connect with Clark's Blackboard site so that all the participants can remain in contact with one another.

The evenings were spent with lovely dinners and gatherings to discuss and share more information, especially the benefits of being a TOPSS member. Both Drs. Brewer and Gurel stayed in the dormitory and joined in our evening sharing sessions. Teachers were engaging and willing to share many of their own best practices. By the end of the workshop, the participants were filled with an abundance of ideas, and each echoed how happy they were to have participated in this experience. Dr. Gurel was applauded and recognized for his wonderful contribution to the enhancement of teaching of high school psychology.

Look for details about the 2008 APA/Clark University Workshop on page 20 and on the TOPSS Web site at http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/conf_wkshop.html. **PTN**

Meet the 2007 TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS

In Spring 2007, **Michael McLane** of Sterling Heights High School, Sterling Heights, MI; **Jacquelynn Norman** of San Marcos High School, San Marcos, TX; and **Susan Spencer** of Arthur L. Johnson High School, Clark, NJ, were selected as the 2007 APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award winners. McLane, Norman, and Spencer were each awarded a framed certificate, an engraved Jefferson Cup, a complimentary TOPSS membership for the 2008 membership year, and a cash prize. They also received the *ActivePsych* CD series, donated by Worth Publishers. The TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes outstanding high school psychology teachers. (See page 23 for the 2008 call for nominations.)

TOPSS Member-at-Large Marie Smith, PhD (MS), conducted the following interviews with the 2007 TOPSS Teaching Award winners.

1 MICHAEL MCLANE (MM)
STERLING HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL, STERLING HEIGHTS, MI

MS: Tell us a little about yourself: your background, how you got into teaching. How long have you been teaching high school psychology?
MM: I graduated from Eastern Michigan University and went back to the high school I graduated from, where I have been teaching for the last 9 years. I wanted to be a high school teacher because I wanted to help students make the most of opportunities that await them after high school. In addition to Psychology 1, I implemented AP psychology and wrote a course called Transitional Psychology, which covers the transitional period of adolescence.

MS: What advice do you have for new psychology teachers?
MM: When I first started teaching psychology, I knew the material, but did not know the material. In other words, I knew the content of psychology, but sometimes in a way that only I understood. When a student did not understand something and asked me to explain it again, I could not offer any other explanations. In retrospect, those situations actually gave me a chance to search for different explanations, which led to finding new and more innovative ways of teaching psychology. Sometimes those awkward moments of silence and staring at confused faces led to my best examples for teaching a new concept.

MS: As a veteran teacher, what have you learned that you'd like to share with PTN readers?
MM: Through networking, I have realized the many different ways to explain psychology. There are so many good and experienced psychology teachers willing to share their teaching methods that it is nothing but advantageous to include their techniques in your curriculum. Networking with other psychology teachers has led to expanding the content and delivery of my curriculum, which has helped me become a better teacher.

MS: What has been the most rewarding experience you have had as a teacher?
MM: The most rewarding experiences have always been centered on students' saying that the material has helped them with a problem or a situation. I want my students to

Meet, continued on page 14

Meet, continued from page 13

understand the material, but I also want them to be able to use the material to better their lives.

2 JACQUELYNN NORMAN (JN)
SAN MARCOS HIGH SCHOOL, SAN MARCOS, TX

MS: Tell us a little about yourself: your background, how you got into teaching. How long have you been teaching high school psychology?
JN: Thirty years ago, with a great deal of enthusiasm, I became an educator. My favorite high school English teacher wrote a letter of encouragement giving me the key to the kingdom: "The most important thing is to love your students." For the past 20 years, I've taught psychology along with all the required social sciences. Currently, I am fortunate to teach AP psychology and economics in the beautiful new San Marcos High School.

MS: What advice do you have for new psychology teachers?
JN: Besides joining TOPSS, new teachers should initiate a relationship with the psychology department of the nearest university. University professors and psychology majors are great resources for teaching materials, guest speakers, and student field trips. Create a psychology club and assign your very creative officers to establish communication with the leaders of Psi Chi or other psychology organizations. In a perfect scenario, your club officers will do all the legwork (and paperwork) required for a trip to sit in on a college psychology class.

MS: As a veteran teacher, what have you learned that you'd like to share with PTN readers?
JN: The most important thing I have learned is that students will learn more effectively if they are provided an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge to their peers. My psychology students create several group media assignments, a personality research paper, review games, and a final multimedia project to be presented to the class. They also conduct experiments and demonstrations during a school-wide Psychology Awareness Week. A psychology fair of some sort is an excellent way to increase enrollment in psychology courses. All of the extra effort on the teacher's part to create the assignments or organize the psychology fair has a big payoff—you would be amazed at how much you can learn from your students.

MS: What is the most rewarding experience you have had as a teacher?
JN: By now the list is long. (It should be!) A sentimental favorite is when Kendall Hollis (Rice University, Class of 2010) selected me as his most inspirational high school teacher at the 2006 Distinguished Scholars and Educators banquet. Kendall is a National Merit Finalist and an American Red Cross Hero for saving his mother's life. He is currently on full scholarship at Rice, probably working on a design to save the baby boomers from the pains of aging or some other noble scientific cause. Kendall recommended me for the TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award, and I couldn't have been more proud. It is always rewarding to learn that a high school student has been deeply inspired by your instruction, your wisdom, or your patient smile.

3 SUSAN SPENCER (SS)
ARTHUR L. JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL, CLARK, NJ

MS: Tell us a little about yourself: your background, how you got into teaching. How long have you been teaching high school psychology?
SS: I have been teaching psychology for 9 years; this September will be my 10th! Originally, I majored in psychology as an undergraduate at Princeton, but decided after graduation that I would like to work with adolescent-aged kids in the classroom as a teacher, so I enrolled in a teacher prep master's program (MAT) at Smith College. While I was unsure at the time that I would always be a teacher or work in education, I knew I wanted to work with kids that age and that teaching them would give me an opportunity to become more familiar with them as a population. Once I started teaching, though, I found that I loved it because it allowed me to work professionally with adolescents and continue to work in the field of psychology. I was lucky to find a position that wanted someone who could teach both social studies and psychology—both of which I was certified to do because of my combined undergraduate-graduate school experiences. Originally, my teaching assignment was half psychology and half sociology, but I noticed after a couple of years that there were several students who really wanted to take their psychology studies to the next level, so I proposed that our school begin an AP psychology course. The following year, our school had one section of 21 seniors; now we have two full sections of 25 seniors (I teach in a small school and there are only about 220 kids in each graduating class). These numbers, combined with the five sections of general psychology I teach each year, indicate that almost all students have taken some sort of psychology class before graduating—and that I have gotten to know almost every kid in the school.

MS: What advice do you have for new psychology teachers?
SS: For new psychology teachers—or any teachers—get to know yourself first and develop teaching styles that allow you to be comfortable in the classroom. Many mentor teachers and prep programs latch on to one "right" way to teach kids, and while this may work for some, it's not a match for all teachers. People have different strengths—some are excellent lecturers, some are good facilitators, etc. Once I stopped trying to teach the way that others told me and started being myself, I became much more successful in reaching the kids and getting them to embrace learning.

MS: As a veteran teacher, what have you learned that you'd like to share with PTN readers?
SS: Never stop enrolling in classes and/or participating in professional development experiences. These are great ways to network with other teachers while keeping up with the latest trends in the field. I have been an AP reader, a PRAXIS reader, an NBPTS assessor, and a graduate student (attaining my supervisor's license this past spring and working on my doctorate presently). These are just some experiences that have allowed me to meet other psychology and social studies teachers, share ideas and resources, and also be reminded of what it's like to be a student. This has helped me to keep a much better perspective as a teacher and relate better to my students. Also, advising/coaching extracurriculars is a great way to really connect with students as people, making them much more receptive as learners in an academic setting.

MS: What is the most rewarding experience you have had as a teacher?
SS: This is a tough question! I would have to say the answer is having many of my psychology or history students come back during or after college to tell me that they remember/use what they learned in my class, or that they have decided to go into psychology or teaching because they enjoyed my class so much. **PTN**

ANNOUNCING THE 2008 TEACHING TIPS CONTEST FOR PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites you to participate in the fourth annual Teaching Tips Contest! Sponsored by the APA Education Directorate and PT@CC, the Teaching Tips Contest aims to encourage sharing of instructional techniques that community college faculty have developed and used in psychology classes.

Community college instructors are invited to submit an original demonstration, an individual or group class activity, an interactive teaching/learning module, or other pedagogy designed to illustrate a psychological concept or theory. Preference will be given to active-learning approaches.

The competition is open to psychology teachers who are members of PT@CC. Faculty members interested in joining PT@CC can obtain more information on the Web or by contacting Martha Boenau at 1-800-374-2721, ext. 6140 (e-mail: Mboenau@apa.org). An award of $400 will be given to the first-place winner, $300 to the second-place winner, $200 to the third-place winner, and $50 each to two honorable mention winners. Certificates for all winners will be presented by PT@CC at the APA annual convention.

Look for the new format for submissions on the PT@CC Web site (www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html). Submissions may be mailed to Martha Boenau (APA Education Directorate, 750 First St, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242, or sent via e-mail). Entries must be postmarked by **May 1, 2008.**

SPOTLIGHT

A Significant Moment in Teaching

M. Liz Wright
The Victoria College, Victoria, TX

As a faculty member at a small community college, I rarely am able to offer a social psychology course—there simply are not enough majors to fill a class. In the fall of 2006, I was blessed with a social psychology class of 14 students. Over the course of the semester, the students created a true community atmosphere. For this reason, I felt the need to give them closure experiences at the end of the course. I asked them to write their thoughts about who in the class influenced them and why. When they were finished writing, I was not sure how to begin a discussion of the topic, and I expected it to be a rather superficial discussion (due to avoiding closure).

As I began, Michelle, an older student, said forcefully, "Damien pissed me off the other day." Damien, a 20-something student who wanted to counsel teens away from the gang violence that he had experienced, sat quietly and listened. My heart sank, and I readied myself to intervene as she continued.

"As you guys know, we had $600,000 stolen from us by our accountant. The lawyers froze our accounts as they tried to figure it all out. Damien said he stole a shirt from a store and didn't care because they had a lot of money." She told Damien that she thought he was better than that, that she thought he could accomplish great things, and that she would always be there for him because he had become like a son to her. As their "moment" ended, there was not a dry eye in that classroom.

While others made their statements about who had influenced them, none were as powerful as Michelle's. In her journal, Michelle thanked me for creating a classroom atmosphere that promoted community and for giving her the skills she needed to confront Damien's behavior.

That group of social psychology class students still has lunch together every other week. They also work together to cope with their school, family, and social problems. They have continued their friendships, and I am amazed at the connections I helped them make.

How many lives have you touched? Do you recall an important moment in the classroom that reminded you why you teach? Share your story about a significant moment in teaching! If you have a story to share (250 to 300 words), we would like to include it in the Psychology Teacher Network. *Please send your submissions to Martha Boenau (Mboenau@apa.org). We look forward to hearing from you!* **PTN**

ACTIVITY

CLUBBING IN CLASS: Book Clubs in Psychology Courses

Debra Mashek, PhD
Harvey Mudd College

I didn't prepare a stitch of material for yesterday's class. In fact, I arrived to class carrying nothing more than an empty manila folder and a full mug of coffee. When I walked into the room, students were already gathered in groups of three. Conversational din filled the large space, furnished with a multitude of overstuffed couches arranged in small pods. As I meandered about the room sipping coffee, I greeted the various groups and then passively listened in on their proceedings. Here's what I witnessed: All 36 students in the class were engaged in deep and nuanced discussions, and their voices were filled with excitement and curiosity as they wove together ideas from the class with observations from their other classes, current events, and their personal lives. These conversations continued for a full 75 minutes. In spite of my seeming negligence in preparing material for the day, the class session was a decided success. How can this be?

My course development efforts are driven by a desire to create communities of learners in which each individual is engaged in the processes of teaching and learning. Ideally, the individuals who comprise these communities exercise agency in selecting both what they learn and how they learn it. It is in service to these goals that I developed a book club component for my psychology courses. Class sessions like the one described above testify to the ability of these book clubs to create collaborative engagement with psychological theory and topics.

BOOK CLUB ORGANIZATION

During the first week of the semester, I circulate lists of nonfiction books written by psychologists and other informed authors for nonexpert audiences. When constructing these lists, I preference books with a clear empirical bent and attempt to put forth authors representing diversity in terms of ideology, gender, race, etc. Students then select a book of interest by signing up on sheets posted outside my office door. Although groups are limited to three people, multiple groups could potentially read the same book.

Students participate in two different book clubs over the course of a semester. In a moment void of creativity, I opted to name these "Book Club A" and "Book Club B." Book Club A meets three times during the first half of the semester, and Book Club B meets three times during the second half of the semester. Membership need not remain stable across the two book clubs; in fact, I tell students it is more important to organize around a topic of interest than to organize around peer interests.

Once the membership of a particular group is set, the members collectively decide on the reading assignments for each discussion session (e.g., "We'll read the first 5 of the 15 chapters for the first discussion."). The group then submits to me a contract detailing the reading assignments and indicating which group member will facilitate each of the three sessions (each person is required to facilitate one discussion).

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Clubbing, continued from page 17

FACILITATING DISCUSSION

The facilitator for a given discussion period is responsible for preparing a written facilitation plan detailing how she or he will structure the group's class time. I provide a small number of requirements for these discussion plans in the course syllabus.

First, facilitation plans need to include at least five discussion questions appropriately formatted to promote deep discussion, noting that, on average, each question will need to produce about 15 minutes of discourse. To prepare facilitators to meet this charge, we spend class time prior to the first book club meeting identifying attributes of effective and ineffective discussion questions.

Second, facilitation plans must also include at least one activity to promote experiential engagement with ideas from the book. For example, a student facilitating a discussion of Richard Nisbett's book *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently … and Why* brought to class line drawings of two nearly identical park scenes. The facilitator invited group members to compare the two images and to point out any differences. This brief activity demonstrated to students, all of whom were North American, their tendency to focus on individual people and objects in the foreground of the scene as opposed to broader contextual information. The facilitator used this activity as a spring board to discuss Nisbett's assertion that, compared to Westerners, Easterners tend to be more tuned in to environmental context when viewing the world.

Third, to encourage students to connect ideas from class to "the real world," facilitation plans must integrate at least one source beyond those provided in class (e.g., a newspaper article, a movie trailer, a clip from youtube.com). For example, the facilitator of a discussion about Ed Deci's book *Why We Do What We Do: Understanding Self-Motivation* brought in magazine articles describing strategies for disciplining young children. He asked the group to critique the suggested strategies in light of Deci's arguments concerning autonomy-supportive parenting.

At the end of the class session, facilitators give their written facilitation plans to me (hence the need for the empty manila folder). I then evaluate these facilitation plans and award points based on whether they meet the requirements described above.

EVALUATING PARTICIPATION

If the facilitators held the sole responsibility for making sure any given discussion was a success, I suspect some other students might not bother to read the book or engage fully in the discussion. Two strategies are in place to minimize this possibility. First, beginning on the first day of class, I emphasize that group members who are not facilitating a particular discussion are expected to come prepared with their own insights, questions, and enthusiasm. I hype the experience by framing it as an opportunity to get together with really smart peers who are equally interested in a fascinating psychological topic.

Second, after each discussion section, all group members evaluate each other's contributions to the group. Specifically, each person answers the following question about the group facilitator: "Based on the general guidelines provided for group facilitators and your own understanding of what it means to be a good facilitator, what percentage grade would you assign today's group facilitator?" And, each person answers the following question about the remaining group members: "Based on the general guidelines provided for group members and your own understanding of what it means to be a good group member, what percentage grade would you assign this person's contribution to the discussion?"

Ultimately, participation in each book club counts 10% toward the final course grade. These points come from my evaluation of the student's facilitation plan (4 points), peer ratings of this student's performance as a facilitator of one discussion session (2 points), and peer ratings of this student's performance as a regular group member during the other two discussion sessions (4 points).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is worth noting a set of drawbacks and cautions to other instructors considering implementing book clubs in their own courses. First, book clubs take substantial class time. In fact, in my one-semester courses, which meet a total of 30 times, six entire class sessions are devoted to book clubs. My commitment to these book clubs has necessitated cuts in content coverage. That said, book clubs could easily be adapted to span fewer class sessions. Rather than hosting two book clubs, with each meeting three times, I can imagine including just one book club or having each book club gather for just two discussions.

Clubbing, continued on page 22

Assessing Student Success in Introductory Psychology

Robin Hailstorks, PhD
APA Education Directorate

Can the introductory psychology course be used to bolster student success in college? The answer to this question will depend on how you define and assess student success.

Recently, there has been an interesting debate in higher education about the need to improve student success in college, given the record number of students enrolled in college today and their overall performance on standard measures of academic achievement. Yet, it has been difficult for educators to agree on exactly what constitutes success and on how we might assess student success across different institutional contexts (e.g., community colleges versus 4-year institutions). While they may also assess other indicators of student success, transfer and graduation rates are the top two indicators of success used by most colleges and universities.

For high school and community college teachers, there are several other measures of student success that don't get captured in data collected by their educational institutions or by state Departments of Education. For example, improved test performance or writing skills or the quality of oral presentation of concepts are just a few measures of success that standard measures of student success do not capture. Veteran high school and community college teachers know that there are multiple ways to measure students' success and that the introductory psychology course is a wonderful vehicle for assessing students' knowledge, skills, and values in general.

We live in an era of increasing emphasis on accountability in K-12 and in higher education. However, the instruments of accountability have remained narrow and traditional in their format and scope. For high school psychology teachers, the threats posed by No Child Left Behind are real and are felt on a regular basis. In fact, the teaching of introductory psychology courses in high school is under siege in several regions of the country because of this policy, and, therefore, affects how resources are allocated in the high school curriculum. Despite these external forces surrounding accountability issues in secondary school, high school psychology teachers continue to demonstrate how their courses in introductory psychology can be used to assess student learning and success. Moreover, the course content in introductory psychology in and of itself is quite useful for improving student retention and learning.

The adverse impact of the No Child Left Behind era of American Education and its subsequent policies regarding accountability may be even greater for community college teachers. Community colleges represent almost half of the undergraduate institutions of higher learning in this country (AACC, 2006). Yet, we know very little about how to measure student success in these institutions. The traditional measures of student success simply do not capture the multiple pathways to success afforded by these institutions. A senior-level official from the U.S. Department of Education and members representing disciplinary societies confirmed this point in a recent meeting. On the one hand, the U.S. Department of Education, politicians, and other stakeholders are demanding greater accountability. On the other hand, there are no standard guidelines for measuring success at 2-year institutions.

Since enrollment in introductory psychology courses at the high school and community college levels has steadily increased during the past few years, it occurred to me that this might be an excellent opportunity for teachers who teach introductory psychology at these levels to demonstrate how they define and measure student success in their courses. It also occurred to me that these measures of student success could be shared with not only teachers of psychology, but also with teachers in high school and community colleges in general. Moreover, these measures could possibly inform course assessment and program

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2008 APA/CLARK UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

The fourth annual APA/Clark University Workshop will be held on July 21-23, 2008, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. (At press time, these were the tentative workshop dates. Please check online for the confirmed dates.) All interested high school psychology teachers are invited to apply to attend this 3-day workshop. Workshop facilitators will include Clark University psychology professors and high school teachers from APA TOPSS. Housing in the Clark campus dorms and materials will be provided for all participants. Participants will also receive travel stipends of $100. Application forms and additional information about the 2008 workshop are available online at http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/conf_wkshop.html. The application deadline is **APRIL 15, 2008.**

This workshop is sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation Lee Gurel Fund and Clark University. Please contact Emily Leary at eleary@apa.org or (202) 572-3013 if you have any questions.

ANNOUNCING THE 2008 APA PT@CC ELECTRONIC PROJECT CONTEST

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites your students to participate in the fifth annual APA PT@CC Electronic Project Contest! Supported by funding by the APA Education Directorate and Allyn & Bacon Publishing Co., the Electronic Project recognizes innovative and high-quality electronic presentations.

The Electronic Project Contest aims to promote active learning by means of electronic presentations developed by psychology students in either of the following categories:

- presentations designed as demonstrations or teaching modules that illustrate and explain a psychological concept, theory, or research discovery; or
- presentations that illustrate and explain a service-learning experience or other application of psychology in the community.

Entries should be developed primarily by students and designed to explain the concept, research, or application to a 2-year college student audience. It may be helpful to think of these presentations as computerized teaching/learning modules or electronic poster presentations. Nearly any class project that can be put into a PowerPoint or similar electronic format will be acceptable.

The competition is open to students currently enrolled at a community college or other 2-year school. Students are eligible for the contest if they have not previously completed a bachelor's degree. Faculty sponsors must be members of the APA Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC). If you have students who might be interested in entering, tell them about this opportunity and urge them to begin work immediately on their presentations. The entry deadline is **APRIL 28, 2008.**

The first-place winner will be awarded $500; second- and third-place winners will receive $300 and $200, respectively. Certificates for all winners and their faculty sponsors will be presented at the APA annual convention.

Look for the contest entry form and guidelines about the 2008 Electronic Project Contest on the Web at www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html. For more information about this competition or PT@CC, please contact Jewel Beamon (JBeamon@apa.org).

Update on the STP Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP)

OTRP, operating under the auspices of the Society for Teaching of Psychology (STP, APA's Division 2), offers five primary categories of service for teachers of psychology from universities through secondary schools. These resources are free to anyone with access to the Internet. In this article I briefly describe each service and how it may be of use to you. In addition I invite you to contribute your resources and talents to add to those already available. I hope you will also tell your colleagues about the services.

OTRP's Online Document Library is a collection of miscellaneous documents posted online that teachers find useful not only for course preparation but also for our other duties and interactions with students. For example, OTRP documents include a lab manual for introductory psychology; introductory psychology text comparisons; activities for the first and last days of class; activities for college-high school partnerships; film study guides; informational resources on incorporating genocide, ethnopolitical conflict, and human-rights issues into the curriculum; and annotated bibliographies on topics such as psychology and law, internationalizing the curriculum, diversity, and multicultural psychology.

Other documents cover advising issues: assisting undergraduate majors with graduate school planning, advising students about the PsyD degree, and writing letters of recommendation. Some deal with research-related activities, such as instructions to make posters with presentation software or sensitizing students to research fraud. Another discusses ethical issues in teaching. If you have created documents on topics that you think a teaching audience would find valuable, I encourage you to submit them. As the director of OTRP, I am the point of contact for these submissions, ruault@davidson.edu.

We engage in a peer-review process prior to accepting any document for posting. In this way, STP attempts to encourage teaching as scholarship and to provide an endorsement of such work to heighten its value at the local level. Authors retain copyright of their work but assign publication rights to OTRP for a 4-year initial period. After that, OTRP may continue to post it, at our discretion, until authors contact us and ask us to withdraw it.

Project Syllabus, a special section of the online library, is an online syllabus collection covering a wide variety of course topics, including introductory psychology, cognitive psychology, research methods, history of psychology, health psychology, psychological testing, psychology of adjustment, personality, physiological psychology, psychology of peace, teaching of psychology, human sexuality, and others. As with other documents, syllabi are peer-reviewed. Although the review does not impose uniformity on the syllabi, it does guarantee a certain level of quality. To guide syllabus development, Jeanne Slattery and Janet Carlson have listed pointers for preparing exemplary syllabi (see <http://www.lemoyne.edu/OTRP/syllabi/exemplary_syllabi.pdf >). These pointers form the basis of the review criteria. Not only are you welcome to search the site for syllabi that may pertain to your teaching load, but you are welcome to submit your syllabi for review and possible posting. That way these excellent resources can reach a broader audience. Copyright procedures are the same as for the other online documents. Send syllabi to the service director, Sue Frantz, at sfrantz@highline.edu.

The Mentoring Service, listing faculty who have agreed to correspond with anyone seeking teaching advice, is organized by the content expertise areas of those faculty members. It is most useful for faculty teaching at schools that have no formal mentoring program, but it can also be quite useful for individuals who do not want to share a particular concern with anyone from their own institution or who have no appropriate contact at their own institution. I hope you will consider joining the list of mentors and use the list whenever you have need of a mentor. Drew Appleby (dappleby@iupui.edu) is in charge of this OTRP function.

The Departmental Consulting Service is a joint undertaking of STP and APA's Board of Educational Affairs (BEA). Any psychology department or program that seeks recommendations of individuals who are experienced program reviewers can request those names after indicating on a brief form what criteria are most important to the department (e.g., the reviewer's being from a public or private school or a comparably sized institution or having a particular area of expertise). Although consultants do not deal

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with problems concerning individual faculty members, they can address general personnel issues such as ways a department can promote faculty development. Programs are expected to compensate reviewers in the standard ways (travel, honorarium) and do their own negotiations concerning the specifics of what they want reviewers to do. Having a vetted list of possible reviewers can be a big help to starting the process. If you are interested in becoming a reviewer or want to use the service, I invite you to contact STP's service coordinator, Tracy Zinn (zinnte@jmu.edu), or BEA's Martha Boenau (mboenau@apa.org).

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to STP-provided funding opportunities to develop instructional resources. Each year we issue a call for proposals and award up to five Instructional Resource awards. These awards help faculty complete substantive projects that yield resources appropriate for distribution by OTRP, and the award-winning documents are identified as such at OTRP-Online. The annual submission deadline occurs around February 1, but you can contact the chair, Andrew Johnson (andrew.johnson@park.edu), of the committee that evaluates proposals, anytime. Application forms are posted at OTRP-Online, and we try to publish a call for proposals in the *Monitor on Psychology* in the fall. Applicants do not need to be members of STP, although we would be happy to have you join us.

General Contact Information
Ruth L. Ault
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(704) 894-2885

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Second, at least at first, it wasn't easy to turn over control of these class sessions to the students. I worried the students wouldn't offer intellectual challenge to their peers; I worried they wouldn't take seriously the facilitator role; I worried the groups would spend their time gossiping about the weekend's parties instead of focusing on the books. I'm pleased to say that, at least thus far, these worries have been unfounded.

Third, I've found it challenging to select appropriate book club material. I haven't been able to read all the books that appear on my lists, so there's a leap of faith in selecting the books. Feedback from my disciplinary colleagues and prior students has been invaluable as I cull the lists, but I imagine they nevertheless still contain a few as-yet-undiscovered duds. Moreover, it's been surprisingly difficult to identify books that represent the diversity of those people who "do" psychology.

Overall, however, I've been pleased with the ways the book clubs have supported my goals of creating communities of learners with agency in selecting both what they learn and how they learn it. The students report an appreciation for the opportunity to explore topics of interest in a more meaningful way than would typically be possible in a survey course. Personally, I appreciate the ways in which the book clubs invite students to take ownership of their own learning, while also decentralizing my role in the classroom. To boot, all this happens as students sip coffee, kick off their shoes, and sprawl across the comfy couches. If only all my days in the classroom could feel so relaxed and rewarding! **PTN**

NEW TOPSS COMMITTEE OFFICERS ELECTED

Congratulations to the newly elected TOPSS Committee Officers: Chair-Elect **William Elmhorst** of Marshfield High School, Marshfield, WI; Member-at-Large **Marie Smith, PhD,** of Thomas S. Wootton High School, Rockville, MD; and Membership Coordinator **Bill James** of Milford High School, Highland, MI. The TOPSS Committee also is pleased to announce that **Diane Halpern, PhD,** of Claremont McKenna College has been appointed to serve as the TOPSS Faculty Representative. Elmhorst, Smith, James, and Halpern begin their new positions on January 1, 2008.

The TOPSS Committee thanks **Mary Jean Voigt** (Past-Chair) of Boylan High School, Rockford, IL, and **Loretta Neal McGregor, PhD** (TOPSS Faculty Representative), of Arkansas State University for their service on the TOPSS Committee. Voigt and McGregor will complete their elected terms in December 2007.

2008 APA TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The purpose of the APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award is to recognize outstanding teachers in psychology. There will be up to three awards annually. Teachers of high school psychology who are self-nominated or nominated by a colleague, supervisor, student, or administrator are eligible.

AWARD

Winners will receive a framed certificate, award, cash prize of $300, *ActivePsych* CD series, and a free TOPSS membership or renewal for the 2009 membership year. The *ActivePsych* CD series has been generously donated by Worth Publishers.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Teachers are asked to provide the following:

1. A letter of reference from a former student, colleague, or supervisor
    a. Student letter will focus on the teacher's commitment to academic excellence.
    b. Colleague or supervisor letter will focus on a teacher's commitment to professional excellence.
2. A content outline for a lesson plan designed for a topic in psychology
    a. The outline must contain appropriate content and be accurate.
    b. The outline must be correlated to the *National Standards.*
3. Example(s) of activities, demonstrations, or programs related to the outline or topic
    a. Example(s) must be appropriate for the student population.
    b. Example(s) must be effective and involve active learning experiences for students.
    c. Example(s) must be aligned with the content in the outline for a lesson plan.
4. A statement of roles and initiatives that demonstrate and/or promote professional development activities and provide leadership for others in the field
5. A CV or resume

JUDGING CRITERIA

Submissions will be evaluated using the rubric posted on the TOPSS Web site (http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/). The award committee is appointed by the TOPSS chair and will include no fewer than three members. Incomplete submissions will not be considered. The committee reserves the right to not confer an award if submissions do not meet minimum requirements.

TIMELINE

All supporting materials must be postmarked by **MARCH 14, 2008.** Electronic submissions on CD are welcomed. Please submit materials to Jewel Beamon, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.

The winners will be announced in the *Psychology Teacher Network* newsletter.

A nomination form is available at the TOPSS Web site. For additional information, please contact Jewel Beamon at (202) 336-6076 or jbeamon@apa.org.

CONTEST

The APA TOPSS Scholars Essay Competition Is On!

The APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is pleased to announce the topic for the 2008 APA TOPSS Scholars Essay Competition. Each of the three winners will receive a $500 award. Submissions must be postmarked by March 3, 2008. For rules and scoring rubric, visit http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/topsscholar08.html.

2008 ESSAY TOPIC

Popular movies depicting individuals with psychological disorders have earned awards and acclaim for their portrayal of people living with the disorders. While some in the psychology community applaud efforts to depict people with psychological disorders in popular media, others are concerned that the portrayals do not accurately reflect the true struggles and triumphs of these people and their families.

What is your assessment of the portrayal of psychological disorders in motion pictures?

This essay competition requires you to conduct research to determine how accurately motion pictures depict the lives of persons living with one of three disorders listed below. You will also have an opportunity to use social psychological concepts to explain how the general public perceives abnormal behavior.

Students are asked to address the following four sections in an essay that must be 3,000 words or fewer. Essays must be written according to APA style.

Part I—Salient Characteristics of Psychological Disorders
Choose one psychological disorder listed below and use the DSM-IV-TR to summarize the salient characteristics of this disorder. Conduct a literature review of at least three peer-reviewed journal articles that discuss this disorder and synthesize the findings of these articles.

Next, describe the salient features of the disorder that may be portrayed by the media. Additionally, list one common misconception of the disorder that may be held by the general public.

Disorders (choose one)
- obsessive-compulsive disorder
- schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder

Part II—Motion Picture Analysis
Choose and watch one of the movies listed below that depicts the psychological disorder you described in the previous section of your essay (Part I). Using the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for the disorder and any relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, discuss whether the movie accurately portrays the symptoms of the disorder. Cite at least two specific examples that support your argument for whether the movie portrays the disorder accurately. This section should be no more than 500 words.

Movies
- *As Good as It Gets* (1997), rated PG-13 (obsessive-compulsive disorder)
- *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), rated PG-13 (schizophrenia)
- *The Mosquito Coast* (1986), rated PG (bipolar disorder)

Part III—Application to Social Psychological Concepts
Define and then use two of the following social psychological concepts to explain how (mis)portrayal of abnormal behavior can have negative consequences for individuals and society at large:
- stereotyping and prejudice
- first impressions
- self-fulfilling prophecy
- attribution errors
- confirmation bias

Part IV—Conclusion
Briefly summarize your findings in 300 words or fewer. Your conclusion should include, but not be limited to, an assessment of how abnormal behavior is portrayed in the popular media and in the film you watched and what the overall social implications are of labeling individuals living with psychological disorders.

Submission deadline is **MARCH 3, 2008.**
Papers should be sent to:
APA TOPSS Scholar Competition
Attn.: Jewel Beamon, Education Directorate
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242

Questions? Contact Jewel Beamon at jbeamon@apa.org or (202) 336-6076. **PTN**

HELP NEEDED FOR NSF PROJECT: SEEKING COMMUNITY COLLEGE PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY AND THEIR STUDENTS

Please consider helping with an NSF project designed to support community college psychology faculty in their efforts to teach psychology as a science. The project needs you and your introductory psychology course students to serve as baseline controls for evaluation of the project.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR TIME WOULD BE INVOLVED?

The time commitment is the same for you and your students: about 15 minutes at the end of the present term.

WHAT'S THE NSF PROJECT ABOUT?

The goal of the "Tried & True: Investigative Psychophysiology Activities in Your Introductory Psychology Course" is to help community college teachers help their students think critically—in other words to think more like psychologists. We want to:

- design activities that engage students in tasks that require them to use scientific reasoning while they acquire knowledge of psychology and
- develop students' critical thinking skills so they can become savvy consumers of research.

We realize that relatively few students will become scientists, but they all need to understand the scientific process and fundamental principles of scientific inquiry. This project contributes to efforts to improve America's scientific and technological infrastructure.

HOW WILL IT BE HELPFUL?

The project will share educational materials and processes developed for interactive investigative psychophysiology activities for introductory psychology. These educational materials and processes are being shared in national workshops for selected teachers from community colleges across America.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN SERVING AS A BASELINE CONTROL FOR THE PROGRAM EVALUATION?

Before you make a commitment to help us with this project, we will send you an Information Statement and Informed Consent Form for your consideration. If after you've read the information you are willing to help, you would sign the form and return it to us. Your students would also be given information about the project and asked to indicate their consent to participate.

HOW WOULD YOUR STUDENTS AND YOU BE INVOLVED?

We would send an e-mail to you with a link to forms that are on the Internet. You would simply forward that e-mail to your students. You and they would click on the link to open the form and make all responses by computer. A click on "OK" would forward your responses to the project.

WHAT BENEFIT WOULD THERE BE TO ME AND MY STUDENTS?

For your own use, at the conclusion of the project, we would be pleased to send you all the materials for teaching psychology as a science that are developed in the project. We believe that you will find these materials useful in designing class activities and lesson plans.

Reply to howard-bob-NSF@stolaf.edu if you would be willing to consider helping, and would like more information.

Howard Thorsheim (St. Olaf College) and
Robert Gephart (Itasca Community College)
Co-Principal Investigators, NSF Grant DUE-618573

Assessing, continued from page 19

assessment plans that are on-going nationally in these types of institutions.

As school districts and state Departments of Education promote standard measures of success, perhaps promising practices from introductory courses in psychology at the high school and community college levels could be used as examples of how to define and measure student success. While we all agree that we need to have benchmarks with clearly defined beginning and ending points for measuring student success, it's equally important to articulate benchmarks of success that are progressive and offer qualitative measures of student success. As teachers of psychology, we need to be ever vigilant about explaining how our discipline addresses the issue of student success.

In the past, we missed an opportunity to explain how our discipline contributes to the science of learning, and we learned that other disciplines were eager to voice their contributions to this area of study. At a time when our nation is examining how to apply what we know about the science of learning to the classroom, psychology teachers have an opportunity to contribute to this broader conversation. There is much to be learned and shared about teaching the introductory course in psychology in this regard.

Exactly how does the introductory psychology course enhance student success? First of all, the subject matter taught in this course is applicable to any other high school or college course taught in the curriculum. In what other course at the high school or college level do students learn firsthand about how people learn, improve their memory, become motivated, and develop in a sociocultural context? In what other course at the high school or college level do students learn about mind/body relationships and behavioral influences at the micro and macro levels? In what other course at the high school or college level do students learn that what they are studying has important implications for their lives and the lives of those people who live around them?

Psychology is the science of behavior and mental processes, and teachers of psychology should teach the introductory psychology course as a science. They should also teach this course by explaining how the science of psychology can be used to improve student performance in the classroom, thus enhancing overall student success. Every student who is enrolled in an introductory course in psychology should learn how to apply the knowledge gained in this course to his or her life. Teachers of psychology at the high school and community college levels should demonstrate how the knowledge acquired in their courses contributes to their students' success.

The final grade in an introductory psychology course should never be the sole indicator of student success. Students enrolled in introductory psychology courses in high schools and community colleges are challenged to write papers, take examinations, participate in community service projects, complete service learning contracts, and engage in research.

The skills acquired in the introductory course in psychology are vast and can be applied to other courses as well as to the work setting. Perhaps if high school and community college teachers were more vocal about the skills acquired in the introductory psychology course, they could advance a set of measures of student success that are often overlooked by K-12 administrators and the higher education community.

The introductory psychology course provides teachers of psychology at the high school and community college levels a wonderful opportunity to contribute to national debates about student success and about how to measure this important aspect of student achievement. Let's use this forum as a vehicle to share how we measure student success in the introductory psychology course and to inform the educational community about the significance of this course.

REFERENCE

American Association of Community Colleges. (2006). *Fast facts.* Retrieved November 21, 2007, from www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/Fast_Facts1/Fast_Facts.htm. **PTN**

PLAN AHEAD FOR THE 2008 MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

MARCH 6-9, 2008
Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA)
Charlotte, NC
http://www.sepaonline.com

MARCH 13-16, 2008
Eastern Psychological Association (EPA)
Boston, MA
http://www.easternpsychological.org

APRIL 3-5, 2008
Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)
Kansas City, MO
https://www.swpsych.org

APRIL 10-12, 2008
Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA)
Boise, ID
http://www.rockymountainpsych.org

APRIL 10-13, 2008
Western Psychological Association (WPA)
Irvine, CA
http://www.westernpsych.org

MAY 1-3, 2008
Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA)
Chicago, IL
http://www.midwesternpsych.org

OCTOBER 24-25, 2008
New England Psychological Association (NEPA)
Bristol, RI
http://www.nepa-info.org

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