

## BRINGING PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE TO THE FOREFRONT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY: COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S COALITION FOR PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

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The following article details the work of the American Psychological Association's (APA's) Coalition for Psychology in the Schools and Education (CPSE). First, a brief history of the background and creation of the coalition is described. The article then details the projects, completed and ongoing, of the CPSE. Those projects include a Teacher Needs Survey, the work of the Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning Task Force, and work in education advocacy and on the Higher Education Act. The article concludes with details regarding the composition of the CPSE and specifics regarding the APA divisions represented. © 2008 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Over the past several decades, a vigorous and public debate has raged over the quality of our elementary- and secondary-level education system. Statistics indicate that among peer nations U.S. students do not fare well in terms of educational achievement (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006). Reports in the popular media decry how the next generation of inventors, entrepreneurs, and technicians (National Research Council, 2006) is not being seeded, nor are high school graduates competent to take their place in a changing workforce (Cavanaugh, 2006). The proposed solutions to these problems have been varied and inconclusive ranging at the federal level from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to a multitude of state and local initiatives for improving our education system.

Psychology, more than any other discipline, has the breadth of scholarship and expertise to influence the direction of public education. With this argument in mind, the Education Directorate of the American Psychological Association (APA) brought together in a coalition, the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, scholars and practitioners representing knowledge and expertise from various psychological traditions to contribute to important national debates in education. This article describes the history of the Coalition, along with detailing key projects that have thus far been promoted and accomplished by this group.

### *Brief History of the Coalition and the Context in Which It Was Established*

The role of psychology and the psychological sciences is often overlooked in our national education debates. For example, a 2001 briefing provided by the National Research Council on the reform agenda for U.S. public schools failed to include the role of psychologists. This omission occurred at nearly the same time as (a) an increase in the debate over NCLB, (b) consideration of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA), (c) new legislation establishing the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) within the U.S. Department of Education, and (d) the inclusion of education in the revised mission statement of the APA. These events precipitated the establishment of the coalition spearheaded by the APA's Divisions 15, 16, and 17 (i.e., Educational, School,

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and Counseling Psychology). In 2002, Cynthia Belar, Executive Director of the APA's Education Directorate, provided funding to support the first year of twice yearly meetings, chaired by the first author.

From the beginning, it was determined that each federal initiative discussed previously could be significantly improved through the contributions of psychology and the expertise of psychologists. For example, with regard to standards and assessment, NCLB requires states to verify empirically both the quality of their teachers and the educational progress of their students against a standard established by each individual state. Failure to meet these standards leads to the imposition of financial and administrative sanctions as well as public notoriety. Psychologists receive specific training in tests and measurements. So, representatives from the APA's Committee on Psychological Testing and Assessment could be a key group engaged in this debate. However, at the time of the formation of the Coalition, this group was not considered.

Furthermore, Title II of the HEA reauthorizes programs designed to enhance the career preparation of postsecondary students in elementary and secondary education. The last reauthorization in 1998 focused on augmenting teachers' content knowledge. However, questions of effective instruction, assessment, and classroom management, areas where psychological science and practice have contributed enormously, were not addressed. Consequently, the Coalition began with the tenet that psychologists with expertise and understanding of teacher education should be engaged in this debate.

The IES was established to address the view held by policy makers that educational research lacked rigor and usefulness. Created to replace the former Office of Educational Research and Improvement, IES emphasizes the role of intervention research using randomized control trials applied to problems central to K–12 education. Psychology research training was identified by the IES as an exemplar of more rigorous preparation for researchers. Because the IES is using psychology as an exemplar, and APA's revised mission statement included and highlighted its commitment to education, the establishment of the Coalition was a logical next step.

At the 2002 APA Convention, the Division of School Psychology (Division 16), led by Steve and Angeleque Little, provided a conversation hour that allowed various interested parties within the APA to discuss the merits of establishing a forum to focus on issues associated with the application of psychological science to contemporary issues within American pre-K through 12th-grade education. As mentioned previously, psychology has a great deal to contribute to many aspects of K–12 education such as evidence-based instructional strategies, teacher education and professional development, student assessment, learning for achievement, promoting mental health, and effective classroom management. However, psychologists from different traditions often disagree on issues of research methodology and accountability. This disagreement can sometimes prevent fruitful scientific discussions at a time when unification between educators, policy makers, and psychologists are essential to making necessary improvements to our nation's education system. In an effort to create a forum for psychologists to constructively discuss pre-K through 12th-grade education policy, the APA's Education Directorate developed the Coalition. It was the hope that this group would provide psychologists from different traditions with an opportunity for discussion and participation in the national debate regarding pre-K through 12th-grade education. The mission of the Coalition is to develop and strengthen linkages between psychology and public education that will allow psychologists the opportunity to share their knowledge and research to serve education stakeholders: students, administrators, parents, support personnel, the business community, higher education, teachers, and teacher educators. The CPSE also strives to serve as a resource to educators and policy makers, demonstrating that psychologists and psychological science offer real world solutions to many of our nation's current educational problems.

From the beginning, the Coalition has sought to promote cooperation among a growing number of APA divisions, APA governance groups, and affiliates who are working together to improve

schools. To date, there are 13 divisions and five work groups that comprise the Coalition. These groups reflect the strong interest within the APA to address the issues facing contemporary elementary and secondary education (Figure 1).

Table 1 *Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education membership.*

*Because the CPSE strives to promote cooperation among the American Psychological Association (APA) divisions and various groups and affiliates who are working to enhance education and teacher training for children and adolescents, the Coalition has included, but has not been limited to, representatives from the following the APA divisions and affiliated groups.*

Division	Mission
Division 7 (Developmental Psychology)	This division promotes research in the field of developmental psychology and high standards in the application of scientific knowledge to educational, child care, policy, and related settings.
Division 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology)	The Society of Clinical Psychology includes members who are active in practice, research, teaching, administration, and/or study in the field of clinical psychology.
Division 13 (Consulting Psychology)	Psychologists in this division share an interest in the consultative process, including applied activities, research and evaluation, and education and training.
Division 15 (Educational Psychology)	The Educational Psychology division provides a collegial environment for psychologists with interest in research, teaching, or practice in educational settings at all levels to present and publish papers about their work.
Division 16 (School Psychology)	This division serves the needs of scientific-practitioner psychologists whose major professional interests lie with children, families, and the schooling process.
Division 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology)	The Society of Counseling Psychology brings together psychologists, students, and professional and international affiliates who are dedicated to promoting education and training, scientific investigation, practice, and diversity and public interest in professional psychology.
Division 25 (Behavior Analysis)	This division promotes basic research, both animal and human, in the experimental analysis of behavior; it encourages the application of the results of such research to human affairs and cooperates with other disciplines whose interests overlap with those of the division.
Division 27 (Society for Community Research and Action)	Community psychologists encourage the development of theory, research, and practice relevant to the reciprocal relationships between individuals and the social systems that constitute the community context.
Division 35 (Society for the Psychology of Women)	This organization serves as a base for all feminists, women and men of all national origins, who are interested in teaching, research, or practice in the psychology of women
Division 37 (Child, Youth and Family Services)	Child, Youth and Family Services psychologists are concerned with professional and scientific issues relative to services and service structures for children and youth.
Division 43 (Family Psychology)	This division provides a home for psychologists interested in families in their many forms.
Division 53 (Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology)	The Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology represents psychologists who are active in teaching, research, clinical services, administration, and advocacy in clinical child psychology to the APA and the public.

*Continued*

The Coalition also has included, but has not been limited to, representatives from the following affiliated groups.

Affiliated Group	Mission
APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA)	The BEA's mission is to (a) recommend educational policy to the APA Board of Directors and Council of Representatives; (b) recommend to the Board of Directors and Council of Representatives changes to its programs and operational priorities that would allow the APA to take a leadership role for the nation in the educational arena; (c) serve a consultative and advisory role with respect to ongoing planning and operations of the Education Directorate, in consultation with its Executive Director; and (d) ensure importance and commitment to diversity in education and training in all its activities and initiatives.
APA Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA)	The BSA addresses all aspects of psychology as a science, including the continued encouragement, development, and promotion of psychology as a science; scientific aspects of the program at the annual convention; and psychology's relations with other scientific bodies. It has particular responsibility for liaison with agencies giving financial support to scientific projects, for awards and honors in recognition of scientific achievement, and for seeking new ways in which the APA can assist scientific activities.
Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA)	The mission of the CEMA is to increase the number of ethnic minority psychologists in the profession, as well as in the membership and leadership of the APA, state psychological associations, and APA divisions, and promote activities that increase recruitment and retention of ethnic minorities in psychology. The CEMA also works to increase the need for scientific research on ethnicity and culture, promote increased multicultural competence in psychology, promote the use of psychological knowledge for the recognition and prevention of racism, and promote and monitor an effective legislative advocacy agenda addressing ethnic minority concerns and their public policy implications.
Committee on Psychological Testing and Assessment (CPTA)	The CPTA is responsible for addressing problems regarding sound psychological testing and assessment practices. Members of the CPTA serve as technical advisors to other APA boards and committees on all issues affecting testing and assessment as it involves policy, practice, and science; monitoring actions of government and other organizations concerning regulation and control of assessment and testing practices; maintaining knowledge of and concern regarding current policy issues on the use of tests and assessment in clinical, counseling, educational, and employment settings; and promoting the appropriate use of tests and sound assessment practices.
Committee of Teachers of Psychology at Secondary Schools (TOPSS)	The TOPSS works to promote the scientific nature of introductory and advanced high school psychology, to meet curricular needs of secondary school psychology teachers, and to provide opportunities for high school students to be recognized and rewarded for their academic excellence in psychology.
Child and Adolescent Caucus (CAC)	The CAC was formed by the APA's Council of Representatives to concentrate on child advocacy. The CAC focuses on a wide range of issues—from education to psychoactive medication—for children and adolescents.
Committee on Children, Youth and Families (CYF)	The mission of the CYF is to advance psychology as a science and a profession and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare—by specifically ensuring that children, youth, and families receive the full attention of the association in order that all human resources are actualized. The CYF's goals are to (a) identify and disseminate information concerning the psychological status of children, youth, and families for psychologists, other professionals, policy makers, and the public; (b) offer consultation to relevant APA boards and committees responsible for psychologists who conduct research and provide services for children, youth, and families; (c) encourage psychological research on the factors that promote or inhibit the development of individual and family competence; (d) contribute to the formulation and support of policies that facilitate the optimal development of children and youth within families; and (e) designate priorities for the APA involvement in the issues affecting children, youth, and families, including issues related to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.

## COALITION PROJECTS

The Coalition promotes the application of psychological science to teaching and learning in schools through several ongoing projects, with a particular focus on promoting teacher quality and enhancing the professional growth of teachers. The following sections describe the Coalition's major projects.

*Teacher Needs Survey*

*Background.* The Teacher Needs Survey reflects one of the Coalition's overriding goals, which is to communicate psychological science related to teaching and learning in schools in ways that are accessible to teachers. The focus of the survey project was to investigate how psychologists could assist with teacher professional development needs and in what format. According to Hanushek (1997), the difference between having a good teacher and a bad teacher can exceed one grade-level equivalent in annual achievement growth. In addition, the importance of teacher effectiveness is reflected in the following:

1. About \$200 billion, or half of all public education funding, is invested in teacher pay and benefits annually (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1999).
2. Many teachers leave the profession within 3 years, as a result of poor working conditions and a limited repertoire of effective tools for the classroom (NCES, 1999).
3. The inclusion of appropriate psychological principles and techniques in teachers' instructional methods preparation is incomplete or nonexistent (Meece, 2003).
4. Current professional development courses do not tend to be useful in supplementing or enhancing good teaching skills (Guskey, 2000), nor are they sufficiently based on adult learner principles such as creating professional learning communities (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Hawley & Valli, 1999).
5. Two-thirds of teachers report that they have no control over the content or delivery of available professional development (Choy, Chen, & Bugarin, 2006).
6. Finally, data from the NCES (2002, 2005) suggest that when teachers believe that they have influence in determining the content of in-service professional development, they are more likely to participate in such learning opportunities.

To support the goal of providing a framework for high-quality professional development based on psychological science, the Coalition began designing the online Teacher Needs Survey in May 2004. Between August and December 2004, the Coalition piloted the survey nationwide with 900 pre-K–12 teachers. At the Coalition December 2004 meeting, representatives reviewed the survey results, and the pilot data were used to refine the survey, including additions to the demographics section (ethnicity, gender, region, grade); changes to the rating scales (Likert scale); and a reduction in the number of questions relating to teachers' professional development needs. After two mailed circulations of draft revisions, the online survey was launched in April 2005. Authorship of the Teacher Needs Survey involved the cooperation of 31 Coalition members and staff.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Authorship of the Teacher Needs Survey involved the cooperation of the following CPSE members and staff: Angeleque Akin-Little, Division 16; Larry Alferink, Division 25; Marc Atkins, Division 53; Mary Brabeck, Board of Educational Affairs; Jeffery Braden, Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment; Cindy Carlson, Division 43; Jane Close Conoley, Board of Educational Affairs; Jessica Henderson Daniel, Division 35; Ruth Fassinger, Division 44; Robert Felner, Division 27; Amy Fineburg, Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools; Jeffrey Haugaard, Division 37; Tom Kubiszyn, Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment; Steven Little, Division 16; Ane Martinez-Lora, Division 35; Ray Lorion, Division 12; Joan Lucariello, Board of Scientific Affairs; Robert McMahon, Division 53; Laura Nabors, Division 37; Angela O'Donnell, Division 15; Samuel Ortiz, Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment; Debra Park, Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools; Pat Puccio, Psychology Teachers

*Areas Addressed in the Teacher Needs Survey.* The Teacher Needs Survey asked educators to indicate the specific types of training they would be interested in receiving under each of four areas—classroom management, instructional strategies, classroom diversity, and communication with families/caregivers—areas supported by a strong psychological literature. In addition, educators were asked to indicate their level of preparation in each of the four areas and to rank order each area with regard to priority of training. Finally, educators were asked to rank the type of training modality they would prefer from options such as online modules; regional, university, or conference workshops; and in-district workshops. A number of demographic items were also requested from respondents.

*Data Collection.* With the support of more than 80 state teacher associations<sup>2</sup> and Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools, the survey was disseminated among members of state and district teachers. A total of 2,334 educators from 49 states and the District of Columbia shared for the first time their professional development needs on classroom management; instructional strategies; classroom diversity; and communication with parents, psychologists and the general public.

*Survey Result.* When asked for their favored mechanism for receiving professional development, respondents replied that they preferred in-district workshops with teams of teachers or online modules. Educators in the Teacher Needs Survey sample indicated that their greatest needs for professional development were in the areas of (a) instructional skills and (b) classroom management. When breaking out results based on years of teaching, first-year teachers rated classroom management number one.

Further analysis indicated the following instructional skills as most needed:

- Promoting critical thinking
- Motivating students to learn
- Designing or implementing a challenging curriculum, including problem-solving techniques
- Modifying instructional strategies to meet individual student needs

In terms of classroom management, specific areas receiving the highest ratings included

- Ensuring that students' negative behaviors are not an ongoing distraction to teachers and their classroom
- Ensuring that students are socially and emotionally safe in the classroom
- Ensuring that all students participate in classroom interaction
- Helping students work well independently

Many of the issues identified in the survey are of great interest to school psychologists as well as other psychological professionals. The Coalition promotes the idea that the teacher concerns

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at Community Colleges; Stephen Quintana, Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs; Stephen Rollin, Division 17; Sylvia Rosenfield, Division 13; James Royer, Division 15; Marissa Sarabando, Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools; Heidi Sickler, the APA Center for Psychology in Schools and Education; V. Scott Solberg, Coalition Chair, Division 17; Gary Stoner, Division 16; Rena Subotnik Director, the APA Center for Psychology in Schools and Education; and Mary Jean Voigt, Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

<sup>2</sup>More than 80 teacher associations disseminated the survey link on their Web sites, including the California Teachers Association, United Federation of Teachers, Illinois Education Association, Florida Education Association, Texas State Teachers Association, Pennsylvania State Education Association, New Jersey Education Association, Ohio Education Association, Colorado Education Association, and Massachusetts Teachers Association.

identified in the survey provide an opportunity for psychology to address these issues and problems in a number of ways and venues.

*Policy Implications.* The Teacher Needs Survey contains information relevant to policy makers as they try to improve important federal programs such as Title II of NCLB (Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals) and Title II of HEA (Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants for States and Partnerships). A critical resource, the Teacher Needs Survey, offers a perspective directly from teachers about how psychology can contribute to increasing the capacity of their teaching toolbox.

#### *Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning Task Force*

The Coalition served as an advisory group to the Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning (APS-TL), was a APA Board of Educational Affairs–sponsored task force. The task force’s charge was to explore applications of psychological science to teaching and learning by tapping the expertise of psychologists from several subdisciplines, including motivation, developmental, assessment, behavior management, social psychology, and learning and instruction, as well as to work collaboratively on translating psychological literature associated with evidence-based teaching strategies. The focus of the work was to integrate developmental science, research teaching and learning, and contextual concerns. Members included Mary Brabeck (Chair), Carol Dwyer, Sandra Graham, Thomas Kratochwill, Joan Lucariello, Barbara McCombs, Sara Rimm-Kaufman, and Margaret Semrud-Clikeman.

Based on the findings from the APA Teacher Needs Survey, the APS-TL Task Force’s expertise, the available psychological literature, and the CPSE’s advice, Web sites are being developed for the following teaching strategies:

- Using praise to enhance student resilience and learning outcomes
- Using classroom data to give systematic feedback to students in order to improve learning
- Classroom management
- Improving students’ relationships with teachers to provide essential supports for learning
- Bullying in school
- How do my students think: Diagnosing student thinking
- How do I get my students over their alternative conceptions (misconceptions)?
- Developing responsible and autonomous learners: A key to motivating students
- Practice for knowledge acquisition (not drill and kill)
- Research in brain function and learning

The introductory page for each strategy has been designed to answer two questions: (a) “What is this strategy?” and (b) “Why is it useful?” This user-friendly page also includes some suggested “do’s and don’ts” related to the strategy.

The second page of the Web site on this strategy features the following:

- Why the strategy works
- For whom it works (developmental level and special populations)
- Possible unintended consequences from using the strategy
- Frequently asked questions about the strategy
- References to the strategy in the research literature

The task force expects to have pages up on the APA Web site by August 2008. A complementary task force project was established to identify gaps in the literature for each strategy. The group synthesized the gaps in the form of a report for federal funding agencies to use in guiding the development of new funding proposals (RFPs).

#### *Online Academic Professional Development Courses*

Based on the Teacher Needs Survey, an Online Academy professional development course entitled “Practical Classroom Management: Class-wide and Individual Strategies” is scheduled to be available online in 2008. The scholarly framework for the course was developed by Russell Skiba and Jack Cummings, presenting an introduction to identifying, understanding, preventing, and remediating pre-K–12 classroom management problems. The course attempts to provide teachers with the skills to practice effective classroom management problems. The course will also provide teachers with systematic methods to maximize learning for all students, while identifying strategies that can be used when an individual level of intervention is needed. The course emphasizes that the most powerful message of research in educational psychology in the past 30 years is that students learn in direct proportion to the amount of time they are engaged in active instructional tasks. Thus, the course is structured in a way that helps teachers learn the strategies they need to reduce the incidence of misbehavior and maximize their students’ productive, positive learning behaviors. Staff member Maya Bassford is coordinating the production of the course for the APA.

#### *Education Advocacy*

*No Child Left Behind.* NCLB, also referred to as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, guides the federal investment in K–12 education. In an effort to gauge and gain a better understanding of the range of issues that are of interest to APA members, Jennifer Smulson and Annie Toro from the Education and Public Interest Directorates’ Government Relations Offices held several meetings with the Coalition because of its broad representation of groups within the APA. These meetings presented an opportunity for the Coalition to feature the role that psychology plays in elementary and secondary education, as well as highlight and integrate the extraordinary research and expertise of psychologists. The Coalition focused both on implementing and improving NCLB in the areas of accountability, assessment, teacher quality, and student achievement, all areas where psychologists have the expertise necessary to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of current law. More specifically, the Coalition’s proposed recommendations, spearheaded by Jeffrey Braden, Sam Ortiz, Gary Stoner, Joan Lucariello, Ane Marinerez-Lora, and Roger Azevedo, entailed incorporating scientifically viable individualized growth models as measures of student achievement, improving teacher quality through training, practice as found in the Coalition’s Teacher Need Survey, as well as addressing parental involvement and school violence issues.

Based on the effort and feedback of the APA Coalition members, a set of comprehensive, organizationwide recommendations, including legislative language, was submitted to key members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate on how to improve NCLB. In addition, the APA submitted the names of the APA members with expertise in education policy for consideration as hearing witnesses to relevant committees. Congressional testimony is an important opportunity for psychologists to publicly voice their expert opinions and to draw attention to the important role of psychologists in NCLB and education at large. Education and public interest staff continue to attend hearings and meet with congressional staff to respond to current developments and to draw attention to the work of the APA.

*Higher Education Act.* The Higher Education Act (HEA) was first authorized in 1965 during the Johnson administration. It is a highly complex piece of legislation that is supposed to be reviewed

and reauthorized by Congress every 5 years. It was last authorized in 1998. The HEA programs and activities fall into five primary categories: (a) teacher quality; (b) programs to assist historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, and Hispanic-serving institutions; (c) student financial assistance; (d) support for international education programs; and (e) graduate and postsecondary improvement programs.

*Teacher Quality and Teaching Skills.* Title II of the HEA cites content knowledge and teaching skills as components of teacher quality more than 20 times. With the help of the Coalition, the APA was successful in developing and including a definition for the term, “teaching skills” in legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate in both the 108th and 109th Congresses. Although modified from the original version submitted by the APA to the Senate and House for consideration, this important definition draws on the psychological sciences to improve the educational opportunities for prospective teachers.

Because action on HEA reauthorization was not completed during the past Congresses, the 110th Congress is currently working again on that effort. The APA definition of “teaching skills,” as modified, was included in HEA authorizing legislation in both Senate and House bills in the 110th Congress. The Senate-passed bill, S. 1642 includes a modified version of APA’s teaching skills definition. This legislation, the Higher Education Amendments of 2007, was passed 95-0 by the full Senate on July 24, 2007. The definition has also been included in HR 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007. This legislation was unanimously approved by the House Education and the Workforce Committee and will likely be considered by the full U.S. House of Representatives in February 2008.

The House and Senate passed definition is as follows (with minor drafting differences between the two):

*“TEACHING SKILLS.—The term ‘teaching skills’ means skills that enable a teacher to—*

*‘(A) increase student learning, achievement, and the ability to apply knowledge; “(B) effectively convey and explain academic subject matter; “(C) employ strategies grounded in the disciplines of teaching and learning that—“(i) are based on empirically based practice and scientifically valid research, where applicable, related to teaching and learning; “(ii) are specific to academic subject matter; and “(iii) focus on the identification of students’ specific learning needs, particularly 3 students with disabilities, students who are limited English proficient, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and the tailoring of academic instruction to such needs; “(D) conduct an ongoing assessment of student learning, which may include the use of formative assessments, performance-based assessments, project-based assessments, or portfolio assessments, that measure higher-order thinking skills, including application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; “(E) effectively manage a classroom, including the ability to implement positive behavioral intervention support strategies; “(F) communicate and work with parents and guardians, and involve parents and guardians in their children’s education; and “(G) use, in the case of an early childhood educator, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate strategies and practices for children in early education programs.*

S.1642, the Senate Higher Education Act reauthorization bill also includes another provision that allows for departments of psychology and human development to be included among those entities that may be considered as part of the federally funded teacher quality partnerships. These partnerships, housed at institutions of higher education, have as their goal improving the training and preparation of prospective teachers.

*Academic Teaching Centers.* Another HEA initiative developed through the advisory capacity of the Coalition are academic teaching centers (ATCs). Coalition member Mary Brabeck and staff

members Jennifer Smulson and Rena Subotnik provided specific assistance. These centers are designed to provide a setting for the integration of education and training, research, and evidence-based practice for teacher candidates, university professors, and master teachers.

A publication by the National Research Council, *How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice* (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999), specifies the potential benefits of model pedagogical laboratories, a concept that is comparable to the ATC:

Laboratory experience could provide the opportunities for practice, as well as for observation and diagnosis of events that are likely to arise in the classroom, that could ease the transition into the classroom and allow for greater transfer of school-based learning to the practice of teaching. (p. 50)

The objective of such laboratories is “to create an environment in which the immediate demands of the classroom do not prevent reflection on, or exploration of, the process of learning” (p. 51).

To ensure high-quality teacher preparation, the ATC initiative promotes

- Knowledge of the scientific research on teaching and learning
- Development of skills in evidence-based educational interventions
- Faculty who model the integration of research and practice in the classroom
- Real interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-fertilization among and between (a) education faculty; (b) school teachers; (c) psychology faculty who conduct research on the learning process and the assessment of learning, as well as those who prepare professional staff, such as school and counseling psychologists; and (d) faculty from disciplines within the university responsible for subject-matter content (e.g., history, English, biology, chemistry, psychology)
- Opportunities for rigorous, closely supervised training experiences in high-quality teaching settings
- Development of mechanisms to assess quality of teacher preparation by the value it adds to student achievement
- Application of relevant scientific research on teaching and learning

The ATC model requires a demonstrated commitment to the integration of science and practice. Modeled on academic health centers, ATCs could provide prospective teachers with a system of practice-based support at initial levels of training, training during the first years of practice, and continued support in maintaining high levels of skill mastery. Like academic health centers, the ATC model offers a clinical setting with an education and research mission, mentorship by expert practitioners, a setting where research is translated to practice and practice informs research, and high-quality services for its K–12 students.

ATCs were also designed to promote the participation of education college faculty in classrooms, thereby providing prospective teachers with faculty role models who have hands-on experience. The focus of the ATC model has been on the “value added” by the science of teaching and learning to both teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The ATC would prepare teachers who are able to meet the standard established in NCLB of “highly qualified.” The ATC would also provide a forum for information sharing among teacher candidates and faculty. Finally, university faculty in education, psychology, and other disciplines in the arts and sciences would have opportunities to enhance the synergy between research and practice to the benefit of both.

Grants awarded for the implementation of ATCs would allow for the clinical training of preservice teachers in evidence-based practice school settings. Such settings could be located in a

school or grouping of schools and may include an adjacent school, schools, or school district; a school on campus; a charter school; or an urban, rural, or suburban school network. These schools would partner with university schools or departments that have relevant and essential roles in the effective preparation of teachers, including content expertise (arts and science), teacher candidates (schools of education), and science of teaching and learning expertise (departments of psychology housed in either arts and sciences or schools of education). The proposed criteria for school selection include

- Evidence that schools are home to outstanding teachers who can provide high-quality mentoring and modeling to prospective teachers based on a demonstrated record of achievement for students
- A commitment to evidence-based teaching confirmed by documentation of professional development offered to staff and documented experience with university collaborations

The 108th and 109th Congresses failed to complete action on a HEA reauthorization; however, the APA will continue to advocate for the inclusion of the “teaching skills” definitions and the ATC during debate on HEA during the 110th Congress.

#### CONCLUSION

The APA Coalition is involved in various projects and initiatives devoted to improving the quality of education through the application of psychological science. The work is conducted by way of joint cooperation of psychologists across several disciplines. Thus, the Coalition not only serves as a critical forum and vehicle for promoting cooperation among APA divisions and committees, psychologists, educators, and various interest groups who are working to enhance teacher training and education of children and adolescents, but also demonstrates to educators and policy makers that psychological science can make important contributions to classroom practices and to the education policy agenda.

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