



Inside

Using Dialogue to Explore the Depths of the History of Psychology.....4
Mining the Magic of Harry Potter.....6
Teaching Resources on the APA Web Site7
Students Learn the Science Behind Drug Abuse12
Casting Stones at the Stone Caster.....13
A Handy Rubric for Judging Students' Research Projects.....15
We're Psyched! How to Prepare for a Student-Centered Psychology Convention16
Try a Psychology Fair.....18
Opportunities and New Challenges.....21

Book Review

What the Best College Teachers Do23

Psychology Spotlight

The Comeback22

Announcements

News From STP.....3
2007 Psi Beta Psychology Synergy Conference3
NECTOP Conference.....11
NITOP Conference11
Winners Announced for 2007 TOPSS Scholars Essay12
APA PT@CC 2007 Electronics Project.....15
Kudos to the 2007 TOPSS Teacher Award Winners.....17
Chudler's BrainWorks Nominated.....19
Deadlines and Information on Psi Chi.....20
Psychology Faculty at Community Colleges.....24
Ethical Challenges in the Teaching.....24
New Resources for Inexperienced psychology Teachers.....25
APA Teaching Tips Contest Winners.....25
PT@CC Invites Student Participation.....26
APA Awards Seven Best.....27
MATOP Conference.....28

Redesigning Undergraduate Education in Psychology: Imagine the Possibilities

Diane F. Halpern, PhD

Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children and Claremont McKenna College

Suppose you were in charge; it could be up to you to decide how to redesign undergraduate education in psychology. Where would you start? It is a good bet that you would not come up with the system that we have today, where the majority of in-class learning activities consist of writing down what a lecturer says. Students mostly listen to someone talk in the same room for a fixed number of hours each week for the number of weeks that correspond to an academic term. In return, they receive a number of credit units that equal the number of hours per week they sit in this room. The practice of accumulating credit-hour tokens that can later be cashed in for a diploma is often pejoratively referred to as “seat time units” because a student who sits through a class that meets for 3 hours each week will receive 3 credit-hour units, regardless of how much or how little is learned, the level of the class, or the disciplinary content. Students graduate when they accumulate enough credit units in each of several categories. It is usually expected that students will graduate in approximately 4 to 5 years, an expectation that is frequently violated as college enrollments swell at a rate that far exceeds faculty hires. If all has gone well, students will maintain ties to their alma mater in the form of check writing, also known by that euphemistic gerund, alumni giving.



Diane Halpern, PhD

If you were learning about higher education for the first time, you might find some of the practices of higher education absurd, but because they are so deeply engrained in our understanding of how to provide a university education, we rarely question them. For example, think about our standard assessments of learning. Student learning is

evaluated by each faculty member in each course, with grades varying widely in their meaning. Some professors assign grades according to the belief that grade distributions should be normally distributed; others believe that almost everyone or almost no one is deserving of a high letter grade. When questioned about their grading practices, many professors cite academic freedom as a defense of their right to assign grades in any way they deem appropriate. Academic freedom notwithstanding, there are

many external pressures on faculty to assign high grades, including the fact that the faculty member's own teaching effectiveness is evaluated with student ratings, and funding for one's own academic unit depends on the number of students who are retained. The problem of grade inflation is real, and the result is increasing reliance on external measures of academic achievement, which may not match what has been taught. It is not surprising that the latest report from the Department of Education is touting accountability as one its main goals for higher education.

How would you go about improving postsecondary learning? With some thinking time, many possibilities come to mind. In recognition of the need to rethink our assumptions about higher education in psychology, the Board of Educational Affairs, which is the decision-making body of the Education Directorate in APA, is sponsoring a national conference that will draft a “Blueprint for the Future of our Discipline.” The conference will take place on the beautiful campus of the

Psychology Teacher Network is published quarterly by the Education Directorate of the American Psychological Association (APA). Subscriptions are free to High School and Community College Teacher Affiliates of APA and APA Members, and \$15 a year for all others. Address editorial correspondence to *Psychology Teacher Network*, APA Education Directorate, 750 First St., NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242; (202) 572-3013. Address inquiries regarding membership or affiliation to the APA Membership Office, at the same address.

Coeditors

Martha Boenau
mboenau@apa.org

Emily Leary
eleary@apa.org

Robin Hailstorks, PhD
rhailstorks@apa.org

Contributing Editors

TOPSS
Marie Smith, PhD
Marie_T_Smith@mcpsmd.org

PT@CC
Vivian Hamilton, MA
vhamito@pcc.edu

Redesigning Undergraduate Education, *continued from page 1*

University of Puget Sound, from June 22nd to June 27th, 2008. We are planning to convene a diverse group of experts and stakeholders, which will include representatives from a variety of types of institutions, including those that link with undergraduate education—high schools, graduate and professional programs, and employers.

There are many reasons why we believe that traditional undergraduate education is ripe for real reform (say that 5 times fast). Higher education, as we know it, is facing new kinds of competition. There are distant and virtual universities that offer any-time any-place learning, and virtually every traditional campus is offering some virtual courses. Some classes are being held in alternative cyber-universes, where students send their avatars to school. Of course, there are no geographical boundaries on student enrollment when the university address is cyberspace. Our student bodies are becoming increasingly international, which is a necessary change as we prepare undergraduates for the new global economy.

Some psychologists are frightened by these alternative ways of teaching and new kinds of competition, likening them to “drive-by teachings.” Some of the new types of competition are good for higher education, but others are undeniably substandard, a euphemism for fly-by-night diploma mills. A few new universities are opening in shopping malls and other places where the “pay at the pump” generation can get an advanced education “to go.” Of course, there is nothing wrong with putting classes in convenient locations, but for the most part, the general public cannot make a meaningful determination about the quality of the education that is being delivered—at least not at the time of the purchase.

The new competition is causing many traditional campuses to reevaluate how they educate. Currently, there are few concerted efforts to use our large research literature on how students learn in ways that produce long-term retention and transfer of learning. Traditional colleges and universities organize for learning in ways that completely ignore the contents in the

huge number of journals we fill, books we write, and experiments we conduct on how people learn and think. It seems that even cognitive psychologists apply very little of what they know about their academic discipline to their teaching. The gap between empirically validated theory and practice is wide. One of the intended outcomes of the conference on undergraduate education in psychology is recommendations for applying the science of learning to classroom settings. There are exciting possibilities that make use of our most advanced technologies and the tried and true methods of caring teachers who provide quality feedback that students can use to direct their own learning.

All of higher education is becoming increasingly diverse, which includes diversity across ages, preparation for college-level work, reasons for attending college, religious affiliations, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, and sexual orientation, just to name a few ways that our students differ. Females comprise a majority of all college enrollments, with most majoring in service-related fields like teaching, social work, education, and psychology. African Americans and Hispanics are seriously lagging behind other ethnic groups in their college-going rate, and they are dropping out in disproportionately high numbers at every transition point in education—before graduation from high school, in the gap between high school and college, in the gap between community colleges and 4-year schools, and in the gap between college and postgraduate education. We need to build bridges across these gaps so that members of all racial and ethnic groups can get an advanced education.

There are important changes in what students need to know to be successful and educated citizens in the technological world in which they will be working and living. We need to rethink what and how we teach because the demands on our students for advanced and life-long learning are constantly increasing. We need new pedagogies that address their needs and prepare them for a future that not even science fiction writers can imagine. The stakes are high: Our ability to compete and cooperate in the global economy depends on our ability to



help students become better learners and thinkers.

As psychologists, we need to respond to these forces of change by focusing on ways to enhance student learning, keeping what is good in our current model of higher education and devising new ways to improve upon it. We need to bring the empirical mode of inquiry that we use in our research into our classrooms so that we are constantly experimenting with new ways of learning and assessing the outcomes to determine their effectiveness. We need to develop and use learning models that are informed by pedagogy of higher education, where pedagogy is defined as theory and research into how adults learn best. Most importantly, we need to keep sight of our values and teach for long-term retention and transfer—two considerations that are irrelevant to the way we currently organize for education.

To address these challenges, the Steering Committee for the National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Psychology is soliciting applicants for the conference. With apologies to the U.S. Marines, we are looking for the dedicated, the few, those who are brave enough to advocate for new models of undergraduate education while also willing to fight to keep what is working with our current models. We have a phenomenal planning committee: Bernard Beins, PhD; Ludy

Benjamin, Jr., PhD; William Buskist, PhD; Ladonna Lewis, PhD; and Valerie Whittlesey, PhD. Charlie Blair-Broeker serves as a liaison for precollege psychology, and Courtney Rocheleau, PhD, serves as a liaison representing the early teaching career perspective. Charles Brewer, PhD, and Barry Anton, PhD, are liaisons from the APA Board of Educational Affairs and the APA Board of Directors, respectively.

We hope that readers will be as excited about our plans to provide a blueprint for the future of our discipline as we are. If you are, please submit an online application before our closing date of November 15, 2007, and urge those colleagues who are passionate about teaching and learning to apply as well. To apply, please click on the Education Directorate Web page (<http://www.apa.org/ed>), where you will find a link to our online application. We hope you will join with us in planning for the future of undergraduate education in psychology.

If you have any questions about the National Conference on Undergraduate Psychology or the application process, please contact Martha Boenau (MBoenau@apa.org), Education Directorate, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. *PTN*

News From the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP)

STP is pleased to announce its latest e-book: *The STP Guide to Graduate Training in the Teaching of Psychology*. Edited by Christopher Howard, William Buskist, and Jeffrey Stowell, the e-book describes about 50 graduate programs in 25 states that provide training for graduate students in the teaching of psychology and in teaching at the college or uni-

versity level. This book and others are available at the Society's Web page, www.teachpsych.org.

The Society welcomes new members! If you teach psychology, please join us. Complete information about membership is available on the Web site.

2007 Psi Beta Psychology Synergy Conference Features Prominent Speakers

Psi Beta is thrilled to feature Drs. Helen Fisher and David Buss at the 2007 Psychology Synergy Conference at Collin County Community College in Plano, TX. Dr. Fisher, visiting professor and member of the Center for Human Evolutionary Studies and Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University, will present "Why We Love: The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love." Dr. Buss, professor of psychology and president of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society, University of Texas, will discuss "Sexual Conflict in Human Mating." Along with these speakers, planned workshops and symposia will emphasize both teaching and student interests.

Unique this year will be an opportunity for licensed professional counselors to obtain CEUs during the conference.

Specific to Psi Beta, the conference will feature exclusive workshops run by Psi Beta National Council members for advisors and student officers of Psi Beta National Honor Society. Workshop topics will include Advisor and Officer Training, Induction Ceremony Essentials, Psi Beta to Psi Chi: Making the Transition, and Facilitating Student Research.

Faculty and students are encouraged to not only attend the October 4-6, 2007, conference, but to present their research and/or teaching demonstrations. Abstracts will be accepted through September 15, 2007. See details about the conference and an online application at <http://psibeta.ccccd.edu>.

Registration costs—\$35 for students and \$50 for faculty—include a Friday afternoon luncheon, Saturday morning breakfast, and a conference t-shirt.