

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

Mary Jean Voigt

Boylan High School, Rockford, IL

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

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



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 2

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSY- CHOLOGY 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 1

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**