

APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2005 Annual Report

In 2005, TOPSS developed several initiatives that included the production and development of unit lesson plans, offering workshops and programs for high school psychology teachers, recognizing outstanding high school students of psychology, and sponsoring invited addresses at the APA Convention.

APA National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula

- In August 2005, the APA Council of Representatives approved revisions to the APA *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*. The purpose of the *National Standards* is to provide guidance for high school psychology teachers and others responsible for development of psychology curriculum at the secondary school level. The Standards, which were originally adopted as APA policy in 1999, promote quality instruction of psychology as a scientific discipline. The document is available as a resource to psychology teachers on the TOPSS website.

APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers

- TOPSS, the APA Education Directorate, and Clark University held the first annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation (APF) Lee Gurel Fund and Clark University. The three-day workshop was held June 24-26, 2005 at Clark University in Worcester, MA and featured sessions on clinical and developmental psychology and the history of psychology, as well as sessions on involving high school students in research. Clark University psychology professors and two TOPSS Past-Chairs (Debra Park of West Deptford High School in Westville, NJ and Rob McEntarffer of Southeast High School in Lincoln, NE) were presenters. The workshop was attended by twenty-five high school psychology teachers.

Unit Lesson Plans

- A signature product of TOPSS, unit lesson plans provide guidance for teachers in developing a curriculum in psychology and enable teachers to teach a specific area within the discipline of psychology. In December 2005, a new unit lesson plan on *Stress and Health Promotion* was distributed to TOPSS members. Development of other lesson plans continued throughout the year, including units on *Social Psychology*, *Research Methods*, *I/O Psychology*, *Psychoanalysis*, and others. TOPSS is collaborating with the APA Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Concerns on a unit plan related to gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues. TOPSS unit lesson plans are available to all TOPSS members on the TOPSS website.

Integrating Psychology at Science Fairs Initiative

- The TOPSS Committee continued supporting the integration of psychology at science fairs:
 - a) *Conducting Psychological Research for Science Fairs: A Teacher's Guide and Resource Manual*, a manual designed to assist teachers in guiding their students to conduct psychological research, was distributed to TOPSS affiliates in early 2005. The manual is also available on the TOPSS website.
 - b) APA and TOPSS collaborated with the Science Service Organization to sponsor awards recognizing outstanding research in psychology at regional fairs affiliated with the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) during the spring of 2005.
 - c) APA also continued to sponsor special awards at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), held in May 2005.
 - d) TOPSS sponsored several workshops or sessions on research, such as a Pre-Convention workshop held in Washington, DC, encouraging teachers to engage in research with high school students.

Minority Recruitment Project

- Development of this program continued in 2005. This program is a joint venture with TOPSS, the APA Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges ([PT@CC](#)), the APA Membership Committee, and the APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs. The program aims to expose minority high school students to career options in psychology, and to encourage and motivate these students to consider pursuing psychology as a career. The project was designed to facilitate meetings with minority high school students and minority two- and four-year college students and faculty, and with local minority psychologists. A webpage detailing the project and pilot projects is linked to the TOPSS website, encouraging teachers to initiate programs at their schools.

Collaborations internal and external to APA

- TOPSS collaborated with the College Board, which oversees AP Psychology, by allowing articles from the *Psychology Teacher Network* to be posted to the College Board website. A link to the College Board website has been placed on the TOPSS website.
- TOPSS had a liaison to the APA Coalition on Psychology in Schools and Education. The Coalition aims to enhance the presence of psychology in education and education in psychology.
- The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) endorsed the APA *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* in late 2005. NCSS is the largest association for social studies educators in the country.

TOPSS Workshops for High School Teachers

- TOPSS sponsored teaching workshops or sessions at the following regional and national conferences: AP National Conference, Best Practices for Teaching Introductory Psychology, the Eastern Psychological Association conference, the Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology conference, held in conjunction with the New England Psychological Association conference, and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Annual Conference. Full-day workshops were offered in Birmingham, AL (Alabama Teachers of Psychology at Secondary Schools), Washington, DC (Neuroscience and Research in the High School Classroom), and San Francisco, CA (Cross-cultural issues and critical thinking: Applications for high school psychology). The annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers began in 2005, as described above. Workshop participants were high school teachers of psychology.
- The APA Education Directorate and TOPSS, with generous support from the APA Membership Office, purchased an exhibit booth at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) conference in Kansas City, MO. The booth offered APA and TOPSS great visibility to the teachers attending the conference and reinforced the importance of psychology programming at NCSS.

Recognizing High School Teachers and Students of Psychology

- TOPSS recognized three outstanding teachers in 2005 with the Excellence in Teaching Award. Wendy Hart of Brentwood High School, Brentwood, TN; Julie Tedford of Freeburg Community High School, Freeburg, IL; and Deborah Costello of Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park, FL received the 2005 awards.
- In 2005 TOPSS recognized high school students and awarded scholarships to those who submitted outstanding essays and research papers. Funding for these awards was generously provided by the American Psychological Foundation (APF).

Three students were recognized as the 2005 APF/APA TOPSS Essay Scholars: Alyssa Hoyt from Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park, Florida; Mary Altum from Shawnee High School,

Medford, New Jersey; and Peter Millar from Shawnee High School, Medford, New Jersey. Each winner received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Four students received APF/APA TOPSS Excellence in High School Student Research Awards: Erin Choo (first place), Roslyn High School, Roslyn Heights, NY; Christine Therese Schwall (second place), W.C. Mepham High School, Bellmore, NY; Dara Steinberg (third place), John F. Kennedy High School, Bellmore, NY; and Nova Hinman (fourth place), Portage Northern High School, Portage, MI. Scholarships in amounts of \$1,500 (first place), \$1,000 (second place), \$500 (third place) and \$250 (fourth place) were awarded.

- TOPSS offered Outstanding Student in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in the Spring of 2005, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. Certificates were also placed on the TOPSS website for the convenience of teachers.

TOPSS Invited Addresses at the APA Convention in Washington, DC

- TOPSS sponsored five invited addresses focusing on development across the lifespan. Presentations were given by Drs. Toni Antonucci and John Cavanaugh, Joshua Aronson, Aaron T. Beck, Frank Farley, and David Matsumoto.
- A Pre-Convention TOPSS workshop was held before the APA Convention, with Drs. Eric Chudler, Stephen Chew, and Allyson Weseley presenting. Forty high school teachers attended the workshop.

Membership Outreach and Services

- Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. TOPSS continued its network of Regional Coordinators to strengthen communication with TOPSS members in various regions of the country, including Canada and Latin America. Funding was available to the ten Regional Coordinators to support outreach in various regions. Regional Coordinators were encouraged to locate State Coordinators to facilitate communication on a state-by-state basis.
- TOPSS initiated a mentor program as a means of providing service to new high school psychology teachers. Experienced psychology teachers have volunteered to serve as mentors to new teachers, who often need advice on lessons, textbooks, and so on. The program is maintained through the TOPSS Regional Coordinators network.
- TOPSS initiated a Speakers Bureau to enable high school teachers to locate and contact psychologists to speak to their psychology classes. A call for volunteer psychologists interested in speaking with high school and community college psychology students about their careers and interests in psychology was sent through various publications such as the *APA Monitor* and the *Division Dialogues*. Information about the TOPSS Speakers Bureau listing is available on the TOPSS website.
- In August 2005, all TOPSS affiliates were sent a copy of a new poster highlighting the contributions of Kenneth and Mamie Clark.
- The *Psychology Teacher Network* quarterly newsletter was distributed to all TOPSS members. The PTN provides teachers with articles, activities, and book reviews to enhance psychology classroom teaching.

TOPSS Composition

The TOPSS Committee was comprised of nine members, including two College Faculty Representatives. In 2005 the committee included seven females and two males. Two committee

members were ethnic minorities. TOPSS encourages and considers diversity as the ballot is developed for future TOPSS officers.