Teaching an undergraduate psychotherapy course can be problematic. Unfortunately, the lack of licensure and supervision precludes using actual clients. Role-playing may also be ineffective, due to the reliance on fellow students to portray fictitious clients and the artificiality that such role-playing entails. While such role-playing is quite useful for skills building, applying true therapeutic techniques is not possible because students are unlikely to react as true clients. However, applying theoretical models and counseling techniques is still an effective way to demonstrate and learn the process of conducting therapy with clients.

Another important aspect of the psychotherapy course is teaching students the professional nature and logistics of actually working in a psychotherapeutic environment. Akillas (2003) describes a method in which students simulate psychotherapy cases using a chart in which records such as an intake form, progress notes, and treatment plans are kept. The technique outlined in this paper utilizes a very similar strategy, but includes an additional component of movie characters providing the framework for the simulated cases. Film characters have been used successfully as diagnosable cases in social psychology (Paddock, Terranova, & Giles, 2001) and abnormal psychology courses (Nissim-Sabat, 1979). Using a character from a film also gives the students a static case, which is a potential improvement over relying on students to stay in character during role-playing activities. In addition, students can elaborate on the character presentation within the movie to hypothesize about potential origins for the disorder. Finally, the films can be presented in a group format to simulate a case conference that might occur in a professional agency environment.

The structure of this course involves the students learning theoretical models of major areas of psychotherapy. Currently these areas are: Psychodynamic, Behavioral, Cognitive, and Family Systems. During this portion of the course, students also learn various therapeutic techniques used in these major areas. They then apply the theories to their movie characters and speculate about which therapeutic techniques would work well with their “client.” In addition, students write intake reports, progress notes, treatment plans, and termination notes regarding these clients. In this manner, students gain the opportunity to see what working with a clinical client from beginning to end would be like in a true professional environment.

Method
Films
All films that are available for the course are preselected by the instructor. Each film is previewed, and preliminary diagnoses are made. Films generally are somewhat obscure, to ensure that preconceived notions of a character or things students may have heard other people discuss about the character are kept to a minimum. This strategy enables students to get fresh perspective on a “client” (the movie character) much as a real therapist would.

The following table represents a sampling of films that have been used in the past, with the character and actor listed as well as the instructor-determined DSM-IV diagnosis:

Teaching, continued on page 2
Chart

Students are required to keep a chart for their clients. The charts consist of an intake report that they have written on the case, two treatment plans (one initial and another revised), progress notes from fictitious sessions, and a termination summary. Each of these also represents assignments that are graded and returned. The students are then able to refer back to previous work to see how their cases are progressing.

Group Work

The students are given their films in groups of five or six students (depending on the size of the class). While all work in the chart is individual for each student, there is a group component to this course. Part of the grade is based on the group’s ability to present the case to the class to discuss their conceptualization for their diagnosis, the goals for treatment, the hypothetical progress of therapy, and how and why therapy was terminated. The rest of the class is also encouraged to ask questions or provide feedback to the group for clarification.

Evaluation

The course, in the format discussed in this paper, has been taught twice. Each time the class size was 20 students. However, it is possible that even larger classes could still participate in a course of this type. After each of the previous courses, open-ended comments regarding the class as a whole were collected. Though not specifically asked about the use of movies or the keeping of a chart, several students spontaneously offered their comments. Here is a sampling:

• “[Using movie cases] was a good way to learn the steps of psychotherapy.”
• “I like the use of movies, which is a great way to work hands on with psychotherapy.”
• “[The movies] helped a lot with learning the basics of how to be a psychologist.”

In conclusion, this method has been found to be effective in teaching students various theories of psychotherapy, and the use of movie characters provides a somewhat realistic person to work with as a client. Though face-to-face contact is not possible, other courses, such as a counseling methods course, can facilitate that portion of conducting psychotherapy. As structured, however, the movie character provides a nice frame of reference for understating diagnosis, origins of psychopathology, and how to apply various psychotherapeutic techniques to a simulated case.

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Nissim-Sabat, D. (1979). The teaching of abnormal psychology through the cinema. Teaching of Psychology, 6, 121-123.

Engaging Community College Psychology Students in Undergraduate Research

Valerie Smith
Collin County Community College

Although the process of undertaking behavioral science research with undergraduate students can generally be quite challenging, the task can present unique trials when working with community college students. Excited rather than daunted by this prospect, faculty at Collin County Community College District in Plano, TX, have begun a program through their local chapter of Psi Beta that encourages student participation in the research process.

The first task in working with students in the community college environment is to identify some of the pitfalls that are certain to arise. The most obvious of these centers on the issues involved in being a commuter school. Students attend classes at different locations and do not necessarily reside in close proximity to the primary campus for meetings. In addition, the majority of community college students work full- or part-time schedules, making after-hours meetings difficult to coordinate. Students also frequently have extensive family obligations. Finally, student academic preparation likely does not involve specific training in research methods or statistics because of the curricular constraints of the 2-year college.

To address these issues, students and faculty developed guidelines designed to ameliorate difficulties to the greatest extent possible. A weekly meeting schedule was set for the year, so that students could arrange their work and family commitments accordingly. To provide focus for the process, the faculty advisors offered students a choice of three potential projects, one in forensic psychology, another focusing on human behavior, and the third assessing civic engagement on campus. Thus, each student was allowed the opportunity to self-select into an endeavor best suited to his or her interests. Each of the three projects capitalized on the strengths of the faculty members involved, and the teams were divided accordingly.

Each group proceeded in a slightly different manner, but there was a common overall structure for the projects. In developing the research designs, the students in the human behavior and forensic teams constructed their own instruments, while the civic engagement team built their study on student message boards, involving debate on controversial topics. Faculty members were available to offer feedback during the process, but left primary responsibility with the student teams. This was also true for literature reviews.

Data analysis presented unique opportunities for both faculty and students. As these were student-driven projects, faculty members were committed to allowing students to direct the course of analysis. To facilitate a level of understanding of basic statistical functions and tests adequate to complete the project, an advisor provided brief informal courses in statistics.

As it became clear that students were fully committed to the project, the abstracts written by the students were submitted for consideration to various professional organizations. Students constructed presentations on their respective projects, utilizing PowerPoint and videos. As conferences approached, teams frequently met outside the regularly scheduled meetings, gathering on weekends with advisors, who provided feedback to students.

An additional task was the requisition of funding for these student presentations. Advisors worked with the division dean and representatives from the Student Activity Committee to secure financial support for the expenses incurred for student and advisor travel. The group was quite fortunate in receiving considerable support from campus administrators, support staff, and student activities funds.

Numerous advantages, related to professionalism, collegiality, and academia, were realized by students as the projects progressed. As conferences approached, teams frequently met outside the regularly scheduled meetings, gathering on weekends with advisors, who provided feedback to students.

Numerous advantages, related to professionalism, collegiality, and academia, were realized by students as the projects progressed. The research team members indicated that the experience of investigating a topic in a field of their interest, in a sophisticated way, provided them with skills that will transfer directly to their future academic endeavors. Students also experienced the satisfaction that coincides with the successful completion of a complex challenge. 

PTN
TOPSS Elects 2005 Executive Committee Members

TOPSS is pleased to welcome three new members to the TOPSS Executive Committee. Effective January 1, 2005, Chair-Elect Mary Jean Voigt (Boylan Catholic High School, Rockford, IL), Secretary/Treasurer-Elect Hilary Rosenthal (Glenbrook South High School, Glenview, IL), and Member-at-Large Carol Farber (Miami Killian Senior High School, Miami, FL), will begin their terms. Congratulations!

The TOPSS Executive Committee extends sincere thanks and appreciation to off-going members of the Board: Past Chair Marissa Sarabando (Memorial High School, McAllen, TX), Secretary/Treasurer Rob Johns (Westside High School, Omaha, NE), and Member-at-Large Allyson Weseley, EdD (Roslyn High School, Roslyn, NY). 

Teaching Enhancement Workshop Announced

The University of San Diego will host the first Teaching Enhancement Workshop on April 1, 2005, cosponsored by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology and the APA Education Directorate. This 1-day workshop is open to teachers of psychology at any level: high school, community college, 4-year college/university, and graduate students. More information can be obtained from Kenneth Keith (kkeith@sandiego.edu) or from Annette Taylor (taylor@sandiego.edu).

17th Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology

February 25-26, 2005
Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw, GA
http://ksumail.kennesaw.edu/~bhill/setop/index.html

The 17th annual Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology sponsored by the Kennesaw State University Department of Psychology and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will be held at the Northwest Marriott Hotel, Atlanta, GA (10 miles north of downtown Atlanta on I-75), on February 25 26, 2005. The opening W. Harold Moon Keynote Address will be by Lonnie Yandell (“Learning to Teach Research: What Students Have Taught Me About Teaching Research”), and Elliott Hammer will give the evening invited address (“What I’ve Learned: Reflections on a Career as a Minority in the Classroom”). Concurrent sessions will focus on teaching techniques and issues in courses such as research methods and developmental, social, and introductory psychology. Additional sessions will address topics such as service learning, advising, new faculty development, teaching students with disabilities, multimedia approaches to teaching, and facilitating class discussions. A poster session and teaching idea exchange are also scheduled for participants. The registration fee of $170 covers all meals and receptions during the conference. A special reduced conference rate of $100 is available for high school psychology teachers and graduate students and $160 for each additional faculty member from the same institution. A block of rooms at the Marriott Northwest Hotel is available at the special conference rate of $85.

For additional information, contact Bill Hill (bhill@kennesaw.edu or 770-423-6410) or visit the conference Web page at http://ksumail.kennesaw.edu/~bhill/setop/index.html.
Update on Abnormal Psychology

Jeffrey S. Nevid, PhD
St. John’s University

Taking a snapshot of current knowledge in abnormal psychology is like trying to capture a moving target. Just when you think you’ve got it squarely in your viewfinder, it’s moved elsewhere. Research developments sharpen prior understandings of abnormal behavior and lead to new understandings. Moreover, new controversies emerge, and old ones simmer or return to center stage. In 2004, for example, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning to prescribing physicians to carefully observe adults and children treated with SSRI-type antidepressants for signs of worsening depression and suicidal thinking or behavior. The FDA warning touched upon earlier concerns about the safety of these drugs that were first voiced more than a decade ago when the SSRI-drug Prozac came on the scene. Though it is sometimes difficult to sort out the rhetoric from the evidence, an FDA advisory panel in 2004 claimed that antidepressants can increase the risk of suicidal behavior in children, although no actual suicides in children had yet been linked to use of these drugs (Dooren, 2004).

With the constraints imposed by taking a snapshot of a moving target, let me address some recent developments in the field that might inform our teaching and writing on abnormal psychology.

Moving Beyond the Nature-Nurture Debate

Mirroring developments in the broader discipline of psychology, investigators in the field of abnormal psychology recognize the need to go beyond the traditional nature-nurture or gene versus environment debate to determine how genetic and environmental factors interact in the development of abnormal behavior (Andreasen, 2003; Plomin, DeFries, Craig, & McGuffin, 2003). The field is dominated today by the biopsychosocial model or framework, which views abnormal behavior patterns as determined by complex interactions of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. We have ample evidence of a genetic contribution to many forms of abnormal behavior, including schizophrenia, mood disorders, substance abuse and dependence, and autism (Merikangas & Risch, 2003; Plomin & McGuffin, 2003; Yu et al., 2002). Yet genes do not tell the whole story. Even with schizophrenia, the concordance rate among twins sharing 100% genetic overlap (monozygotic twins) is slightly less than 50%. Other factors clearly play contributing roles.

In teaching about genetic contributions to abnormal behavior, we need to recognize that there is no one-to-one correspondence between genetic factors and abnormal behavior patterns. Genetic factors create a predisposition or likelihood, not a certainty, that certain disorders will develop in the context of stressful life experiences. We also need to recognize that genetic contributions to psychological disorders are based upon the roles of multiple genes in combination, not individual genes acting alone (Plomin, 2003; Uhl & Grow, 2004). We have yet to find any psychological disorder that can be explained by defects or variations on a single gene (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999).

Investigators today are attempting to track down the roles of particular genes in a range of psychological disorders (e.g., Abkevich et al., 2003; Plomin et al., 2003). For example, a recent discovery showed that people who inherit a variant of a particular gene had more than twice the chance of developing clinical depression in the face of stressful life events than did those with another version of the gene (Caspi et al., 2003). The gene regulates production of a protein that plays a key role in transmission of serotonin, the neurotransmitter targeted by antidepressants such as Prozac and Zoloft. The field of gene tracking is still in its infancy, but investigators hope that such discoveries will make it possible to repair defective or harmful genes, perhaps by blocking the actions of these genes.

Drug Therapy Versus Psychotherapy? Or Drug Therapy and Psychotherapy?

Television viewers are regularly exposed to commercials for psychiatric drugs such as Paxil (for social anxiety disorder) and Zoloft (for depression). These advertisements leave the strong impression that mental health problems are best treated with drug therapy. Often, the story that doesn’t get told is that many psychological forms of treatment are effective in treating a wide range of psychological disorders. For example, cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) yields impressive results in treating anxiety disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kubany et al., 2004; Resick, Nishith, Weaver, Astin, & Feuer, 2002), panic disorder (Barlow, Gorman, Shear, & Woods, 2000), generalized anxiety disorder (Borkovec, Newman, Pincus, & Lytle, 2002), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) (Abramowitz, Foa, & Franklin, 2003; Abramowitz, Franklin, Schwartz, & Furr, 2003).
Update, continued from page 5

We also have evidence that cognitive-behavioral treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) produces as much, if not greater, benefit than either treatment component, that of antidepressant mediation (DeRubeis, Gelfand, Tang, & Simons, 1999; DeRubeis, Tang, & Beck, 2001). Some structured forms of psychodynamic therapy also show good results in treating certain disorders, including depression, borderline personality disorder, and bulimia (e.g., Gabbard, Gunderson, & Fonagy, 2002; Leichsenring & Leibing, 2003; Mufson et al., 2004).

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Consumers today have a choice of effective psychological treatments or pharmacological treatments for many types of mental health disorders. But is the combination of drugs and therapy more effective than either treatment component alone? This question informs current research in the field, but present evidence points to some benefits of combining these forms of treatment. For example, recent evidence shows that antidepressant medication and psychotherapy produced slightly better outcomes in comparison to either psychotherapy or medication alone (Friedman, Detweiler-Bedell, Leventhal, Horne, Keitner, & Miller, 2004). Evidence also supports the benefits of combined treatment in some cases of severe, recurrent depression (Friedman et al., 2004; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). Similarly, some people with anxiety disorders, such as social phobia, OCD, and panic disorder, may benefit from a combination approach (Feldman & Rivas-Vazquez, 2003; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). What we need is additional research focusing on use of a stepped approach to treatment in which additional treatment components are added to first-line treatments as needed.

Emerging Treatment Approaches

The landscape of psychotherapy and biomedical therapies is ever expanding, taking us in some unexpected directions. Here, let me touch upon two recent therapeutic innovations, virtual reality therapy and transcranial magnetic stimulation therapy.

The technology used in virtual reality video games is now being applied in treating people with a wide range of psychological problems. Virtual reality therapy (VRT) is a behavior therapy technique in which computer-generated simulated environments are used as therapeutic tools. VRT is a variant of a well-established behavioral technique, exposure therapy. But, rather than exposing individuals to fearful stimuli in imagination or real-life situations, VR technology creates encounters with fearful stimuli in a virtual reality environment. By donning specialized virtual reality equipment, fearful individuals can confront the objects of their fears in a virtual world, such as riding up a virtual glass-enclosed elevator to the top of an imaginary hotel. VRT offers the therapeutic advantage of creating exposure situations that may not be practical or feasible in the real environment, such as repeated aircraft take-offs and landings. VRT also permits users to more directly control the intensity and range of stimuli used during virtual exposure sessions.

Individuals may also be more willing to perform certain fearful tasks in virtual reality than in real life. Increasing evidence supports the therapeutic benefits of VRT in treating a range of phobias, such as fear of heights and fear of flying (e.g., Rothbaum et al., 2002). Therapists are also exploring other potential applications of VRT, such as experimenting with virtual bars and crack houses to help substance abusers learn to resist drugs (Lubell, 2004). Virtual reality may also enable individuals to work through unresolved conflicts with others by allowing them to confront virtual representations of significant figures in their lives.

A potentially important biomedical advance in treating refractory depression is the application of

APA Receives Award To Create Online Psychology Laboratory

The National Science Foundation has awarded a grant to the APA Education Directorate in the amount of $375,000 (DUE-0435058) to fund Phase One of the Online Psychology Laboratory (OPL). To date, there has not been an NSF-funded National Science Digital Library (NSDL) entry for the discipline of psychology. NSDL provides educational resources for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. The NSDL mission is to both deepen and extend science literacy through access to materials and methods that reveal the nature of the physical universe and the intellectual means by which we discover and understand it (http://www.nsdl.org/about).

OPL will consist of highly interactive, Web-deliverable psychology experiments and demonstrations, a cumulative data archive from which students can retrieve datasets for analysis, and pedagogical materials that link the library content to the curriculum in high schools, community colleges, and 4-year institutions. Dr. Maureen McCarthy, associate executive director of the Education Directorate, and director, Precollege and Undergraduate Education, and Dr. Ken McGraw of the University of Mississippi will serve as the Co-PIs of this project.
strong magnetic stimulation to the head. The treatment technique, called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), involves the use of a powerful electromagnet placed on the scalp to generate a strong magnetic field that passes directly through the skull. TMS affects electrical activity in the prefrontal cortex, the thinking and organizing center of the brain. Depressed patients often show patterns of underactivation in the prefrontal cortex.

**Advances in Brain Imaging Studies**

Virtually every major psychiatric journal is replete with studies examining the workings and structures of the brains of psychiatric patients. Modern brain imaging techniques, especially functional MRI (fMRI), which offers a glimpse of the brain at work, have increased our understanding of brain abnormalities associated with various disorders, including schizophrenia and mood disorders.

One of the most prominent brain imaging findings is the loss of brain tissue (gray matter) in many schizophrenia patients, as compared to normal controls (Cowan & Kandel, 2001; Thompson et al., 2001). Though the origins of schizophrenia remain a mystery, at least some forms of schizophrenia may arise from the progressive loss of brain tissue during childhood or adolescence (a loss of about 5% on the average) or perhaps from a failure of the brain to have developed normally in the first place. Scientists suspect that brain damage may result from prenatal influences, such as viral infections or inadequate fetal nutrition, from genetic defects, or from birth traumas or complications (e.g., Wahlbeck, Forsen, Osmond, Barker, & Eriksson, 2001; Walker, Kestler, Bollini, & Hochman, 2004). But we should recognize that not all schizophrenia patients show evidence of structural brain damage. This heterogeneity suggests that there may be different forms of schizophrenia resulting from different causal processes.

Along with structural defects, brain imaging studies of schizophrenia patients show abnormal functioning (underactivation) of parts of the brain, especially the prefrontal cortex. (Callicott, Mattay, Verchinski, Marenco, Egan, & Weinberger, 2003; Walker et al., 2004). The prefrontal cortex controls many higher-order, or executive, functions, such as regulating attention, organizing thoughts, prioritizing information, performing working memory tasks, and formulating goals—the very types of deficits often seen in people with schizophrenia (Barch, 2003).

Other brain imaging studies show abnormalities in subcortical structures, including structures in the limbic system involved in regulating emotions, attention, and memory (e.g., Csernansky et al., 2004; Gaser, Nenadic, Buchsbaum, Hazlett, & Buchsbaum, 2004).

We also have evidence from brain imaging studies of lower (metabolic) activity in the prefrontal cortex in clinically depressed patients as compared to healthy controls (e.g., Schatzberg, 2002). Two key neurotransmitters implicated in depression, serotonin and norepinephrine, are involved in transmission of nerve impulses in the prefrontal cortex, so it is not surprising to see irregularities in this region of the brain. We also have recent evidence of brain abnormalities in bipolar patients involving loss of brain cells in parts of the brain that regulate mood (Blumberg et al., 2003; Lopez-Larson, DelBello, Zimmerman, Schwiers, & Strakowski, 2003). Moreover, brain imaging studies reveal subtle abnormalities in the brains of children and adolescents with ADHD, especially in parts of the brain regulating attention, arousal, control of motor behavior, and communication between the cerebral hemispheres (e.g., Castellanos, Sharp, Gottesman, Greenstein, Giedd, & Rapoport, 2003; Semrud-Clikeman, Steingard, Filipek, Biederman, Bekken, & Renshaw, 2000). With continuing research utilizing modern brain-imaging techniques, we will likely learn more about how the brains of people with various types of psychological disorders differ from those of healthy individuals.

All in all, research in the field of abnormal psychology continues to illuminate our understanding of psychological disorders and the ways of helping people who face the many challenges they pose.

**References**

Available upon request (contact Dr. Nevid at nevidj@stjohns.edu). *PTN*

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**2004 Excellence in Teaching Award Winner Announced**

TOPSS and the APA Education Directorate are pleased to announce that TOPSS member Viviana Mendoza has been awarded the 2004 TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award. Viviana, a teacher at American Cooperative School (ACS) in La Paz, Bolivia, teaches AP psychology, philosophy, sociology, and comparative religion at ACS, and is also the K-12 Community Service Coordinator.

The Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes outstanding high school psychology teachers. Award winners are commended for exemplary teaching and for their efforts to promote vigorous student involvement in psychology beyond the classroom and positive applications of psychology in the school community. Please see page 10 for the 2005 call for nominations.

Viviana has been awarded with a certificate and engraved award to recognize her exceptional teaching skills. Congratulations, Viviana Mendoza!
PT@CC Invites Students To Enter Electronic Project Contest

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites your students to participate in the third annual APA PT@CC Electronic Project Contest! Supported through funding by the APA Education Directorate and Allyn & Bacon Publishing Company, the Electronic Project Contest 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 are community college students who have not previously completed a bachelor’s degree. Faculty sponsors must be members of the APA PT@CC. If you have students who might be interested in entering, tell them about this opportunity and urge them to begin work on their presentations right away. The entry deadline is May 2nd.

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 2005 Electronic Project Contest on the Web at www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html. For more information about this competition or about PT@CC, please contact Martha Boenau (mboenau@apa.org). PTN

2005 Regional Association Meetings

Mark your calendars for the 2005 annual meetings of the regional psychological associations! Regional meetings are excellent opportunities to hear presentations by distinguished scholars and for networking with colleagues in your region. Please visit the Web sites below for additional information.

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<th>Regional Association Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Psychological Association Meeting (EPA)</td>
<td>March 10-13, 2005</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.easternpsychological.org">http://www.easternpsychological.org</a></td>
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<td>Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Meeting (RMPA)</td>
<td>April 14-16, 2005</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
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<td>Western Psychological Association Meeting (WPA)</td>
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<td>Midwestern Psychological Association Meeting (MPA)</td>
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How To Have Your Cake and Eat It Too: *The Story of the Classics in the History of Psychology Web Site*

Christopher D. Green, PhD
York University

The full impact of the Internet revolution has only just begun to be felt in psychology. Many have not yet realized the extent to which the World Wide Web frees us from what Stevan Harnad has called the “Faustian bargain” that scholars struck with publishers in centuries past. Back in December of 1997, having spent 2 years as the webmaster for a few small scholarly societies, I was just beginning to understand. My main beef back then wasn’t with commercial publishers so much as with those nasty little copy shops that inhabit college campuses across the continent.

I had just finished teaching another section of history of psychology, a course in which I have long thought it important to include some primary source materials in order to prevent students from becoming wholly bound to the interpretations—sometimes quite eccentric—of their textbook writer. A direct confrontation between a student and the “real” material, rather than (only) a predigested reading of it, can have an amazing effect on the authority with which students view the written word generally, and textbook accounts in particular. Publishers had just begun to crack down on professors with the audacity to photocopy a few articles for their courses’ reading lists. With that, campus-based copy shops saw a lucrative opening to offer to negotiate reprinting costs with publishers on behalf of professors who were caught between wanting to teach quality courses and wanting to reduce course preparation time. These costs were then added to the price charged to the students. The result was predictable: The prices went through the roof, and students began to squeal. I needed a way out if I was going to keep primary sources on my syllabus.

I taught myself how to scan printed documents and then run them through optical character recognition (OCR) software. With some hand editing, I could produce a computer-ready version of a journal article in a few hours. I created a few for my history of psychology course—short writings by James, Watson, Koffka, Freud, Binet, and Terman—and I posted them to a Web site for use by my students. These documents were now in the public domain and could therefore be reproduced in this manner. I called the Web site—much too grandly—“Classics in the History of Psychology” (today you can find it at: http://psychclassics.yorku.ca).

While I was producing these first few documents, it occurred to me that other faculty might be able to use them in their courses as well. Indeed, I began to see that I could make it so easy for psychology teachers to assign primary source documents to their students that they would hardly be able to resist doing so. It began to feel a bit like a mission. I told a few colleagues about the site and was astonished at the results. The use of the Classics site immediately outstripped that of the society Web sites I had been managing up to that time: 2000 page hits in January 1998... 9000 in April... 28,000 in November... a total of 134,000 page hits in 1998. Over half a million hits were logged the following year, and more than a million the year after that.

Things really took off when I learned that everything published in APA journals prior to 1962 is in the public domain. I hired a couple of graduate student assistants and taught them to produce Web documents. I appointed an editorial board to advise me on what documents to post next. I asked colleagues to write expert commentaries on the most popular documents. I experimented with various ways of organizing the documents—special collections of documents on important themes such as “women in psychology” and the “founding of the first psychology courses, laboratories, and journals.”

There are now more than 200 documents on the Classics site and links to over 200 more that reside on other Web sites. In 2003, the site received over 2 million page hits from countries the world over. According to Google, there are links to it from over 700 other Web sites. I like to think it has begun to change the way history of psychology is taught—from a mainly textbook-based course to one in which primary sources are plentiful.

Christopher D. Green is the coordinator of the History & Theory of Psychology graduate program at York University (Toronto). Other writings on the topic of electronic academic publishing can be found at http://www.yorku.ca/christo.
TOPSS Requests Submissions for 2005 Excellence in Teaching Awards

Purpose
The purpose of the TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award is to provide an opportunity for TOPSS to recognize outstanding teachers in psychology. There will be up to three annual awards.

Eligibility
Teachers of high school psychology who are self-nominated or nominated by a colleague, supervisor, student, or administrator will be eligible.

Evidence of Excellence
- **Recommendation Letter:** Submit one letter of reference (e.g., from a former student, colleague or supervisor).
- **Professional and/or Student Growth Activities:** Submit a resume or curriculum vitae that includes professional development activities and/or student-centered psychology related activities.
- **Content and Pedagogy:** Highlight a topic taught during the psychology course that best represents your teaching. Include the following elements in your submission:
  - A content outline for a lesson plan of what is taught for the topic with a correlation of the topic to the National Standards, and
  - Example(s) of activities or demonstrations related to the topic.

Judging Criteria
Submissions will be evaluated using the rubric posted on the TOPSS Web site. 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.

Award
Winners of the APA-TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award will receive a framed certificate, an engraved Jefferson Cup, and free affiliate membership renewal. New this year, recipients will also receive the Media Archive: Psychology and a $50 American Express Gift Certificate from Worth Publishers.

Timeline
- All supporting materials must be postmarked by **March 21, 2005.** Send to Emily Leary, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.
- The winners will be announced in the Psychology Teacher Network newsletter.

For additional information, please contact Emily Leary, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002 (800) 374-2721, ext. 3013, eleary@apa.org. PTN

Internet Resources for Teaching About Psychological Disorders (Introductory Course)

Students often resist traditional print resources. Providing students direction to specific sites may actually result in better understanding of psychological illness. The APA Help Center (http://www.apahelpcenter.org) features a number of online brochures and fact sheets that cover a range of topics including mental health and emotional wellness.

Consider requiring students to visit the National Library of Medicine (http://www.nlm.nih.gov) and produce a report about a particular psychological illness (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar, phobias). For example, schizophrenia produces information about clinical trials, coping, diagnosis, and treatment.

NIMH provides information about the current state of research on mental disorders. Excellent fact sheets for the layperson or introductory student are available (http://www.nimh.nih.gov).
Thinking Like a Scientist

Wendy M. Williams, PhD
Cornell University

As TOPSS teachers know, psychology has the power to speak to today’s high school students. Research in psychology is often applicable to the daily lives of these young women and men—“Does playing violent videogames make youth more violent?”, “What is the role of high self-esteem in success?”, and “How can we treat teenage depression?”—to mention just a few examples. By considering questions such as these, an innovative educational program developed at Cornell University helps high school teachers bring psychology alive for their students. This project, led by professor Wendy M. Williams, was funded by the National Science Foundation through a grant to the Cornell Institute for Research on Children, which Williams codirects with Stephen J. Ceci.

Thinking Like a Scientist (TLAS) seeks to reach students through current hot topics in psychology and train these students to think critically and to reason using the scientific method about problems in daily life. Traditional curricula in the basic sciences attempt to teach critical thinking, but often students find the topics remote from personal experience. Consequently, students sometimes fail to invest in the learning process. By engaging all students, including those who may have been previously turned off to science, TLAS attempts to increase the eventual representation in science careers of girls, people of color, and people from less-privileged backgrounds. In particular, its authors hope to encourage these students to continue their education beyond high school. The program also trains general scientific thinking and reasoning ability for use in other classes and in life outside the classroom and increases awareness of science-related careers.

The authors began by scouring the scientific literature in psychology for key articles representing consensus positions on topics that were both relevant to the lives of teenagers and appropriate for teaching scientific thinking. The authors then developed a set of six themes around which to organize each lesson:

1. Ask: What is Science?
2. Define the Problem: See Many Sides
3. Distinguish Fact from Opinion: Understand What Constitutes Evidence
4. Weigh Evidence and Make Decisions
5. Move from Science to Society, and
6. Revisit, Review, Reflect, and Reevaluate

Using the same format for each lesson, TLAS provides self-contained full lesson plans suitable for students in grades 8-12, as well as for community college students. Lessons may be taught in any order because each lesson’s specific content is independent from the content of other lessons. Though several concepts are used in multiple lessons (e.g., “hypothesis,” “working definition”), each lesson adds its own unique piece to the puzzle. Key terms and concepts are emphasized and elaborated upon via special boxes in the margins. Lessons initially take about two to three class periods to teach. After a few lessons, students learn the gist of the procedure, and lessons can be taught in one to two class periods. (Sample lessons can be seen at www.circ.cornell.edu.)

TLAS has been taught to rural working-class White high schoolers, inner-city African American and Latino youth (at a magnet high school and technical school), urban Catholic School students, 4-H youth of all ethnicities participating in a summer program at Cornell University, and middle-class high schoolers in Ithaca, NY. The project leaders are interested in finding teachers to help expand the program into new schools and communities. Participation level can vary, and stipends are available for teachers who wish to help in the program’s evaluation and further development. If you are interested, please contact Principal Investigator and TLAS author Wendy M. Williams (wmw5@cornell.edu) or graduate fellow and TLAS author Matthew C. Makel (mcm57@cornell.edu), and visit the Web site for the Cornell Institute for Research on Children at www.circ.cornell.edu. PTN

Correction

In the Fall 2004 PTN, we incorrectly listed the title of Michael Sloyer’s second-place winning APF/TOPSS Excellence in High School Student Research paper. Michael’s winning paper was entitled The Effect of Visual Images and Power Phrases on Contributions to a Hunger Prevention Charity.
TOPSS Scholars Essay Question Announced
The Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is proud to announce the essay question for the sixth annual American Psychological Foundation (APF)/APA TOPSS Scholars Competition. There will be three winners, each of whom will receive a $1,000 scholarship. TOPSS is extremely grateful to the American Psychological Foundation (APF) for contributing funds to support this wonderful opportunity for the winners in 2005.

To compete in the contest, a student must answer all parts of the question. Winners will be selected on the basis of a demonstrated ability to (1) complete a critical analysis and synthesis of empirical research and (2) generate a quality research proposal. Psychology faculty at the college level will serve as judges.

Please visit http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/apftopsscholar.html for complete information on eligibility requirements, scoring criteria, and process for submitting papers. You can also contact Emily Leary at eleary@apa.org or 202-572-3013 for additional information. Submissions must be postmarked by February 14, 2005.

2005 Essay Question
Growing interest exists today in the fields of behavioral medicine and health psychology. Psychologists’ contributions to health care have grown considerably over the past 100 years as we have come to appreciate the extent to which health is affected by behavior. Increasingly, the leading causes of death in the United States are linked not to infectious diseases but rather to lifestyles. For instance, overeating, smoking, and prolonged exposure to stress have all been shown to be related to a variety of medical problems.

Prepare a research proposal to explore how behavior may influence health.

Part 1
Conduct a thorough search of the related literature. Provide a complete review of the literature using a minimum of five print-based sources. The list of references must be formatted consistent with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition) style. Limited assistance for formatting using this style can be found at the following Web site: http://www.apastyle.org/previoustips.html.

Part 2
Based on the literature review, develop a research proposal that tests how a specific behavior or set of behaviors may affect health. The research design must be specified using a method that is feasible under circumstances of limited resources. In other words, the proposal should specify a study that can be conducted locally and with a limited amount of money for materials or supplies.
Sometimes students approach the study of the brain in introductory psychology as an exercise in memorization. Obviously, as instructors, we want them to understand the functioning of the brain and how it relates to their everyday activities. To facilitate this understanding, I introduce the unit on the brain by posing the question, “What does it take for me to be able to successfully walk across the room?” At first I am confronted by blank stares because students feel the answer to this question is so blatantly obvious that it seems pointless to discuss. However, I persist by asking, “What kind of activities does my brain have to do and control to make walking possible?” Typically a student will volunteer, “You have to be able to move your legs forward.” I then jump to the section of my PowerPoint presentation that describes the functioning of the motor cortex. I continue in this fashion until we have covered all of the major brain structures in the chapter that can play a role in walking.

In the past I waited until after lecturing on the brain to conduct this activity because I thought it would make more sense to students because they would be more familiar with the brain structures and their functioning at that point. During the last two semesters, however, I have started this activity after covering the hindbrain, midbrain, thalamus, and the limbic system, but before covering the cerebral cortex. The reason for this change is twofold. First, I want to start with the students’ current knowledge of the topic and then present new information. For example, students already know that you need to move your legs and balance your body to walk, but they do not know which brain structures control these functions. Second, I hope to create cognitive disequilibrium by making students aware of a gap in their knowledge concerning how the brain controls everyday functions. From a Piagetian perspective, this cognitive disequilibrium may stimulate curiosity to resolve the cognitive conflict and understand the brain’s role in controlling the body. (For more information on the role of curiosity and motivation, see Loewenstein’s (1994) article on the psychology of curiosity.)

If after we go through the walking example students are still unsure about the relation between brain structures and how they control the body, I present the example of driving a car. This example is a little more complicated, but can be used to incorporate other ideas about cognitive functioning, such as effortful versus automatic processing (novice drivers versus experienced drivers). See the table included here for an example of how various brain structures can be related to driving. For the purpose of this activity, I have excluded some of the autonomic functions, as well as the medulla (heart rate, blood pressure, breathing), reticular formation (arousal), thalamus (sensory switchboard), and the limbic system (memory, emotion, and drives) to keep the activity from becoming overwhelming. Granted, this classroom activity oversimplifies how the brain functions, but for an introductory course I feel this oversimplification is appropriate.

Reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Brain Structures Involved in Driving a Car</th>
<th>Brain Structure Related Aspect of Driving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor cortex</td>
<td>Moving muscles in the arms and legs to control the steering wheel and pedals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory cortex</td>
<td>Tactile feedback from the foot and arms/hands concerning muscle movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parietal lobes</td>
<td>Awareness of where your feet and hands are (proprioception)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontal lobes</td>
<td>Deciding your driving destination and how you will get there; conscious control of voluntary movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal lobes</td>
<td>Interpreting auditory information about traffic; balance (vestibular sense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebellum</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occipital lobes</td>
<td>Interpreting visual information from the instrument panel and traffic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PT@CC Elects New Executive Committee Members

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges is delighted to welcome two new members who will join the PT@CC Executive Committee beginning in January. Susan Pollock, PhD, of Mesa Community College, and Ladonna Lewis, PhD, of Glendale Community College, have been elected to the committee.

Drs. Pollock and Lewis will fill the positions left vacant by off-going committee members Ann Ewing, PhD, of Mesa Community College, and Tonja Ringgold, EdD, of Baltimore City Community College. The PT@CC Executive Committee and the APA staff extend thanks and appreciation to Drs. Ewing and Ringgold for their service to PT@CC and commitment to community college psychology. PTN

Tell Us About Your Professional Development Needs

The APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education has created a survey to determine teachers' needs for professional development that could be addressed by APA.

The purpose of the survey is to gather information about teachers' perceptions of professional development needs in several areas, including classroom management, instructional practices, classroom diversity, family and community outreach, and other teaching skills and knowledge informed by psychological science. The survey will help form APA professional development courses for teachers.

The survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and should be completed in one session. The survey is anonymous. To protect confidentiality, data will be released in the aggregate only.

Please contact Heidi Sickler at hsickler@apa.org to request a link to the online survey.

Announcing the 2005 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 Teaching Tips Contest! Sponsored by the APA PT@CC and Worth Publishers, 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 the APA 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 more details about the Teaching Tips Contest on the PT@CC Web site. Entries must be postmarked by April 1, 2005.
Dear Doctor

Q How does the definition of abnormality differ across cultures?

A There is not a single definition of what is normal or abnormal in this culture or any culture. Instead, abnormal behavior is classified by professional psychologists and typically includes statistical deviance, level of functioning, and subjective distress. Yet, even with the empirically grounded information, contextual factors play a role in diagnosis.

We need to recognize that society establishes norms for behavior and that societal standards do change over time, hence the definition of abnormal behavior must be considered relative to the period of time. For example, years ago, homosexuality was considered a mental illness. Today, of course, it is not. These types of changes occur in other diagnostic categories as well and reflect the fluidity of our definitions of mental illness according to changes in social mores and culture within societies as well.

Second, although many things differ across cultures, there are many similarities between cultures. Some pathology appears to have several universal characteristics. The World Health Organization conducted seminal studies on the characteristics of depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders. Although some differences in behaviors were obtained across cultures, there were also many cross-cultural similarities. For example, in one study, the World Health Organization (WHO) (1983) investigated the symptoms of depression in four countries—Canada, Switzerland, Iran, and Japan—and found that the great majority (76% of the 573 cases) reported cross-culturally constant symptoms, including “sadness, joylessness, anxiety, tension, lack of energy, loss of interest, loss of ability to concentrate, and ideas of insufficiency” (p.61). Furthermore, over half of this group (56%) also reported suicidal ideation. Based on these findings, Marsella (1980; Marsella et al., 1985) suggested that vegetative symptoms such as loss of enjoyment, appetite, or sleep are cross-culturally constant ways in which people experience depression. Other studies (for example, with children in six countries, Yamamoto, Soliman, Parsons, & Davies, 1987; with Iranians, Haghighatgou & Peterson, 1995; and comparing Hungarians with Americans and Canadians, Keitner, 1991) have tended to support this viewpoint.

But, cross-cultural studies of depression have also documented wide variations in expression of symptomatology of this disorder. Some cultural groups (for example, Nigerians) are less likely to report extreme feelings of worthlessness and guilt-related symptoms. Others (for example, Chinese) are more likely to report somatic complaints (Kleinman, 1988). Indigenous expressions of depression for Hopi Indians include worry sickness and heartbrokenness (Manson, Shore, & Bloom, 1985). As with schizophrenia, rates of depression also vary from culture to culture (Marsella, 1980), ranging from 3.3% in South Korea to 6.24% in Iran to 12.6% in New Zealand (Hwu & Compton, 1994; Mehrabi et al., 2000). However, different assessments and manifestations of the disorder render it difficult to obtain comparable prevalence rates.

There are some disorders that appear to be indigenous to certain cultural groups. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia are thought to be a product of the societies that foster abnormal and unhealthy views of beauty, especially among women. These kinds of disorders point to how society and culture do play a large role in the labeling and etiology of some disorders. Genetics and biological substrates that contribute to disease must be considered in addition to cultural factors. Although we know a lot, in some senses we are still in our infancy in attempting to understand the relative contributions of genes, biology, culture, and learning in the mental disorders.

This answer was provided by David Matsumoto, PhD, of San Francisco State University (SFSU). Dr. Matsumoto is professor of psychology and director of the Culture and Emotion Research Laboratory at SFSU. He has studied culture, emotion, and social interaction and communication for 20 years and has written more than 250 works in these areas.

Additional Resources:

References

Dear Doctor, continued on page 16


Questions submitted to this column by teachers and students will be answered by experts in the field of psychology. Please send your questions to: *DearDoctor/PTN, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. PTN*