Technology changes very quickly, and the signal-to-noise ratio is very high. As faculty, we don’t have a lot of time to seek new ways of interacting with our computer-based information, let alone learn how to use those new tools. This essay introduces a few easy-to-use tools that can help teachers work more efficiently.

DROPBOX: WINDOWS, LINUX, MAC, IPHONE/DROID APPS WITH AN APP FOR BLACKBERRY COMING SOON

Are you using a flash drive to tote your files from your office to your classroom and then home? Do you back up your flash drive or send files to yourself via email? Do you ever worry about losing your flash drive or losing track of which version of a file is most current? Consider Dropbox (http://dropbox.com). Imagine having access to your files wherever you are: at home, at work, on your laptop, at the public library, on your smartphone, on a boat, with a goat, in the rain, on a train. You get the idea. Dropbox adds a folder in the “My Documents” folder called “My Dropbox.” Treat it like you would any other folder. Whatever you put in that folder will automatically be uploaded to Dropbox.com and then downloaded to any other computer where you have installed Dropbox.

For example, I have it installed on my work computer and my personal laptop. I can also access it on my Droid using the Dropbox app or my phone’s web browser. In my classroom, I can visit Dropbox.com and log in to my account to access my files. Dropbox serves as a handy backup. Not only are my files saved in three places (work, home, and on the Dropbox server), Dropbox retains previous versions of files for 30 days.

Another advantage of Dropbox is that I can share individual folders with other people. I have several folders inside my Dropbox

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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.

ADDRESS EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
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folder. By right-clicking on the folder and mousing over “Dropbox,” I can select “Share this folder.” This will open my browser to the appropriate page on the Dropbox website. All I need to do is type in the addresses of the people with whom I want to share the folder, and Dropbox will send them invitations. A shared folder acts like a shared drive. Any change I make to a file will automatically be updated on the computers of everyone with whom I’m sharing that folder. When that person makes a change, the file is updated on my computer. A minor disadvantage of this resource is that only those who install Dropbox are able to share files. While Dropbox makes it easy for others to join and set up Dropbox, some users may resist being “forced” to use a new program.

**XOBNI (INBOX SPelled BACKWARDS): WINDOWS XP, VISTA, OR 7; OUTLOOK 2003, 2007, OR 2010**

Xobni is an add-in for Outlook (http://xobni.com) that makes managing the onslaught of email much easier. It can help you quickly find email messages, attachments, and contact information for anyone with whom you have ever exchanged emails. You can take a look at Xobni here: http://sfrantz.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/xobni-v1-9.jpg. Xobni occupies the fourth column on the screen. To illustrate how it works, I sent a blank email to myself. When I click on that email, I see the message in the reading pane (third column), and Xobni automatically pulls in whatever information it has collected about me. If I were looking at an email from you, I would see whatever information Xobni has collected about you. At the top you see my work email address. Next are my work and mobile numbers. I can even Skype directly from Xobni. I didn’t have to enter any of this information; Xobni pulled it from emails that were sent to and from my Outlook. Where did the photo come from? Facebook. Xobni will show photos for people who use this email for their Facebook account and who have their Facebook photo set as publicly available.

Xobni’s true power lies in its indexing of email. If I’m looking at an email you just sent me, I can also see the most recent email conversations we’ve had, the files we’ve exchanged, and website URLs we’ve shared, all of which I can open directly from Xobni.

Xobni is also searchable. Typing “Jack” in the search box will locate everyone I’ve corresponded with who has “Jack” as part of their name. I will also get all the email messages that had “Jack” in the subject line or body of the message, all files exchanged that contain “Jack” in the name of the file, and any appointment that included someone named Jack. If “Jack” is on the webpage of a URL that I and another person exchanged in an email, Xobni will give me the URL. When Xobni was first released, it was criticized for slowing down Outlook. Xobni has largely resolved that issue. Outlook may initially take slightly longer to open but then there is no difference in how the program performs, and the benefits of Xobni’s search capabilities can quickly outweigh this slight delay.

**OTHER OUTLOOK ADD-INS**

If you live in Outlook, you might also be interested in Simply File (http://www.techhit.com/SimplyFile) for quickly filing email messages into folders; EZDetach (http://www.techhit.com/ezdetach) for quickly pulling attachments off email messages and saving them to your computer; and Bcc (http://www.bccthis.com), which allows you to send one message to one or more people while letting you send an additional comment to one or more additional people. Use Bcc to keep someone in the loop while adding additional information for context. It works with Outlook, Gmail, and Blackberry.

**GOOGLE READER**

How many websites do you visit each day? When do you find time to go into your college library’s database to look at what’s new in your professional journals? Do you keep checking in with your favorite bloggers to see if they have posted something new? Wouldn’t it be nice if someone would just contact you to let you know when there is new content on a web page? RSS feed readers do just that. When you use a feed reader to “subscribe” to a website, the reader periodically checks that website for new content. In fact, you probably already have a feed reader. Outlook and Firefox, for instance, both can read RSS feeds. In Outlook, you can find “RSS Feeds” in your “Mail Folders” pane, just above your “Sent Items” folder. In Firefox, they’re called “Live Bookmarks.” Many web pages produce RSS feeds—content that is readily readable by RSS feed readers. Many post a sporty little orange icon. You can link to this screenshot to take a look: http://sfrantz.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/rss1.png?w=125&h=150. Your browser may also display this icon in the address bar to tell you an RSS feed is available. Click the icon to subscribe to the feed. Google Reader (http://www.google.com/reader) is popular because it’s web-based rather than residing on your computer; you can access your personal news feeds on any device that has Internet access. I’ll discuss how to use Google Reader, but all readers work basically the same way:

**Subscribe to a news feed.** Read the news feed. Here’s a one-minute overview courtesy of Google Reader: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSPZ2Uu_X3Y.
This is what my Google Reader looks like:

http://sfrantz.wordpress.com/2009/04/12/heres-comes-the-news/greader1

In the screenshot on the left, you can see some of the feeds to which I’m subscribed. The ones in bold are the ones with unread content; the number in parentheses tells me how many unread items are in that feed. On the right is content from some of my unread feeds. Did you know that your library’s database has RSS feeds? For instance, in the screenshot above, I have an “APA” folder that has two APA journals in it. Google Reader retrieves each journal’s table of contents, giving the title, author, and journal information. Some journals even provide the abstract. Clicking the article title takes me directly to the article in my library’s database. Some journals even provide the abstract. Clicking the article title takes me directly to the article in my library’s database. A database search can also be an RSS feed. Whenever new content arrives in the database that matches your search criteria, the articles will appear in your feed reader. To subscribe, visit your library’s website, and open your favorite database. Locate the journals, magazines, or newspapers you are interested in and look for the orange RSS icon.

(Screenshot accessed through: http://sfrantz.wordpress.com/2009/04/12/heres-comes-the-news/psycarticles/)

In short, an RSS feed reader produces a personalized newspaper. Some people feel compelled to read everything in their news feed and if they don’t, they feel guilty. Truly, your RSS feed reader doesn’t care if you read it or not. Skim the headlines like you would a newspaper, and read only what you’d like.

**PHRASEEXPRESS:**

**WINDOWS 2000, XP, VISTA, OR 7**

I spend a lot of time typing the same phrases over and over again. When students send me an assignment via email, I reply with a “got it” message. When I send them their graded assignments, I write a “your assignment is attached” message. When I grade papers electronically, I find myself typing the same sorts of comments over and over again such as, “Write out numbers that begin sentences.” PhraseExpress (http://www.phraseexpress.com) allows me to use keyboard shortcuts to make such comments. PhraseExpress works wherever you type text—in email, in Word, in Excel, in your browser’s search box. Using whatever combination of key strokes you designate, PhraseExpress will automatically enter text, run a program, open a folder or file, do a web search, access your clipboard cache, open a calendar, or enter today’s date. If you can do it on your computer, PhraseExpress can do it with a shortcut. One downside of this application is that PhraseExpress will sometimes behave strangely, such as performing an action with just part of a keyboard shortcut. For example, CTRL-ALT-V will produce a window that lists the last 20 copies I made. In Windows, CTRL-V pastes just the last copy. Sometimes CTRL-V will be enough to cause PhraseExpress to show the last 20 copies. Closing and reopening PhraseExpress usually resolves the issue.

**CONCLUSION**

This essay introduced several computing resources that can help you more easily manage files, email, and information and can also provide you with shortcuts for common tasks. Resources such as these can enhance your ability to collaborate with colleagues, improve your access to information, and increase your efficiency as you juggle professional responsibilities. PTN

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Sue Frantz has taught psychology for 17 years, the last 9 of those at Highline Community College, which is located in the Seattle area. Since early in her teaching career, she has been an early adopter of new technologies in which she saw pedagogical potential. She has had a web page with resources for her students since 1995. By the mid ‘90s she was giving presentations on (then) cutting-edge technologies such as using email discussion groups to foster student engagement and interaction. She is currently exploring the teaching applications of Web 2.0 (primarily the use of wikis), interactive video conferencing, and audience response systems (“clickers”).
APA TOOLBAR FOR PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS

APA has facilitated the creation of a toolbar designed especially for High School Psychology Teachers! We have included links to the most relevant and practical content, tools, and feeds from the APA web pages in a free application that can be easily downloaded to your web browser. The toolbar will appear at the top of the page every time you open a new browser window, and it will be updated automatically with every improvement and revision through a simple “refresh” of the screen. Your toolbar will work on Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari for Mac.

EXAMPLE: High School Psychology Teachers Toolbar

Here is the link for downloading the toolbar on your computer:
http://www.highschoolpsychologyteachers.ourtoolbar.com/
For toolbar assistance, contact APA at ToolbarTech@apa.org.

2010 APA PT@CC TEACHING TIPS CONTEST WINNERS

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2010 PT@CC Teaching Tips Contest.

Developed as a means to recognize and encourage sharing of high-quality instructional techniques, the contest guidelines invited community college instructors 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.

PT@CC extends thanks and appreciation to the APA Education Directorate for supporting the Teaching Tips Contest. In addition, special thanks go to all of the psychology faculty members who participated in the competition. Join us in congratulating this year’s winners!

First Place: “Dialing for Dullards”
By Richard Alexander
Muskegon Community College (MI)

Second Place: “Using Toys to Teach Application of Developmental Concepts”
By Cinnamon Martin
Wilkes Community College (NC)

Third Place: “History of Psychology Learning Module”
By Lawrence Venuk
Naugatuck Valley Community College (CT)

Honorable Mention: “Using the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale to Demonstrate the Importance of Inter-Rater Reliability”
By Andrea M. Macari
Suffolk County Community College (NY)

Visit the PT@CC website at http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/undergrad/ptacc/contest-winners.aspx to read the winning teaching tips.
The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2010 Teaching Excellence Awards. Winners were honored at the STP Social Hour at the 2010 APA Convention in San Diego.

**Robert S. Daniel Teaching Excellence Award (4-year college):** Dr. Marianne Miserandino, Department of Psychology, Arcadia University, Glenside, PA

**Wayne Weiten Teaching Excellence Award (2-year college):** Dr. Phil O. McClung, West Virginia University at Parkersburg, Parkersburg, WV

**Mary Margaret Moffett Memorial Teaching Excellence Award (high school):** Ms. Wendy Hart, Brentwood High School, Brentwood, TN

**Jane S. Halonen Teaching Excellence Award (early career):** Dr. Karen Z. Naufel, Department of Psychology, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA

**Wilbert J. McKeachie Teaching Excellence Award (graduate student):** Ms. Sadie Leder, Psychology Department, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

The STP Teaching Awards Committee congratulates the recipients of the 2010 Teaching Excellence Awards and thanks all nominees, nominators, and reviewers for their participation in the awards process.

The call for nominations for the 2011 awards is on the STP website at http://teachpsych.org/members/awards/index.php.

**2010 TOPSS Essay Competition Winners**

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) congratulates the student winners of the 2010 APA TOPSS Essay Competition. **Sabina Babar** of Colonia High School (Colonia, NJ), **Rachael J. Erickson** of Sutton Memorial High School (Sutton, MA), **Allison Gutworth** of Colonia High School (Colonia, NJ), and **Alexis Suskey** of Grandville High School (Wyoming, MI) each received a $250 scholarship for their winning essays. Funding is provided by the APA Education Directorate.

The 2010 essay question asked students to focus on the effects human behavior has had on the current environmental crisis. Students were asked to create and describe a community service project that could be carried out in their local communities to encourage environmentally friendly behavior, explaining how human behavior affects a specific environmental issue. Students had to use three principles of learning theory from a choice of five—reinforcement, schedules of reinforcement, shaping, observational learning, and generalization—to encourage this behavior change in their communities. Finally, students were asked to use research findings on these principles to support their plans.

**Sabina Babar**

**Rachael J. Erickson**

**Allison Gutworth**

**Alexis Suskey**
**SYNERGY IS COMING!**

Synergy between psychology students and faculty from across the nation! Synergy between positive psychology and student success! Student driven, student friendly, and affordable psych synergy in the Rockies.

**WHAT?** 2010 National Synergy Conference

**WHEN?** October 29 and 30, 2010

**WHERE?** Auraria Campus, Denver, CO

**WHO IS INVITED?** All psychology students and faculty

**WHY COME?**
- The theme, Positive Psychology, with keynote speaker Sonja Lyubomirsky, author of the *How of Happiness* (http://www.faculty.ucr.edu/~sonja/)
- Workshops on mindfulness, resilience, academic and career success, and building successful student organizations
- Opportunity for student poster presentations in a welcoming environment
- Brain storming and connecting with fellow students and faculty
- Affordable student registration at $45 that includes meals; hotel packages from $85 at swank and historic downtown Denver hotels
- Beautiful tri-institutional campus and setting with easy access to cultural experiences

**HOW?** Go to http://www.psibeta.org and click on the link for Synergy 2010 in the upper right hand of the home page. You will find a conference schedule, links for hotel packages, more information on the city and the campus, and an online registration form for your convenience.

Synergy 2010 is hosted by Psi Beta and Psi Chi chapters of the Community College of Denver and Metropolitan State College with the help and support of the National Psi Beta and Psi Chi organizations.

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**2010 APA TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD RECIPIENTS**

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) congratulates Scott Reed of Hamilton High School in Chandler, AZ, and William James of Milford High School in Highland, MI, for being selected as the 2010 TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award recipients. The TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes outstanding teachers in psychology. Scott and William each received a framed certificate, award, cash prize of $300, ActivePsych CD series, and a free TOPSS membership renewal for the 2011 membership year. The ActivePsych CD series was generously donated by Worth Publishers.

More information on the 2010 award winners will appear in an upcoming *PTN* issue. The deadline for the 2011 TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award nominations will be in March 2011. Nomination information will be posted to the TOPSS website (http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/index.aspx) later this year.
How many teachers have you heard complain about cell phones? How often have you told a student to put a phone on silent; had your lectures interrupted by melodic ring tones; or, seen, during a film, a lovely blue glow from the back of the otherwise dark classroom? Cell phones and text messaging seem to be permeating all walks of life. Psychology professors like me find ourselves asking why a student thinks it’s okay to use his/her cell phone during class. Past classroom etiquette—before the technological revolution—was sit, be silent, listen, and speak when asked. To borrow a phrase from a colleague, “are cell phones a mass distraction or [are they] increasing multitasking?” Will we need to redefine what is socially acceptable within educational environments?

At our college, the Academic Standards Subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Council receives complaints of how much cell phones/texting are interfering with classes daily. As a result, our committee researched cell phone/texting policies in colleges and high schools in our area and the Midwest. It is not surprising that in 90% of the schools we examined, classroom management is left up to the professor. Of course prior to college, most schools reserve the right to simply take a cell phone away if you don’t leave it in your locker. However, student representatives on our council say that maintaining standards within the classroom has become harder because cell phones, texting, and technology disturb the whole class. Additionally, students have complained that some of their classmates have cheated by storing documents on their smart phones or sharing answers in texts during a test.

We cannot negate how much technology has helped us: So much information is easily accessible and literally at our fingertips. And, the information can be obtained at lightning speed; the simplicity is addictive (Ream, 2008). Gibbs (2007) calls our addiction to texting and cell phones “hypersociability.” In fact, in 2007 it was reported that text messaging in the United States had increased 67% and that people aged 13-24 were averaging 50 messages per week. Furthermore, predictions at the time were that texting would increase another 42% by 2011. Those of us over 30 years of age remember searching for pay phones when we needed to communicate or get help. Now reporting on what we are doing in class, at home, at the mall, all while hanging out, is a new phenomenon that interferes with class work.

Some teachers believe that texting and the Internet are destroying students’ thinking

Some teachers believe that texting and the Internet are destroying students’ thinking (Ream, 2008). Texting does not teach spelling or encourage proper writing (Ream, 2008). The new language of texting may destroy critical thinking, an essential aspect of college learning (Ream, 2008). This contradicts McCarroll (2005), who believed that texting improves writing and communicating. Lenhart, Arafah, Smith, and Macgill (2008) found in a large Internet study that college students know that texting is not writing and that as you mature you stop including text anagrams and lingo in your papers. However, it is noted by Lenhart, et al., that texting slang has started to creep into our everyday vernacular.
Is every student using a cell phone during class? Tindell and Bohlander (2010) wanted to gain a better understanding of how frequently students use cell phones or text in the classroom. Their anonymous survey on cell phone use was completed by 269 college students. All the students said that they used cell phones or text messaged while in class. Furthermore, many believed that the professor was unaware of what they were doing. Tindell and Bohlander also discovered that the type of teacher influenced how much students texted: An involved and active instructor promoted less cell phone use. Students also reported that many fellow students abuse cell phones during class (Tindell & Bohlander, 2010). Quan-Haase (2007) found that 268 college students in Canada liked texting and instant messaging (IM) because of its immediacy. And, although it may interfere with class work, some psychologists believe that in the long run, it will reduce depression (Quan-Haase, 2007). Students in Canada felt that new ways to communicate allow them to do two things at once, or multitask (Quan-Haase, 2007).

Cell phone use can be addictive, particularly for female college students who like to reach out more (Jenaro, Flores, Gómez-Vela, González-Gil, & Caballo, 2007). Moreover, cell phones can be dangerous; holding a cell phone while driving is a distraction and can cause accidents (Sloviter, 2009). (Furthermore, recalling cell phone conversations while driving is more difficult (Bower, 2010.).) Researchers in 2009 also found that children aged 10-11 years talking on a cell phone while crossing the street are more likely to be hit by a car. The implication is that cell phone use in the classroom can distract a student. However, it is up to the instructor to change this negative to a positive (Doksai, 2009; Hardin, 2007; Mogilski & Hughes, 2010; and Patton, Callahan, & Fallon, 2010).

So how can we use cell phones, texting, and technology in our classroom effectively? Technology does help our lectures, PowerPoint slides organize our presentations, and other technology provides more entertainment for our students. However, students consistently report that the instructor is more important than the technology used (Patton, et al., 2010; Mogilski & Hughes, 2010; and Hardin, 2007). In fact, students at Albright College reported that they prefer that a professor use a dry-erase board over a PowerPoint program (Mogilski & Hughes, 2010). On the other hand, with new technology emerging daily, we as instructors can encourage students to use technology as a learning tool, e.g., use Twitter to get news updates while discussing current events, tape a reading by a classmate or instructor, or use their smart phones to save important documents from the class (Doksai, 2009). Researchers have found that students who used technology to aid learning did better than those who didn’t.

Technology for education has been proven effective outside the classroom. Colleges and professors can send mobile alerts to their students (Go, 2008). Students who use online learning tools provided by publishers and instructors, blog with classmates and professors, and set homework reminders on their cell phones or Facebook do better than their peers who do not (Patton, et al., 2010; Doksai, 2009). Incorporating technology like this is more work for the professor, but learning is no longer a passive experience.

So how did our committee resolve the issue of unwanted cell phone use in the classroom? We developed a policy that we’d like to see included on all syllabi saying that cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom unless instructed by the professor. The larger council approved this policy, but as of now it is caught up in “red tape.” Needless to say, integrating technology in our college is slow, and whether we have Wi-Fi or a smart classroom is unpredictable. But, while writing this, I realized that I want to include cell phones in my classes in the fall; after all this is the 21st century. PTN

REFERENCES


INTEL INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR WINNERS

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) was held May 9-14, 2010, at the San Jose Convention Center in San Jose, CA. More than 1,600 students from 59 countries, regions, and territories competed at the 60th ISEF. Students competed against more than 65,000 students at over 500 regional Intel ISEF-affiliated science fairs around the world before making it to Intel ISEF. Each affiliated fair selected two individual projects and one team project to travel to the Intel ISEF to compete in 18 different categories: Animal Sciences, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Science, Engineering: Electrical and Mechanical, Engineering: Materials and Bioengineering, Energy and Transportation, Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Mathematical Sciences, Medicine & Health, Microbiology, Physics and Astronomy, Plant Sciences, and Team Projects.

As a Special Awards Organization, APA grants seven awards to the best projects in the psychological sciences. During 2 days of intense judging, a panel of psychologists selected the top projects related to psychological science. The effort is funded and organized through the Education Directorate.

The following awards were given by APA for the best projects in the psychological sciences. All winners receive an award certificate and a 1-year student affiliate membership to APA.

**First Place Award of $1500:** Adelina Corina Cozma, Bayview Secondary School, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Slow It Down to Speed It Up: Breaking Through the Window of Autism.

**Second Place Award of $1000:** Joseph Hunter Yagoda, William A. Shine Great Neck South High School, Great Neck, NY. Risky Business: What Cognitive Factors Influence Risk Taking in the Academic Setting?

**Third Place Awards of $500:**
Athman Ramana Adiseshan, Ramana Academy, San Jose, CA. Ethology of Friendship Among Adult Male Bonnet Macaques (Macaca radiata) at Arunachala Hill, India.

Lindsey Brooke Saunders, Union County High School, Lake Butler, FL. A Comparative Study of Comprehension Differences in Struggling Readers Using Phrase and Character Spaced Models, Year Three.


Diane Elizabeth Schulze, Cherry Creek High School, Greenwood Village, CO. Error in MRI: Bias, Random Error, and the Power of Suggestion.

Mariah Bruns, Saint Mary’s Academy, Portland, Oregon; Annelise Cummings, Cleveland High School, Portland, Oregon; Alexander Eskil Harding, Cleveland High School, Portland, Oregon. Ask PEAT: Determining if Online Music Videos Are Safe for Teens with Photosensitive Epilepsy.
BERNARD C. BEINS RECEIVES
2010 CHARLES L. BREWER DISTINGUISHED TEACHING OF
PSYCHOLOGY AWARD

WASHINGTON—

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) Board of Trustees has named Bernard C. Beins, PhD, as the recipient of the 2010 Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award.

The Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award, which has been given annually since 1970, recognizes exemplary career contributions to the teaching of psychology and leadership in improving the teaching and learning of psychology.

Bernard (Barney) C. Beins has contributed a great deal to the field of psychology though his passion for teaching and mentoring those around him. As a teacher of specifically undergraduate students, Barney has been praised for giving “real and meaningful” lectures, creating better writers, and instilling in his students a hunger to learn and to continue their education in psychology.

Many of his students who move onto graduate school voice their appreciation of how influential his teaching methods were in preparing them for graduate-level work. Those who were taught by Barney (among them some of today’s influential psychologists) insist that his teaching methods have made them better professionals.

Barney is not only known as an excellent teacher, but as a mentor for other teachers and colleagues as well. Through his extensive research, presentations, and publications, he has been able to disseminate innovative and effective teaching methods and materials that have been used to train other teachers. Barney was one of the first pioneers to use computers as a means of teaching. He also created some of the first computer simulations, one of which replicated psychological experiments to teach undergraduates statistics. For his work with computers, he was named the first editor of the Computers in Teaching section of the journal Teaching of Psychology.

Known nationally as one of the best experts on teaching research methods, Bernard C. Beins continues to share his findings with colleagues and students alike.

As the award recipient, Dr. Beins received $2,000 and gave an invited lecture at the American Psychological Association (APA) Annual Convention. Dorothy W. Cantor, PsyD, APF President, presented the Brewer Teaching Award at the APA Convention on August 13, 2010 in San Diego, CA.

For more information, please visit the APF website at www.apa.org/apf.

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) provides financial support for innovative research and programs that enhance the power of psychology to elevate the human condition and advance human potential both now and in generations to come.
MEDIA EXPOSURE AND YOUTH

Jeff McIntyre
Director of National Policy,
Children Now

There is a certain cool-ness, a certain hip-ness to speaking in a language foreign to older generations. However, the language favored by today’s youth is prompted by media and technology more so than ever before.

Often referred to as “Generation M,” this group of American children and youth is immersed in an evolving, ever-changing media environment. In a recent Kaiser Family Foundation study (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010), researchers discovered that children (between ages 8-18) spend more time in the nonacademic media environment than any other environment, including time at school or at sleep. Some children average as many as 10-1/2 hours a day immersed in media, with African American and Hispanic children being among the most voracious consumers of media.

While many parents can be taken aback by the digital, interactive media environment, most children remain their family’s de-facto “chief technology officer,” having developed media-use skills their parents lack. According to the Kaiser study, children are often multitasking their media—consuming as many as 8-1/2 hours of media in 6 hours’ time. Simply put, “Generation M” can do more in less time than any other American generation before. And, the first class of American children to never know life without the Internet? They turn 18 and enter the workforce this year.

The influence of media on children has been a public issue since the early days of radio, comic books, and television. There was an explosion of concern over the role of television in the 1950s when the first congressional hearings were held by the House of Representatives, investigating the links between juvenile delinquency and the sudden proliferation of television sets in American households. In retrospect, the content that lawmakers and American families were concerned about in those congressional hearings seems quaint by today’s standards.

Modern times have brought new concerns over the influence of media in our children’s lives. Janet Jackson has a “wardrobe malfunction” at the Super Bowl. Investigators point to the influence of violent video games in the shooting at Columbine High School. The V-chip is developed to give parents more tools to manage their children’s television habits. Concerns are regularly expressed over violent movie trailers, “male enhancement” advertisements, the influence of sexualized media on girls’ self-image, and the impact of junk food marketing on our children’s diets. This list continues to grow as parents struggle to compete with a quickly evolving media culture.

What does psychology say about media effects on today’s children? While it is easy to get lost in the conversation about the latest interactive, digital, networked device, the heart of this issue is still our children. Regardless of the environment, there are certain basic truths about child development that psychology has shown to be important.

Until the ages of 7-8 years old, children cannot discern persuasive intent and tend to accept the rules given to them. A child’s world is black and white, right and wrong, rule-bound or rule-broken. Generally, until ages 7-8, children cannot tell when someone is trying to “sell” them something. How often do parents listen to their child tell them they “have to” buy something because it’s the best, for a limited time offer, will give them added powers (like strength or better health), or because everyone else has one? While age 7-8 is considered the threshold for developing this ability to discern persuasive intent, all children are...
different. Some children need to be prompted by parents, while others do not develop this skill until their early teens.

This is a great concern for child advocates as today’s media environment becomes more interactive, more personal, and more targeted. As cell phone use is on the rise among younger children and websites seek more information to personalize the interactive experience, it’s increasingly difficult for parents to stay on top of what and how their child is accessing information.

Concerns over children’s exposure to media have generally fallen into three areas: media violence, sexualization, and advertising/childhood obesity.

MEDIA VIOLENCE
Much of what we know about the effects of the media on children and, specifically, the effects of media violence on children, comes from three landmark studies on media violence completed over a 30-year cycle:

- 1982—The National Institutes of Mental Health Report for the National Institutes of Health
- 1997—The National Television Violence Study by the National Cable Television Association

According to these three studies, children are at risk for certain behaviors when exposed to violence in the media:

- They are more likely to view violence as an acceptable way to settle conflicts.
- Repeated viewing of violence can lead to an emotional desensitization of violence and lead individuals to be less sympathetic to victims of violence in the real world.
- Children exposed to violence at a young age are more likely to be violent and aggressive than children who are not exposed to violence.

According to the Kaiser study, the highest proportion of violence in the media is found in children’s programming, averaging almost 25 acts of violence an hour. Between 1937 and 1999, 100% of animated feature films produced in the United States featured violence. Of the top 33 video games, 21% feature violence against women.

SEXUALIZATION
Many parents of young girls have concerns about the increasingly sexualized media directed to younger and younger children. A healthy, age-appropriate self-image of one’s own body is critically important as young girls begin to establish relationships, develop confidence, and begin to date.

Sexualization occurs when:

- a person’s value comes only from their sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics;
- a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy;
- sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon someone, or;
- a person is sexually objectified—that is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making.

Awareness of this issue is especially important for parents of young girls. According to the recent APA Task Force Report on Sexualization of Girls (APA, 2007), one 5-year study found that 85% of print advertisements sexualized girls rather than boys.

What are the most common mental health problems associated with sexualization? They are issues familiar to many parents of girls—low self-esteem, poor body image, depression, and disordered eating. Unfortunately, sexualization of our nation’s girls can have cultural implications, according to the APA task force report. Fewer girls pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) professions; there are increases in sexism; and there are increased rates of sexual harassment and violence.

While APA called for more research to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and interventions that promote positive alternatives and approaches to the sexualization of girls, there is one alternative that has shown to counter many of the effects of sexualization in the media on girls—involve in sports.

Girls’ involvement in sports positively affected girls’ development by building self-esteem, friendships, ideas about femininity, and positive body image. It also positively correlated with attitudes toward women, other girls, boys, and men, as well as educational aspirations and future career success.

MEDIA AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY
Researchers recently stated in the New England Journal of Medicine that an analysis of the effect of obesity on longevity shows that the steady rise in life expectancy during the last two centuries may soon come to an end (Olshansky et al., 2005). As Former Surgeon General Richard Carmona stated in his testimony before an U.S. Senate subcommittee, “we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents” (Carmona, 2004). The alarming rise in childhood obesity since the 1980’s is a great concern. What is the media’s influence on childhood obesity?

Even in this age of handheld devices, Internet, and video games, most children’s eyes are still watching television. As television viewing goes up, so does children’s body fat. Is sedentary behavior solely responsible for that gain? Remember the above discussion on how children interpret media messages at certain ages? Let’s look at the content of what children see in advertising on television.

(continued on page 14)
2010 APA ELECTRONIC PROJECT CONTEST WINNERS

During the spring, the APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) announced the eighth annual APA Electronic Project Contest to recognize innovative and high-quality electronic presentations by community college psychology students.

The PT@CC Committee extends thanks and appreciation to the APA Education Directorate and our contest cosponsor, Allyn & Bacon Publishing. In addition, special thanks go to all of the students who participated in the 2010 competition. Join us in congratulating this year’s winners and their PT@CC faculty sponsors:

First Place: “Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation: A Global Affair”
Presentation by Kaitlyn Scalerio of Suffolk County Community College (NY)
PT@CC Sponsor: Claire N. Rubman, PhD

Second Place: “Chasing My Father’s Shadow: A Freudian Perspective on the Effects of Paternal Absence on the Psychological Development and Identity of Children”
Presentation by Joseph Eulo of Union County College (NJ)
PT@CC Sponsor: Albert Bramante, MA

Third Place: “Effects of Appearance on Compliance”
Presentation by Justin Balliet of Lehigh Carbon Community College (PA)
PT@CC Sponsor: Robin Musselman, EdD


CONCLUSION
While many of these trends can be alarming, it is important to realize that technology and media are an important part of today’s world and economy. Like exploring the world, venturing into new media can be an intimidating journey.

This can be an exciting opportunity for parents, teachers, and children to explore and learn together. There are exceptionally great, positive, educational media available for children and tools readily available for parents to make healthy decisions about their child’s media environment. Be familiar with parental blocking technologies. Seek out positive educational media. Watch and participate in media with children. Be involved.

REFERENCES


In advertising during children’s programming, food is the most dominant product. APA member Dale Kunkel, PhD (University of Arizona), found in a recent study (Stitt & Kunkel, 2008) that fats and sweets, breads and cereals, and fast food restaurants comprised almost 94% of that advertising. Of the fats and sweets, sugared snacks were the dominant product. For bread and cereals, sugared cereals were the majority product.

However, fast food restaurants used a different pitch to market to children. Instead of selling the food, the low prices, or the products they offer, what Dr. Kunkel discovered was that 82.6% of fast food restaurants advertised that their products would make children happy (e.g., Happy Meals®). When this practice is targeted at children who cannot discern persuasive intent until ages 7-8 years, and sometimes older, the implications are disturbing. The media message is that eating unhealthy food is the thing to do for children to be happy. Sugared snacks and sugared beverages also used “happiness” as the main selling point to children 41% and 50% of the time, respectively.

THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IS ON FACEBOOK!

http://www.facebook.com/AmericanPsychologicalAssociation

BECOME A FAN!
RESOURCES FOR FACILITATING THE TEACHING OF RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Gary W. Lewandowski, Jr., PhD
Monmouth University

The American Psychological Association’s (APA) National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula (APA, 2005), when referring to its model of the interrelationships between the standards, states “The placement of Methods at the center of the model underscores the importance of teaching the content and skills consistent with the science of psychology as the core activity of the course” (p. 3). Among teachers, the importance of methods is clear, but students seem to remain largely unconvinced. Odds are that students display much less enthusiasm for learning about research methods than content areas such as abnormal or social psychology (Rajecki, Appleby, Williams, Johnson, & Jeschke, 2005). Students’ diminished enthusiasm is not the result of poor mastery (Sizemore & Lewandowski, 2009). In fact, students who increase their knowledge of research concepts simultaneously report a decrease in the perceived utility of research. Students also seemingly fail to understand the applicability of research methods to their broader education and various careers in psychology.

As a result, teaching research methods or statistics in psychology can be a psychology teacher’s biggest challenge. To meet this challenge, teachers must have high-quality activities that not only help students learn difficult material, but also do so in a way that makes less palatable concepts more engaging. One general strategy for invigorating student interest is to teach research in the context of studies that incorporate actual behaviors (e.g., how close a person chooses to sit near a minority) instead of self-report (e.g., rating one’s feelings about a minority) (Lewandowski & Strohmetz, 2009). Actual behavior allows students to visualize or act out the concepts in a way that makes the material more memorable. Another strategy is to have students read original research articles on interesting topics where the researchers use clever techniques (e.g., a study on how viewing cute images of baby animals influences carefulness while playing the game Operation) (Ciarocco, Strohmetz, & Lewandowski, 2010).

Thankfully, the field of psychology is full of teachers who have developed a myriad of clever and creative activities to help students learn about psychological science. The difficulty is that quality resources can be difficult to find quickly and easily. To help facilitate this process for both novice and experienced teachers, we (Gary Lewandowski, Natalie Ciarocco, and David Strohmetz) created a website (www.teachpsychscience.org) devoted to peer-reviewed resources for teaching research and statistics in psychology.

Garnering inspiration from other fantastic teaching resource sites like Course Resources on the Web (CROW; http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctri.edu/crow/), the Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP; http://www.teachpsych.org/otrp/index.php), and Personality Pedagogy (http://personalitypedagogy.arcadia.edu/pmwiki/pmwiki.php), we created a site that provides PowerPoint slides, exemplar studies, class demonstrations, class/lab activities, assignments, student practice exercises, and links to web-based resources. TeachPsychScience.org features resources that require students’ active role in the research process. Rather than simply listening to a lecture on experimentation, students will ultimately enjoy and benefit from participating in a class activity that requires them to design a study or work with data in...
order to test their hypothesis. Alternately, rather than lecture about the difference between single data points (individual experience) vs. larger samples (accumulated experience), you could use the website to find a clip from the Daily Show, with Jon Stewart satirizing how cold outside temperatures influence perceptions of global warming.

TeachPsychScience.org is possible due to the creativity and ingenuity of the teachers who work to create resources that facilitate students’ appreciation and understanding of research methods and statistics. Are you one of those teachers? If so, please consider taking this opportunity to share your activities and other lecture material with your colleagues. Submissions will be peer reviewed based on their pedagogical value, uniqueness, clarity, potential efficacy, and ease of use. The peer-reviewed nature of TeachPsychScience.org relies on the support and generosity of fellow teachers, and we hope that you will also consider serving as a peer reviewer. With your help, TeachPsychScience.org will be a centralized, comprehensive, dynamic, and much-needed resource for disseminating high-quality teaching materials for research methods and statistics.

TeachPsychScience.org is supported with grant funding from the Association for Psychological Science (APS) Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science. PTN

REFERENCES


In January 2009, our lab, the Social Cognitive Development Lab at Yale University, began what has since become one of our greatest accomplishments—not a discovery that changes our field or a paper that made it into *Science*—but rather a pilot program aimed at getting high school students into the lab as research assistants. We began with two interns, selected after interviews with us and several undergraduate research assistants. We hoped to provide the high school students with the opportunity to see what research is really like, a chance to learn more about psychology, and a chance to get to know college students. From the get-go, the program exceeded all expectations, and we found that the students weren’t the only ones gaining something important from the internship experience!

The high school internship program started with a simple goal: to provide the opportunity for students, especially those who would not typically have such experiences, to be active in an ongoing research program as part of a team of researchers while simultaneously learning about the college environment. With help from the Office of New Haven and State Affairs, we selected a public high school within walking distance of our lab—the Hill Regional Career High School—from which to recruit our interns.

During the first semester of our program, spring 2009, our two interns, one junior and one senior, each spent 2 afternoons per week (about 6-7 hrs./week) in our lab. They worked on a wide range of projects—they completed human subjects training, learned to use our video equipment, recruited and scheduled participants, “sib-sat” (babysat the siblings of participants while their parents watched the studies), learned to search the Internet for photos to be used as stimuli, and helped our graduate students and undergrads with various tasks. The first semester was such a success that, during the summer of 2009, we applied for and were awarded the Pre-College Grant from the American Psychological Foundation to continue our program for another year. With help from that grant, we expanded the program in several critical ways.

Thanks to funding from the APF, we were able to add a new component to the program—an undergraduate mentor. Our mentor, Ari, regularly checks in with the students, helps to train them and answer their questions, and organizes special events (“field trips”) for them. For example, the interns had a chance last semester to visit Dr. Karen Wynn’s Infant Cognition Lab at Yale and this semester learned about psychophysiology equipment and electroencephalography during visits to Dr. June Gruber’s clinical psychology lab and Dr. Greg McCarthy’s cognitive neuroscience lab. In addition to the benefits interns have reported gaining from working with Ari, Ari has reported many benefits to serving as the high school mentor. She explains that “the high school intern program has truly kept me grounded….being their mentor has helped me remember the community around me…. they keep me inspired to reach my goals, and I hope that as I have worked with them I have helped in the attainment of theirs.”

Another important recent addition to our internship program is inclusion in some of the more “academic” aspects of working in a lab, namely in getting to know the literature. Each week the high school interns are assigned an article to read from a major psychology journal. This is the same article that our Yale undergraduate research assistants are assigned to read. These articles are then discussed at our weekly lab meeting. In addition to these lab meetings, whenever there are departmental talks, colloquia, or other research talks going on during an intern’s shift, the interns are encouraged to attend in order to learn more about the field of psychology and to gain experience attending academic, research-oriented talks.

In addition to the psychology-specific aspects of our program, one of the main foci of our program has been emphasizing the feasibility (and fun!) of a college education. The students who are part of our program are all interested in attending college, but most are the first person in their family to have the opportunity to do so. Therefore, everything from writing college essays to...
deciding which colleges to apply to, to the application and financial aid paperwork are new challenges for the students and their families. The students’ undergraduate mentor and the two authors have all worked with the students on these processes, finding this to be perhaps the most rewarding part of our experience with the interns. At this point all of our interns that are seniors have applied to and been accepted to 4-year universities.

We know that it’s likely only a few of these students will choose to go on to study psychology, and even if that number is small, we hope that at least these students have learned something about why and how research happens, that science is fun, and that being a part of an academic community is rewarding. We hope that whatever field our interns ultimately choose for their careers, their experience working in our lab will help make them strong colleagues, collaborators, and leaders. Many of the skills we emphasize in our lab—attention to detail, clear and concise communication, careful collection and consideration of evidence, and initiative-taking, to name a few—are skills that can not only be applied to other areas but are indeed crucial life skills which we hope our interns will apply on a regular basis, both professionally and personally. Current intern Merrill asserts, “…working in the lab has not just taught me how to do office work, but it’s a way to meet new people and open more doors for me in the future,” and Brianna, a former intern who is now a college freshman, fondly recalls her time in the lab, “Looking back at it all now, I’m really glad I got the experience to intern at the SCD lab. I have met wonderful people and learned so much about how a lab works and the process of conducting research.”

In addition to the psychology component, a strong emphasis of our program is in forming personal relationships with undergraduate students, graduate students, and at least one professor. As our intern Merrill recently told us, “The undergraduates have not only helped me to get into the routine of the lab, but they have also shared their experiences so far on living so far away from home and juggling school, social, and family life. For me it especially has opened my eyes to what I’m about to encounter because I only have a couple of weeks left in high school.” This quote illustrates just what we hoped would happen—that our interns would learn from our undergraduates’ experiences, that they would be comfortable in a college environment and ultimately realize that they belong in a college environment.

In the interest of constantly improving our internship, we ask our interns for anonymous feedback each semester to let us know what they particularly enjoy about the internship and which aspects they feel could be stronger. Interns regularly provide useful and inspiring comments, on the basis of which we refine our internship each semester. The best evidence we have for the success of our internship, however, and the best feedback we have received, is that our interns have consistently decided to stay in the lab for multiple semesters. We’d originally envisioned the program as a one-semester program, but found that our interns haven’t wanted to leave until they are ready to head to college. This has meant we’ve had some interns stay in the lab for three semesters! We feel very lucky that this has been the case, as the students are always an energetic, enthusiastic, and dynamic group, and it is a pleasure to have them on our research team.

EXPANDING THE PROGRAM: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE SUMMER SCHOOL

One limitation of the internship program is that its close mentorship and hands-on approach coupled with limited resources do not allow us to include more than two to three students each semester. Fortunately, the grant from APF will allow us to expand the number of students whom we can expose to hands-on psychological science: This summer we are adding a psychological science course to an existing science summer school for high school students.

For the last 12 years, the Office of New Haven and State Affairs at Yale has been organizing a summer program called SCHOLAR (Science Collaborative Hands on Learning and Research). SCHOLAR selects students, also from Hill Regional Career High School, who are interested in science. The students in SCHOLAR stay on Yale’s campus for a 3-week residential summer school program. During the program, students take courses in the traditional sciences (biology, chemistry, physics). Thanks to the APF, this year we’ll be adding psychology to that list; Kristina will be teaching a new course for incoming high school sophomores on Experimental Psychology. In the course we’ll tackle the issue of how to test hypotheses and convince others of your results. During the course, students will learn what a hypothesis is, how to test a hypothesis using scientifically acceptable evidence (keeping in mind issues like sample size, experimenter bias, confounds, etc.), and how to talk about the results—both in written and oratory form. Over the course of the program, students will have the opportunity to come up with hypotheses and test them, they will read recent journal articles from current psychological journals, and they will be “tested” on their knowledge in a final Jeopardy showdown.

Having just taught a traditional introduction to psychology course to undergraduate students, Kristina looks forward to turning this class into something different. Students won’t be asked to memorize definitions or remember specific studies, rather they will be asked to understand how the actual science is done—by doing it! Our high school interns who have taken or are enrolled in a psychology class at school often make connections between their coursework in psychology and the practical experience they gain in lab. Our hope is that this hands-on approach to the summer class will provide a valuable introduction to psychology in both theory and practice. As Kaneez, one of our current interns, asserts, our lab introduces students to “studies that break down the
complexities of human thought and interaction.” It is our hope that Kristina’s lectures, readings, and class presentations this summer will similarly help students tease apart and examine the many facets and nuances of the human mind.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS
At this point our high school internship program has been ongoing for a year and a half. We’ve had so much success that we plan to continue the program over the next few years. Our hope is that the interns continue to report that the program is an “amazing and rewarding experience” that allows them to be “positive that [they] will succeed in any future activities,” as our veteran intern, Kimberly, recently reported. Perhaps most importantly, we hope that our interns head off to college feeling more prepared and excited, knowing that they have a research team back at home cheering them on! PTN

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The work involved in starting up our internship certainly paid off—the high school internship is a very, very valuable part of our lab, and our lab would not be the same without it. The interns have the opportunity to get hands-on research experience, meet undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty members, and read and synthesize college-level research articles; in turn, the interns provide very valuable help to the lab (e.g., “sib-sitting”) and give the undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to serve as mentors. We can only hope that other schools and institutions will form similar internships to give local high schoolers the opportunity to participate in hands-on research!

Look into your institutions’ policies and procedures for having minors in the lab. We found that there’s a lot of red tape but having the support of our department chair helped a lot. We’ve found that there are all sorts of rules that govern how we recruit, choose, train, and mentor our students, but once we did it the first time, things got considerably simpler.

If there are local high schools that emphasize the sciences, these are often great places at which to recruit interns. The best idea might be to get in touch with the school’s psychology teacher or other science or social science teachers to announce the position in their classes. These teachers are busy people, so we’ve encouraged them to have interested students contact us directly.

We highly recommend that you pay a stipend to your high school interns, either weekly or at the successful completion of a semester’s worth of work. This will mean that all students will have an opportunity to apply, not just those who come from financially privileged families (many students in many families need to work in order to help support their families or to save for college). To help with costs, look for grants specifically for programs like this (e.g., APF Pre-College Grant) and/or add it to your grant proposals—places like NSF love supporting opportunities like these.

Think about where students will be coming from—is their school far away or nearby? If it’s too far to walk, is there a bus route nearby? Could you assist them in purchasing a bus pass?

There are a few ways a teacher could help a student to gain hands-on psychological research experience. One is to try to create a long-term relationship between a single professor or psychology department and a specific high school or high school teacher. Most professors these days use e-mail as a primary mode of communication, so this can be accomplished by e-mailing faculty at a local university to assess interest. Remember the power of diffusion of responsibility, though—it’s much less effective to send an e-mail with the whole department as recipients as everyone will just assume someone else will reply. Instead, try to find a person or two in the department whose research sounds like it might be interesting to your students and e-mail them, or try e-mailing the department chair. Another possible way to make contact is to get in touch with your university’s office of local or city affairs. Many universities now have these official liaisons, and they may be able to suggest a specific person in the psychology department or may contact them on your behalf.

If you are less interested in establishing a long-standing research program that would potentially involve several students over several years, but perhaps have a specific student who is particularly interested, our suggestion is to have that student check out the local psychology department’s website and find the webpage of a few faculty members who have particularly appealing research interests. Then the student (rather than you, the teacher) could e-mail the faculty member explaining what he/she is looking for in terms of a research experience. If the e-mail comes from the student, the faculty member is more likely to see the student as responsible and genuinely interested. Professors are often suspicious of how deep a student’s interest is when the student’s parent or teacher contacts us instead of the student (does the student want to do this or does his/her parent want the student to do it?). One important step to take when suggesting that a student contact a faculty member directly is to warn the student that faculty members are very busy and likely some will not reply or will but will not do so immediately. The student should be warned that this could happen. Also, it’s much less likely that the student will find a paid internship in this way; rather it’s more likely that the student will need to offer to work as a volunteer.
BE PART OF THE TOPSS COMMUNITY

Kimberly Patterson
Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

We all like to be part of something. When we are a part of something, we feel a sense of community. It is fulfilling to be able to share our goals with other passionate teachers. In addition, it helps us remain involved and reaffirms our unique value as a professional. The APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is the right organization for you and your colleagues to stay connected to high school psychology through various publications, sample lesson plans, and access to online databases through the TOPSS website at http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/index.aspx.

Max Wertheimer, the founder of Gestalt psychology, believed that things are seen as a whole rather than their individualized parts. When a teacher becomes a member of TOPSS, he or she is part of a larger organization that is dedicated to promoting the teaching of high school psychology and to providing resources and professional development opportunities for high school psychology teachers. The teacher becomes part of the whole. As a member of TOPSS, you are part of APA through your membership as a high school teacher affiliate. More so, you are part of an organization that encourages the growth and recognition of psychology in the high school realm. The common goal of TOPSS is to support instructors and instruction in high school. One of our most valuable TOPSS resources is the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula. Members of TOPSS also have access to discounted APA books, discounted journal subscriptions, and special pricing for the annual APA convention.

Currently, we have TOPSS members in ALL 50 states. Membership growth can give us a stronger voice—in our schools and within the APA. With some goals in mind, I encourage you to recruit one friend to join TOPSS by the end of the year: For just $40 a year, anyone who becomes a TOPSS member anytime in September through December can get up to 4 months’ membership free! We are looking for each state to recruit 15 new members this year—a very attainable goal!

Effectiveness comes with involvement and enthusiasm. TOPSS wants to further the development of quality resources and curriculum materials while offering leadership opportunities for high school instructors who are sometimes on the fringe of either their social studies or science department. TOPSS affords those who want to be involved leadership opportunities in high school psychology, including running for open positions on the TOPSS Committee and becoming a Regional Membership Coordinator. Please contact me at kcar223@yahoo.com if you are interested in these positions.

New members can apply online at http://www.apa.org/membership/hsteacher/index.aspx. We look forward to a productive and terrific year! PTN

FUN QUICK IDEAS

As psychology teachers, we are always looking for fun quick ideas that can be incorporated into our classrooms. Please feel free to submit ideas to me at kcar223@yahoo.com, and we will add a couple in future issues.

“I have a pair of inexpensive aviator glasses. When I teach Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Experiment, I wear them for 10-15 minutes while introducing some social psychology concepts. Students react differently due to my anonymity. We discuss their reactions in detail, and the students have a personal experience to associate with social psychology.” —Lara B. Herrera, Stranahan High School, FL

“I use an activity during the perception module where students walk around school and find examples of monocular cues. I then ask the students to identify five types of monocular visual cues and give examples for each of the five monocular cues.” —Michael Ray, Verona Area High School, WI
In 2008, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) released a report written by George Kuh titled *High Impact Education Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. This report was written to support the work of AAC&U’s initiative on Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), a decade-long campaign that delineates the essential aims, learning outcomes, and principles of excellence for a 21st century college education (www.aacu.org). According to Kuh, these practices—first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses or projects—have been widely tested and are highly effective teaching strategies. Moreover, Kuh believes that the students who have benefitted the most from these forms of active learning are students who have been historically underserved by our educational systems.

Over the past decade, articles have been published in the *Psychology Teacher Network (PTN)* that highlight some of these effective teaching practices. High-impact teaching practices in psychology courses have important implications for how we teach our courses, how our students learn that psychological research can be used to solve social problems, and how we assess what our students have learned in our courses. These practices also have implications for how we assess our effectiveness as psychology teachers. Using these practices helps us demonstrate quality teaching in psychology courses and how our discipline furthers the goals of a liberal education.

We invite you to share with us how you have implemented high-impact practices in your courses and to update us on any new strategies that you are now using to achieve greater results in the classroom. We would like to compile these strategies and share them with the broader education community. We work closely with disciplinary societies and national organizations like AAC&U to advance teaching at the precollege and undergraduate levels of instruction. We are especially interested in learning how these strategies have affected student success at your school or on your college campus and encourage you to publish any data you have collected that provides evidence of your effectiveness in the classroom.

Ideally, we would like to demonstrate how using high-impact educational practices in psychology courses benefits students in general and the larger society. As we don’t have the human or fiscal resources to undertake such a huge initiative, we can use PTN and our Listservs to share your teaching strategies for engaging students in the classroom, community, and laboratory. We want to know what you are teaching, how you are teaching, and with what impact in the classroom. A greater emphasis is placed on the last part of this question because these high-impact practices are not used uniformly across school districts and college campuses. Therefore, we look forward to receiving articles from you that promote the use of high-impact educational practices in psychology courses and to promoting your work by sharing it with educational associations that are strong advocates for these practices, too.

In the meantime, we invite you to read about a dynamic model of teaching and learning that proposes how promising principles might be translated into effective teaching practices. We also invite you to learn about a contextual model of teaching that takes into account the importance of context for teaching and learning. These models are published in the APA book *Undergraduate Education in Psychology: A Blueprint for the Future of the Discipline* (Halpern, 2010).

Best wishes for a wonderful fall term. **PTN**
es, blue-eyed parents can have brown-eyed children; there’s a reason child prodigy cellist Yo-Yo Ma succeeded in adulthood, while most prodigies don’t; and almost all the great Kenyan distance runners come from the same ethnic group, but their success is probably not genetic. What’s going on here? None of this seems to fit what we “know” about genetics, talent, and performance.

David Shenk argues in *The Genius in All of Us* that there are enormous implications embedded in a new way of understanding the interaction of our genes and environment. This new paradigm should change our conception of intelligence, talent, and achievement.

Most teachers of psychology consider the dualistic concept of nature vs. nurture as outdated and favor rather the idea that genes and the environment work together to determine our traits, abilities, and intelligence. But, scientists that Shenk calls “interactionists” study far more complex, reciprocal interactions among genes, environment, and structures called epigenomes, which exist outside DNA but can influence the DNA’s expression. They are now demonstrating that the environment can influence whether genes are even switched on or, if they are active, which proteins they code for. Our genetic inheritance is no longer a static blueprint from which we are built; instead, Shenk likens it to a control board in a recording studio through which small changes on the knobs and dials can produce large changes in the finished product.

Shenk acknowledges that this new interaction is not fully understood, nor fully accepted, by scientists in the field. It is by no means a finished, well-articulated set of theories. Nonetheless, current research in the field is building a new paradigm for understanding our genes and, by implication, our “unactualized potential.” We cannot determine the limits on human skills, memory, intelligence, and performance, but they are surely beyond what we currently believe.

Having established that the interactions between nature and nurture are dynamic, complex, and reciprocal, Shenk then applies this understanding to such fields of study as prodigies; twin studies (what they really show is how extensively the environment can cause differences in monozygotic twins); the prodigious memories of experienced London taxi drivers; the Flynn Effect; why Jamaicans are world-class sprinters; why Head Start kids don’t do better in school; and why Ted Williams was not a born hitter with superhuman eyesight. Shenk builds on Anders Ericsson’s research on exceptional performers, arguing that talent is the result of a complex interaction between genes, personal attributes, and the environment, not an inborn gift.

In the tantalizing final chapter of the first half of the book, Shenk revives Lamarckism, the long-discredited claim that individuals can experience changes in their genes, which can then be passed to their offspring. He reviews research indicating that the epigenome can be changed by the environment and those changes passed to offspring!

The second half of the book is called “The Evidence,” wherein Shenk provides not only his sources, but commentary on them, along with further reading suggestions, explanation of terms and concepts, and other fun nuggets of information. At first, devoting so much of the book to sources seems off putting ($26.95 for 135 pages of content and 140 pages of notes?), but in practice, the evidence section is nearly as interesting reading as the book proper. While the book is written for the general reader, the notes will appeal to those who can handle more complex information. For example, to support a paragraph in the text about eye color, Shenk offers a full page of quotations from journal articles. For a discussion in the text about Francis Galton and eugenics, the notes include a two-page, generally sympathetic, biographical sketch of Galton, whose scientific accomplishments went well beyond his embrace of eugenics.

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*The Genius in All of Us: Why Everything You’ve Been Told About Genetics, Talent, and IQ Is Wrong*

*Author: David Shenk*

*Publisher: Doubleday*

*Copies: 2010*

*ISBN: 978-0-385-52365-3*

*Length: 297 pages*

*Hardcover Price: $26.95*

*Softcover Price: Not Yet Available*

*E-Book Price: $9.99 (Kindle)*

Reviewed by:

Gary Shea

*Center for Advanced Studies and the Arts, Oak Park, MI*
The teacher will find that Shenk’s work is applicable in many areas of introductory psychology—certainly in genetics and twin studies, where Shenk reinforces the correct understanding of the frequently misunderstood concept of heritability. It will be useful in development and parenting—Shenk offers methods for inspiring children to greatness. He introduces effectively Ericsson’s work on expert performance and discusses the intrinsic motivation required to slog through the years of practice needed to attain expertise in many fields. (Though some of Ericsson’s academic work is certainly accessible to students, Ericsson has not written a popular-market book, to my knowledge.) Scattered throughout the book are notes and comments useful in the study of the history of psychology. The teacher might also find useful Shenk’s citation of recent, interesting studies in these fields, many that are not usually included in textbooks.

The book could also be used as a worthwhile companion to Malcolm Gladwell’s Outliers: The Story of Success (Little, Brown: 2008), as they overlap in coverage of outstanding performance in different fields.

David Shenk is a journalist and author, not an academic, but he is clearly deeply engaged in the field and the research. His writing style is clear, engaging, and accessible. The book is generally an easy read, though some sections require close attention. One minor quibble: Shenk’s “hook” at the beginning of the book is a story about Ted Williams, the great Boston Red Sox baseball player of the 1940s and 1950s. He returns to the Williams story more than once in the book. Alas, few of my suburban AP Psychology students knew who Williams was, and so the impact of the Williams stories on many young people might be limited. That aside, The Genius in All of Us will surely provoke thought and discussion among students and teachers. It would be a valuable supplement to any introductory course in psychology.