LIVING, BREATHING, GROWING: THE REVISED NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULA

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The APA Council of Representatives approved the latest incarnation of the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula in August 2011. The National Standards is a living document, and this new revision shows how much growth and evolution the high school psychology course has undergone since 2005, when the last set of Standards was approved by the APA’s Council of Representatives. High school psychology courses are more popular than ever, and the newly approved National Standards outlines both foundational and cutting-edge content that will guide veteran and new teachers to develop a course that helps students understand psychological science and prepares them for future learning about the field.

The National Standards undergoes revisions constantly, with a new revision process beginning soon after the latest version has been approved. Because psychology as a field moves so quickly, the National Standards aims to keep up with current thinking in the field while providing students with the foundational
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knowledge they need to understand where psychology has been and how it has evolved. The National Standards also attempts to portray new perspectives into the course, making sure that diverse voices are presented to students. The revision process is often difficult, but the educators and psychologists who work on the revisions are always eager to create a document that is both user-friendly and true to the field.

OVERARCHING THEMES
Even the best, most informed high school psychology teacher would struggle to teach all of psychology to a classroom of high school students. Typically, high school students taking a regular psychology course have no formal background in psychology, and their understandings of what psychology is may be mistaken. Using the National Standards as the guide for the high school course should help teachers decide what content is important and how much to emphasize with students. One way to help students capture the essence of psychology is to plan lessons while considering the following overarching themes, which are a new addition to the 2011 revision:

• The development of scientific attitudes and skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, and an appreciation for scientific methodology

• A recognition of the diversity of individuals who advance the field

• A multicultural and global perspective that recognizes how diversity is important to understanding psychology

• An awareness that psychological knowledge, like all scientific knowledge, evolves rapidly as new discoveries are made

• An acknowledgement that psychology explores behavior and mental processes of both human and nonhuman animals

• An appreciation for ethical standards that regulate scientific research and professional practice

• An understanding that different content areas within psychological science are interconnected

• An ability to relate psychological knowledge to everyday life

• A knowledge of the variety of careers available to those who study psychology

• An appreciation that psychological science and knowledge can be useful in addressing a wide array of issues, from individual to global levels

• An awareness of the importance of drawing evidence-based conclusions about psychological phenomena

By emphasizing these themes in each unit, teachers can help students appreciate the breadth and depth of psychology as a scientific discipline. Students can appreciate the diversity inherent in all aspects of psychology, from the ways psychologists conduct research to the ways they interpret research. These themes can help anchor the course for students, helping them see the bigger picture of why we study behavior and mental processes in the first place.

NEW DOMAINS, NEW STANDARD AREAS
The newly approved National Standards departs from the 2005 edition in several key ways. First, the domains were reorganized and refreshed. The working group tasked with revising the National Standards felt that five domains were not enough to help students appreciate the diversity of the field. Seven domains now divide the National Standards. Within those seven domains are 20 standard areas that correspond to the units or chapters taught in a regular psychology course in high school:

Scientific Inquiry Domain
Perspectives in Psychological Science
Research Methods, Measurement, and Statistics
Biopsychology Domain
Biological Bases of Behavior
Sensation and Perception
Consciousness
Development and Learning Domain
Life Span Development
Learning
Language Development
Sociocultural Context Domain
Social Interactions
Sociocultural Diversity
Cognition Domain
Memory
Thinking
Intelligence
Individual Variations Domain
Motivation
Emotion
Personality
Psychological Disorders
Applications of Psychological Science Domain
Treatment of Psychological Disorders
Health
Vocational Applications

The new standard areas better reflect chapters found in most high school psychology textbooks. In addition, these standard areas are organized in ways that reflect how the discipline now thinks about what is studied. For example, “consciousness” has typically been found in the cognition domain, but recent research suggests that the brain’s mechanisms for consciousness are more complex than previously believed. More research is now being conducted in neuroscience about both

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conscious and unconscious processes, making the move to the biopsychology domain a better fit for now.

The sociocultural context and applications of psychological science domains were added to highlight their importance to psychological science. Whereas in the past teachers could effectively leave out these two important areas if they were short on time, now teachers should include at least one unit from each of these domains in their course in order to emphasize the importance of diversity and the applications of psychology.

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*Note.* You can help the *National Standards* remain a living document! All teachers are encouraged to submit Performance Indicators online via [http://apacustomout.apa.org/commentstandards/default.aspx](http://apacustomout.apa.org/commentstandards/default.aspx). Performance Indicators are measurable learning objectives that help clarify how a teacher might address each performance standard.

An example of a performance standard with performance indicators is shown below.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2.2 DESCRIBE THE MAJOR SUBFIELDS OF PSYCHOLOGY.**

*Students may indicate this by (Performance Indicators):*

- Identifying the different subfields of psychology, such as clinical, counseling, social, experimental, school, and developmental psychology
- Describing the similarities and differences between the different subfields of psychology

By submitting performance indicators, you can help the *National Standards* be even more useful for teachers around the world! Take the time to share your ideas for how you would measure student progress in achieving the Standards by submitting performance indicators today.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**
Amy C. Fineburg, PhD, is an assistant principal at Oak Mountain High School in Birmingham, AL. She received her MA in educational administration from Samford University and her PhD in educational psychology from The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. She served as TOPSS chair in 2005 and has received numerous teaching awards. Her publications include a teacher’s edition and instructor’s resource manual for the high school psychology textbook *Thinking About Psychology* by Charlie Blair-Broeker and Randy Ernst and *Myers Psychology for AP™* by David Myers.
In the spring 2011 issue of PTN, I addressed the practical reasons why educators should focus on the acquisition of skills by undergraduate psychology students and majors. In Part 2, I discuss how well those educational goals are being achieved and present a radical conceptualization of how current educational practices could be transformed into a skills-based competency model.

In 1982 the artist once known as Prince released a forward-looking album called 1999, and the title track featured the lyric “So tonight I’m gonna party like it’s 1999.” In this article I fantasize about what a higher education system might look like if we focused on skills and abilities rather than knowledge accumulation. It does appear that U.S.-based higher education is testing-centered—just ask the millions of enrolled students about the tests they are studying for, or ask the faculty who are grading millions of tests. Multiple-choice testing (and other tests such as those in math that rely on students’ memorizing a formulaic response) is not evil, and it can play a meaningful role in assessment. Carefully designed multiple-choice tests—such as the Force Concept Inventory in physics, concepTests in geosciences, physics, psychology, chemistry, and other disciplines—can assess higher order skills beyond recognition and rote recall. And instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) attempt to measure higher order thinking skills, but if you believe Academically Adrift, the outcomes of the first two years of college are not promising. But let me ask this—what occupation in the United States requires high levels of memorization followed by adequate performance on multiple-choice tests? Teaching our students to be good test-takers, implicitly or explicitly, teaches what? Do we have any evidence that the “memorize-regurgitate” model of knowledge testing leads to substantial long-term retention of that knowledge? [Self-disclosure: Yes, I use multiple-choice knowledge tests on occasion, but exclusively in lower division courses, and I am phasing out my use of multiple-choice tests based on my recent epiphany.] Repeated testing of content can result in metacognitive benefits for helping students learn, and learn about themselves, but my premise here is that educators should invest more time guiding students in the attainment of skills (and developing measures to assess those skills) rather than developing their test-taking abilities. In some cases, a “teaching to the test” focus may be an unintended side effect of No Child Left Behind legislation. After college, aside from the occasional visit to the DMV, how often do adults need to be adept at test-taking? Perhaps other skills would be more valuable and more applicable to daily life.

IS WHAT WE TEACH NOW ACHIEVING THE DESIRED GOALS?

Knowledge provides the foundational infrastructure for tasks that we perform throughout our lives. My suggestion is that (1) knowledge acquisition need not be the singular focus of a college education, and (2) the mere accumulation of knowledge without the ability to apply that knowledge limits the benefits to the individual and to society. The acquisition of skills should not be an epiphenomenon that happens by lucky circumstance; in my 22nd century model of higher education, skills-based competencies should be the central focus of higher education. Knowledge provides the fuel that powers the skills-based engine, and without fuel we get nowhere. With the help of cross-disciplinary research collaborators pursuing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), we need an enhanced emphasis to uncover the pedagogical practices to help students acquire skills. The additional implication is that we need to devote expertise and resources to develop multiple measures of skill competency to assess and document both student...
achievement and institutional performance. Furthermore, institutions would need to value these efforts and acknowledge such advances in promotion and tenure dossiers, as well as develop grant programs to provide infrastructure and seed money to help faculty devote research expertise in the development of skills measures. These steps would send the message that these efforts are valued by the larger university community. Grant dollars and course releases often signal important aspects of our academic culture, and thus, if skills assessment is ever to be taken seriously by faculty, institutions must value assessment expertise as they value teaching and research in annual evaluations.

If we look to the work of consortia of employers (The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills), higher education think tanks (Association of American Colleges and Universities, Lumina Foundation, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment), or others (Collegiate Employer Research Institute, National Association of Colleges and Employers), current evidence leads to a conclusion that college graduates, in unacceptably large numbers, are leaving college without the requisite skills necessary for workforce success. A plethora of organizations exist that work to assess the current state of higher education, and these organizations provide direction for improvement. The status quo continues to be a knowledge-centered approach; however, knowledge is fleeting, and data about what college students retain after the course are nearly nonexistent (which makes the requirement of one course a prerequisite to another course a questionable practice at best). The retention data that are available point to little to no retention at all. For anecdotal insight, at the beginning of the semester all faculty need to do is ask students about what their students learned in the previous semester, and students will often struggle to remember what classes they took.

Reliance on lower level (such as Bloom’s taxonomy-Revised lower level) assessments, such as the approach often used with multiple-choice testing, may be considered more of a faculty-centered approach rather than student-centered approach. Multiple-choice testing is efficient with 300 students in your introductory psychology course.

The primary goal of higher education should be to assist students to acquire knowledge and develop skills.

TRULY STUDENT-CENTERED WOULD BE A SKILLS-CENTERED COMPETENCY MODEL

The primary goal of higher education should be to assist students to acquire knowledge and develop skills. Knowledge acquisition for the sake of knowledge acquisition, absent application, is akin to hoarding. The ability to receive a perfect score on the SAT or ACT may be impressive, but we should be more concerned about what that student learns to do with that knowledge rather than its mere possession. In a presentation about the apprentice model used in the Middle Ages, Bill Rankin of Abilene Christian University reminded us that “no one fails bread-making.” If you were an apprentice bread-maker, you kept working until you got it right. Graduation should occur when the requisite skills are acquired and can be reliably demonstrated. I suggest that for a 22nd century education, we consider a skills-based competency model rather than the current credit-hour model. A student’s transcript is now transformed into an assessment of the proficiency levels (underdeveloped, developing, effective, distinguished) that a student achieves in those areas regarded as valuable by departments, colleges, and universities.

In our current credit-hour model, students accumulate credit hours into buckets, and if your grades are average (or above) and you put enough credits into enough buckets, you graduate (i.e., “Cs get degrees”). These curricula are often well conceived with high-level goals in mind, but given the current state of assessment and employer feedback, are we meeting our students’ needs, or are we truly adrift? Are faculty seeing student achievement at the levels we expect? Are we even meeting our own institutional goals? What I propose here is a transformative shift from a credit-hour model to a competency model. Rather than ensure that students accumulate 120 credits to graduate, under a competency model, a student must demonstrate key skills in the institution’s requisite areas to graduate. Just as some students in the current credit hour model do not graduate (they did not fill all the buckets), neither would every student graduate in a competency model. Not all students can attain all the key skills designated by the institution as central to graduation; not everyone can be a bread-maker. Institutions would need to determine the proficiency levels necessary to graduate. Perhaps a national skills-based proficiency exam might provide colleges and universities baseline data by which to adjust and benchmark an institution’s respective assessment efforts.

In a general education or core curriculum within a competency-based model, when a student attains and demonstrates the requisite skills, the student receives an associate’s degree. When the student achieves the standards set by the college or university for knowledge attainment and skills competency, the student receives a bachelor’s degree—a concentric-circles model approach. That might take 120 credits worth of academic

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work, or 72 credits, 144 credits, or 40 credits. The lynchpin is the ability to measure skills with multiple psychometrically sound measures—an ability we do not possess currently. However, there are models in place and efforts under way to systematically and meaningfully measure skills. For example, the Career Readiness Certificate program provides measures of competency in key skills areas for employers such as reading for information, locating information, and applied mathematics. Skills are assessed and categorized into proficiency levels of platinum, gold, silver, or bronze. In the 22nd century, a student’s graduation would represent a true capstone involving the meaningful demonstration of skills that the institution values and assesses with vigor.

Imagine the benefits to graduates as well as society if there were assurances about what college graduates know and are able to do?

CREDIT FOR PRIOR EXPERIENCES, PRIOR LEARNING, AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Under a skills/competency model, students’ prior life experiences are particularly relevant. If a student begins college with demonstrable skills, then that student is “ahead” (similar to an incoming student having Advanced Placement [AP] credits). Of course, they need to maintain those skills, and hopefully enhance their skill set. For example, if a marketing executive who gave 100 speeches a year returned to college to become an elementary school teacher, would we really make this returning student take COMM 101? Under a skills/competency model, we do not guess at the answer to that question; if the student achieves the requisite proficiency in an active demonstration of the skill, then the student meets the communication requirement for COMM 101. Conversely, if a transfer student has been “core-certified” by another institution, the student must still demonstrate the skills required by their new institution. Community colleges might focus more on skill development and less on credit generation; the same holds true for 4-year colleges and universities. The emphasis shifts from knowledge possession to knowledge application via demonstration of skills and abilities.

We do implement a skills/competency model currently in some areas of higher education. In many cases, we do not give students multiple-choice tests about how they would write, but faculty have students write. Generally speaking, a student’s memorized knowledge about writing rules and grammar seems less important than their ability to write. Many AP tests go beyond multiple-choice testing, asking students to consider multiple concepts and be able to form linkages among seemingly disparate concepts—in writing. At the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University, undergraduate business majors demonstrate their skills in a highly developed and monitored assessment center-type environment. Revisit our trip to the DMV—a multiple-choice test might be in your future, but wait, there’s more. You would probably complete a vision test. And importantly, to obtain a driver’s license you would demonstrate that you possessed the skills and abilities to drive a car by driving a car. A trained observer would determine if you had the requisite skills to complete the task safely and correctly. From a societal perspective, we invest a great deal to ensure that citizens exhibit the requisite skills to drive a car. But what about critical thinking skills, ethical skills, interpersonal awareness skills, technological literacy skills, sociocultural and international awareness skills, quantitative and qualitative reasoning skills, and so on—can you see the value in ensuring that citizens, and especially college graduates, possess these skills as well? Imagine the benefits to graduates as well as society if there were assurances about what college graduates know and are able to do? Given the billions of dollars invested in higher education annually, evidence about the return on our investment would be welcomed.

UNIVERSITIES CHART THEIR OWN DESTINY, FIND THEIR OWN NICHE

Here is an opportunity for colleges and universities to carve their own niche. Although good rubrics exist from think tanks, and guidelines and recommendations exist from consortia of employers and relevant agencies, ultimately the institution, disciplines, and departments would determine the key skills and abilities to be demonstrated by their graduates. In the 22nd century, institutions would develop the desired competency levels. Each school or department would select or develop measures of skills and learning outcomes or coordinate discipline-wide efforts to do so. Models exist for some disciplines, such as the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in Nursing. There would need to be a minimum number of credits earned from an institution, such that the institution has enough time to deliver its own unique approach to skills development. In other words, a highly accomplished person could not apply to a college or university, take one course, complete all the skills assessments, and graduate with a degree. The college or university needs time to imprint its academic “habits of mind.” For example, there might be a minimum of 32 credit hours needed to earn the degree (similar to a second-degree seeking student). But the selection of those credit hours would be instrumental, and keyed to a current assessment of student skills compared to the competency levels required to graduate. Institutions

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A student-centered curriculum is a skills-centered curriculum; a curriculum in which students gain confidence in what they know and what they can do. 5- and 10-year master plans, but this is a four score-plus master plan. A student-centered curriculum is a skills-centered curriculum; a curriculum in which students gain confidence in what they know and what they can do. Faculty will need to embrace the challenge, as faculty have so many times in the past. Think about it—what if better educated graduates were enabled to experience greater personal success and an enhanced quality of life? And what if we had the measurement tools to clearly document the added value of the collegiate experience (and identify efficient pedagogical practices too)? Whereas some faculty embrace entrepreneurial challenges, others abhor the notion. An innovative approach will be necessary, and a skills-based revolution may well turn current educational practice on its side. What good is psychological literacy if the practical applications of that knowledge are not recognized, exercised, and applied? That might lead to graduates who are underprepared for the workforce experiencing dissatisfaction with their education—a phenomenon some are calling malemployment. Our collective investment in human capital must be redoubled if we are to allow our students, departments, disciplines, and institutions to achieve their respective destinies. If that were to happen, just wait until the party we’re gonna have when it’s 2099. PTN

would put their own imprint or approach or brand on the skills earned by their students. Want proficiency in creativity—Vanderbilt University might be the choice to specialize in developing creativity skills. Similarly, a student might attend Alverno College to hone critical thinking skills or Abilene Christian University to become proficient in mobile technology as applied to academic life. Each discipline must determine the key skills students need to be successful for a particular bachelor’s degree; this will be a major first step in the process, and some disciplines have already done so. Then disciplines will need to work with skills-based consultants to design tasks to adequately measure skills acquisition—fortunately, many campuses already possess that local expertise. And there are trained professionals who become experts at measuring human behavior by developing psychometrically sound measures—they are called psychologists.

After disciplines and departments settle on demonstrable learning outcomes, then the goal is to develop multiple methods assessing the desired skills and abilities with assessment procedures and outcomes that are valid and reliable.

**MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES**

After disciplines, programs, and departments identify and articulate the desired skills for their students, the looming challenge is the meaningful measurement of those skills and abilities. Some may posit that the ephemeral aspects of a college education cannot be measured or that the act of measurement changes the experience—this latter point can be true to some extent. Can we measure a student’s skills and abilities for such nebulous concepts as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, sociocultural awareness, and so on? I tend to agree with the sentiments expressed by William McCall in his 1939 *Measurement* textbook, when he wrote “Anything that exists, exists in some amount. Anything that exists in some amount can be measured.”

After disciplines and departments settle on demonstrable learning outcomes, then the goal is to develop multiple methods assessing the desired skills and abilities with assessment procedures and outcomes that are valid and reliable.

**LAST THOUGHTS, FOR NOW**

Think about what this new century would look like—a college degree is a credential that means you have achieved a skill level that your alma mater has measured and quantified. You have proficiencies and competencies, and if your department and discipline did their homework (which accrediting agencies attempt to ensure), you are now poised for success in the workplace of your choosing. You have the tools to succeed in your chosen profession, and that means that the faculty in that discipline are aware of what it takes to be successful in the postbaccalaureate world. Electives taken while in college are immediately relevant (and not courses “to get out of the way”), because these electives are essential for helping students develop strengths in their areas of weakness. Content alone no longer drives the course selection, but content knowledge and skill development are powerfully intertwined to point students toward success in their academic major and beyond.

Why the subtitle to this essay “a model for higher education for the 22nd century?” Honestly, if anyone were to take any of these ideas seriously, it will be more than four score years to observe the paradigm-shift described here. Institutions work on
Many people, some of them psychology teachers, have made suggestions to help get a class off to a good start. In fact, a recent Google® search for “first day of class” returned a list of nearly 700,000 entries. Clearly, a lot of people have thought about how to launch a successful class, and there is evidence from psychology that the first day really matters (Hermann, Foster, & Hardin, 2010). Fewer, however, seem to have thought as much about bringing the semester to a satisfying close. What do we want students to take with them when they leave us? What advice will serve them well in life? What will they remember about their time with us?

Perhaps because the end of the semester is often hectic, for both students and teachers, a significant number of faculty members seem to simply close out their courses with traditional activities, e.g., projects, papers, or review sessions (Eggleston & Smith, 2002). In this article, I will share a few of my own perceptions about teaching and learning and suggest some ways to make the last day of class as memorable as the first.

THE THINGS THEY REMEMBER
I am sometimes surprised by the memories my former students describe when reflecting on their time with me. They remember my sometimes eccentric behavior, the details of offbeat classroom demonstrations, the content of offhand conversations, and other experiences that, to me, seem less than memorable. However, when I think back to my own time as a student, I realize that I, too, have memories of my own teachers—some of them as unlikely as the memories my students describe.

Some of those memories—of teaching activities, expectations for classroom performance, and casual encouragement of critical thought—remind me of some of the best lessons I have learned from academic life.

Although they may never have written it in a lesson plan, my teachers taught me a great deal about logic, curiosity, kindness, respect, generosity, discipline, and rigor. They also prompted me to think that I should not leave my own legacy as a teacher to chance—that I should be mindful and deliberate in my efforts to form the lessons and the parting memories I would leave my students.

THE NATURE OF ENDINGS
Endings, according to psychologists, may strongly influence our judgments of experiences (Gilbert, 2005), and a positive (or at least less painful) ending may temper, in a favorable way, our memory of challenging experiences (Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993). These findings do not, of course, suggest that a pleasant ending can salvage the wreckage of an awful course, but they do point to the possibility that attention to parting memories may enhance the perceptions and future behavior of our students. We should certainly model, throughout the semester, the traits and values of an educated person, but at the end we are bringing relationships to a close, saying goodbye to students we may never see again, and perhaps preparing others for future classes.

In a course on the psychology of endings, Lutsky (2010) presents material dealing with a variety of types of closure and parting—in careers, conversations, literature, poetry, relationships, and, of course, life. Like Gilbert, Lutsky has noted that endings may powerfully alter memories of life experiences and the stories we tell about those experiences. How, then, can we make endings meaningful in the context of our teaching? That question has guided me as I have tried to develop ideas for teaching activities that might create memorable last day experiences.

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A MEANINGFUL GOOD-BYE
Letters to students. It has been, I suppose, two decades since I began asking students in my introductory psychology classes to write letters discussing topics from the course. I believed it would be useful for the students to attempt, in their own terms, to explain their work to a nonpsychologist. I actually mail these letters to their intended recipients, typically the students’ family members, former teachers, or friends at other universities (Keith, 1999). After assigning a series of these letters each semester for several years, I concluded that it might be useful if I were to use the same medium to communicate some of my own thoughts to the students. Thus began a practice that has now become a tradition: a final-day letter from me to each of my classes.

I confine these letters to one page, single-spaced, and I try to incorporate three broad themes: (a) Skills the students have learned, with a focus on broad aspects of critical thought, rather than specific facts or details; (b) the pleasure and privilege I feel in working as a teacher with bright young students; and (c) a little advice for life, always including the suggestion that my students should develop the habit of reading good books. Read one good book a week for the rest of your life, I tell them, and you will get an amazing education.

Book list. At some point, after I began giving my students the advice to read good books, some of them of course started asking me for recommendations. They wanted to know what kinds of books I read. I realized that, if I was telling them to read a good book a week, it might make sense to provide them a list that would carry them through the first year; so I adopted the custom of offering, on the back side of the last-day letter, a list of 50 books. I explain that I do not intend this list to be anything more than a roster of good books I have read. That is, the books are not necessarily classics, although some do fit in the classic category, and they are not all even great books. They are simply books I have enjoyed reading, and they usually represent a variety of genres, including poetry, novels, science, nonfiction, history, and biography.

Although I do not explicitly say it, a part of my motivation in giving students the book list is to encourage and model a meaningful approach to the liberal arts in particular and the life of the mind in general. I also want my students to begin to see the connections between psychological science and the other sciences and humanities.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Elsewhere (Keith, 2011) I have provided more detail and a sample letter and book list. I am aware of other teachers who give students their own versions of parting gifts, in the form of poems, e-mails, pictures, or postcards. If we believe, as Kupfer (1983) wrote, that there is more meaning in learning that has aesthetic closure, it follows that a meaningful last day should add to the quality of the classroom experience.

Planning a memorable and graceful ending is one way to make us mindful of our behavior as teachers and our influence on the perceptions of students. If we plan well, we will leave our students with a favorable view of our field and of the learning process. And perhaps we can move them a step closer to a continued engagement with the life of the mind. PTN

This article is adapted from the Lee Gurel Lecture that I delivered at the 2010 convention of the American Psychological Association.

REFERENCES
just wanted to let everyone know that, as of Wednesday afternoon (June 15, 2011), all 198,863 AP Psych exams have been scored. Several members of this electronic mailing list were present in Kansas City to read the answers to the free response questions. Psychology has grown from just under 4,000 exams in 1992 to the 6th most popular AP subject. Roughly 200 teachers were assigned to read each of the two questions, and it really is quite a sight to just watch the two reading rooms in operation. Readers, seated in table groups of eight or nine, attack folder after folder of essays (25 in each) with focused intensity. The rooms are amazingly quiet as aides deliver fresh folders to the tables as needed. Remarkably skilled table leaders, experts in the rubrics they developed, are available to help with troublesome essays. They also reread a percentage of essays to keep the process reliable. Make no mistake—it’s challenging work both mentally and physically—but it’s also very interesting to see how so many different students approach the same question. Trust me, their work ranges from excellent to horrible. One hopes for more of the former than the latter.

It’s not all work. There are humorous interludes throughout the day, and breaks and meals provide an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones. We’re housed in the downtown Marriott and read in the convention center. It’s a short walk to the Power and Light entertainment district filled with pubs and restaurants. Some evenings have planned entertainment options (ranging from the Glore Psychiatric Museum to the Boulevard Brewery), and other evenings people look for fun on their own. Most years, we take in a baseball game, but this year the schedules of both the Royals and the triple A T-Bones didn’t match up. Bill Hill from Kennesaw State gave the Professional Night address this year (every AP subject has an invited Professional Night speaker each year).

By mid-summer, the rubrics and sample essays for this year’s test will be posted on the AP central website (the questions, are already there). Question 1 was a research design question that was scored on a 7-point rubric. Question 2, about language acquisition, had 8 points. Answers to Q2 ran a little longer, and it takes more time to make decisions about 8 points than to make decisions about 7, but both rubrics “worked” very well. The check-reading process indicated that we had excellent reliability. Your students can be confident that their essay scores depended on the quality of their answers rather than the particular readers who happened to get their booklets.

It’s about the most fun I’ve ever had doing hard work and a rare opportunity to discuss psychology for a week with some of the best high school and college teachers in the country.

Anyway, I do want to encourage you to consider applying to be a reader. It’s about the most fun I’ve ever had doing hard work and a rare opportunity to discuss psychology for a week with some of the best high school and college teachers in the country. Your expenses are paid, and there is a stipend as well. You can find details for applying on the AP Central website (http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Controller.jpf). Please note that there may be a wait of a couple years between when one applies to be a reader and when an invitation actually comes.
Ruth Cousins and her daughter Carol Tracy founded Psi Beta (www.psibeta.org), the National Honor Society for Community and Junior Colleges, 30 years ago. Sixty-two students joined Psi Beta in 1981, the organization’s very first year. Psi Beta has grown steadily since 1981. In 2010-2011, more than 1,800 students joined Psi Beta, the most ever to join in a single academic year. Psi Beta now has 32,745 lifetime members!

We are greatly indebted to the many psychology professors who serve as chapter advisors and become inspiring mentors to their students. Thanks to these advisors, Psi Beta continues to be an important source of educational enrichment for many of America’s most talented students. It’s great to know that many advisors report that Psi Beta has become their primary source of professional development.

Psi Beta continues to develop more resources for chapters. Here is a sampling of recent or coming resources:

1. Chapter-controlled websites for posting meeting minutes, event calendars, names of officers and members, photos, and so on
2. Collaboration grants that encourage joint activities between local Psi Beta and Psi Chi chapters
3. A video on ways to host an outstanding induction ceremony
4. The national Synergy Conference, featuring distinguished speakers, student research presentations, and more (The next Synergy Conference will be in 2012.)
5. Career development videos and PowerPoint programs
6. An annual national research project in which chapters can participate

Psi Beta has grown steadily since 1981. In 2010-2011, more than 1,800 students joined Psi Beta, the most ever to join in a single academic year.
RESEARCH-INSPIRED PEER-MENTORING PROGRAM MAY BE A FORMULA FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS

Melody C. Brown, Kristin K. Gundersen, and Luke Klein

Psi Beta Officers at Irvine Valley College

Compared to students attending 4-year institutions, community college students are at a higher risk of dropping out (Crisp, 2010; Dougherty, 1992). Crisp (2010) and Cohen & Brawer (2003) suggest that dropout proneness stems from being commuter students, which, in turn, results in fewer opportunities to engage in social activities and to join the campus social support network. This contributes to poorer “connectedness” between community college students and their campuses.

Researchers define connectedness as the “students’ subjective sense of ‘fit’ within the university, and the perception that they are personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the academy” (Wilson & Gore, 2009, p. 2; see also Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Studies have consistently found a positive correlation between students’ levels of connectedness and graduation rates, retention rates, and academic performance (Willson & Gore, 2009; Crisp, 2010).

Due to their interest in student connectedness, Psi Beta* honor students at Irvine Valley College recently participated in Psi Beta’s national study. That study

continued on page 14
investigated possible links between connectedness, shyness, and the Big Five personality traits. Among other findings, the study confirmed the hypothesis that students who scored higher in levels of shyness reported feeling less connected to their college.

As a result of this study, the Irvine Valley Psi Beta students have initiated a service project designed to increase student connectedness. They are developing a student-run and research-based, peer-mentoring model called “CONNECT: The Student Network,” where CONNECT is an acronym for “Coaching of Novices Now Experiencing College Transition.” The program’s pilot phase begins in fall of 2011.

CONNECT will incorporate a number of measures designed to gauge the extent to which mentee students become socially and academically integrated with campus life. The program will also measure students’ academic growth in terms of metacognition, effective study and time management strategies, and progress toward achieving their academic goals. The founding students will be working closely with the office of institutional research at the college to track the program’s overall success in terms of improving student persistence, GPA, and graduation rates.

An additional and somewhat experimental component of the CONNECT peer-mentoring program will be the creation of electronic learning portfolios for each student. The portfolios will allow students to gather and reflect upon academic milestones to fulfill the college’s Institutional Student Learning Outcomes—outcomes expected of each student who completes a degree or transfer-readiness course sequence at Irvine Valley College. It is intended that students who demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes will become eligible for scholarships and special recognition at graduation. The student directors are currently working with faculty discipline experts to develop the criteria and rubrics necessary to gauge mastery of each Institutional Student Learning Outcome.

Founders hope that the CONNECT program will become a national model for other Psi Beta chapters to implement on their own campuses. In addition, Dr. Bernardo J. Carducci, director of the Shyness Research Institute at Indiana University Southeast, has agreed to serve as program advisor and consultant.

Dr. Jerry Rudmann, executive director of Psi Beta, recently praised these students for conceiving of the project. Rudmann said, “The CONNECT program has tremendous potential to become a national model for other Psi Beta chapters. Honor students will be able to make a direct and significant contribution to the academic success of veterans, single mothers, reentry students, first-generation college students, and many others who can benefit from the immediate support of well-prepared, caring peers.”

CONNECT’s founding students are seeking a grant to provide startup and scholarship funds. For more information about the program or to offer suggestions for finding possible grant support, visit CONNECT’s website at www.connectivc.org or contact Program Director Melody C. Brown at CONNECTTheStudentNetwork@gmail.com.

*Psi Beta is the National Honor Society in Psychology for Community and Junior Colleges. Information on Psi Beta can be found at www.psibeta.org.

REFERENCES
MEET THE 2011 TOPS Excellence in Teaching Award Winners!

Interviews by Mike Hamilton, MA
Hopkinton High School, Hopkinton, MA

Nancy Diehl, PhD
Hong Kong International School in Tai Tam, Hong Kong

Mike Hamilton (MH): Tell us about yourself. How long have you been teaching? Have you always taught at the school you are currently in? If not, where else have you taught? How did you get into teaching psychology courses? Which psychology courses do you teach—general/AP/IB? Do you have any special psychology programs like fairs or other activities?

Nancy Diehl (ND): I’ve been teaching AP Psychology for 4 years at the Hong Kong International School. I am privileged to work with an amazing faculty and supportive administration, allowing me both freedom and flexibility to support student learning. Students come to the classroom excited, ready to learn, and with broad cultural diversity, thus enriching the content. I am a clinical psychologist by background and was on faculty at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston for nearly 10 years. During that time, I did research, clinical work, teaching, and supervising of graduate students. Teaching high school psychology has been both fun and tremendously rewarding.

In terms of psychology programs, I facilitated a presentation to students and parents by a renowned sleep expert, arranged summer research internships with faculty at Hong Kong University, and conducted workshops for faculty and parents on topics in psychology (learning, memory, etc.).

MH: What do you like the most about teaching psychology compared to other subjects you have taught? What are your favorite topics/concepts to teach in psychology? Do you have a favorite demonstration or class activity you use to enrich the content you are teaching?

ND: Teaching AP psychology is fantastic; it is “psychology’s greatest hits,” and each student can find several areas that are fascinating to him/her. I haven’t taught other high school courses.

Coming from a graduate school setting, I am used to working with students as highly valued contributors/collaborators and have been able to extend this in the high school setting. Student feedback influences class content and assessment style. Broadening frameworks (my own and students) is one of our central themes. Concepts in sensation/perception, social psychology, and learning about the different perspectives in psychology are some mechanisms to help students understand how experience and perspective color the lenses through which we understand our own and other people’s behavior.

I love facilitating students’ making connections between what they study in the classroom and what they observe in their lives.

I love facilitating students’ making connections between what they study in the classroom and what they observe in their lives. Being present as they continue to develop critical thinking skills, laughing with them at some of the mnemonic devices they create, and seeing them sparkle as they apply difficult concepts in novel situations is an honor.

The question about favorite demonstrations is difficult, as I can hardly select favorite units. For the most part, my favorite unit is the one I am teaching at the moment. I create several new classroom activities each year and learn a great deal from colleagues at conferences and on electronic mailing lists. I probably have at least one favorite for each unit. Some examples: continued on page 16
• Take your own field trip (get a massage, go to the amusement park, go to an art gallery, etc.) and then analyze experiences using the language of sensation and perception.
• Write a letter to an eighth grader with developmentally appropriate language and graphics regarding the memory/learning techniques you wish you knew and used all throughout high school. We share these with the middle school teachers for use in their study skills classes.

This year a new “cupcake review” assignment and speed dating (taking on the role of famous psychologists in a 3-4 minute date, then rotating) were well received.

MH: How would your students describe your teaching style? What do students like most about taking your psychology course? Talk about one of your most exciting or rewarding experiences with students or a student from your psychology classes.

ND: Student feedback suggests the instructor is enthusiastic, passionate about the subject, class is relevant to everyday life, class is relaxed. Classes are interactive and hands on, with a variety of modalities each 80-minute class period. The atmosphere, students say, is “chill” while they are learning tremendous content. They comment on the value of the assignments, and, consistently, students of all levels ask for additional out-of-class assignments because they are both “fun and help me learn.”

Teaching psychology is globally rewarding. Students connect strongly with the content, ask great questions (getting me off topic at times but still relevant to psychology, isn’t everything?), and often finish the course with increased confidence in their own abilities and a passion for the subject.

Nearly all plan to take at least some additional psychology courses in college, and many intend to pursue psychology-related specializations, including traditional areas of learning as well as criminology, neuroscience, and I/O psychology.

Being a recipient of this award was a tremendous honor, and the process of putting together the materials was valuable to me as an educator, so thanks to TOPSS for everything!

Sheryl Freedman, MA
Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD

Mike Hamilton (MH): Tell us about yourself. How long have you been teaching? Have you always taught at the school you are currently in? If not, where else have you taught? How did you get into teaching psychology courses? Which psychology courses do you teach—general/AP/IB? Do you have any special psychology programs like fairs or other activities?

Sheryl Freedman (SF): I have been teaching for 7 years and have taught AP Psychology the entire time. I currently work at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD, where I have spent my entire teaching career. I actually inherited the psychology course from a teacher who left unexpectedly in the middle of the year. I was doing my student teaching, and the position opened up so as fate would have it, I got a fabulous job! I teach three or four sections of AP a year and one section of general psychology when we can get enough students to fill the course. The AP course is much more popular and is seen as very attainable for students at our school. I’m also in charge of the Student Government Association at my school, and I coach the JV Girls Soccer team—so those

I believe that all students should have to take a psychology course at some point in their academic career. It is one of the most applicable subjects of any I have taught.

SF: I believe that all students should have to take a psychology course at some point in their academic career. It is one of the most applicable subjects of any I have taught. I have students come in daily and tell me that they heard a concept on TV or talked about something with their parents related to a subject we discussed in class. High school students in general have so many questions about themselves, their peers, and their families, and psychology gives them at least a glimmer of why people are behaving and thinking the way they are.

I love teaching the behavioral neuroscience unit and the unit on social psychology. I think it is

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so important for students to understand what is happening to them in their brains when they are thinking or behaving. I’m also fascinated by how people interact for better or for worse in a group.

My favorite activity is a mnemonic device I developed to help students remember 12 key brain parts and their functions. It uses the method of loci around the classroom with stories, imagery, motions, and auditory callbacks. When initially delivered, students are not aware that they are learning brain parts/functions, so it is a great moment of amazement when they figure it out. This activity is also something about which students will write me when they go off to college.

**MH:** How would your students describe your teaching style? What do students like most about taking your psychology course? Talk about one of your most exciting or rewarding experiences with students or a student from your psychology classes.

**SF:** My teaching style is discussion- and example-based and, as often as possible, experiential. I try to find novel ways to present course material beyond simple note taking, whether through game play, demonstration, or activity. I think students feel comfortable taking my psychology course. They are free to share their opinions and know that it will not be a traditional classroom setting. They also know that they will be able to apply their knowledge in multiple contexts. I just went on a week-long service trip with around 65 students from my school, many of whom had taken my course. Multiple students kept coming up to me to demonstrate what they had learned this past year in psychology. It was almost a competition for them to say things like, “Look, there’s confirmation bias!” or “We are getting over the bystander effect!” It’s hard to pinpoint a specific rewarding experience with students from my classes. I think simply receiving e-mails or messages from former students who are studying psychology in college or beyond has been most gratifying. It shows that I sparked some interest and that it was enough to have them continue their journey.

**Melissa J. Kennedy, PhD**

**Holy Names Academy in Seattle, WA**

**Mike Hamilton (MH):** Tell us about yourself. How long have you been teaching? Have you always taught at the school you are currently in? If not, where else have you taught? How did you get into teaching psychology courses? Which psychology courses do you teach—general/AP/IB? Do you have any special psychology programs like fairs or other activities?

**Melissa Kennedy (MK):** I began teaching psychology at Holy Names Academy (HNA) in the 2005-2006 academic year. It was the first time I taught—psychology or any other subject. I was a clinical psychology graduate student, and I was very interested in whether I would like teaching. My university program did not offer teaching as part of our graduate assistant positions, so I approached the principal of HNA and asked if she would be interested in adding an AP Psychology course into the curriculum. I had worked extensively with adolescents, my daughter was a student at the school, and I was familiar with their mission. I taught my first course, which went well for both the students and me. As I finished my clinical training, I continued teaching part time at the school. Upon graduation in 2007 from Seattle Pacific University with my PhD in clinical psychology, I also began teaching in a doctoral program in clinical psychology at Antioch University Seattle. I taught a wide array of core clinical curriculum classes and served as core faculty, chairing dissertations, sitting on university committees—all the normal university faculty expectations. For 3 years, I worked as core faculty there and taught four classes at HNA. I knew I couldn’t continue both positions and had to choose between them. I found myself better suited to my work at HNA and resigned my university faculty position at the end of the last academic year. HNA is a unique environment. We have an excellent principal, probably the best administrator for whom I have ever worked. (I could write quite an extensive essay on the pros/cons of university teaching vs. private high school teaching, but that is definitely more than you want to hear!) In 2009-2010, I began teaching AP Statistics as well as AP Psychology and love bringing college-level coursework to a highly motivated group of young women.

Last year, I was also involved in promoting the first Pacific Northwest Brain Bee competition. The Brain Bee is an international neuroscience competition for high school students. I am excited to see my students and others from the community interested in neuroscience and am delighted to work to promote growth of this program. We also have a Psychology Club at HNA, which I moderate.

**MH:** What do you like the most about teaching psychology compared to other subjects you have taught? What are your favorite topics/concepts to teach in psychology? Do you have a favorite demonstration or class activity you use to enrich the content you are teaching?

**MK:** I’ve only taught psychology, though a wide array of classes. It was quite enlightening to be teaching for several years at both the introductory level with adolescents and also teaching adults in...
While helping those in crisis is part of my clinical work, and important to me in that setting, knowing that my teaching allowed someone to recognize a life-threatening situation and get help was incredibly touching.

A most rewarding experience, and there have been many, which is why I stay in the high school classroom, is that I have had many students go on to study psychology in college. But I would say the most touching story was of a former student who reached out to me during her freshman year in college. Over the summer following graduation and the beginning of her freshman year, she developed a serious case of anorexia. She contacted me when she realized she needed help. I worked with her, and her mother, to find referrals for treatment; she came home from the university and got the help she needed. She told me that she knew she needed help because of what she learned in my class. While helping those in crisis is part of my clinical work, and important to me in that setting, knowing that my teaching allowed someone to recognize a life-threatening situation and get help was incredibly touching.

MH: How would your students describe your teaching style? What do students like most about taking your psychology course? Talk about one of your most exciting or rewarding experiences with students or a student from your psychology classes.

MK: My students enjoy my enthusiasm. I have been told more than once that they know they learn, but they also have fun. I believe that AP psychology is a fascinating and highly applicable course for adolescents. I attempt to set expectations high, but very clear, so that the students know exactly what they need to do to succeed in the class. I believe this is very helpful.

Also, as a clinical psychologist (I have a small private practice), I tend to have a high level of social cognition. I observe the students and know when they are not connecting or understanding an idea, allowing me to tweak or alter a comment or topic to be sure they grasp the essentials. I believe, based in part on the empirical data of their anonymous feedback, that they like my openness and the atmosphere of a safe classroom where their inquiry and comments are sought and appreciated. Also, they often write about the course material that they learn. All of the diverse topics of AP psychology are something that they see around them every day in their lives. As one student wrote, “I am so happy I took this course. Some of the usual things that occur in life—now I know the reason why :-) .”

As far as demonstrations, I enjoy the sheep brain dissection each fall. The students, though, love the classical conditioning exercise with the water gun—classically conditioning one of the students by spraying water in their face. I do an end-of-the-year survey with my students and the majority of them report the water gun demonstration as most memorable.

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ATLANTIC COAST TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY (ACTOP) HOSTED BY MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

http://www.monmouth.edu/ACT/default.asp

September 23-24, 2011
Ocean Place Resort & Spa
Long Branch, NJ

The keynote speaker is David Myers, PhD, of Hope College (Holland, MI).

2011 STP BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE


13TH ANNUAL MID-ATLANTIC TEACHERS OF PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE

The Prince George’s Community College (PGCC) Department of Psychology and Argosy University are sponsoring the 13th Annual Mid-Atlantic Teachers of Psychology (MATOP) conference on the teaching of psychology on October 21, 2011, at PGCC, outside of Washington, DC.

The mission of the MATOP conference is to bring together teachers of psychology from universities, 2- and 4-year colleges, and high schools who wish to enhance their teaching of psychology and expand their teaching skills through workshops, lectures, and participant idea exchanges on successful teaching strategies and techniques. In addition, MATOP fosters the development of valuable teacher networks that further strengthen the continued support of good teaching and professional fellowship.

Registration is $75 before October 15. On-site registration is $90. Early registration (by September 1, 2011) is $50. Registration for presenters is $50. Registration for graduate students is $25 for early registration, $30 before October 15, and $45 on-site. Please send proof of student status.

Regan Gurung, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, president of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, will deliver the keynote address, “Using Psychology to Help Students Succeed.” For more information, please contact Diane Finley at dfinley@pgcc.edu.
COME TO NECTOP!

Fairfield University will host the 17th Annual Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (NECTOP) on October 28, 2011. The major addresses and interactive sessions for the conference include a diversity of topics and approaches to teaching that will be of interest to teachers of psychology in all varieties of institutions.

Keynote addresses by D. Alan Bensley (Frostburg State University) and Wade Pickren (Pace University) will anchor the conference. In the morning keynote, Bensley will discuss his research on teaching and assessing critical thinking as a component of the psychology curriculum. Later, he will conduct a workshop providing an opportunity for hands-on experience of the methods he developed throughout his career. After a buffet lunch that will provide an opportunity for discussion and networking, Pickren, an internationally renowned historian of psychology and archivist, will offer his views on effective teaching of historical issues in psychology.

There will be six concurrent, interactive sessions—three in the morning after Bensley’s talk and three in the afternoon following Pickren’s presentation. These programs include (a) Kathleen Flannery (St. Anselm College) and her students demonstrating the use of virtual reality technology for conduct of a psychology laboratory; (b) Deborah Carroll (Southern Connecticut State University) explaining and documenting the effectiveness of interteaching as a method of course delivery; (c) David Miller (University of Connecticut) showing how his method of Screencasts, a hybrid course, increases student engagement and learning; (d) Janine Buckner (Seton Hall University) and Carolyn Vigorito (St. John’s University) discussing approaches to instill interest in life-long learning through the psychology curriculum; (e) Emily Soltano, Linda Larrivee, and Susana Meyer (Worcester State University) describing how they manage and direct interdisciplinary research with students; and (f) Alan Bensley’s follow-up to his keynote address.

NECTOP’s afternoon program will also include a poster session and several participant idea exchanges. The submission period for these presentations will remain open until September 22, 2011, and anyone interested in attending is welcome to submit. Submission requirements are available at http://www.nepa-info.org/. NECTOP runs in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the New England Psychological Association, and online registration for both events is available at the NEPA website http://www.nepa-info.org/.

SAVE THE DATE!


Connect with colleagues at the APA Exhibit Booth, #319!

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY (NITOP) TO BE IN FLORIDA

January 3-6, 2012

The 34th Annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP) will be held at St. Pete Beach, FL. Registration is limited to 375 participants; early registration is highly recommended. Contact: Joanne Fetzner, National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology, 2303 Naples Court, Champaign, IL 61822, by phone at 217-398-6969, or e-mail at jfetzner@illinois.edu (http://www.nitop.org).

2012 MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

FEBRUARY 15-18, 2012
Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA), New Orleans, LA
http://www.sepaonline.com/

MARCH 1-4, 2012
Eastern Psychological Association (EPA), Pittsburgh, PA
http://www.easternpsychological.org/

APRIL 12-14, 2012
Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA), Oklahoma City, OK
http://www.swpsych.org/

APRIL 26-29, 2012
Western Psychological Association (WPA), San Francisco, CA
http://www.westernpsych.org/

MAY 3-5, 2012
Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA), Chicago, IL
http://www.midwesternpsych.org/

OCTOBER 12-13, 2012
New England Psychological Association (NEPA), Worcester, MA
http://www.nepa-info.org/

APRIL 15-17, 2012
Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA), Reno, NV
http://www.rockymountainpsych.org/

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Ballots for the 2011 elections to the PT@CC and TOPSS committees will be coming soon! Every vote counts!

ASSOCIATION POLICY UPDATE

Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

At its February 2011 meeting, the APA Council of Representatives adopted as APA policy the Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology. These guidelines articulate a set of recommendations for quality teaching and learning in psychology. See the full guidelines at http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/principles.aspx. Hard copies will be available soon upon request to education@apa.org.

National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula


THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IS ON FACEBOOK!

http://www.facebook.com/AmericanPsychologicalAssociation

Become a fan!
HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY ENROLLMENT AND EXAM STATISTICS

Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology

• 198,863 students took the AP Psychology exam in 2011.
• In 2011, 4,428 schools were authorized to include the “AP” designation for their psychology courses.
(Source: W. Tinkler, College Board, personal correspondence, July 5, 2011)

International Baccalaureate (IB) Psychology

• So far in 2011, 16,123 IB Psychology exams have been taken worldwide.
  In the US, there have been 9,654 candidates for the IB Psychology exam from 445 schools.
• By volume, the IB Psychology exam ranks 12th worldwide and 8th in the US.
(Source: IB Policy and Research Department)

Including Regular Psychology

Recent data from the College Board indicated that 27% of high school graduates who took the SAT took at least one psychology course during their 4 years in high school.
(Source: College Board Research & Development, 2011)

FUN QUICK IDEAS

Collected by Kimberly C. Patterson
Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

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 walk into class with a banana on a leash. I act as if nothing is wrong. The students and I then talk about abnormal psychology and what is classified as abnormal as an introduction to this chapter.”

– Kat Sullivan
Coral Reef High School, Miami, FL

“I find one of those “before/after” ads (ads for fitness products or contact lenses work well), and I use them to demonstrate confounding or extraneous variables. Students readily see that the ads vary far more than just the product between the before and the after (when smiles, a more flattering pose, better lighting, etc., are in place), and they begin to recognize that the changes in appearance (the DV) can’t all be attributed to the product being advertised (the IV).”

– Elliott Hammer, PhD
Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, LA

MOUNTAIN TOP TEACHING CONFERENCE

Imagine yourself on a serene mountaintop, watching the sun gently set over the majestic peaks as you notice the last of the golden Aspen leaves flutter from a nearby branch. If this sounds appealing to you, join us at the Dick Gorman Mountain States Conference on the Teaching of Psychology --Mountain ToP for short--in beautiful, picturesque Durango, CO, on October 22-23, 2011. The conference offers highly engaging and interactive sessions in a small, intimate setting. This year’s conference will include keynotes from Dan Krauss and Brian Burke in addition to hands-on workshops and stimulating discussions on a wide range of teaching topics with a focus on critical thinking. This is the final Mountain ToP conference and is a tribute to the loving memory of Dick Gorman (http://chronicle.cnm.edu/cnm-news/713-remembering-dick-gorman), the conference’s energetic founder who passed away at the ripe age of 82 last November. In lieu of a conference fee, the conference website provides a list of suggested donations in Dick’s honor. For more information, please check out the conference website at http://mountaintop.fortlewis.edu <http://mountaintop.fortlewis.edu/> or e-mail Lesleigh Keetch at keetch_l@fortlewis.edu.

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APA ANNOUNCES  **THIS IS PSYCHOLOGY VIDEO SERIES**

APA has recently announced a new public education video podcast series, entitled “This is Psychology,” featuring APA CEO Norman B. Anderson, PhD. These new podcasts will focus on trends and themes growing out of psychological research.

APA has multiple goals for the series:

1. To educate the public about the science base of psychology
2. To demonstrate the ways in which psychological science can help solve problems
3. To increase APA’s visibility


Each video segment will be about three minutes in length. They will be posted on apa.org, YouTube.com, and APA’s Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

APA DUES AND BENEFITS

Providing high-quality teaching resources and professional development opportunities remains a top priority for the APA TOPSS and PT@CC committees. A number of new teaching resources, including updated TOPSS lesson plans and videos to accompany some of them, are in development. We also are pleased to announce that beginning in September 2011, Teacher Affiliates will automatically receive a subscription to the *American Psychologist*, the flagship journal of the American Psychological Association, in addition to the *APA Monitor on Psychology* magazine and the *Psychology Teacher Network* newsletter. Teacher Affiliates can learn more about all of the benefits of membership by visiting the APA website at [www.apa.org/membership](http://www.apa.org/membership).

In late October, APA Teacher Affiliates will begin to receive statements for the 2012 dues year. While APA has not raised the dues for Teacher Affiliates since 2009, the APA Council of Representatives approved a dues increase to $50 per year for APA Teacher Affiliates beginning in 2012. Please note that this increase will include the new *American Psychologist* subscription as an ongoing membership benefit and that APA Teacher Affiliate dues continue to be lower than dues of other professional organizations for psychology teachers. We hope you will renew your membership for 2012!
TOPSS CONGRATULATES 2011 APA TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS

The APA Education Directorate and the APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) congratulate Nancy Diehl, PhD, of Hong Kong International School in Tai Tam, Hong Kong; Sheryl Freedman, MA, of Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD; and Melissa J. Kennedy, PhD, of Holy Names Academy in Seattle, WA, for receiving the 2011 APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Awards. The Excellence in Teaching Awards are given annually to recognize outstanding high school psychology teachers.

The recipients each received a framed certificate, engraved award, cash prize, High School Psychology Video Toolkit DVD, and a free TOPSS membership renewal for the 2012 membership year. The Video Toolkit DVD was generously donated by Worth Publishers.


2011 WINNERS: PT@CC STUDENT PRESENTATION CONTEST

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) announced the ninth annual PT@CC Student Presentation Contest during the spring to recognize innovative and high-quality electronic presentations by community college psychology students.

The PT@CC Committee extends its thanks and appreciation to all the students who participated in the 2011 competition. Join us in congratulating this year’s winners and their PT@CC sponsors:

First Place: Rewiring Our Brain and Body Connection: Uses of biofeedback in the classroom
   Presentation by Dot Majchszak of Lorain County Community College (OH)
   PT@CC Sponsor: Vincent Granito, PhD

Second Place: Stop Playing Around? The Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Stakes
   A team presentation by Grace Pentecoste and Kelsey Williams of Suffolk County Community College (NY)
   PT@CC Sponsor: Claire Rubman, PhD

Third Place: Bullying: It Hurts Everyone
   Presentation by Kim-Marie Kirk of Suffolk County Community College (NY)
   PT@CC Sponsor: Claire Rubman, PhD

Coming Soon!

Visit the PT@CC website at http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/undergrad/ptacc/index.aspx to view the winning projects.
THE 2011 WINNERS:
APA PT@CC TEACHING RESOURCES AWARDS

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2011 PT@CC Teaching Resources Awards.

The contest, which was developed to recognize and encourage the sharing of high-quality instructional techniques, invited community college instructors to submit an original demonstration, individual or group class activity, 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 support of the Teaching Resources Awards. 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: Beyond Social Networking: Using Facebook to promote student engagement, study skills, and critical thinking
Amy J. Marin, Phoenix College (AZ)

Second Place: Psychological Research
Kathleen Braier, Milwaukee Area Technical College (WI)

Third Place: Ethics in Clinical Psychology: Six “what-if” scenarios for the undergraduate Abnormal Psychology course
Richard Alexander, Muskegon Community College (MI)

Honorable Mention: Plagiarism/Library Module
Diane L. Finley, Prince George’s Community College (MD)

ANNOUNCING THE 2011–2012
APA PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT PROGRAM

APA is pleased to announce a program for universities and colleges—the Psychology Department Program (PDP). This program offers valuable information and useful resources to enhance teaching and learning in psychology.

The benefits of enrollment in the PDP include:

These publications
- Undergraduate Writing in Psychology: Learning to Tell the Scientific Story
- Graduate Study in Psychology: 2012

These annual subscriptions
- American Psychologist
- Monitor on Psychology
- gradPSYCH
- Psychology Teacher Network
- The Educator

These resources
- Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology
- Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major
- Careers in Psychology—Video and guide
- Student affiliations—Free student affiliate memberships for three of your students
- List of participating programs on the APA website
- PDP-NEWS Listserv

Cost of enrollment in the PDP: $300
To enroll or for more information, please visit www.apa.org/ed/precollege/department/index.aspx
The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) was held May 8-13, 2011, at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA. More than 1,500 students from 65 countries, regions, and territories competed at the 62nd ISEF. To compete in Intel ISEF, students competed against fellow students at 443 regional Intel ISEF-affiliated science fairs around the world. 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 and Health, Microbiology, Physics and Astronomy, and Plant Sciences. 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 received an award certificate and a 1-year student affiliate membership to APA.

**First Place Award of $1,250 (tie): Adelina Corina Cozma, 15, Bayview Secondary School, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Growing Up “In Sync”: Connecting a Bridge to an Autistic Mind’s World**

**Liza Joely Strauss, 18, Mamaroneck High School, Mamaroneck, NY. A Study of the Cognitive Neuroscience of Arithmetic Combinatorial Processing Using Magnetoencephalography (MEG)**

**Third Award of $500: Olivia A. Dure, 16, The Altamont School, Birmingham, AL. Brain Plasticity: The Effect of Age (A Two Year Study)**

**Neel Sanjay Patel, 16, Oviedo High School, Oviedo, FL. An Analysis of Listener Perception and Visual Replication of Sonifications: A Third Year Study**

**Samantha Michelle Phillips, 18, William A. Shine Great Neck South High School, Great Neck, NY. Strategies Utilized by People With Autism and Neuro-Typical Individuals to Determine Emotion in Faces**

**Rachel Emily Reon, 17, The Governor’s School for Science and Technology, Hampton, VA. Behavioral Evidence for Cerebral Asymmetry in Green Anoles**

**Heitor Geraldo da Cruz Santos, 16, Colegio GGE, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. Problematizing Pedagogy as a Nutritional Education Strategy: A Social Constructivist Approach**

APA was joined by special awards organizations Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology; the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Friends of NIDA, National Institutes of Health; and the ITT College of Psychology in granting awards to projects focused on psychology and the behavioral social sciences. Additionally, Intel awarded 21 grand awards and one Best of Category award to those with behavioral and social sciences projects.
APF INVITES NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2012 BREWER TEACHING AWARD

The American Psychological Foundation invites nominations for the Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award. Nominees must demonstrate and will be rated on the following dimensions:

- Demonstrated influence as a teacher whose students became outstanding psychologists: names and careers of nominee’s students and evidence of influence as a teacher of them
- Development of effective teaching methods and/or teaching materials
- Engagement in significant research or other creative activity on teaching
- Development of innovative curricula and courses: description and sample of innovation and evidence of its successful utilization
- Outstanding performance as a teacher in and outside the classroom: student ratings, enrollment figures, evaluative observation by colleagues, teaching awards, other forms of prior recognition
- Serving as an especially effective trainer of teachers of psychology: description of the contributions and evidence of effectiveness
- Outstanding teaching of advanced research methods and practice in psychology (advanced undergraduate, graduate, or other): description of classroom and mentoring roles
- Administrative facilitation of outstanding teaching: description of administrative actions and results on teaching programs; evaluation by others of actions and results

APF encourages nominations for individuals who represent diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.


UPDATE FROM THE CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGY IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

The Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education is made up of representatives from APA divisions and committees that are committed to furthering the quality of K–12 education through the application of psychological science. The coalition met from June 3-5 to discuss new and ongoing projects and initiatives to promote the psychology of teaching and learning in K-12 schools.

One project, currently in its final stage, is an online video module aimed at new teachers and teachers-in-training on strategies to combat and prevent stress. Other projects in the works include a new module on creativity in the classroom, an article on social-emotional learning, and a still-evolving project that will examine teaming and multidisciplinary work amongst school professionals.

Coalition members also discussed opportunities to contribute content via articles, blogs, and newsletters to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Whole Child Initiative website to increase visibility of the coalition’s projects to the K–12 educator audience. High school AP Psychology teacher Nancy Fenton represented the APA TOPSS Committee at the meeting. For more information about the coalition, please contact Ashley Edmiston at aedmiston@apa.org.
**STP ANNOUNCES NEW E-BOOK ON PROMOTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology recently announced the publication of its newest e-book, a two volume set called *Promoting Student Engagement*.

Volume 1 is entitled *Promoting Student Engagement: Programs, Techniques, and Opportunities*. This volume is edited by Rick Miller, Eric Amsel, Brenda Marsteller Kowaleski, Barney Beins, Ken Keith, and Blaine Peden.

Volume 2 is entitled *Promoting Student Engagement: Activities, Exercises, and Demonstrations for Psychology Courses*. This volume is edited by Rick Miller, Emily Balcetis, Susan Burns, David Daniel, Bryan Saville, and William Douglas Woody.

To access these two volumes, point your browser to: [http://teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/pse2011/index.php](http://teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/pse2011/index.php)

Both volumes promise to be helpful to psychology teachers at all levels of education and represent a wealth of compelling resources to benefit our students’ study of psychology.

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**RECIPIENTS OF THE 2011 STP TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology is very pleased to announce the recipients of the 2011 Teaching Excellence Awards. Winners were honored at the STP Social Hour at the 2011 APA Convention in Washington, DC. They are:

- **Robert S. Daniel Teaching Excellence Award (4-year college):**
  Mark Costanzo, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA

- **Wayne Weiten Teaching Excellence Award (2-year college):**
  Kari L. Tucker, Irvine Valley College, Irvine, CA

- **Jane S. Halonen Teaching Excellence Award (early career):**
  Aaron S. Richmond, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Denver, CO

- **Wilbert J. McKeachie Teaching Excellence Award (graduate student):**
  Lynne Kennette, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

- **Mary Margaret Moffett Memorial Teaching Excellence Award (high school):** The committee did not select a winner this year.

The STP Teaching Awards Committee congratulates the recipients of the 2011 Teaching Excellence Awards and thanks all nominees, nominators, and reviewers for their participation in the awards process.

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**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2012 STP EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS**

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (Division 2 of the American Psychological Association) announces its 2012 program of awards for outstanding teachers of psychology. Teaching awards of $1,000 and a plaque will be bestowed for outstanding performance in each of five categories: 4-year college or university (Robert S. Daniel Teaching Excellence Award), 2-year college (Wayne Weiten Teaching Excellence Award), high school (Mary Margaret Moffett Memorial Teaching Excellence Award), first 5 years of full-time teaching at any level (Jane S. Halonen Teaching Excellence Award), and graduate student (Wilbert J. McKeachie Teaching Excellence Award).

The deadline for submissions is January 13, 2012. For more information on specific criteria, what materials to submit, and guidelines for electronic submission, visit [http://teachpsych.org/members/awards/index.php](http://teachpsych.org/members/awards/index.php) or contact: William Douglas Woody, Chair of the STP Teaching Excellence Committee (e-mail: william.woody@unco.edu, phone: 970-351-2528).
Did you know that students in racially diverse schools are less likely to have a friend from a different race? Or that praising your students’ intelligence can mean they will be less successful than if you did not? Or, that schools miss identifying gifted kids 73% of the time?

*Nurture Shock* is full of research-based findings on the science of child and adolescent development. The authors present information in a way that is highly readable, and fascinating. The first chapter alone is worth the price of the book. It discusses the inverse power of praise and how telling kids that they are smart often backfires. Instead of challenging themselves, these kids (or students) don’t want to try things that they might not be good at, and they often underperform.

This is a terrific book to use in a psychology class. My students have to read each semester, and have a variety of books to choose from. This year *Nurture Shock* has been the book of choice. Not only are students reading it, but many of them are having their parents read it. And there is a wealth of information in the book that any teacher of psychology can use.

In addition to the chapter on praise, there is one on the hazards of not getting enough sleep, and another one on why kids lie. It turns out that the strategies we use to teach children not to lie just turn out better liars. Another chapter discusses how we talk about race and that when we think we are being politically correct by being “color blind,” we may actually be increasing discrimination.

What about teen rebellion? Arguing with adults, the research shows, is a good sign and is constructive to relationships. Remember what Freud said about siblings fighting to gain their parents’ attention and love? Well, he was wrong—what kids fight about 75% of the time are physical possessions; only 9% of fights are about parental affection.

Other chapters look at the effect of educational TV programming on behavior (it may not be the good thing we think it is), how to teach preschoolers self-control, and what really helps kids when they are learning to talk. The book cites the research the authors used for every chapter, so you or your students can find the original studies if you wish.

Information from the book can be used to reinforce and expand many concepts taught in a psychology class, including brain and biology, child development, states of consciousness, personality, and intelligence. The information will intrigue students, and they will be eager to contribute their own experiences around the topics presented.

The authors, Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, have written articles on the science of children for the *New York Magazine, Time Magazine*, and others. They have won numerous awards for their writing, including the magazine journalism award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the outstanding journalism award from the Council on Contemporary Families. Bronson has published five books; one of them a *New York Times* bestseller titled, *What Should I Do With My Life?*

*Nurture Shock* is one of those books every psychology teacher—and every parent—should read. Even if you know a lot about the subjects covered in the book, the authors’ excellent analysis of the research will help you to see things in a new way. It is a great read.
I am writing to salute all psychology teachers for their efforts to transform the educational experience of their students by preparing them for the challenges ahead in this new global century. We are absolutely delighted to serve you and your students, and we wish you a productive and successful academic year.

This year, 2011, has been a banner year for you and for the staff of APA’s Office of Precollege and Undergraduate Education. This fall we will be disseminating two APA policy documents—Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology and the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula—that were approved by APA’s Council of Representatives in February and August 2011, respectively. We would be remiss if we did not thank all the psychology teachers who provided leadership and support for making these two policy documents a reality. We also thank those of you who provided feedback on earlier drafts of these documents. All in all, it was a team effort that we can now applaud.

The principles set forth in Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology are designed for creating a world-class educational system that provides students with workplace skills in this information age. They were developed by the steering committee of the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) for the 2008 APA National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Psychology. The members of the steering committee were Diane Halpern, PhD (chair); Bernard Beins, PhD; William Buskist, PhD; Bettina Casad, PhD; Wallace Dixon, PhD; Yolanda Harper, PhD; Mary Kite, PhD; and Pat Puccio, EdD. Charlie Blair-Broeker served as the liaison for precollege psychology, and Courtney Rocheleau, PhD, as the liaison representing the early teaching career perspective. Charles Brewer, PhD, and Barry Anton, PhD, acted as liaisons from the BEA and the APA Board of Directors, respectively.

These principles were patterned after the Principles for Quality Undergraduate Psychology Programs, adopted by APA in 1994 (see McGovern & Reich, 1996). The initial development of the current version of the principles resulted in a chapter published in Undergraduate Education in Psychology: A Blueprint for the Future of the Discipline (Halpern, 2010). Recently, these principles were presented in a session at the APA convention chaired by Charles Brewer, PhD, that included the following speakers: Barry S. Anton, PhD; Dana S. Dunn, PhD; Mary E. Kite, PhD; and Randolph A. Smith, PhD.

The National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula describes what high school students should learn in the high school psychology class and recommends how students should demonstrate what they have learned. This is arguably the most important document that exists in support of high school psychology. If adopted by state boards of education and school districts, it could promote quality instruction and standardize the curriculum taught in high schools.

Efforts are under way to promote the adoption of the National Standards by state boards of education. Moreover, the National Standards will be shared at numerous conferences and workshops this fall and in spring 2012.

Members of the National Standards Working Group included Amy C. Fineburg, PhD (chair); James E. Freeman, PhD; David G. Myers, PhD; Debra E. Park, and Hilary Rosenthal. Members of the National Standards Advisory Panel included Elizabeth Bjork, PhD; Joan C. Chisler, PhD; James Kalat, PhD; Cheryl Luis, PhD; Morton McPhail, PhD; Jeffery Scott Mio, PhD; David B. Mitchell, PhD; Pat Puccio, EdD; Daniel Reisberg, PhD; and Susan Krauss Whitbourne, PhD. I encourage you to read more about the newly revised structure of the National Standards in the article (p. 1) by Amy Fineburg in this edition of PTN.
As we prepare for the fall, we will be thinking of new teaching resources we can provide that will enhance your teaching experience. We are looking forward to announcing these resources, which will be posted to the APA website once developed.

You have told us that you appreciate the teaching resources we provide, and we want to make certain that we continue to provide high-quality resources to meet your needs.

In the interim, we strongly encourage you to visit the website of the Office of Precollege and Undergraduate Education (http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/index.aspx) to learn more about resources in support of precollege and undergraduate education in psychology.

We have some exciting projects coming your way in just a few months. Stay tuned to learn about new resources and initiatives. Best wishes for a wonderful fall term.

As we prepare for the fall, we will be thinking of new teaching resources we can provide that will enhance your teaching experience. We are looking forward to announcing these resources, which will be posted to the APA website once developed.

REFERENCES