Established in 1999 with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts with continuing support from the National Science Foundation, the National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science’s mission is to promote the use of active learning techniques to the teaching of science with a particular focus on case studies. In addition to offering workshops on case study teaching, the center has developed a peer-reviewed case collection of more than 400 case studies in all areas of science including psychology for use by high school, college, and university teachers. Cases are available as classroom-ready PDF handouts that can be downloaded directly from the center’s website along with detailed teachers’ notes. In addition, teachers may apply on the site for an answer key account, which allows them password-access to answer keys for cases.

We have found the case method to be a powerful pedagogical technique. By using realistic or true narratives, cases provide students with opportunities to integrate multiple sources of information in an authentic context and engage in ethical and societal problems related to their discipline. The method, moreover, is a flexible teaching tool. Cases can take many different forms and be taught in many different ways, ranging from the classical discussion method used in business and law schools to small-group, cooperative learning strategies such as are used in problem-based learning, one method of teaching a case.
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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Nancy Schiller, MS, is a Co-Director of the National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science, University at Buffalo, and a Librarian and Engineering Subject Specialist with the Arts & Sciences Libraries, University at Buffalo. As Co-Director, she oversees the activities of the center, including grant writing, faculty training workshops, an annual fall conference, case collection, and website development.

**SELECTED PSYCHOLOGY CASES IN THE NCCSTS CASE COLLECTION**

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<td>Karen Chambers</td>
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<td>Sheryl Ginn &amp; Elizabeth Meinz</td>
<td>Students learn about good experimental design by examining a research study in which a number of ethical issues arise. Developed for a sophomore-level (college) research methods course, it could also be used in an introductory psychology course.</td>
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<td>Jamie McMinn &amp; Dana Dunn</td>
<td>Students analyze comments made on news websites responding to the murder of an 8-year-old boy in terms of how those responses fit into the explanatory lenses of social psychology and social cognition. Designed for a course in social psychology, the case is also appropriate for courses in introductory psychology, forensics, and social cognition.</td>
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<td>Artificial Sanity</td>
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<td>Case of Maria: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Therapeutic Relationship</td>
<td>Stephanie Brooke &amp; Janet Morahan-Martin</td>
<td>Illustrates concepts of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment within the context of a counseling relationship and the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. Appropriate for use in either an introductory psychology course or a more advanced course, such as an upper-level abnormal psychology course.</td>
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<td>I Can See Clearly Now: Mini Cases in Perception</td>
<td>Antoinette Miller</td>
<td>Set of mini cases focusing on the cortical areas associated with vision and visual perception based on actual cases reported in the literature. Appropriate for courses in physiological psychology, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, cognitive science, sensation and perception, and cognitive neuropsychology/neuroscience.</td>
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<td>Mini Cases in Movement Disorders</td>
<td>Antoinette Miller</td>
<td>Collection of six short cases taken from the literature focusing on brain areas and neurotransmitters involved in the control of movement. Appropriate for courses in physiological psychology and neurobiology.</td>
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<td>Speak Up! Mini Cases in Language</td>
<td>Antoinette Miller</td>
<td>Set of mini cases on language deficits (aphasias) and their likely organic causes based on actual cases reported in the literature. Appropriate for courses in physiological psychology, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, cognitive science, sensation and perception, and cognitive neuropsychology/neuroscience.</td>
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<td>Mini Cases in Psychoactive Drugs and Their Effects on the Brain</td>
<td>Darlene Mitrano</td>
<td>Series of mini cases focusing on how the major drug classes (stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, etc.) affect the brain. Designed for an upper-level psychology class on the brain and behavior, it can be used in any undergraduate course that covers psychoactive drugs from a biological standpoint.</td>
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<td>Kristen Hausmann &amp; Karen Aguirre</td>
<td>Students explore the possible causative explanation for autism, its diagnosis, and treatment in this interdisciplinary case study designed for general biology students and students of psychology and health studies.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Feenstra</td>
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<td>The Mozart Effect:A Research Methods Case Study</td>
<td>Lisa Hager</td>
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<td>The “Lady” of Charleston: A Case of Wrongful Gender Assignment?</td>
<td>Kim Finer</td>
<td>Explores the developmental basis of human sexual dimorphism and how gender misidentification may occur, as well as the emotional, legal, and societal implications of gender misassignment and reassignment. Designed for a junior-level human genetics course for allied health students, it could also be used in courses in physiology, endocrinology, developmental biology, general biology, and psychology.</td>
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<td>Nature or Nurture:The Case of the Boy Who Became a Girl</td>
<td>Keith Schillo</td>
<td>Explores the question of whether gender identity is determined strictly by genetics (nature) or social variables (nurture). Developed for an undergraduate course in human anatomy and physiology as an introduction to the reproductive system, it also could be used in courses in general biology, developmental biology, and psychology.</td>
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<td>To Be Who I Am: An Issues Case on Identity and the Body</td>
<td>Debbie Engelen-Eigles</td>
<td>Examines a rare condition in which an individual has a persistent and consuming desire to become an amputee. Students explore factors that play a role in the creation of identity and self-concept and compare and critique cultural attributions of deviance to different forms of body modification. Appropriate for introductory sociology courses and upper division and/or topics courses in social psychology, deviance, medical ethics, research methods, and disability studies.</td>
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<td>Exploring Unintentional Racism: The Case of Tim Hanks</td>
<td>Robert Grossman &amp; Thomas Ford</td>
<td>Explores attitudes about race and aspects of racism including the social psychology of unintentional racism, attribution theory, and institutionalized racism. The case has been used in an introductory sociology course, as the focus of the social psychology unit; in a social psychology course, as part of a unit on prejudice; and in a course on prejudice.</td>
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<td>Studying Racial Bias: Too Hot to Handle?</td>
<td>Jane Connor</td>
<td>Students evaluate a research proposal to determine if it is consistent with ethical principles and federal guidelines for conducting research with human subjects. The case was developed to be used in a seminar on prejudice and racism. It could also be used in a general diversity course, research methods course, or social psychology course.</td>
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<td>Josie: An Interdisciplinary Case Study of Madness</td>
<td>Joan-Beth Gow, Susan Nava-Whitehead, &amp; Kerri Augusto</td>
<td>In this interdisciplinary case, students are presented with conflicting data from which they must make a diagnosis of either porphyria or schizophrenia. This case can be used in many ways depending on the focus of the course and the instructor. The case has been used with majors and nonmajors in psychology, biology, and genetics.</td>
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<td>Salem’s Secrets: A Case Study on Hypothesis Testing and Data Analysis</td>
<td>Susan Nava-Whitehead &amp; Joan-Beth Gow</td>
<td>Uses the Salem witch trials to get students to analyze and critique data and help them understand the scientific method. Originally developed for a nonmajors general biology course, the case could be used in psychology, microbiology, sociology, and biostatistics course by focusing on particular aspects of the case.</td>
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<td>The Irresistible Costs of Impressing Others</td>
<td>Jamie McMinn</td>
<td>Explores recent research that indicates that people who boast to friends and those who are modest to strangers are less able to regulate their behaviors on other tasks. Designed for use in a social psychology course, the case is also appropriate for introductory, health, and motivation psychology courses.</td>
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<td>War, Death, and Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Jamie McMinn</td>
<td>Explores cognitive dissonance theory through the responses of residents in a town in Ohio to the rising death toll among Ohio soldiers in Iraq. Designed for social psychology courses, the case also would be appropriate for introductory psychology courses.</td>
<td><a href="http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/collection/detail.asp?case_id=186&amp;id=186">http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/collection/detail.asp?case_id=186&amp;id=186</a></td>
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Josh Pasek’s article for this issue of the Psychology Teacher Network serves as “a template for the budding social scientist” for writing an empirical research paper. The abstract below explicates and provides a link to the full article, which is formatted as a proper empirical research paper.

**ABSTRACT**

Students sometimes find the general process of writing an empirical research paper to be daunting. Yet, when the process is approached in a systematic way, students can become more comfortable with the writing and standard formatting used in an empirical article. Accordingly, the current paper (http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/empirical-social-science.pdf) serves as a template for the budding social scientist. In it, I describe the various sections of a research paper to illustrate the structure of an introduction, methods section, results section, and discussion section in a format in fitting with the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. As in most empirical research papers, the first section is an abstract, a short outline of the paper that clarifies both what the paper will be examining, what is found, and in most cases a one-line explanation of why the findings are important to the field. Accordingly, this paper should help clarify the process of producing an empirical article.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Josh Pasek, PhD, is assistant professor of Communication Studies and faculty associate in the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. His research explores how new media and psychological processes each shape political attitudes, public opinion, and political behaviors. Pasek also examines issues in the measurement of public opinion, including techniques for reducing measurement error and improving survey design.
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is defined by the purpose and use of assessment data during the learning process to help inform teacher and/or student decisions about teaching or learning. Formative uses of assessment data focus on providing feedback, while summative uses of assessment data focus on evaluation and grading. Popham (2008) summarizes the definition crafted by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): “Formative assessment is a planned process in which teachers or students use assessment-based evidence to adjust what they’re currently doing” (p. 6). Here, teachers and/or students use assessment data to change the process of learning when needed (e.g., a teacher might use feedback from an assessment as a suggestion to continue a classroom conversation in a different direction, and a student might use feedback from an assessment as a suggestion to reflect further about a specific issue or debate). Stiggins and Chappuis (2006) describe the distinction between formative and summative assessments by dividing uses of assessment data into two categories: assessment FOR learning and assessment OF learning (p. 11). Assessment FOR learning impacts learning as it is happening, while assessment OF learning is characterized by repeated “summative” uses of assessment data, which “sum up” learning and tend to end conversations. Assessment for learning, formative assessment, implies a continuing conversation: Assessment only becomes formative when it is used by teachers and or students to reflect on the learning process. Assessment of learning, summative assessment, implies an “ending” to the learning process: This occurs when student learning is summarized, most often in the form of an overall grade.

SINGLE DIAGNOSTIC ITEMS

Ciafolo and Wylie (2006) describe a formative assessment technique called Single Diagnostic Items that is designed to focus on one important concept and diagnose student misconceptions about that concept. Ciafolo and Wylie define these items as “single, multiple choice questions connected to a specific content standard or objective. They have one or more answer choices that are incorrect, but related to common student misconceptions regarding that standard or objective” (p. 4). These items are designed so that each incorrect response indicates a specific misconception about the concept, so that student responses identify specific misconceptions. Ciafolo and Wylie provide the following example of a simple single diagnostic item (p. 4):

**Question:** Write two thousand sixty seven as a number.

A. 267  
B. 2067  
C. 200067  
D. 2000607  

A student’s response to this item provides information about whether or not she or he understands how to answer problems like these. If the student answers incorrectly, the incorrect response provides information about exactly what misconception the student has, and this information can be used by the teacher or student to quickly correct that misconception. A student who answers “C” tries to solve the problem by first writing the entire number 2000, then adding the second number, 67. Similarly, a student who answers “D” also tries to first

continued on page 8
Another formative use of the data is also possible: Teachers could use the data to sort students into discussion groups, each group tasked with analyzing their responses and re-thinking the solutions. These meta-cognitive reflections could help students correct their own misconceptions and deepen their understanding of why the correct answer is “right.” Students can also use these data in formative ways: Teachers could provide a key for students that explains which misconception corresponds with which incorrect answer. Students could then self-assess their own understanding and/or misconception and reflect on what further practice they need to better learn the concept. This self-assessment and reflection could help prepare students to be more independent in their learning in the future and communicate the message that student self-assessment and reflection could help prepare them to better learn the concept. This practice they need to better learn the concept. This approach may only include mammals and exclude humans from the category. Each option, correct and incorrect, can reveal important details about the ways in which students are thinking about this important categorization. Teachers could use this item and student responses to start discussions between students with different conceptions about what is included in the category of “animal.” Students who include different answers in the animal category can lead each other toward greater inclusiveness, gradually moving toward a mutual, technically correct understanding.

Consider the item below:

“Which of the following is an animal?”
A. Cow
B. Tree
C. Human
D. Shark
E. Mushroom
F. Worm
G. Snail
H. Bacteria” (Ciafolo and Wylie, 2006)

Consider the information a teacher could glean from this item: If a student chooses “A. Cow” as the only correct answer, what can we diagnose about the student’s thinking about the category of “animal?” The student’s mental concept of animal may only include mammals and exclude humans from the category. Each option, correct and incorrect, can reveal important details about the ways in which students are thinking about this important categorization. Teachers could use this item and student responses to start discussions between students with different conceptions about what is included in the category of “animal.” Students who include different answers in the animal category can lead each other toward greater inclusiveness, gradually moving toward a mutual, technically correct understanding.

This emphasis on formative uses of data from the diagnostic items allows the traditional form and guidelines for multiple-choice items to be “loosened in several interesting ways” (Ciafolo & Wylie, 2006, p. 5). Since the data will be used by teachers and students to inform rather than evaluate learning, some of the traditional rules for writing the items no longer apply. Consider the item below:

“Which of the following is an animal?”
A. Cow
B. Tree
C. Human
D. Shark
E. Mushroom
F. Worm
G. Snail
H. Bacteria” (Ciafolo and Wylie, 2006)

Consider the information a teacher could glean from this item: If a student chooses “A. Cow” as the only correct answer, what can we diagnose about the student’s thinking about the category of “animal?” The student’s mental concept of animal may only include mammals and exclude humans from the category. Each option, correct and incorrect, can reveal important details about the ways in which students are thinking about this important categorization. Teachers could use this item and student responses to start discussions between students with different conceptions about what is included in the category of “animal.” Students who include different answers in the animal category can lead each other toward greater inclusiveness, gradually moving toward a mutual, technically correct understanding.

**THE TRYOUT**

Educational psychology is littered with intriguing ideas that, according to perceptions of teachers, never quite work in actual classrooms (Rust, 2009). As enamored as I was with the idea of formative diagnostic items, I was also determined to try them in an actual classroom. I asked an instructor of an introductory psychology class at a local small liberal arts college for permission to work with one of her classes. After obtaining permission from the college’s IRB, I spoke with the instructor about what key concept might be useful to design an item around. We eventually chose the topic of working memory. The text for the course did not cover this topic thoroughly, and the instructor had not yet discussed this topic with the class.

After introducing myself and explaining the goals of the research project with the class, I asked them to write a short paragraph about their conception of working memory. Then I asked the class to participate in a working memory demonstration: They closed their eyes and mentally counted the number of windows in their house. After they finished this task, I asked them to close their eyes again and asked them to “count the number of words in the sentence I just said.” After they finished this task, I asked them to raise their hands if they had to use their fingers to count when they finished the task, I asked them to close their eyes again and counted the number of windows in their house. After they finished this task, I asked them to close their eyes again and asked them to “count the number of words in the sentence I just said.” After they finished this task, I asked them to raise their hands if they had to use their fingers to count when I asked them about the number of windows in their house (none of the students raised their hands). Then I asked how many used their fingers to count the number of words in the sentence (almost all the students raised their hands). Then I projected a formative diagnostic item on the screen:

Why do most people have to use their fingers when they count the words in the sentence, but they don’t when they count the windows?

A. Windows are visual, and visual things are easy to process.

B. Most people are visual learners.
C. The windows are in long-term memory, but the words are in short-term memory.

D. Familiarity—I’m more familiar with my windows than I am the words in that sentence, so that task is harder.

E. I can picture the windows, but I can’t picture the words, and that has something to do with it.

F. Working memory must process words and pictures differently.

Students then indicated their response to this item (using their cell phones and the website Poll Everywhere: http://www.polleverywhere.com/). We briefly discussed the diversity of their responses (see chart below left).

Students pointed out that at least one student in the class chose each of the possible responses. We discussed the frequency of the different responses: Most students chose answer C (“The windows are in long-term memory, but the words are in short-term memory”) or answer E (“I can picture the windows, but I can’t picture the words, and that has something to do with it”). We briefly discussed this diversity of responses and concluded that the data indicate that the class doesn’t yet have a common explanation for why the word-counting task required almost everyone to count on their fingers, and the windows counting task did not.

Then I explained the origin of the task they were asked to do: Baddeley (1974) used this and several similar tasks to demonstrate that working memory (then called short-term memory) was not the simple, temporary storage it was previously conceived to be. This kind of memory task demonstrates that not all information is treated equally in working memory. Baddeley established that working memory is actually an active system that deals with different kinds of information in different ways. To complete the “counting the windows” task, first working memory has to categorize the incoming information and figure out what needs to be done with it. Baddeley calls this aspect of working memory the “central executive.” The central executive determines that the windows need to be pictured and then counted. Baddeley calls the aspect of working memory that handles images (e.g., picturing the windows) the “visuo-spatial sketchpad,” and the aspect that handles words and numbers the “phonological loop.” In the counting windows task, the central executive can “tell” the visuo-spatial sketchpad to “look” at the windows, and the phonological loop to count them. But when faced with the “count the number of words in the sentence I just said” task, the central executive encounters a problem. The phonological loop has to repeat the words in the sentence, but the visuo-spatial sketchpad can’t count, so most people have to use their fingers to complete the task.

After explaining Baddeley’s research and terminology to the class, I asked students to again complete their answer to the writing prompt “In a few sentences, please briefly describe working memory (aka short-term memory).” Then I asked them to again use their cell phones to vote on the correct answer to the diagnostic item (see chart below right).
The class discussed these data and agreed that the memory demonstration and explanation changed their conceptions and understandings about the nature of working memory. Almost everyone in the class agreed in the end that answer F “working memory must process words and pictures differently” was the most correct answer. We discussed the two previously most common answers (C and E), and the class was able to describe in what ways those responses were correct and incorrect. I re-explained a bit about the purpose of this study with the class, answered the few questions they asked, and the class period came to an end.

Later I analyzed the students’ written responses to look for other evidence of changes in understanding of the working-memory concept. I created a short rubric to use to score students’ pre- and postwriting responses (see chart below).

Each student response was scored by me and a colleague who did not know which responses were “pre” and which were “post.” These scoring data also indicate changes in understanding the working-memory concept (see chart on next page).

All the samples of student writing showed progress according to the rubric except for the responses of participant #6. The writing data support the data from the formative diagnostic item and the conclusion that the memory demonstration and explanation helped students in this class better understand the concept of working memory.

**DISCUSSION**
The single diagnostic item about working memory used in the introductory psychology class worked effectively to establish that student understandings about the nature of working memory improved as a result of the demonstration and explanation. Items like this one could be developed to evaluate the impact of classroom demonstrations, and these “effectiveness data” could be used to make decisions about which demonstrations are most effective and which need to be modified. These same data could have been used for several other formative purposes: I could have regrouped students into discussion groups based on their responses and asked groups to process the rationale behind their answers. Heterogeneous discussion groups might be useful, with each student discussing their different answer with the goal of the group moving toward a consensus conclusion. I could have used the two most common answers and used classroom demonstrations that focused on those misconceptions directly. All these possible formative uses of the assessment data share a common characteristic: Data from one item are used to focus specifically on student misunderstandings about an important concept. This focus on the misconceptions these students demonstrate addresses student thinking actively and directly.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
Thanks to Nebraska Wesleyan University, Dr. Kim Paul, and Dr. Jerry Bockhoven.

**REFERENCES**


SCORING DATA INDICATE CHANGES IN UNDERSTANDING THE WORKING-MEMORY CONCEPT

Mean PRE=1.22  Mean POST=2.70
Most of us have engaged in research and learned statistics. Although we discuss how research is conducted and what types of research methods are used in our discipline, we may not incorporate these much into our courses. Why not have students participate in research while we discuss it? Students would be better prepared for courses in research methods and statistics if they were exposed to research earlier. What can we do to expose our students to actual research earlier in their education? The APA Online Psychology Laboratory (OPL) is the answer. With OPL we don’t need a psychology lab on campus or other resources for students to participate. OPL—cosponsored by the National Science Foundation, the Education Directorate of the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Science Digital Library—features 27 hands-on experiments and a step-by-step guide to help faculty and students get the most out of it.

When you arrive at the website (http://opl.apa.org), simply click on the Teacher Tour tab for help in getting started. This section provides teaching tips, lessons in simple data analysis with Excel, and more complex inferential statistics with SPSS. Teachers can read articles on specific ways to use OPL to illustrate ideas in social psychology, memory, and implicit attitudes. If you need more resources or ways to explain more difficult topics, under the Resources tab, you will find interactive animations, flash programs, and ideas that can be added to any course either as an addition to in-class lectures or as activities students do on their own.

I have used OPL successfully for some time. Each semester, I begin my use of OPL by reviewing the studies available on OPL. For example, I have used the study Mirror Drawing to further examine the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain in my introduction to psychology class, and I have used studies on learning and memory for my development classes. Sometimes I’ll pick a study to illustrate a concept when I’ve noticed students’ attention drifting in the past. If you teach statistics and you want data sets that are interesting for your students to analyze, you can pick data to use or a study for your research methods class. To review all the studies, just click on the Studies tab, and in the upper right hand corner you will see the option to read more about the studies. Or, if you click on your study choice and answer “No” to being a student or participant, at the bottom of the page, you will see an option to read more about your study choice. After choosing what you like, simply register your class.

With OPL we don’t need a psychology lab on campus or other resources for students to participate.

The level of the course determines how I incorporate OPL. At the beginning of an introduction to psychology course, I take students through OPL step by step and carefully define each term while discussing psychological research. Later on, I take students to a computer lab where we examine a study closely. Students who do not have computers or the proper hardware or software are encouraged to use a computer on campus. For a higher level course such as child psychology, I show students how to access OPL and give them assignments that we will discuss in class. I find it helpful to review what students are doing in a lab or schedule class time throughout the semester when I can address questions, problems, or concerns. A statistics professor I know brings the data and his analysis to class and then encourages students to access OPL on their own.

continued on page 13
Too often students view research or statistics as boring and something they just have to get through to be a psychology major. With OPL, your students can participate, analyze the data, and interpret their findings; in other words, they see something from beginning to end. Students learn by doing and realize that the content presented in our courses is mostly based in rigorous research. I have seen OPL spark students’ interest in doing more research. Furthermore, it’s an exceptional way to incorporate the APA learning goals and outcomes for the undergraduate psychology major, which include understanding and conducting research. By fostering a deeper understanding of research, we have an opportunity to foster students’ development of psychological literacy. OPL is a readily available resource that can help us foster that understanding.

ANNUAL ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY CONVENTION SLATED FOR APRIL

The New Hampshire Psychological Association Educational Foundation announces its fourth Annual Academic Psychology Convention for Saturday, April 14, 2012. This year, the convention is being held at Keene State College. Psychology faculty from high schools and colleges are invited to attend. Special programming for faculty includes:

- Workshop: Multicultural Education in Today’s Classroom
- Workshop: Using Therapeutic Role-Play in the Classroom Setting to Engage Students in an Introduction to Psychology Curriculum
- Psychology Academic Consortium Discussion: Advancing and Enriching Teaching Psychology in New Hampshire

There is no cost for registration, and lunch is available for all attendees. For registration and program information, please visit us at http://nhpaonline.org/students/index.htm.

PSI CHI EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY

Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, is pleased to announce its newest international chapters. The second Canadian chapter was installed at University of British Columbia, Vancouver, in November. Egypt also now has a chapter located at the American University in Cairo, Egypt (AUC). AUC has had to postpone their formal installation ceremony due to continuing unrest in Egypt, but new members are looking forward to holding the ceremony spring semester 2012. Psi Chi’s Board of Directors also approved a new chapter at University of the West Indies, Cavehill, which will become Psi Chi’s fourth chapter in the Caribbean (there are already two in Puerto Rico and one in the U.S. Virgin Islands).
meetings, announcements & reminders

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 12-14, 2012
Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA), Reno, NV
http://www.rockymountainpsych.org/

TOPSS ANNOUNCES SPECIAL SESSIONS AT THE WESTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION 2012 CONFERENCE

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is pleased to announce two special sessions for high school psychology teachers. Philip Zimbardo, PhD, will deliver the TOPSS-sponsored address Why I Am Managing a New Hero Factory in San Francisco, on Saturday, April 28; and TOPSS Chair Jann Longman of Liberty High School in Renton, WA, will present on the newly revised National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula (APA, 2011) on Friday, April 27. The sessions will take place during the Western Psychological Association Conference (April 26-29, 2012) in San Francisco, CA.

For more information, visit http://www.westernpsych.org/.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS: COURSE-BASED AND STANDARDS-BASED APPROACHES

In February 2012, the APA Council of Representatives approved Guidelines for Preparing High School Psychology Teachers: Course-Based and Standards-Based Approaches (APA, 2012). This document outlines models for preparing preservice high school psychology teachers and is aligned to the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula.

The Guidelines will be posted to the TOPSS website this spring and broadly disseminated to state departments and boards of education and teacher preparation programs. Please contact Emily Leary at eleary@apa.org if you have any questions.
24TH ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE ANNUAL CONVENTION

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES
May 24-27, 2012 in Chicago, IL USA
http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention
Psychological research aims to understand, and serve, a diverse world. Achieving that aim requires diverse perspectives. Diversity—gender, ethnicity, culture, and scholarly background—enriches our science by expanding the range of questions we ask and methods we use to answer them. The 24th APS Annual Convention explores advances achieved through diverse perspectives in psychological science.

ALSO FEATURING…
THE 19TH ANNUAL APS-STP TEACHING INSTITUTE
The Teaching Institute is sponsored by the Association for Psychological Science and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. The day-long (May 24, 2012) program offers information talks and practical advice from experts on the teaching of psychology.


The 2012 Music, Mind, and Brain theme program will also include a special concert with Dan Levitin, Dale Boyle, Bianca Levy, Robert Levenson, Kevin Feyen, featuring Victor Wooten (see http://www.victorwooten.com/), a five-time Grammy Award winner and bassist for Béla Fleck & The Flecktones.

ETOP COMING SOON
The Department of Psychology at James Madison University will host the next Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP) on Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23, 2012. The conference will be held at the historic Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, VA. All participants are invited to submit proposals for the concurrent sessions, poster session, or participant idea exchange. The deadline is March 1, 2012.

For more information, visit http://www.psyjc.edu/etop/.

TOPSS MEMBERS RECOGNIZED BY APA PRESIDENT
APA President Melba J. T. Vasquez, PhD (2011), presented APA Presidential Citations to Amy C. Fineburg, PhD, of Oak Mountain High School, Birmingham, AL, and Debra E. Park, of Rutgers University, Camden, NJ (West Deptford High School, Westville, NJ, retired). Fineburg was recognized for her “leadership as chair of the [APA] National Standards for High Psychology Curricula Working Group,” and Park, for her “efforts on behalf of the association to promote high-quality instruction of high school psychology and membership growth for APA.”

The APA Education Directorate and the APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools congratulate you both!
APA/CLARK UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

The eighth annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers will be held July 16-18, 2012, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. All interested high school psychology teachers are invited to apply; the workshop will be open to 25 teachers. Workshop presenters will include faculty from the Clark University Psychology Department; faculty and master teacher presenters will be announced this spring. Randy Smith, PhD, of Lamar University, will deliver the keynote address.

Housing in the Clark campus dorms and materials will be provided for all participants. There is no registration fee. Participants will also receive travel stipends of $100. Five travel scholarships of $250 each will be available to teachers in need of extra travel support (please note that the maximum travel reimbursement any teacher would receive is $250).

The application deadline is April 15, 2012. An application form is available at www.apa.org/ed/precollege/TOPSS/conferences.aspx. This workshop is sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation, Clark University, and APA, with generous support from Lee Gurel, PhD.

A NEW TOPSS UNIT LESSON PLAN AVAILABLE

The TOPSS unit lesson plan Sensation and Perception is now available. This unit lesson plan covers lessons in introduction to sensation and perception, vision and audition, other senses, and perception. TOPSS members can visit http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/lessons/index.aspx to access the unit. A limited number of hard copies are also available (contact ccrowley@apa.org).

TOPSS expects at least two more unit plans to be published in 2012: Biological Bases of Behavior and Life Span Development. These two unit plans, along with the Sensation and Perception, are revisions of original lesson plans from the 1990s. New funding, through the American Psychological Foundation and the generosity of Lee Gurel, PhD, has allowed the revisions to be completed. In coming years, more unit lesson plans will be revised, including Perspectives in Psychological Science; Research Methods, Measurement, and Statistics; Vocational Applications; Memory; Learning; and Personality.

NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO START A PSI BETA CHAPTER!

By Jerry Rudmann, PhD
Executive Director of Psi Beta

Psi Beta, the national honor society in psychology for community college students, celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2011. Membership in Psi Beta helps students and faculty in a variety of ways. Psi Beta chapters help students develop leadership skills, encourage participation in community service projects, and recognize good scholarship. Psi Beta membership, possible only through a local chapter, makes students eligible for Psi Beta’s various competitions. Many chapters provide students with the opportunity to engage in psychological research. Psi Beta’s faculty advisors also benefit from Psi Beta. Advisors report the satisfaction and joy derived from watching students blossom; many of their Psi Beta students continue on to achieve their academic goals and become productive members of our field. A Psi Beta chapter brings positive recognition to faculty advisors, the psychology department, and the college. In many ways, advising a Psi Beta chapter can serve as an excellent professional development activity.

If you still do not have a Psi Beta chapter at your community college, here is a special but limited offer. A reduced application fee of only $50 (temporarily reduced from the normal $150 fee) is available for applications submitted on or before June 28, 2012! Details for starting a new Psi Beta chapter are available on the Psi Beta website at http://psibeta.org. You can also email me at Jrudmann@ivc.edu if you have any questions.
TOPSS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS!

The APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is pleased to celebrate its 20th anniversary from 2012-2013! In 1992 an Interim Steering Committee of TOPSS was founded, and in 1993 the TOPSS Committee officially became part of the APA governance structure.

Please watch for information about the anniversary in future issues of the Psychology Teacher Network, the APA Monitor on Psychology, and on the TOPSS website by spring 2012.

SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR PT@CC TEACHING RESOURCES AWARD

Sponsored by the APA Education Directorate and PT@CC, the 2012 Teaching Resources Award aims to encourage sharing of instructional techniques that community college faculty have developed and used in face-to-face, hybrid, or online psychology classes. The committee is interested in receiving teaching activities, resources, presentation slides, or other materials, along with a brief description of the teaching resource, what class it is used in, what topic is covered, and evidence of its effectiveness.

The winning entries will be posted on the PT@CC website. An award of $400 will be given to the first place winner, $300 to the second place winner, $200 to the third place winner, and $50 each to two honorable mention winners. Certificates for all winners will be presented by PT@CC at the APA annual convention (http://www.apa.org/convention/index.aspx). Attendance at the convention is not required.

Deadline: May 7, 2012

ANNOUNCING NEW ONLINE MODULES FOR PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS

The APA Education Directorate and TOPSS Committee are pleased to announce the upcoming release of three new online modules for psychology teachers: two on biological bases of behavior and one on research methods, measurement, and statistics. The two biological bases modules, Key Points to Remember in Biological Psychology and Classroom Demonstrations in Biological Psychology, feature James Kalat, PhD, of North Carolina State University. Both modules will be released with the Biological Bases of Behavior unit lesson plan.

The module on Research Methods, Measurement, and Statistics features Steven Chew, PhD, of Samford University and covers topics such as quantitative and qualitative research methods, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

Each module is about one hour long. Upon completion of a module, teachers can take a multiple-choice quiz (or enter a series of letters that appear in the video) to receive a certificate of professional development. The modules are designed to promote professional development and be useful resources to teachers.

Funding for the modules was provided through the American Psychological Foundation, with generous support from Lee Gurel, PhD.

COME TO THE 2012 APA CONVENTION IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA!

The 120th Annual APA Convention will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL, on August 2-5, 2012. Information about convention registration and programming will be available on http://www.apa.org/convention/.

The TOPSS and PT@CC Committees will sponsor several hours of convention programming. Look for details later in this spring. We hope you and your students will attend!
ANNOUNCING 2012 PT@CC
STUDENT PRESENTATION CONTEST

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites your students to participate in the 10th annual PT@CC Student Presentation Contest! Supported through funding by the APA Education Directorate, the Student Presentation Contest recognizes innovative and high-quality electronic presentations. PT@CC looks forward to receiving presentations including original videos, websites, and electronic presentations.

The PT@CC Student Presentation Contest aims to promote active learning through the submission of psychology student presentations developed in either of the following categories:

- Presentations designed as demonstrations or teaching modules that illustrate and explain a psychological concept, theory, or research discovery
- Presentations that illustrate and explain a service-learning experience or other application of psychology in the community

Entries should be developed primarily by students and designed to explain the concept, research, or application to a 2-year college student audience. Nearly any class project that can be put into a PowerPoint, video, website, or similar electronic format will be acceptable.

The competition is open to students currently enrolled at a community college or other 2-year school. Students are eligible for the contest if they are community college students who have not previously completed a bachelor’s degree. Faculty sponsors must be members of the APA Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC). If you have students who might be interested in entering, please tell them about this opportunity and urge them to begin work on their presentations right away. The entry deadline is June 1, 2012.

The first place winner will be awarded $500; second and third place winners will receive $300 and $200, respectively. Certificates for all winners will be presented at the APA annual convention.

The contest guidelines and entry form for the 2012 Student Presentation Contest are on the web at www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html. For more information about this competition or PT@CC, please contact Martha Boenau at MBoenau@apa.org.

PARTICIPATE IN THE APA NATIONAL SURVEY OF HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS!

The American Psychological Association’s national survey of high school psychology teachers will close March 1, 2012.

Your responses to the survey, funded through the American Psychological Foundation, will provide APA and the APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) with vital information on who is teaching high school psychology across the country and inform our work on behalf of high school psychology teachers and students. The survey asks questions about your educational background, preparation and training, resources and opportunities, classroom issues, future trends, and professional development needs.

Please take 20 minutes and complete the online survey:


All data will be held confidential and reported in the aggregate only; individual-level data will not be released. Overall compiled survey results will be shared with everyone who completes the survey.

If you have any questions, please contact Emily Leary at 202-572-3013 or eleary@apa.org.
APA TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS
NOMINATIONS DUE

The APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award provides an opportunity for TOPSS to recognize outstanding teachers in psychology. Up to three awards are given annually. Teachers of high school psychology are invited to apply or can be nominated by a colleague, supervisor, student, or administrator. For more information, please visit http://www.apa.org/about/awards/teaching-excellence.aspx.

A nomination form is available at the TOPSS website. For additional information, please contact Emily Leary at (202) 572-3013 or eleary@apa.org. The form and all supporting materials must be postmarked by March 15, 2012.

APA TOPSS SCHOLARS ESSAY COMPETITION
DEADLINE APPROACHING

The deadline for submissions for the 2012 APA TOPSS Scholars Essay Competition is March 5, 2012. Each of four winners will receive a $250 award. The 2012 competition requires students to describe specific psychological concepts as they relate to the various ways a person might react to a natural disaster. For more information, please see the fall 2011 Psychology Teacher Network issue or visit http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/essay-competition.aspx.

Questions? Contact Caitlin Crowley, ccrowley@apa.org or (202) 336-6076.

APPLY NOW FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
TEACHER NETWORK GRANTS!

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) and the APA Education Directorate invite proposals to support a teaching workshop or conference for local or regional high school psychology teachers. APF is particularly interested in proposals for professional development opportunities for teachers that could lead to the formation of a new regional network of psychology teachers. APF will award $2,000 in grants in 2012.

Proposals should include (a) justification/rationale for how a specific project would build a new network of psychology teachers and enhance the teaching of high school psychology on a local basis, and (b) a budget.

Send proposals by May 1, 2012, to Emily Leary, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242 or by e-mail to eleary@apa.org.
APF SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS

American Psychological Foundation (APF) professional development awards help high school psychology teachers cover travel and registration costs to attend regional or national teaching and/or psychology conferences. Applicants may be awarded up to $500. Deadline: April 15, 2012.

Funds can be used to offset costs of travel, conference registration, and housing accommodations. Applicants must provide a budget for their conference costs. Conferences to which funding can be applied should take place between June and December 2012. While applicants can apply for funding for any teaching and/or psychology conference, applicants seeking to attend one of the following conferences are especially encouraged:

- National Science Teachers Association Conferences ([www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org/))
- Local psychology teacher conferences (e.g., Chi-TOPSS, UTOPSS, KTOPSS, ITOP, MATOP)
- Conferences such as those listed at [http://teachpsych.org/conferences/conferences.php](http://teachpsych.org/conferences/conferences.php) or those announced in the *Psychology Teacher Network* newsletter

A total of $2,500 is available for these awards. Please visit [http://www.apa.org/apf/funding/professional-topss.aspx](http://www.apa.org/apf/funding/professional-topss.aspx) for details.

APA CPSE NEWS!

The APA Center for Psychology in Schools and Education (CPSE) is working to build a library of free online modules for teachers and administrators that cover a variety of classroom issues, from formative assessment, to classroom management practices, to social issues such as bullying and relationship building.


Two additional video-based modules are also available. They go into more depth and provide additional resources for teachers on their corresponding topics:

1. A module on classroom management is divided into two sections. The first outlines underlying psychological principals and basic classroom management strategies, and the second provides specific strategies to deal with classroom disruptions. Both of these modules can be found at [http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/class-management.aspx](http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/class-management.aspx).

2. A new module, specifically targeting preservice and novice teachers, provides strategies for recognizing, preventing, and dealing with stress. The purpose of this module is to help alleviate some of the stress that teachers face in their new environment by providing up-front information and strategies for their specific population. Additional resources and activities can also be found on the website. This module can be found at [http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/teacher-stress.aspx](http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/teacher-stress.aspx).

In the works is a new video module on the use of creativity in the classroom. Through interviews and online presentations, this module will give an overview of creativity in the classroom and give teachers strategies to enhance creative outcomes from pupils.

For additional resources and projects looking at the application of psychological science to the classroom, please visit the CPSE homepage at [http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/index.aspx).
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: PRECOLLEGE PSYCHOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATION (APF) MISSION AND FUNDING
The APF provides financial support for innovative research and programs that enhance the power of psychology to elevate the human condition and advance human potential both now and in generations to come. It executes this mission through a broad range of scholarships and grants. For all of these, it encourages applications from individuals who represent diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.

The Precollege Program awards grants to individuals or institutions to advance psychological science in high schools. Its description, application requirements, and procedures appear below.

APF supports original, innovative research and projects. Although APF favors unique, independent work, the Foundation does fund derivative projects that are part of larger studies.

DESCRIPTION
This program provides financial support for efforts aimed at improving the quality of education in psychological science and its application in secondary schools. Proposals must focus on supplying education for talented high school students.

PROGRAM GOALS
• Improve the quality of high school education in psychology
• Encourage talented high school students to pursue careers in psychology

FUNDING SPECIFICS
Up to $20,000 annually

We do not allow indirect costs to be taken out of grant monies, although applicants can use grant monies for stipend support and other administrative costs (software, materials, etc.). Our policy on this is as follows, from the grant terms and conditions document:

No Institutional Indirect Costs. The entire grant must be provided to the individual grantee for the stated purpose. The grant may not be used to pay institutional indirect costs or overhead. If funds will be administered by the grantee’s institution, the institution must affirm in writing that it will waive all administrative fees and charges for indirect costs. This assurance may be provided through the signature of a responsible official on this agreement. This assurance must be received before the funds can be released.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
Educational institution, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, or individual affiliated with qualifying institution

EVALUATION CRITERIA
• Conformance with stated program goals
• Nature and magnitude of incremental contribution
• Capability for accomplishing the proposed work
• Likelihood of producing generalizable outcomes

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS
Description of proposed project to include goal and its relation to the institution’s mission and target population, qualifications for execution, other participants and respective roles, intended outcomes and plan for achieving them, extent to which outcomes may generalize

Format: not to exceed 7 pages (1 inch margins, no smaller than 11 point font)

• Timeline for execution
• Full budget and justification (indirect costs not permitted)
• Current CV for project leader

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND DEADLINE
Submit a completed application online at http://forms.apa.org/apf/grants/ by May 1, 2012.

Please be advised that APF does not provide feedback to applicants on their proposals.

Questions about this program should be directed to Parie Kadir, Program Officer, at pkadir@apa.org.
TEACHING IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: PERSPECTIVES FROM EXEMPLARY PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS, VOLUME 4 JUST RELEASED!

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) Division 2 has just announced the publication of Volume 4 of Teaching in Autobiography: Perspectives From Exemplary Psychology Teachers, edited by Robert Bubb (Auburn University), Jeffrey Stowell (Eastern Illinois University), and Bill Buskist (Auburn University).

Volume 4 contains 16 autobiographies, bringing the total number of autobiographies across the four volumes in the series to 96. The series chronicles the experiences and insights of STP Teaching Excellence Award winners, STP presidents, ToP editors, APF Brewer Award winners, and CASE Award winners. The aim of the series is to inspire teachers of psychology in high schools, community colleges, and 4-year colleges and universities to strive toward excellence in their teaching.

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Robert Bubb, Jeffrey Stowell, and William Buskist

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The Tell-Tale Brain is a text on neuroscience discoveries and involvement in cognition, perception, and understanding. The book is the latest from acclaimed neuroscientist V. S. Ramachandran, a professor at the University of California, San Diego, and director of the Center for Brain and Cognition.

In the same way that the Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe reveals the truth of the heart, The Tell-Tale Brain gives various explanations for how, when, and possibly why our brain is linked to our behavior. The book focuses on much of Ramachandran’s previous work, and if you have read any of his other writing, some of the cases may be familiar.

Yet, Ramachandran threads on new information and adds to the breakdown of topics such as phantom limbs, synesthesia, and autism. The Tell-Tale Brain came out last year, and I had the honor of meeting V. S. Ramachandran when he spoke as the Nova Southeastern University’s Distinguished Speaker on March 24, 2011. It was fascinating to meet him and hear his take on much of the research in which he is involved. As I read The Tell-Tale Brain, I could hear his voice reading the words on the pages as if he were right beside me. The thing I like most about this book is it breaks down complex material in a way that makes it more understandable.

The purpose of The Tell-Tale Brain is to put forth a theoretical perspective for understanding the evolution of the brain. Ramachandran covers a plethora of themes, including the way the human brain processes beauty with symmetry and familiarity; how language has changed and grown but still is influenced by our brain’s flexibility with issues like syntax; cell specialty due to the mirror neurons responsible for imitation in behavior, which is also influenced by the new and unknown; and how the neurons perceive beauty and treasure orderliness plus contrast in art.

Most notably, the author discusses the mystery of autism and its relation to mirror neuron dysfunction. Ramachandran and his colleagues hypothesized and discovered a mirror neuron deficiency that may lead to some of the most notable symptoms of autism, including misinterpretation of metaphors, language struggles, and the lack of theory of mind. Even more, potential therapies are discussed for overcoming some of the detriments of autism. Ideas featured include infancy diagnosis for most introductory treatment; the use of biofeedback to “exercise” the mirror neurons; dance therapy; and the use of controversial medications, including MDMA, or Ecstasy.

The Tell-Tale Brain is a valuable piece of literature based on content and overall readability. Ramachandran’s explanations about the new research on neuroscience are entertaining, inspire curiosity, and add to the knowledge base about the brain.

As a reader finishes the story The Tell-Tale Heart by Poe, the reader identifies the relief of the man’s own heart that must divulge its true job. As a reader finishes The Tell-Tale Brain, again a sense of relief overcomes that reader, as Ramachandran would idiosyncratically say. The reader has a sense that we (yes, we humans) are discovering more and more and can finally tap into the dainty corners of our favorite organ.
"I think ALL classes should have a “Cliff.” He was humorous and helpful and was a convenient way for me to reach out to other students."

"Cliff should be mandatory!"

"He gave me useful information I needed to know. Great study tips."

"Cliff was fun and silly and gave me an interesting way to check information and see what other students had questions on."

"I like the stuff he’d post, like the cliff-hangers and cliff-notes. Got me thinking."

—PSY101 STUDENTS, PHOENIX COLLEGE

A year ago, I decided to create a fictional teaching assistant named “Cliff Stroop” to use on Facebook in order to connect with students outside the classroom. You may be familiar with some of the recent statistics on social networking. Nearly all young adults in the U.S. participate in social media, and the majority use these sites as their primary method of communication. The reality is that if we want to contact our students outside of the classroom, we’re going to have to meet them where they are.¹

Initially, I expected my use of Facebook to be nothing more than a convenient vehicle for getting course information to students, such as letting them know when class would be cancelled or reminding them when their next paper was due. What I discovered was that I could use it for a whole lot more. Facebook turned out to be a valuable extension of my psychology classroom. I found I could use it for critical thinking exercises, study skills training, and even as a way to get students excited about the world of psychology.

Now it’s time to share what I’ve learned with other faculty. The student response to Cliff’s Facebook profile has been overwhelmingly positive. I found that students connected to Cliff in ways that were totally unexpected. In this article I’ll present some preliminary data on the effectiveness of using Facebook profiles in psychology courses and offer suggestions for content-related postings that encourage study skills, critical thinking, and course engagement. Finally, I will present guidelines for how to create your own Facebook assistant.

INTRODUCING CLIFF STROOP

On the first day of class, students “meet” their teaching assistant, Cliff Stroop. I pull up his profile on Facebook and give a brief introduction. Students typically have more in common with 20-something Cliff (who follows local sports and listens to popular bands) than their 40-something professor. He once attended the same community college and is currently a graduate student at the local university. He likes the outdoors and is in a “complicated” relationship with Ruby Skinner, the avatar assistant for my human sexuality courses. Although there are no attempts to hide the fact that Cliff is a plastic mannequin, all efforts have been made to give Cliff the same rich and exciting profile enjoyed by flesh and blood humans.

After concluding with a couple of humorous videos of Cliff snowboarding and disco dancing with Ruby, I invite students to friend him on Facebook. Participation is optional, but I let students know that Cliff may be a source of valuable course information. If I’m sick, Cliff will alert students as soon as possible. Cliff also posts

¹If you are a high school teacher, please be sure that you are complying with school policies before using Facebook with your students.
study tips and is available the night before an exam to answer any last minute questions. This 5-minute introduction seems sufficient enough to pique their interest, as the majority of my students end up voluntarily friending Cliff.

**USING CLIFF AS AN EXTENSION OF THE PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM**

Many psychology departments, campuses, and districts have their own Facebook pages with links to interesting articles and information about services and events. These can be great resources for students, but they are not specific to a particular psychology class. The use of a personal profile serves a very different purpose. Cliff provides information specifically tied to my courses. Through the use of Cliff, I am able to accomplish the following objectives:

1. **Course Management**

   My original motivation for creating Cliff was to create a convenient avenue for direct communication with students. Cliff posts when there are changes to the class schedule. He reminds students when papers and exams are coming and when extra credit opportunities are available. During the first week of classes, he also posts information on where to get the textbook, how to drop and add a course, and so on. The same information is provided in the syllabus, but I find that students are more likely to read it on Facebook than they are in the syllabus. This has cut down on the number of times I’ve had to answer the same questions.

2. **Study Skills Training**

   Working at an institution with a high number of underprepared underachievers, I knew that one of my main goals for using Facebook would be to provide study skills information. I tackled this problem in two ways. First, there’s a “notes” section on Facebook that allows you to post large blocks of material. I have posted study tips there under the title of “Cliff Notes.” I included topics related to note-taking and test-taking skills. Second, Cliff also makes random postings throughout the semester under the guise of daily trivia. Cliff may post information on how to find a tutor in psychology or how to guess on a multiple-choice test.

3. **Advisement**

   Cliff’s past experience at the community college and his current experience as a graduate student in psychology make him the perfect candidate to answer questions about pursuing a degree or career in psychology. Cliff can direct students to appropriate resources and offer some insights from his own experiences. When students are no longer enrolled in my psychology course, they can stay friends with Cliff. This provides an alumni-type connection and provides students an easy way to stay connected with me for things like requests for letters of recommendation.

4. **Critical Thinking and Student Engagement**

   There are several ways I use Cliff to get students interested in and thinking about psychology. Cliff sometimes posts “Cliff-hangers” in which he poses a question for students to ponder. The answer to the question is covered that week in class. E.g., “CLIFF-HANGER: Is it possible to die of fear? In other words, can you literally be scared to death? Find out Wednesday when Dr. Marin covers the autonomic nervous system!”

   Other times, Cliff posts links and trivia related to current events and real world psychology. Attempts are made to post questions that stimulate critical thinking and are related to the topics we are currently covering. E.g., “Did you hear about the controversy over the J. Crew ad depicting a mom painting her son’s toenails, pink? Do you think it would stir up the same amount of controversy if the ad had shown a little girl playing with a toy car? What do you think?”

**STUDENT RESPONSES TO CLIFF**

I have used Cliff in a total of eight sections of introduction to psychology over the years. At the end of the semester, I asked all students to complete a brief survey. The students who did NOT friend Cliff on Facebook (about 40%, n=101) were asked to complete a single item survey asking “Why didn’t you participate in Facebook this semester?” They were given a variety of fixed responses, and they could check off all that applied. The majority of students who didn’t participate said that they never got around to it or didn’t have a Facebook account. See chart on page 26 (top).

Overall, responses to Cliff were extremely positive.

The 61% of students who friended Cliff (n=156) were asked to complete a longer survey with both fixed-response items and several open-ended items allowing them to comment about what they liked or didn’t like about using Cliff. Overall, responses to Cliff were extremely positive. Students gave high ratings to the utility and enjoyment of using social networking in their psychology class. When students were asked how they used Cliff during the semester, many students reported that they used him as a source of important course information and a way to get study tips and connect academically with others (e.g., form study groups, share notes, ask questions). See chart on page 26 (bottom).

Several open-ended questions asked students to indicate what they like most about Cliff and whether they had suggestions for making Cliff
WHY DIDN’T YOU PARTICIPATE IN FACEBOOK THIS SEMESTER?

- I never got around to it: 50
- I don’t have a Facebook account: 40
- No Interest: 30
- I didn’t understand the assignment: 20
- I didn’t want to share my Facebook profile with others: 15
- I forgot: 10
- Other: 5

HOW DID YOU USE “CLIFF” THIS SEMESTER?

- As a source of course information: 50
- As a way to get study tips: 40
- As a way to connect academically with other students: 30
- As a way to connect socially with other students: 20
- As a way to send messages to my instructor: 10
- Other: 0

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more useful for students in the future. A final question provided a chance to add comments about social networking in the college classroom. These responses were uniformly positive. Not one student reported anything negative about Cliff or social networking in the classroom. The following are examples of these responses.

“This is a very good way to share with others. I will recommend that all courses do the same.”

“Facebook allowed me to make contacts with people of my major and interests.”

“This was an extra useful resource that was very creative.”

“It’s useful to get in contact with friends from school, the teacher, and news about class.”

“I like how Cliff gives you study hints for the test.”

“Other teachers should do this.”

“I like it because Cliff is a lot easier to check than my e-mail.”

SURPRISING FINDINGS
There were several aspects of the Facebook experience that I found very interesting, and somewhat unexpected. My decision to use a fictional character as opposed to using my own profile or some generic course profile influenced the way students used and interacted with Facebook throughout the semester. A few of these observations warrant noting.

1. Cliff is more interesting than the professor.
It’s as if Cliff is viewed as a peer, and therefore his input is automatically less condescending than that of a faculty member. For example, I’ve been making study skills information available to students for years in the form of handouts and information tacked up on the classroom bulletin board. This has been met with nothing short of complete apathy. However, when Cliff offers a study tip, students will click “like,” and offer responses like “thanks for the tips. I’ll be sure to keep those in mind.” Certain types of information, like study tips, were particularly well received when coming from Cliff.

2. Cliff allowed students to connect with each other.
To my surprise, many times when a new posting came in from a student, I would see that another student would jump in with the answer even before Cliff had a chance to respond.

Student #1: “Cliff do you know when our paper topics are due?”

Student #2: “Yes. This week!!!!!!”

3. Cliff became “real” in the eyes of the students.
Even though there was no attempt to hide the fact that Cliff was a mannequin and therefore had to be operated by someone else (i.e., the instructor), students actually developed a liking for Cliff as a separate individual, as evidenced by the sheer number of “Happy Birthday” wishes Cliff received when he turned 25 in October. Comments such as the following reflect this sense of Cliff as his own person:

“Hi Cliff, I am one of Dr. Marin’s students in PSY101. I’m looking forward to having you in Facebook and to get help for my PSY class.”

“Cliff, why does your relationship status say ‘complicated?’”

“Cliff, you’re cool.”

Cliff’s being viewed as being separate from me seemed to create an atmosphere where students were able to share things they wouldn’t necessarily share with the professor. For example, students might comment on whether they liked class that day or would point out when they found something interesting. One time a student posted “Man, interesting in Dr. Marin’s class today, as always.”

This provided me, as the instructor, another form of course feedback. Students rarely make a special trip to my office to tell me they found class interesting that day, but a quick posting on Facebook is giving me a glimpse into how my classes are being received.

After taking a picture of Cliff, I was able to use various free software to cut-and-paste his photo onto different bodies to create pictures and videos of him graduating, skiing, dancing, etc.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING A FACEBOOK ASSISTANT
If I’ve convinced you to try this creative approach to using Facebook, the next step is to create your own teaching assistant. I used a plastic head designed for cosmetology school students. I happened to have it up in the attic leftover from a Halloween haunted house. After taking a picture of Cliff, I was able to use various free software to cut-and-paste his photo onto different bodies to create pictures and videos of him graduating, skiing, dancing, etc. As an alternative, the nursing department at Mesa Community College in Arizona uses a CPR training dummy for their department profile. Regardless

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of what you choose, I would highly recommend that you pick something human-like, as opposed to a symbol or stuffed-animal. Creating a character that students relate to seems to be a big part of the success I’ve had with Facebook.

1. **Do not use your personal Facebook profile.**
   There are many good reasons for keeping your personal and professional lives separate, but it’s even more than that. Even if you create a separate account to use exclusively for Facebook, the profile is still a direct representation of you, the authority figure in the classroom. “Cliff” feels more like a peer or buddy, roles that students don’t typically associate with faculty members.

2. **Never seek out students to “friend.”**
   Let your students know they must actively seek out your assistant. Cliff is a one-way street in many respects. He does not view other profiles or send messages to particular profiles unless he is responding to a direct request of a student.

3. **On the first day of class, go over basic rules and guidelines for posting on Facebook.**
   If anything inappropriate is posted, Cliff will immediately delete the message and permanently “unfriend” the poster. I think this is an important point to make even though I’ve never had any problem with inappropriate postings.

4. **Respect the privacy of the student.**
   The student may not be interested in having you see their personal pictures any more than you want them to see yours. You can handle this in several ways. One option is to keep Facebook an elective part of the course. A second way is to require Facebook, but encourage students to create a separate profile without any identifying information that can be used specifically for the course.

5. **Remember to delete certain postings such as study tips, trivia, etc., at the end of one semester so that you can repost them as fresh postings the next semester.**

6. **Feel free to friend Cliff Stroop (PSY101) and/or Ruby Skinner (PSY277) to see their profiles and get some ideas for creating your own teaching assistants.**

**ADDITIONAL FACULTY SUPPORT**
I am more than happy to share my experiences with using Facebook and help faculty get started in creating their own profiles. If you have any further comments or questions, please direct them to:

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TEACHING ETHICALLY
Challenges and Opportunities
Edited by R. Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy

Educators work within a fluid academic and social landscape that requires frequent examination and re-examination of what constitutes ethical practice. In this book, editors R. Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy identify four broad areas of concern in the ethical teaching of undergraduate psychology: pedagogy, student behavior, faculty behavior toward students, and considerations in the diverse classroom. Together with their team of experts, they provide evidence-based advice and case studies that illustrate the application of relevant ethical principles.

Ethical teachers need to reflect on commonly accepted practices and make individual decisions about responsible teaching behaviors, such as honoring individual differences and respectfully challenging beliefs. Other challenges examined in this book include grading, textbook adoption, honor systems, online instruction, and conducting and using research on pedagogy to improve classroom practice. Infusing the undergraduate experience with ethics is the focus of chapters on supervising student internships, coauthoring research with students, and modeling appropriate professional boundaries.

Readers will find a host of practical suggestions for approaching ethics proactively in both traditional and virtual classrooms. This book will become an instant resource for all teachers in the social and behavioral sciences who care about ethical interactions between faculty members and students. 2012. 214 pages. Hardcover.

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