What is the key to health, wealth and success? Many students want to know. But educators sometimes sidestep or ignore these questions. We don't want to pigeonhole ourselves as self-help gurus. We focus on what we know. We doggedly pursue our teaching mission: Provide students with knowledge and experiences that will help make them well-rounded, informed and critically thinking adults.

How can students and educators have their cake and eat it, too? We can teach students about the scientific study of an inner strength that helps them lead healthy, productive and accomplished lives. We can teach them about self-control.

WHAT IS SELF-CONTROL?
Self-control is the capacity to override an impulse in order to respond appropriately. We use self-control when we eat carrots instead of Krispy Kreme donuts, when we forgive instead of freak out and when we pay attention instead of paying someone short shrift.

Self-control helps us manage motivational conflicts (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). A motivational conflict is when motivations clash in ways that prevent action. People have many motivations, most of which benefit themselves and society. Our motivation to eat arises out of a natural concern to ensure our own survival, whereas the motivation for sexual intercourse arises out of a natural concern to pass our genes.
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to the next generation. Motivations to seek affiliation and to protect ourselves and loved ones from harm also offer examples of basic, fundamental motivations that promote individual and collective well-being.

Yet, self-control can prevent us from engaging in motivated behaviors. People have natural motivations to survive by eating, but they use self-control to resist their temptation to eat unhealthy foods (or not to eat at all). Natural motivations to reproduce through sexual intercourse must be overridden through the use of self-control in order to follow standards for appropriate sexual behavior. And motivations to harm transgressors are overridden through self-control because forgiving others fosters individual, social and cultural well-being.

Self-control has three main parts:

• **Monitoring** involves keeping track of your thoughts, feelings and actions. In one study, first-year female college students who weighed themselves every day, compared with those who did not, were buffered from the typical weight gain that accompanies the first year in college (Levitsky et al., 2006). The same is true when it comes to our money. Keeping track of how much we save and spend relates to having more money.

• **Standards** are guidelines that steer us toward desirable responses. Our standards originate from society and culture. Think of the speed limit sign that tells you how fast to drive or the laws that tell you to pay your taxes. Follow the rules, and you’ll be fine. Break the rules, and there will be consequences. We also have personal standards that govern our behavior. If I have certain religious beliefs, I might think that it is inappropriate to eat certain foods, think certain thoughts or feel certain emotions.

• **Strength** refers to the energy we need to control our impulses. Numerous factors affect our self-control strength, such as mental exhaustion and stress.

Effective self-control hinges on all three ingredients working together. Without monitoring, you know what you need to do and have the energy to do it, but you struggle to accomplish much because you do not keep track of your progress. A world without standards is a recipe for chaos. And chronically depleted self-control strength can leave people with the knowledge of what they should do without giving them the energy to do it. Like a three-legged stool, kick off one self-control ingredient and the odds are that your self-control will topple over.

**WHY SHOULD WE STUDY SELF-CONTROL?**

It’s easy to sound preachy when we teach students about self-control. They might think they’re the only ones who struggle to get up in the morning, eat healthy foods or get enough exercise. I always tell them about one elegant study that showed that people are not perfect when they try to control their impulses (Hofmann et al., 2012). They fail about 20 percent of the time. Self-control is difficult.

**Why should we study self-control? It improves life in three ways:**

• **Individual well-being:** Self-control relates to better health. Physically, self-controlled people sleep better, experience fewer physical sickness symptoms and live longer lives. They also enjoy better mental health. Self-control relates to lower anxiety and depression. Behaviors that relate to mental health problems, such as substance use and suicide, are less common among self-controlled people.

  And chronically depleted self-control strength can leave people with the knowledge of what they should do without giving them the energy to do it.

• **Relationships:** Beyond wealth or good looks, people want self-controlled relationship partners. We want to spend our lives with people we can trust, who follow through on their promises and who will override their impulse to leave or lash out when things get tough. Self-controlled people are forgiving and react to conflict with benevolence rather than violence.

• **Societies:** Self-control helps societies flourish. Self-controlled people, compared to their less-controlled counterparts, earn more money. Not only do self-controlled people enjoy greater wealth, they behave more generously. They override their selfish impulses and go out of their way to help others. On a broader level, societies that have clear-cut standards for appropriate behavior tend to function better than do societies in which people do as they please. Societies also benefit from monitoring how their citizens behave.

When I teach, I ask students to think of examples of how self-control influences individual, relationship and societal well-being. Working with a partner, they generate a list of real-world examples that demonstrate how high and low self-control can help and harm people, relationships and societies. The good news is that it is easy to improve self-control.

**ISN’T SELF-CONTROL THE SAME AS IQ?**

Sometimes, it is hard to convince students that intelligence and self-control are not two sides of the same coin. They are related, but they aren’t the same thing. But talk is cheap. Let’s look at what the scientific data tell us.

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In a glorious study, Angela Duckworth and Martin Seligman (2005) recruited a bunch of adolescent students at the beginning of the school year and asked them to complete measures of intelligence and self-control. Then Duckworth and Seligman waited ... and waited ... and waited some more. At the end of their patient waiting period, Duckworth and Seligman collected the students’ grade point averages (GPA).

What did they find? Self-control was over twice as important as intelligence in predicting end-of-year GPA. That’s right: Self-control outdid IQ 2 to 1 in predicting academic achievement.

This result breathes fresh air into students’ lives. IQ often doesn’t budge, but self-control does. If our students want to get better grades, they need to stop trying to boost their IQ. Their success depends on how hard they work, how much they persist in the face of failure and how well they overcome temptation.

DIFFERENT FLAVORS OF SELF-CONTROL

Don’t let students think that self-control is an amorphous blob of goodness. It has many forms and flavors. One influential model splits impulsivity (self-control’s close sibling) into four distinct parts: urgency, premeditation, perseverance, and sensation-seeking.

**Self-control was over twice as important as intelligence in predicting end-of-year GPA. That’s right: Self-control outdid IQ 2 to 1 in predicting academic achievement.**

- **Urgency** is when you act rashly when you feel upset. You might get drunk, engage in risky sexual behavior or slug your romantic partner. Urgency also has an optimistic twin: positive urgency — or the tendency to act impulsively when we feel good. Ever wonder why some people can’t resist the urge to set a car ablaze when their team wins the Super Bowl? Or how a work promotion causes some people to visit a bar and do things they later regret? That’s positive urgency.

- **(Lack of) Premeditation:** Ready, shoot, aim — that’s how people who score high on this type of impulsivity navigate their environment. To act before we think is a clear path to fizzled goals.

- **(Lack of) Perseverance:** The 1980s singer Billy Ocean said it best, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” To illustrate, I tell students a story about one of my favorite lawyers.

Before he became a lawyer, he tried his hand at business. He failed. Forced to declare bankruptcy, he handed over his last two assets (one of which was a horse). Next, he tried his hand in politics. Wanting to start small, he campaigned to join his state’s general assembly. He failed again. Sometime later, he set his sights on higher office: the U.S. Congress. His luck didn’t change. Three failed attempts later, he switched his focus to the U.S. Senate. But he came up short again, losing two elections.

Two patterns capture students’ attention. First, this guy appears to delight from failure. Over and over, he strives to achieve goals that his experience tells him he can’t achieve. That’s where most people stop. But I encourage students to focus on the second, and more important, part of the story: his perseverance. Beaten down by repeated financial and political failure, he kept at it. He remained laser-focused on achieving his goals and overrode his natural impulse to quit. He showed confidence that someday his efforts would pay off. He was right. He went on to become the 16th President of the United States, widely regarded as the greatest president of all time. His name was Abraham Lincoln.

- **Sensation-seeking:** Ever feel driven to do things because they give you a buzz? We all do, but people high in sensation-seeking behave for the buzz more than others do. Some behaviors might have disastrous consequences, such as skydiving, base jumping or taking drugs. Other actions carry risk but immense rewards, such as risking one’s life to explore space and land on the moon.

FOUR WAYS TO IMPROVE SELF-CONTROL

Students enjoy learning practical strategies that they can use now. Here are four tips they can use to improve their self-control:

1. **Become a mental energy accountant.** Many students plan how they spend their time. Few students plan how they spend their limited self-control energy. Encourage students to spend the next week considering what they will do and how much self-control energy they will need to do it. Being mindful of when to spend and when to conserve their mental energy will help students navigate their environment and achieve their goals.

2. **Build self-control strength.** Self-control relies on an all-purpose energy resource. You can strengthen your self-control by doing seemingly unrelated self-control tasks. For two weeks, encourage your students to use their non-dominant hand to complete everyday tasks (e.g., cleaning, brushing their teeth). Research indicates that this simple exercise increases self-control in other domains, such as reducing aggression (Denson et al., 2011).

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continued on page 5
3. **Play offense against your environment.** In their book “Willpower,” Roy Baumeister and John Tierney (2011) argue that self-controlled people take control over their environment. If they’re motivated to lose weight, they do not bring junk food into the house. If they are driven to write 2,000 words a day, they block their email to prevent distractions. Encourage students to identify one way they can change their environment to help them achieve a specific goal. Ask them to implement the change for three days. Later, ask students to share their experiences about how the environmental change influenced their ability and motivation to achieve their goal.

4. **Take the mind out of the middle.** Self-control hurts because we have to battle against ourselves. Should I exercise now or later? Should I have zero, one, two, or 10 doughnuts? A solution is to take the mind out of the middle by setting up a mental contract, what psychologist Peter Gollwitzer and colleagues call implementation intentions (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). To achieve an academic goal, students might say, “When I get home from class, I will read Chapter 5.” Now the decision-making is done. They know when they will study. It sounds simple, but it works.

**CONCLUSION**

How can psychology educators accomplish our educational mission while also giving students the practical information that can help them achieve their goals? Self-control might seem stodgy, but it is our job to show students that self-control will contribute to their success more than their smarts or family background. Self-control levels the playing field. It puts the keys to achievement in students’ hands. By showing students what self-control is, how it works and why it is important, we will provide them with knowledge that can help them achieve their goals and have happy, productive and meaningful lives. **PTN**

**REFERENCES**


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Consider the following: Susie Q, a student in your psychology class preparing for her first exam, which will call for a deep understanding and application of the material. Susie hasn’t asked many questions in class because she is confident she knows what you are talking about. She doesn’t take many notes during lecture or group activities because she thinks she perfectly understood the material the first time she skimmed the chapter. As a result, she studies the night before the test by simply looking over the chapter once more. She is convinced she is going to get that A…and she is genuinely shocked when she doesn’t.

**SOUND FAMILIAR?**

This scenario illustrates that many of our students (like Susie) have not developed the metacognitive skills necessary for academic success (see Lang, 2012). That is, they have not developed the ability to think about their own thinking (“Do I understand this material?”) or to be consciously aware of themselves as problem solvers (“Could I figure out this problem without my book open in front of me?”). As a result, they cannot accurately judge their own level of learning (“Do I really know this well enough to earn an A?”).

Why don’t our students have these essential metacognitive skills? Perhaps they haven’t needed them. According to a Higher Education Research Institute study (Sax et al., 2004), 66% of entering first-year college students reported spending fewer than six hours per week doing homework during their senior year of high school. Yet a whopping 70% of them believe their academic ability is above average for their peer group. If this was the case for Susie, then her shock at not earning an A is understandable.

66% of entering first-year college students reported spending fewer than six hours per week doing homework during their senior year of high school. Yet a whopping 70% of them believe their academic ability is above average for their peer group.

Therefore, I want to make the case that we, as psychology teachers, are uniquely positioned to teach these skills to our students.
students. Given the content in an introductory psychology course (e.g., learning, memory, human development, cognition), it is a natural fit. In our courses, we can provide students with a metacognitive foundation that will serve them well beyond their time with us. Let’s explore three low-prep ways to achieve this goal.

**First, teach them the term metacognition.** Perhaps this is a bit obvious, but simply knowing that these skills exist and understanding how they relate to academic success are the first steps toward building metacognitive strategies. In the handy blog, “Improve With Metacognition,” Nuhfer (2014) argues that teachers should “bring explicit awareness of what constitutes becoming well educated directly to students… which requires understanding the stages of adult intellectual development.” And we, as psychology teachers, are just the people to do this because it is right in line with our disciplinary course content.

After clearly defining the term for students and situating it within the context of your course, ask students to apply it to their own studying. I have my students view the “How to Get the Most Out of Studying” video series. Produced by Stephen Chew (Samford University), this five-part series provides a student-focused, highly accessible, applied look at the how, when, and why of metacognition (see reference below). My students respond positively and often lament that they were not exposed to this material earlier in their education.

Whenever I cover a difficult concept (e.g., independent variables), and there are no questions at all (think back to the Susie Q. example), I give students an active learning activity.

Second, **design a class activity that requires metacognition.** For instance, Saundra McGuire (Louisiana State University) asks students to count the vowels in a list of 15 words and then, after a short delay, to recall as many words as possible. Students typically remember only a few. Next, students actively try to memorize the words. At this point, they can recall about half of the words. Finally, Dr. McGuire explains to students that the words are listed in a meaningful way and she guides them through the list. This time, students can recall almost all the words (see McGuire [2008] for the details of this assignment and the list of words). Using this activity allows students to see the different levels of processing in action and can help them begin to understand why metacognition is important when higher-order thinking is required. Nancy Chick (Vanderbilt University) also provides a number of useful metacognitive class activities (see reference list below).

Given the nature of our discipline, we are just the teachers to take on the task of serving our students’ best interests by integrating metacognition into our curriculum.

Third and finally, **revisit the concept of metacognition throughout the course.** If you are reading this article you are a dedicated teacher interested in continuously improving your practice. As such, you already use active learning techniques or formative assessment activities in your classes (e.g., group activities, think-pair-shares). What you might not have considered (and students certainly wouldn’t recognize) is that these techniques also provide opportunities to practice metacognitive skills. Take advantage of these opportunities to make this connection clear for students.

For example, after you lecture on classical conditioning, perhaps you do a group activity where students have to identify the US, UR, CS, and CR for various scenarios. As you are discussing the groups’ responses, I encourage you to go one step further and explain how this activity is also a metacognitive exercise. Explain to students that they might “understand” the terms when they hear them in lecture, but it’s not until they test themselves by applying the information in a novel way that they can really assess the how much they have actually learned it. This is metacognition, and it is what they should be doing in their own studying for every course.

I have found this direct approach to be powerful in my courses. Whenever I cover a difficult concept (e.g., independent variables), and there are no questions at all (think back to the Susie Q. example), I give students an active learning activity (identify the IV in a research design, for example), and at that point questions arise. Once again, I am able to reinforce their metacognitive skills by reminding them, in the heat of the moment, that testing themselves is the best way to find out what they really know.

The bottom line is that these skills are crucial to academic success, and we all too often leave it up to chance that students will somehow develop them. Given the nature of our discipline, we are just the teachers to take on the task of serving our students’ best interests by integrating metacognition into our curriculum. They need to be taught these skills by someone, and who better than their psychology teacher?

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**INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FAIR ON MODERN EDUCATION AND STUDENT WELL-BEING**

International S.F. is an international psychology science fair that offers the opportunity to students from all over the world to design, conduct and present original research relating to modern learning and student well-being.

The goal of this fair is to promote a scientific evaluation of the multiple interactions between innovation, wellness and efficiency in education.

After selection by a jury of specialists in all three domains, the best studies will be publicized worldwide and receive a variety of prizes from partner organizations.

The registration deadline is **January 13, 2015**. The submission deadline is **April 13, 2015**. For more information and registration, please consult the Fair website at [http://internationalsf.weebly.com/](http://internationalsf.weebly.com/).
Youth participation in competitive sports is commonplace in the United States. Recently, there has been greater attention paid to the incidence of concussion in older athletes (collegiate and professional levels). Clinical research has supported the implementation of concussion management programs designed to improve the safety of concussed athletes that return to play (for overviews on this topic, see Semrud-Clikeman, 2001; Baron, 2004; Barr, 2006; Echemendia, 2006; Webbe, 2011). Younger athletes tend to experience a protracted recovery from concussion (Field, Collins, Lovell, & Maroon, 2003; Gagnon, Calli, Grilli, & Iverson, 2009).

Concussed younger athletes experience varying levels of post-concussion residuals. These concussion residuals are often proportional to the severity of a concussion and complicated by other factors. Clinically, younger athletes with histories of prior concussions, pre-existing learning difficulties or co-morbid orthopedic injuries with associated functional changes and chronic pain often experience more difficult recovery patterns. Fortunately, many younger athletes recover relatively quickly from mild concussive events (Kirkwood, Randolph, & Yeates, 2009). Unfortunately, the athletes with more serious concussions experience disruption in many of their life roles (Moser & Berarinelli, 2011). This disruption affects roles at home/community, academic performance, normal developmental trajectories and re-engagement in athletic endeavors. Sadly, many younger athletes do not know how to understand the symptoms of concussion. This can also be the case for their coach or coaches (frequently volunteers without knowledge of concussion or safe RTP protocols) and their parents or other family members.

**PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF CONCUSSION**

By definition, concussion is a relatively mild neurological injury. The symptoms are usually transient, lasting hours to days after the event that precipitated the concussion. Neuroimaging studies, such as CT scan of the head/brain and structural MRI of the brain, are often negative. Some type of microscopic and metabolic dysfunction is presumed to occur, however, given the multiple symptoms of concussion (Bigler, 2008; Lewine, Davis, Bigler, Thoma, Hill, Funke, Sloan, Hall, and Orrison, 2007).

As an example, the memory loss may be due to focal injury of the medial temporal lobes and related structures (hippocampus, hippocampal formation and relevant white matter pathways involved in the consolidation of novel or recent information) (Bigler, 2008). There is some suggestion that concussions affect the brain in a more diffuse manner, as indicated by other common symptoms. The sensitivity to light implies visual system or visual pathway involvement. Balance or vestibular dysfunction implicates brain-based changes (cerebellar, basal ganglia and related pathways), as well as inner-ear dysfunction. The altered level or actual loss of consciousness highlights brainstem involvement, or, again diffuse brain involvement. Finally, behavioral symptoms include personality changes, e.g., emotional lability, highlight fronto-limbic system influences and dysfunction.

In younger individuals, the recovery from concussion is usually more protracted (Kirkwood, Yeates, & Wilson, 2006). This may have more to do with the nervous system immaturity, which heightens concerns about the risk of altered developmental trajectories in neurocognition. The notion of
greater plasticity and youth doesn’t apply to trauma. The brain can reorganize, to a degree, post-trauma, but this is moderated by the severity of injury, the age at which the injury occurs and other complicating factors associated with the injury.

The Third International Conference on Concussion in Sport, held in Zurich (McCrory et al., 2009), provided further information about safer return-to-play (RTP) guidelines.

ZURICH CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

The Third International Conference on Concussion in Sport, held in Zurich (McCrory et al., 2009), provided further information about safer return-to-play (RTP) guidelines. These RTP guidelines applied to children as young as 10. McCrory et al. (2009) defined a concussion as “a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces.” Common features of a concussion were delineated:

1. Concussion may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive force transmitted to the head.”

2. Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously.

3. Concussion may result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury.

4. Concussion results in a graded set of clinical symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course; however, it is important to note that, in a small percentage of cases, post-concussive symptoms may be prolonged.

5. No abnormality on standard structural neuroimaging studies is seen in concussion. (p. 186)

The Zurich Conference document is essential reading for anyone interested in RTP issues after sports-related concussion.

Post-concussion neuropsychological testing focuses on the skills affected by concussion: attention (simple and complex), verbal/visual memory (especially for new information — at the immediate and delayed recall levels), reaction time, processing speed and high-level or complex reasoning (executive functions). In addition, a concussed individual’s self-report or subjective complaints are gathered via some type of concussion symptom scale. Some of the typical complaints (headaches, fatigue) may have high base rates in general. This is why the clinical judgment of the professional evaluating a concussed individual must always be the primary filter through which objective (neuropsychological) and subjective (self-report) information is interpreted.

Brooks (2006) and others in the field of sports neuropsychology (cf. Echemendia, 2006; Webbe, 2011) have put forth some basic recommendations that can help reduce the more problematic sequelae of concussions in younger athletes. These recommendations include some type of concussion awareness program, wherein issues related to prevention, education, concussion surveillance and concussion management are thought through and concretized as part of the overall athletic program. Following these recommendations does not have to be onerous, particularly if administrators of the athletic programs, involved parents and coaching personnel are passionate about reducing the morbidity of sports-related concussion.

The Zurich Conference document is essential reading for anyone interested in RTP issues after sports-related concussion.

ACCESS TO USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS-RELATED CONCUSSION

There are excellent resources available to assist those involved in youth sports as they consider the creation or refinement of concussion management and RTP approaches. The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) has concussion management guidelines with an online video that offers invaluable information (http://www.cifstate.org/health_safety/concussion/index.html).

Interested parties can also access the Centers for Disease Control website for information about concussion and concussion management. This is a helpful resource for lay and professional audiences (http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/clinician.htm).
Of course, locating a sports neuropsychologist for further discussion or information is ideal. The field of sports neuropsychology is evolving. Clinical neuropsychologists that possess expertise in concussion management often consult to amateur teams (high school, college). The more experienced neuropsychologists in the area of sports-related concussions or brain injuries consult to local professional teams (NFL, NHL, MLS) or other entities involved in contact sports.

**SUMMARY**

At this point in time, we know a fair amount about sports-related concussions. We are learning more about the best components of the RTP decision-making processes, but these components need to include an enhanced understanding of the Zurich guidelines.

The pathophysiology of concussion is becoming more apparent (Bigler, 2008; Lewine et al., 2007). Deficits can be focal, diffuse, or a combination of both. Symptoms suggest certain brain areas and systems. In most cases, the effects of a concussion are transient, and injured individuals return to their pre-concussion levels of performance. When an individual sustains multiple concussions over time, or when an individual has not completely recovered from an initial concussion before sustaining a second concussion, symptoms are experienced for a longer period of time. There is a growing body of research that cumulative trauma associated with repeat blows to the head/brain may increase the risk for severe pathological states, such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (McKee, Cantu, Nowinski, Hedley-Whyte, Gavett, Budson, Santini, Lee, Kubilus, & Stern, 2009). 

**REFERENCES**


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What is Aurasma? It’s not a QR code. It’s a QR code on steroids! You can take any static print or web-based image and virtually layer another image or video onto that target. You can make every page of your iBook come to life. If you get an Aurasma Studio account, you can go further by layering a video that, once completed, will send the viewer to any web-based site or form.

We created a school bulletin board so that Aurasma’s power is tangibly evident. Multiple examples from various disciplines, including psychology, were built around a Bloom’s Taxonomy framework. Whether you are a newcomer to incorporating technology in the classroom or a pro looking to put some pop in your lessons, Aurasma will meet you on the level you’re ready to tackle.

Originally, Aurasma was developed as an advertising app to add pop to boring paper media advertisements. If you go to Aurasma’s campaign site, you’ll see the various companies involved with this project. Because it was developed first in England, Aurasma is hitting its stride in Europe. Organizations such as Tottenham, Hotspur and Mercedes are using this app to hook customers. Recently, Marvel Comics, GQ, HP and the Rolling Stones have incorporated this augmented reality app into their arsenal of marketing efforts. Slowly, but surely, Aurasma has been filtering into the United States as evidenced by its utilization by some very American companies. Any image with the purple “A” in media today is augmented with Aurasma.

Originally, Aurasma was developed as an advertising app to add pop to boring paper media advertisements.
INTERESTED IN A DEMONSTRATION?
First, download Aurasma on your iDevice or Android. Look for the purple “A” icon at the bottom center of your screen. Tap it and then touch the magnifying glass icon. In the search field, type in and search for “Compher Social Sciences and Thrasymachus.” You will need to “follow” the channel for the example to work, similar to following a person on Twitter.

Once you follow the channels, open Aurasma and point your device at the image below. When you get the purple swirl, you are almost there. Keep in mind additional actions can be taken by either double tapping or single tapping the videos or images once they’ve been triggered. This “layering” is where the magic happens.

Prelinguistic vocalization

Word Wall of Academic Vocabulary
You can link an image (like the one before) of the academic term to a video example of the term itself. Double tap the video to enlarge. Single tap the now enlarged video for the extended learning.

Narcolepsy

INFOGRAPHICS
Our infographic demonstrates the steps of using Aurasma. Try out the auras for yourself and imagine that students can build the infographics and videos with piktochart. This brain Infographic could easily be created at the end of the biological basis of behavior chapter by students. My AP Psychology students could take it a step further with picture or video overlays with Aurasma. Another post with a further example is available at http://thrasymakos.wordpress.com/2013/06/21/a-little-ignite13-extra/. Students can do group research projects, accompanied by webpage visuals, to demonstrate their knowledge.

SPHERE TECHNOLOGY
The sphere technology is our new favorite toy to use with Aurasma overlays. The iPhone app is truly amazing. After the AP Exam in May, I plan on having my students take me on a tour of rooms they create based on psychological perspectives.

If you are interested in more ways to layer with Aurasma, try our #ARevolution on Flipboard, this teaching video and the Aurasma studio tutorial. Feel free to email (JCompher@nisdtx.org) or tweet with questions. PTN

Charles Cooper (@Thrasymachus) works at Byron Nelson High School in Trophy Club, Texas. He teaches college government and was awarded the 2012 Humanities Texas Teacher of the Year Award.

Jill Compher (@JillCompher) works at Northwest High School in Justin, Texas. She teaches AP Psychology and Sociology. She is an AP Psychology reader for the College Board and was a 2010 semifinalist for the O’Donnell Texas AP Teacher Award.
NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY TO BE HELD SOON
http://www.nitop.org
Jan. 3–6, 2015, St. Pete Beach, Florida

The 37th annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology will be held on Jan. 3–6, 2015, at the TradeWinds Island Grand Hotel, in St. Pete Beach, Florida. Registration is limited to 375 participants; early registration is highly recommended.

Poster session proposals should be received by Oct. 1, 2014, to guarantee space in the program, although later submissions will be considered if poster space remains available. The conference program includes four morning workshops on the first day, three poster sessions, three participant idea exchanges, social hours, book and software displays and 30 featured speakers, well known for their excellence in teaching psychology. The conference fee is $545, which also includes buffet breakfasts and lunches, refreshments at coffee breaks and poster sessions, and an evening reception. For more information, contact Joanne Fetzner (Tel: 217/398-6969 or email Jfetzner@illinois.edu) or visit the NITOP website at http://www.nitop.org.

2015 SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE ON THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY (SETOP)
http://cetl.kennesaw.edu/setop
Feb. 27-28, 2015, Atlanta, GA

The annual SETOP is an opportunity for teachers of psychology to discuss and share experiences and techniques. The conference offers concurrent sessions and invited addresses on teaching techniques and issues associated with undergraduate education. Time is also available for participants to get to know each other and establish contacts with fellow teachers throughout the region. High school teachers get a reduced rate for registration.

Our Keynote Speakers this Year Include:
• Mark McDaniel (Washington University), author of “Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning” (2014)
• Sue Frantz (Highline College), inaugural recipient of the APA Award for Excellence in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at a Two-Year College or Campus (2013)

Register for SETOP here:
http://cetl.kennesaw.edu/setop/registration

Please contact the SETOP Coordinators Tom Pusateri (tpusater@kennesaw.edu) and Amy Buddie (abuddie@kennesaw.edu) with any questions.

SAVE THE DATES: ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE REGIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

March 5–8, 2015
Eastern Psychological Association (EPA)
Philadelphia, PA
http://www.easternpsychological.org/

March 18–21, 2015
Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA)
Hilton Head, SC
http://www.sepaonline.com/

April 9–11, 2015
Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)
Wichita, KS
http://www.swpsych.org/

April 9–11, 2015
Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA)
Boise, ID
http://www.rockymountainpsych.org/

April 30–May 3, 2015
Western Psychological Association (WPA)
Las Vegas, NV
http://www.westernpsych.org/

April 30–May 2, 2015
Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA)
Chicago, IL
http://www.midwesternpsych.org/

October 2015 (specific dates to be determined)
Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg, MA
New England Psychological Association (NEPA)
www.NEPsychological.org
BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS GRANTS FOR 2015 PRE-COLLEGE AND UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING CONFERENCES

APA's Board of Educational Affairs will award $10,000 in grants to support conferences on enhancing the quality of undergraduate education in psychology and advancing the teaching of psychology at the secondary, two-year or four-year level. To qualify for funding, conferences must be directed by an APA member, associate or affiliate and meet the stated criteria that appear on the Web at: http://www.apa.org/about/awards/block-ugradpre.aspx.

Grant recipients may use the funds to offset travel expenses of selected conference participants, registration fees of conference participants and speaker fees. Applicants may qualify for up to $1,000 during a given year, and applications for new as well as annual meetings are encouraged. Complete details about the application components are on the APA website at http://www.apa.org/about/awards/block-ugradpre.aspx.

Funding requests must be postmarked by Feb. 17. Send requests to Martha Boenau of the Education Directorate at the APA address or by email to MBoenau@apa.org.

NEW SCIENCE IN ACTION VIDEO AND POSTERS: HOW CONSERVATION PSYCHOLOGY HELPS US UNDERSTAND OUR CONNECTION TO NATURE

APA's Psychology: Science in Action public education campaign released a new video profile and poster set in October featuring conservation psychologist Dr. Susan Clayton. Dr. Clayton's research focuses on people's connection with nature and how that connection supports their well-being and makes it more likely they will take steps to protect the environment. Dr. Clayton's passion for her work and its strong grounding in science make this an exciting and engaging video to watch. At the recommendation of our teacher advisors, the video is just over five minutes long. View it at: http://www.apa.org/action/careers/protect/susan-clayton.aspx.

Psychology: Science in Action is a multimedia campaign — we're on the Web and in social media — designed to broaden your students' understanding of psychology and the contributions psychology makes to society. The first three campaign profiles featured Dr. Eduardo Salas, an organizational psychologist; Dr. Deborah Tate, a health psychologist; and Dr. David Strayer, a cognitive neuroscientist.

Through psychologist profiles, the campaign teaches students about the scientific underpinnings of psychology, the value of the psychology major and the many career paths within the discipline. Through the campaign, your students can learn about the critical role psychological research plays in answering questions and advancing our understanding of human and animal behavior. The campaign will also introduce your students to psychologists working in areas that may surprise them — for example, developing new traffic safety measures and studying how the brain retains information or ways in which playing video games can enhance learning.

“We have had great feedback from teachers about APAs new Psychology: Science in Action campaign,” says Rhea K. Farberman, APA's executive director for Public and Member Communications and the campaign manager. “Many report hanging the first three campaign posters in their classrooms and building class exercises around the campaign. As the campaign continues, we look forward to bringing the excitement and vast possibilities of psychology to more and more students.”

For more information about the campaign, visit www.PsychScienceAction.org. Also on the campaign website are suggestions for classroom activities and other curriculum materials — follow the “For Teachers” button on the homepage. You or your students may also be interested in joining the nearly 12,000 people who are following the campaign on Facebook (www.Facebook.com/PsychScienceAction) or on Twitter (@psysciaction).
2014 INTERNATIONAL BRAIN BEE HELD DURING THE APA CONVENTION

The International Brain Bee is a worldwide neuroscience competition for high school students motivated to learn about the brain and inspired to pursue careers in the neuroscience and psychological fields. The competition was founded in 1999 by Dr. Norbert Myslinski, of the University of Maryland, and has since expanded to 30 counties. In 2014, the International Brain Bee was held during the APA Convention in Washington, DC. APA will host the Brain Bee every three years, when the APA Convention is held in the nation’s capital. A press release of results from the 2014 Brain Bee is provided below.

A list of national Brain Bee coordinators available for contact is available online here. Interested teachers can start their own local chapter by contacting their respective national Brain Bee coordinator or by contacting Dr. Myslinski via email at nmyslinski@umaryland.edu.

PRESS RELEASE
Results of the International Brain Bee:
A neuroscience competition for young students
August 11, 2014; Washington, DC

Future neuroscientists from around the world met in Washington, DC, to compete from August 6 to 11, 2014, in the 16th International Brain Bee Championship. The Brain Bee is a neuroscience competition for young students, 13 to 19 years of age. Brain Bee President and Founder is Dr. Norbert Myslinski (nmyslinski@umaryland.edu) of The University of Maryland Dental School’s Department of Neural and Pain Sciences. The primary sponsor of the International Championship this year was The Gorrepati Foundation. It was hosted by the American Psychological Association at its convention. The goal of the Brain Bee is to help treat and find cures for more than 1,000 neurological and psychological disorders by inspiring young men and women to pursue careers in brain-related professions.

The new 2014 World Brain Bee Champion is Gayathri Muthukumar of India. She won a decisive victory, scoring 95 out of 100 points, 3.5 points over the runner-up. Gayathri lives in Bangalore and is also a classical Indian vocalist and dancer, a piano player and a sprinter on her track team.

After the first three parts of the competition (the neuroanatomy laboratory exam with real human brains, the neurohistology exam and first Q and A portion), Gayathri was in third place behind New Zealand and the United States. But she sprinted to the finish through the last two parts (the patient diagnosis and second Q and A portions), finishing first. Ewa Wang from Australia came in second; Thomas Chang from New Zealand was third; Adam Elliott of the United States came in fourth, and Rahul Kondaveti of the United Arab Emirates came in fifth. India thus broke Australia’s hold on the championship, which had been Australia’s for the last two years.

The competition was conducted by Dr. Judy Shedden of Canada and Ms. Kitty Tryon of the United States, and helped by Ms. Julianne McCall and Dr. Michael Gavini. The judges included Dr. Frances Fakoya of Grenada, Dr. Vassiliy Tsytsarev of Russia and Dr. Crystal Lantz of the United States. The keynote address was given by Dr. Paul Aravich of Eastern Virginia Medical School. During the six-day event, National Brain Bee Champions where invited to visit and be honored by their respective embassies, including those of Malaysia, Canada, New Zealand, China and Germany.

The competition has three tiers. Worldwide there are about 160 local chapters, each one involving many schools. The winners of the local competitions compete in their respective national championships. Then, winners of national championships then go on to represent their countries in the international championship. They are tested on their knowledge of the human brain, including such topics as intelligence, emotions, memory, sleep, vision, hearing, sensation, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, schizophrenia, addictions and brain research. The competition involves oral tests, a neuroanatomy laboratory exam, a neurohistology test and a patient diagnosis component. Sample questions include: What is the greatest preventable cause of mental retardation in the United States? What kind of molecules are semaphorin, ephrin, neuropilin and plexin? What is the medical term for when you start dreaming before you fall asleep? Stargazer mice are experimental models for which type of epilepsy?

The winner received $3000, a trophy and the right to represent the Brain Bee around the world. Gayathri was also awarded a summer internship in a neuroscience laboratory, provided by the Society for Neuroscience. The list of countries and competitors who came to DC with their ranked order of finish is provided on page 17.

We encourage neuroscientists and educators around the world to start a Brain Bee competition in their cities. It is easy and fun, and the media loves it. For more information visit http://www.internationalbrainbee.com/, call 410-706-7258 or 410-274-4998; or email nmyslinski@umaryland.edu, Julianne.McCall@gmail.com or your national coordinator listed online. continued on page 17
IBB 2014 National Champions and Their Order of Finish in the International Championship Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER OF FINISH</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>NAME OF NATIONAL CHAMPION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Gayathri Muthukumar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Eva Wang</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Thomas Chang</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Adam Elliott</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Rahul Kondaveti</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Anna Pan</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Dragos Casu</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Beatrix Wang</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Korea South</td>
<td>HwaYun Song</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Sam Pinches</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Mara Schubert</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Macau</td>
<td>Tin Wai Ng</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Eric Yoshida de Paulo</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Nabil Husaini Mohd Kamarul Abrar</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Kinga Panasiewicz</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Yameng Zhang</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Ayaka Seki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Cynthia Wahito Ndegwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Avinash Singh</td>
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<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Ihediohamma Valentine U. K.</td>
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<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Al-Yasser Shaaban Kassuwi</td>
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<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Onur Özdemir</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not Compete</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Darya Kuzmenko</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS AT THE 2015 APA CONVENTION

Psi Beta, the National Honor Society in Psychology for Community Colleges, is inviting high school and community college teachers and students to submit posters for the Psi Beta poster session to be held during the 2015 APA Convention in Toronto, Canada. Teachers are encouraged to consider presenting posters about effective teaching strategies they use in their classrooms.

An online application form will be posted through the Psi Beta website (http://psibeta.org/site/) in early 2015.

The deadline to submit an application form to Psi Beta is June 1, 2015. High school students need to complete and submit a teacher approval form to be considered for this opportunity. The approval form will also be provided online through the site above. Questions can be sent to Psi Beta Executive Director Jerry Rudmann, PhD, at jrudmann@ivc.edu.
NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2015 APA TOPSS CHARLES T. BLAIR-BROEKER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS

The purpose of the APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award is to provide an opportunity for TOPSS to recognize outstanding teachers in psychology. There will be up to three annual awards.

Winners will receive a framed certificate, engraved award, cash prize of $500 and a free TOPSS membership renewal for the 2016 membership year. Additionally, Worth Publishers is generously donating a set of its “Interactive (PowerPoint) Presentation Slides for Introductory Psychology,” Volumes 1 and 2, as well as the “Worth Video Anthology Flash Drive for Introductory Psychology,” to each of the winning teachers.

The submission deadline is March 2, 2015. Further details, including a nomination form and application procedure, are posted online at http://www.apa.org/about/awards/teaching-excellence.aspx.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR PT@CC AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE OR CAMPUS

The purpose of the Award for Excellence in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at a Two-Year College or Campus is to recognize the important contributions being made by psychology faculty at two-year institutions.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals are invited to self-nominate or to be nominated for the award. Nominees must be members of APA Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC).

AWARD AMOUNT

$1,000, a plaque from APA and a one-year APA Community College Teacher Affiliate membership renewal

NOMINATION PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION

Required nomination materials

• A nomination letter that provides a detailed description of the nominee’s demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching at a two-year institution;

• Three letters of support, including at least one from a student at the institution; and

• The nominee’s current CV.

Nominees will be evaluated in relation to the excellence of their contribution(s) to the scholarship of teaching and learning at a two-year institution (e.g., receipt of other teaching awards, student evaluations, professional presentations or publications regarding teaching or pedagogy and promoting psychology as a science).

Nomination materials should be sent by May 4, 2015 to mboenau@apa.org.

TOPSS ELECTION RESULTS ARE IN

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is delighted to welcome three new members who will join the committee beginning in 2015. R. Scott Reed, MEd, of Hamilton High School (Chandler, AZ) was elected chair-elect, and both Isabel Morales, EdD, of Los Angeles High School of the Arts (Los Angeles, CA) and Steven Turner, MEd, of Albemarle High School (Charlottesville, VA) were elected as members-at-large.

The TOPSS Committee extends thanks and appreciation to Steve Jones, MA, Yadira Sanchez, PsyD, and Maria Vita for their service to TOPSS and their commitment to excellence in the teaching of psychology. TOPSS also thanks Janie Wilson, PhD, for her term as a TOPSS College Faculty Representative. Janie’s term ends in December 2014, and Sue Frantz, MA, of Highline College will begin her term as a new TOPSS College Faculty Representative in January 2015.
FROM WILL ELMHORST
MARSHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, WI
When introducing personality and testing, I have students take the Luscher Color Test online (see http://kahome.eu/cgi-bin/lscnr.pl) and read the results. Then I tell them to take the test again but reverse their preferences and read the results for the intentionally skewed choices. Students are asked to consider the reliability, standardization and validity of the test based on the accuracy and specificity of the results they read. This introduces the students to the importance of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of various tests in psychology and pop culture.

FROM DAVID MEIXL
APPLETON NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, APPLETON, WI
Usually the day after discussing the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, I show students a video, like the one below. After they scream and whatever, we talk about what happened in their nervous system (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfZ1ov1BUo&NR=1).

FROM REBECCA MAGEE
CROWN POINT HIGH SCHOOL, CROWN POINT, IN
When we are in the neurobiological chapter, we always start class off with “show me your dendrites.” We use our own hands, arms, and long-sleeved shirts to go over the parts of the neuron. Dendrites are represented by spirit fingers. A student’s palm is their cell body. The arm is the axon, and the sleeve is the myelin sheath. I usually yell out a part randomly, and students have to point to it. Then I make students get dramatic by pulling down a sleeve for the myelin sheath. It is dumb and elementary, but the students get a good laugh out of it.

NEW APA RESOURCES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

A new TOPSS unit lesson plan on Psychological Disorders has been published, thanks to funding provided by the American Psychological Foundation (APF). The lesson plan was written by Richard Seefeldt, EdD, of the University of Wisconsin River Falls, and reviewed by TOPSS members Scott Reed and Nancy Diehl, PhD. This lesson plan includes lessons on: An Introduction and History, Current Perspectives, Classification of Psychological Disorders, and Psychological Disorders. All TOPSS lesson plans can be found online at http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/lessons/index.aspx.

Additionally, two new videos have been posted online at http://bit.ly/1tLcSGs for psychology teachers to view, both recorded at the August 6 Preconvention Workshop for Introductory Psychology Teachers. One video features Greg Neimeyer, PhD, of the APA Education Directorate presenting on Understanding the DSM-5: What Every Teacher Needs to Know, and the second features Lynn Bufka, PhD, of the APA Practice Directorate presenting on Update on the International Classification of Diseases. Four additional videos from the workshop will be posted online before the end of the year. The videos were produced thanks to funding provided by APF.
TEACHER SPOTLIGHT:
JULIE BRIDGWOOD KOBOLD
HIGHLIGHTING THE GREAT IDEAS COMING FROM OUR MEMBERS’ CLASSROOMS

Years in education
I trained in clinical psychology and worked at a psychiatric hospital, and it was in that setting that I began helping to teach workshops to families. I was hired to teach high school psychology in 2002 and had six AP students and 13 A level. The next year, there were 37 AP and 24 A level. Sadly, I had to take a three-year hiatus for an ill daughter but returned in 2007 and watched in amazement as the program continued to grow to 96 AP and 30 A level.

Current school
Nauset Regional High School located in the midst of the beautiful National Seashore on Cape Cod

Philosophy of education in 10 words or fewer
Provide safe environment so students maximize growth, curiosity and potential

Favorite teaching moment
In my second year of teaching at Nauset, a lone junior male was in a class full of senior girls. He was struggling a bit but came for extra help, and we worked out an effective learning strategy for him. He worked really hard over the course of the year, studied more effectively, grew more confident, participated more and so was very worthy of the TOPSS award certificate for academic achievement at our underclass academic ceremony in May. His academic career had been rather lackluster before AP Psychology, but everything changed afterwards. His senior year was filled with successes, and he headed to college to study psychology. Soon he was in a neuroscience program and was eventually accepted to graduate school. His father often tells people the psychology award changed his son. When I read Carol Dweck’s “Mindset,” I immediately thought of my student who realized hard work paid off and believed he was capable. My favorite moments in teaching always involve students’ realization that intelligence is not innate, and they are more capable than they believed.

Favorite day of psychology class
I love the second day of the biological bases of behavior unit. Having already covered neurons in a prior lesson, we jump into activating that lesson to check for retention and understanding.

These are ideas generously shared with me during conferences: Students pair up to create and label neurons from Play-Doh. As a way to review principles of neural transmission, they are dispersed to various bathrooms with a sheet that tasks them with explaining how flushing of toilets resembles polarization (when not flushing), threshold (finding the spot on the lever that sets the flush in motion), depolarization (flushing), hyperpolarization (how it is impossible to activate a second flush during short span of the flushing), all or none and direction of impulse. After washing hands, I pass around a bag of potato chips and ask them to lick the outside of a chip. As I model it I say, “Oh delicious, what is this wonderful taste?” They reply “salt,” and I correct it to “sodium.” Then we eat the chip and I ask, “Yum yum yum: What is this?” They reply “potato,” and I say “This is the best potassium I have ever eaten.” From there, “How is this like the ions in a neural axon?” And, they are quick to realize when polarized, the sodium is on the outside and potassium on the inside. Lastly, we head outside to act out the parts of neural transmission. Students divide into dendrites by way of secret handshakes, a wand-waving student-as-nucleus yelling, “I’m so excited!”; students-as-axons wearing positive (+) and negative (-) party hats switching places during depolarization and student-neurotransmitters jumping into the synapse yelling their functions is a memorable moment.

Favorite activity to grade/assess
Doing brain projects is my favorite activity. I set up the activity as a visual so I only have to count labels, location and images. The activity goes fast, and I can see easily if students understand the function. I love visual projects because students have to process the information deeply as they turn reading or auditory material into an image.

continued on page 21
**Topic you most dislike teaching**

Honestly, I like them all! The harder a section is, the more effort I put into finding relevant projects, demonstrations or activities, so that section becomes one of my favorite units to teach.

**What is your favorite original activity?**

One of my favorite activities during the year is exploring art therapy. I often feel I have rushed through health and treatment of psychological disorders, so I like to use post-exam time to further investigate these areas through exploring art therapy. Doing this activity meets the APA “National Standards” in Treatment of Psychological Disorders Content Standard 1, Perspectives in Treatment (Performance Standard 1.1 Explain how psychological treatments have changed over time and among cultures). Asking students to evaluate the efficacy of this treatment would also meet Content Standard 2, Categories of Treatment and Types of Treatment Providers. Including this with the Health standards is a way of evaluating Content Standard 1, Stress and Coping.

First, we discuss art classes they have taken during high school, as Nauset has a vibrant arts program, including art metal, guitar building, ceramics, painting, sculpture and photography. A lively discussion about what students liked and did not like ensues. From that discussion I throw out the question “Can art be medicine?” Depending on the class, I may have students discuss in small groups or write a reflective piece. Together, we watch the video “Can Art Be Medicine?” I usually schedule this lesson after the AP Psychology Exam but still in the midst of AP testing, so most of my students report feeling anxious and stressed. I keep the lights low, put on quiet instrumental music and provide a variety of art options. I typically have clay, collage materials and painting supplies. The majority of students choose painting. One of their options is to paint an inexpensive paper mask. (When money is tight and I have a lot of students, I order Kraft Die-Cut Dimensional Ready-to-Color Masks, available through Amazon.) The rest of the lesson is a little magical. The room mood tends to be focused but subdued; students try out meticulous patterns that take a long time. Conversations are deeply personal, illuminating and intimate. On the end-of-year evaluations, this activity is always mentioned as a favorite, with the accompanying, “It was so relaxing” comment.

PTN

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**TOPIC ANNOUNCED FOR 2015 APA TOPSS COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS**

The APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is pleased to announce that the topic for the 2015 APA TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students is substance abuse. Four winners will be selected for this year's competition, each of whom will receive a $250 award.

Students are asked to write an essay of no more than 3,000 words that addresses one type of substance use and that provides information concerning the neurological, cognitive and social implications of using this particular type of substance. In addition, each essay should discuss one scientifically tested preventive measure or treatment for this type of substance use.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?
THE REAL VALUE OF TOPSS

STEVE JONES
City of Medicine Academy, Durham, NC

I have had the pleasure of serving on the TOPSS committee for the past five years, and I have truly enjoyed working with such a terrific group of people. When I think back about the time, one of the most significant moments for me was in one of the first meetings I attended. We were discussing revising the unit lesson plans, and I recall then TOPSS Past Chair Will Elmhorst making a point about what he called “perceived value” — that is, what were the benefits that we could offer to TOPSS members?

There is an easy way to answer that question. The TOPSS committee and our amazing APA staff members have worked to create so many products for our members. There are newly revised lesson plans in many areas, including memory, perspectives and learning, with lesson plans on personality and research methods and statistics soon to be released. These have been developed cooperatively between college professors and high school psychology teachers to ensure they are both high quality and will work in high school classrooms. We have created our first problem-based unit plan on obesity, thanks to the leadership of Jeanne Blakeslee, TOPSS past chair, so that students can explore issues that don’t always fit neatly into one unit. We have created a TOPSS Facebook page to help share our resources and provide a virtual community for our members. APA, in collaboration with TOPSS and the Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) has a newsletter, the Psychology Teacher Network, created for teachers in high school and community colleges, that is full of suggestions, tips and advice for you. We have developed videos of many of our professional development opportunities and sponsored online webinars, so those who couldn’t attend the fabulous APA/Clark Workshop for High School Teachers or the APA Convention can still be virtual members of those groups. Thanks to funding from the American Psychological Foundation, we have helped support the creation of nearly a dozen state and local networks so teachers not only can learn what resources TOPSS has, but also build connections with teachers closer by.

And yet I occasionally hear the question: “What’s TOPSS doing for veteran teachers? I have the lesson plans, you know.” Before I can reply, I think of Will’s question, and I realize what TOPSS offers our experienced teachers that is even more valuable: opportunities for leadership.

As part of APA, TOPSS is constantly working to make sure psychology is seen as a vital course in all high schools. Our members have worked on the “National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula” because in many states the current standards are inadequate at best. We have created a resource guide for new teachers of high school psychology that provides information on lesson planning, activities, ethics and other resources to use in the classroom. Our members served on a working group that developed guidelines for preparing new high school psychology teachers, so schools of education and prospective teachers know what the best means of preparation are. All of these may not directly benefit you as a veteran teacher, but by increasing the quality in all classrooms, we ensure the course is more valuable and is perceived as more valuable by all of our communities — our schools, our colleagues, our parents and our boards of education.

When you join TOPSS — and renew your membership each year — what you are doing is supporting a powerful advocate for the course you love to teach. Even as the numbers of students enrolled in regular and AP Psychology courses grow in some areas, the courses are being eliminated or reduced in others. Perhaps worse, some administrations feel comfortable assigning some faculty members to teach psychology classes when those teachers have little or no background in psychology. Surely this would not be happening in a chemistry or U.S. history class!

So when you are considering whether or not to renew your membership, please take a moment to reflect on the current state of high school psychology and your role in it and don’t just look at the newest lesson plan or video. Think about whether you can afford a few dollars each month to increase the reach, the quality and the awareness of psychology in classrooms across the U.S. and even around the world. When you start evaluating the “perceived value” of a TOPSS membership, consider what that value truly is.

PTN