How can students or colleagues find a noted psychology expert to be a guest speaker for their local school or community group? Call on the “new” APA national speaker network — PSYCHE. In August 2012, the Society for General Psychology partnered with other divisions of the American Psychological Association to release its updated and expanded roster of 225 experts registered for PSYCHE.

The experts, APA fellows, are prepared to share their unusual and outstanding expertise with local audiences, including students and community groups. In addition, some of these experts are also prepared to host visits to their lab or clinic, speak with the media or advise younger colleagues or students. To download a PDF of the free list, simply check our website, http://www.apadivisions.org/division-1/news-events/speakers/index.aspx. The names are arranged in ZIP-code order.

The experts include several textbook authors, some leaders of U.S. and international psychology and six past-presidents of APA (pictured on page 3, left to right): Norman Abeles, PhD (Michigan), Florence Denmark, PhD (New York), Frank T. Farley, PhD (Pennsylvania), Diane Halpern, PhD (California), Bonnie R. Strickland, PhD (Massachusetts), and Richard Suinn, PhD (Colorado).

The PSYCHE network — Psychology Speakers You Can Hear Easily — was first created in 2006 with an APA...
FEATURED STORY
Reintroducing PSYCHE — the APA national speaker network

ARTICLES
The Indiana High School Psychology Teachers Association Conference
Group exams improve student learning

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT
Highlighting the great ideas coming from our members’ classrooms: Eric Castro

TEACHER ACTIVITIES
Using “Apollo 13” to Teach Problem-Solving
Fun and Quick Ideas

NEWS FROM TOPSS AND CABE
TOPSS Receives 2015 Presidential Citation
2015 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award winners

ANNOUNCEMENTS
APF High School Psychology Teacher Network grants
2015 TOPSS call for nominations
Call for nominations: APA Committee on Associate and Baccalaureate Education

NEWS FROM THE APA CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGY IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION (CPSE)
Classroom management modules

BOOK REVIEW
“The Genius of Dogs: How dogs are smarter than you think”

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
Programming for Psychology Teachers at the APA 2015 Convention
27th APS Annual Convention
Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (EToP)
The experts include several textbook authors, some leaders of U.S. and international psychology and six past-presidents of APA.

CODAPAR mini-grant. It currently spans four APA divisions — 1 (general), 2 (teaching), 21 (human factors), 52 (international) — and may expand to other APA divisions in the future. It also cooperates with other speaker networks, including ROMEO (Roster of Members With Expertise Outside the United States) for international speakers, at www.apa.org/international.

**TOPSS SPEAKERS BUREAU**
TOPSS helps high school and community college teachers find local psychologists who are available to visit psychology classrooms to speak with students. Read more...

**NEWS FROM TOPSS AND CABE**

**TOPSS RECEIVES 2015 PRESIDENTIAL CITATION**

APA President Barry Anton, PhD, presented a Presidential Citation to the TOPSS Committee at the APA Spring Consolidated Meetings on March 26, 2015, in Washington, DC. TOPSS Chair Michael Hamilton received the Presidential Citation, which reads as follows:

**AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

Presents This Presidential Citation to Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools

On the occasion of the March 2015 Spring Consolidated Meetings

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is recognized for their steadfast commitment to promoting high-quality teaching of introductory psychology and for advancing APA’s strategic goal of promoting psychology as a science. Their work is crucial to the association, the discipline of psychology and the general public, as high school psychology is often students’ first exposure to the discipline. By advocating the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula, promulgating revised unit lesson plans, advancing issues related to teacher credentialing and providing professional development opportunities for psychology teachers, TOPSS has raised APA’s reputation as the organizational home for high school psychology teachers. The committee also brings to the association’s attention the most salient issues in the teaching of psychology and K-12 education. In 2016, TOPSS will play an integral role in APA’s hosting the first-ever national summit on high school psychology. APA recognizes TOPSS’ unwavering commitment to the teaching of high school psychology.

Congratulations to the TOPSS Committee for this well-deserved recognition!
The Indiana High School Psychology Teachers Association Conference (IHSPTAC) is an annual, one-day event that draws high school psychology teachers to the Indiana University–Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) campus to

- sharpen their pedagogical skills,
- provide them with a forum to share their teaching techniques with their peers and
- develop collegial relationships with their fellow high school and college teachers of psychology.

Psychology teachers from all 355 Indiana public and private high schools receive an annual invitation to attend. The conference consists of formal presentations by attendees and IUPUI faculty and informal sessions during which attendees share effective teaching methods and discuss topics such as AP courses and teaching ethics. A modest registration fee of $30 per attendee funds the conference.

The foundation was laid in 1998 when the first author created and sent a needs-assessment questionnaire to all Indiana high school psychology teachers—who indicated they thought the conference was a good idea, would attend the conference and would like to participate in an activities/ideas exchange session involving other attendees. Many indicated such a conference would be particularly valuable because they were the only psychology teacher in their school, and the conference would provide them with a network of professional colleagues. As the conference evolved, the first author encouraged attendees to take an active role in planning and implementing conference events, and a core group of attendees (including the second author) accepted the offer enthusiastically. Their participation generated new conference sessions dealing with classroom demonstrations, Internet resources and the Indiana State Standards for Teaching Psychology in High School. The conference has continued for 15 years as an event that has created genuinely collegial relationships among high school and university psychology teachers based on attendees’ shared desire to help their students succeed in high school, college and beyond.

**ASSESSMENT OF CONFERENCE GOALS AND ATTENDEE SATISFACTION**

Attendees complete an evaluation at the end of each conference with the following questions designed to assess the accomplishment of the three conference goals and attendee satisfaction.
satisfaction. The results of these questions from the last seven conferences appear below with the numbers of attendees who answered “yes” or “no” to each question followed by an attendee’s verbatim comment from an open-ended question on the evaluation form. These data confirm that the conference has accomplished its goals and satisfied its attendees’ academic, social and professional needs.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS GAUGE SATISFACTION**

1. Did this conference sharpen your pedagogical skills?
   - Yes: 160/No: 0
   - “This conference is the absolutely best thing I’ve done this year to improve my teaching. I have truly become a more creative psychology teacher by attending this conference.”

2. Did this conference provide you with a forum to share your teaching techniques with your peers?
   - Yes: 160/No: 0
   - “It is just so useful when ‘real’ teachers share ‘real’ assignments that they use in their classrooms.”

3. Did this conference help you develop collegial relationships with your fellow high school and college teachers of psychology?
   - Yes: 160/No: 0
   - “I am the lone psych teacher in our building, so I have no one to collaborate with. This conference renewed my energy for the topic and made me excited to implement new ideas into my classroom.”

4. If next year’s conference is similar to this year’s conference, will you plan to attend it?
   - Yes: 159/Maybe: 1/No: 0
   - “This is the ONLY conference I go to all year, and at the end of the day when the conference is finished, I start counting down the days to the next conference!”

5. Would you recommend this conference to another psychology teacher who did not attend it?
   - Yes: 160/No: 0
   - “Wonderful experience—highly recommend! This conference is helping to produce better psychology teachers in Indiana high schools.”

**THE CONFERENCE AS AN AUTHENTIC RECRUITING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOST UNIVERSITY**

The conference’s primary benefit to its host university is recruiting of students. By bringing attendees to campus where they can experience the quality of its faculty and facilities first hand, the university creates recruiting ambassadors who return to their schools and share this information with their students in an honest and credible manner. The 2011 conference gave the university an opportunity to demonstrate its strong points to a group of educators who reported they taught 6,152 students during the 2010-2011 school year. When asked to respond on a 5-point scale (with 5 being most willing) to the question “On the basis of your experience at this conference, are you now more or less willing to recommend IUPUI to your students who ask for advice about where to go to college if they plan to major in psychology?” The average response of the 160 attendees from the past seven conferences was 4.50.

**OTHER COLLATERAL CONFERENCE BENEFITS**

The following collateral benefits have resulted from the conference.

- The second author created a website ([http://ihspta.weebly.com](http://ihspta.weebly.com)) that provides information about the conference, attendee feedback and a wealth of resources for high school psychology teachers.

- The second author began attending the IHSPTAC in 2000 when she taught two sections of AP Psychology with 50 students enrolled in the course and total enrollment at her school of 800. Since then, the number of AP sections has grown to eight, with an enrollment of 225.

- During the past 3 years in which the second author taught full time, she instructed a total of 420 AP students, and 86% of those who took the AP test in 2012-2013 earned scores of 3, 4 or 5, with an average score of 3.8. This ability to motivate students to work up to their potential was validated by the fact that she was selected by members of the top 5% of her school’s graduating class as one of their “Most Influential Teachers” for each of those 3 years.

- The first author was able to write the second author an exceptionally strong nomination for The Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s Mary Margaret Moffett Memorial High School Teaching Excellence Award, which she was awarded in 2014.

- The second author, who also teaches U.S. History, created and hosted a conference for her U.S. History colleagues in Indiana modeled on IHSPTAC ([http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=6fb7010e-31c7-40ce-8aa2-ab7e7195f1e&c=de98bd20-8ce8-11e3-b4da-d4ae5273d3a&ch=dff420-8ce8-11e3-b6b7-]
Attendees from 17 different high schools invited the first author and his IUPUI colleagues to come to their high schools to present a total of 80 guest lectures on topics such as “Your Freshman Year in College Will NOT Be 13th Grade” and “The Neuroscience of Addiction.”

The authors and several attendees have given presentations at professional meetings, including the College Board Forum.

The two authors created a workshop during which attendees used a rubric to evaluate the state-approved psychology textbooks they could adopt in their classes the following year. The results were made available online to all high school psychology teachers.

An emailing list was created and sent to all attendees to facilitate electronic networking.

A book fair was held during several conferences in which attendees could acquire college-level psychology textbooks solicited by the first author from publishers and his colleagues.

The IUPUI Psychology Department used the conference mailing list to send invitations to all the high school psychology teachers in Indiana to nominate their students to participate in IUPUI’s annual International Brain Bee competition.

Attendees earned 6 hours of continuing education credit from the Indiana Department of Education for participating in the conference.

The attendees developed a genuine sense of empowerment and collegiality as their post-conference feedback was used to improve the conference each year. The following attendee comment attests to this fact: “While Drew is the captain of the ship, the teachers are now empowered to influence content. We are becoming more and more of a collegial network.”

IUPUI hosted Psychology@IUPUI Day. High school students and teachers heard lectures, saw research demonstrations, toured research facilities and participated in roundtables with advisors on being a psychology major.

EMPHASIS ON THE STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHING PSYCHOLOGY IN HIGH SCHOOL

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and APA have created curriculum standards for teaching high school psychology, which are used to evaluate student learning and teacher effectiveness. IHSPTAC emphasizes these standards by focusing on two of them each year in formal presentations made by IUPUI faculty and veteran high school psychology teachers. The IUPUI faculty component of the presentation often includes the cutting-edge research of these content-area specialists. The portion of the presentations given by high school teachers involves sharing classroom demonstrations and activities they have used effectively when addressing the standard.

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agenda and assists the co-directors in creating a relevant program. The second author prepared a document aligning the National Standards to the Indiana Standards, which was presented at the 2014 conference. This document is a useful resource to guide teachers in addressing content identified in both sets of standards.

FINAL COMMENTS

The seed for this conference was sown 20 years ago when the second author enrolled in the first author's Honors Introductory Psychology class. For 4 years, their relationship was teacher and student, advisor and advisee and mentor and protégé. During the last 16 years, it has evolved into roles of professional colleagues and collaborators. This relationship has produced an ever-evolving event for high school psychology teachers — both beginners and veterans — that has garnered the following endorsements.

• “I have attended this conference for many years, and it is always the best conference I attend each year. This conference will assist every teacher (young or old) to do a better job in the classroom.”

• “I absolutely loved every bit of the conference. There is such a wealth of information to be distributed and discussed that one day is not enough! As a new teacher, I want to absorb everything that I can to benefit my students with the best education I can provide. I am looking forward to attending this conference until the day I retire.”

• “This conference enabled me to gain access to proven methods which can be used right away in my classroom! I have also established a new network of colleagues from across the state.”

• “Every psychology teacher in Indiana should attend this conference.”

AUTHORS’ NOTE:

Both authors are willing to share specific details about the conference — including a sample post-conference report — that can be used by anyone who may consider creating a similar academic gathering. Contact the authors at dappleby@iupui.edu and aharmon@zcs.k12.in.us.

Funding to support the creation of local and regional networks of high school teachers is available through the American Psychological Foundation (see p. 12).
We all seem to agree on the need to assess our students’ knowledge in some way so we know they are actually learning what we hope they are learning. Traditionally, one way instructors evaluate students’ knowledge is with one or more exams. These tend to be given with students working quietly and individually in a fairly stressful, time-limited environment. And in many introductory classes, instructors use multiple-choice exams to evaluate students’ recall and/or recognition of terms, but don’t necessarily test how well they understand the material or how well they can explain it to a peer. This testing method may also feed into a “teaching to the test” mindset that often is not beneficial to students and doesn’t help build good learning skills. However, we believe another function a test can serve besides evaluating students’ knowledge and class performance is to nurture their ability to learn.

We’d like to reconceptualize our traditional ideas of testing and learning a bit. We suggest that learning can occur in all activities of the class, including during a test. If we really believe deep learning is a more important outcome than memorization and regurgitation, we should be willing to reconceptualize the way we approach testing.

Pedagogical research is increasingly showing the learning benefits of collaboration between students in discussions and on projects. For example, cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991), team-based learning (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011), reciprocal teaching strategies (Shadiev et al., 2014) and focused interactive learning (Harton et al., 2002) strategies have been used in the context of initial learning of concepts. However, assessment has traditionally remained focused on the individual. We believe the benefits of collaborative learning can apply to testing, and learning can continue to occur even during assessment. We hypothesized that reciprocal, collaborative testing can result in both enhanced performance and increased active learning. Thus, we decided to give our students the same exam twice: once individually/alone and then immediately afterward in small groups—to see what happened.

We studied 276 of our students (57.6% female) across winter and spring 2014. Students were divided among two instructors (TKT: n=122; DGK: n=154) and 10 sections of three class topics (n=187 general psychology, n=78 developmental psychology and n=11 cross-cultural psychology) for a total of 23 exams. We gave two (DGK) or three (TKT) multiple-choice exams throughout the quarter. Exams consisted of 50 questions and were administered in 50-minute sessions. Questions were a mix of factual, conceptual and application types. Students took the same exam twice: first, individually, and second, in assigned groups of three to five. We took care to assign groups that would include an even distribution of students across the grade spectrum. Students completed individual response forms during the group portion, so they were still responsible for their own scores and were not required to agree with the group, and their final score was an average of their individual and group efforts. In a follow-up survey conducted only in the spring quarter (n=94), students also responded to several questions about their experience with the group exams. Quantitative analyses of exam performance speak to the improvement on group exams relative to individual exams, and qualitative analyses of the follow-up survey speak to the power of the group exams for not only improving performance, but for aiding learning and encouraging deep processing.

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Quantitative data indicated that students performed much better on group relative to individual exams. Average scores were fairly consistent across the three exams: individual (exam 1: 71.3%, exam 2: 69.1% and exam 3: 72.1%) and group (exam 1: 88.4%, exam 2: 82.3% and exam 3: 88.5%). The average improvement from individual to group exam was 19.62%, from 70.82 to 86.39, $t(1266) = 14, p < .0001$, with some students improving by as much as 40%! This pattern persisted regardless of instructor, class topic, number of exams or instruction quarter.

**Sample comments include statements such as “I learned a lot more on the group exam and I didn’t learn much of anything new …, but for the same data, I learned different ways to look at it.”**

Importantly, this improvement in learning did not seem to be because of one high-performing student dominating the group conversation. In a follow-up survey, students responded to the question to report on the nature of the atmosphere of contributions made to the group discussion on a Likert scale, from 1 = conversation was dominated by one person to 7 = everyone in the group contributed equally to the discussion. And, students reported that almost everyone tended to contribute equally to discussion, $M(94) = 6$.

We also asked students: What aspects of the group exam worked well for you? Most of the responses collected indicated the students enjoyed the opportunity to discuss each answer choice. They found the process of talking, debating and bouncing ideas off each other to be useful, and they were able to see different ways of reasoning through these conversations. They also shared what they learned more through teaching others and being taught, and sharing these answers boosted their confidence in their own knowledge. Some students mentioned the stress relief provided by the group-testing environment. Here are some sample comments from students:

- “I didn’t know the answers for a couple of questions about parts of the brain, and my group was able to explain it so I understood and remembered it.”
- “I liked that I got to hear different reasoning for things, which helped me to better understand the concepts.”
- “People had different strengths that we played off of … they were both my scores, but even just talking out loud to myself helped.”
- “It forces us to discuss the info more, which is beneficial toward memory.”

Students were also asked: How did you handle situations where group members had different answers to the same question? The responses suggested the students used a process of elimination, reasoning out each answer choice. Some groups reported they listened to everyone, and some explained why a particular answer might have been incorrect. To arrive at a conclusion, some groups voted and went with the majority, while others discussed until a consensus was reached. Still others chose their own answers after discussion. Sample comments include:

- “We explained the reasoning behind the answer and then explained why the other answer could be wrong.”
- “The majority would try to convince. Evidence was key.”
- “We all shared what we thought, then just individually put what we believed was the correct answer. There was no arguing or anything that made choosing your own answer uncomfortable.”

We also asked our students: Did you learn new information on the group exam? We found many students learned new information (65%), and some who didn’t report learning new information suggested the group atmosphere had helped in other ways, such as by clarifying their understanding of a concept or confirming their knowledge (12%). Sample comments include statements such as “I learned a lot more on the group exam and I didn’t learn much of anything new …, but for the same data, I learned different ways to look at it.” The latter comment speaks to our initial hunch that even high-performing students would benefit from the group testing approach.

Students performed significantly better on exams taken in a small group relative to exams taken individually. This improvement in performance was due to a number of factors, including the opportunity to think carefully about the concepts being tested and the ability to teach and learn from one’s peers. In addition to the performance benefit, students reported the group-learning atmosphere helped to relieve stress and solidify their understanding of course material. This effect holds across a variety of class topics and between two female instructors (with differences in course structure, teaching styles and ethnic backgrounds).

We’re both young(ish), early career women, so future research is needed to clarify whether the gender, age and experience of the instructor matters. Future work might also investigate the extent to which this method may help students under other conditions, such as other exam formats (e.g., short answer) and in other course subjects (e.g., history, math, biology). We’re also eager to study whether these effects change when we examine question difficulty and level of abstraction (e.g.,
factual versus conceptual). But one thing is clear from this work so far — group exams seem to improve student learning.

REFERENCES


DEEPTI GUPTA KARKHANIS received her BA in psychology and MA in clinical psychology from Delhi University, India, and her PhD in applied developmental psychology from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. She currently teaches Introduction to Psychology, Lifespan Psychology and Cross-Cultural Psychology at Bellevue College. Her academic research interests include temperament, anxiety and somatization; cross-cultural differences in parenting and socio-emotional development; and immigrant children’s school readiness and resilience. Her pedagogical research projects include understanding the struggles of English language learners in college classrooms and the role of collaborative exams on learning and retention.

TABITHA KIRKLAND TUROWSKI received her BA in psychology from the University of California, San Diego, and her MA in social psychology from The Ohio State University. She is in the process of completing her PhD in social psychology at The Ohio State University and has a research background in emotion, affective neuroscience and time perception. Turowski currently teaches general psychology, social psychology and research methods at Bellevue College. Her goal is to promote excitement for learning and intrinsic interest in the material through interaction, dialogue and demonstrations. In her spare time, she can be found hiking, rock climbing and singing.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT MODULES
According to outcomes from an APA teacher needs survey taken by over 2,300 teachers “classroom management” was identified as the #1 area of professional development needed by novice teachers. Professors Russ Skiba and Jack Cum-
FAVORITE EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES TO USE IN PSYCHOLOGY

- BPS Research Digest [http://digest.bps.org.uk/]
- Not Awful and Boring (examples for teaching statistics and research methods) [http://notawfulandboring.blogspot.com/]
- /r/edpsych [http://www.reddit.com/r/edpsych/]
- #psychat [https://twitter.com/search?f=realtime&q=%-23psychat&src=savs], and, of course,
- Teaching High School Psychology [http://teachinghighschoolpsychology.blogspot.com/#st-hash.2nV96zwC.dpbs].

Though it’s not a “favorite educational website,” my personal journal, which happens to be online, might be of interest to other high school psychology teachers. My teaching methodologies were formed by the Jesuits, and a large part of their methodologies is a tradition of reflection. I sometimes write down my reflections on lessons or activities that went well or did not go well. While I do it almost exclusively for my own benefit, others might find it interesting: http://ee-castro.com/tagged/psychology.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN 10 WORDS OR FEWER

This is hard. That isn’t only a confession about how difficult it was to formulate a “Philosophy of education in 10 words or fewer,” but it’s also, upon reflection, my actual philosophy. Education is hard. Teaching is hard, and learning is hard. Almost every year, I need to make that explicit with students: Learning is hard. It takes time; it takes energy; it takes effort. And, that’s not a bad thing. Most of the things we enjoy in life and find satisfying are actually hard.

FAVORITE TEACHING MOMENT

My favorite moments have been the bad ones, I think. Coming to mind right now are the times I’ve had to work with a student who cheated on a test or plagiarized a paper or the times students have come to me with a personal matter that’s bothering them. These are difficult and uncomfortable conversations, and I don’t think I’ve gotten any better at having them. But, if a student has to go through this experience, I’d rather they do it with me, someone who knows and cares about them.

FUNNIEST TEACHING MOMENT

The funniest teaching moments aren’t actually publishable. There are moments of great levity and humanity in the classroom that, when taken out of context, take on a different color. I often think of this as the definition of a you-had-to-be-there moment. Some that can be shared come to mind… like 2 years ago, I was thrown from my bicycle on my commute home, breaking both arms. Two weeks after the accident, I returned to the class with both arms in hard casts… and hilarity ensued. I couldn’t unlock my classroom door and asked one of the 30 students standing outside to take my keys and do it so we could start class… she said no. While trying to take attendance on my laptop, students were bumping the elbow of my cast, making my arm jerk wildly. Students kept asking me to write or diagram things on the chalkboard. All in all, it was pretty darn funny, trying to teach with two hard casts.

Or there was the day when the gymnema sylvestre taste demo, which blocks sweet receptors, fell on Halloween, and I let students leave the room thinking the effect would last for 24-hours.

continued on page 12
I’ve actually moved the first chapter of our textbook to summer reading; students come in already having read that chapter, they just take a test on it in the first week of class, and we move on.

FAVORITE DAY OF PSYCHOLOGY CLASS
I love the first day of class because it’s so fun to meet my new students and get them excited about the course. I love the last day of class because it’s a commissioning of sorts; students are heading off to college, equipped with greater understanding of themselves and others.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY TO GRADE/ASSESS
Uh… none? Grading is the worst.

Truthfully, I don’t have a lot of it to do. Over the years, I’ve pared down the assignments I ask students to do. For each unit, students write a brief paper (modeled on a single free-response question from the AP Psychology test), which they should be able to accomplish in 25 minutes; they take a multiple-choice reading quiz at home in our learning management system, Canvas, which is open-note/open-book/open-Google, and which is graded by Canvas; and they take, in class, a test on the unit (also in Canvas).

Psychology, for us, is an elective, so I need to be mindful of students’ limited time. They will always prioritize work for a required course over Psych, and while it may sound like I’m trying to avoid conflict by not assigning more homework, I actually came to the idea through Alfie Kohn [http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/truth-homework/]; I realized that students could learn what they needed to without much homework.

The downside is that students have to learn more in class, rather than on their own. Some days I feel like this pushes me to lecture more than I’d really like to, but that’s part of the tension that we should all struggle with. We’re a 1:1 iPad school, though a quarter of my seniors opt to bring in laptops instead. As such, we’re able to bring a lot of outside resources into class. From digital flashcards through online tests, forums and surveys to links to current events or recent findings, I can do it all at a moments’ notice, and all without a single photocopy. (I happen also to be the Educational Technologist for our school, responsible for working with faculty on ways they, too, can integrate technology into student learning. For more, see http://www.restlesspedagogue.com.)

As for a favorite assignment, if we set aside the grading issue for a moment, it’s perhaps the Scary Movie Project [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hgA3rCVywOcuR-vcPvFizo9GE_YhtfTiwH-po1biaCs8/edit]. So many students are terrified of just watching a scary movie by themselves, without the distractor/safety blanket of a cell phone, iPad or laptop, it makes me laugh.

TOPIC YOU MOST DISLIKE TEACHING
My least favorite topic to teach is the history of psychology. I get it: It was a long, hard road to get to where we are now in terms of the science of thought and behavior. Lives were ruined, careers made and lost — and I’m thankful for those who struggled so mightily. I just don’t like teaching it…I’d rather spend the time on modern psychology. As such, I’ve actually moved the first chapter of our textbook to summer reading; students come in already having read that chapter, they just take a test on it in the first week of class, and we move on. PTN

ANNOUNCEMENT

APF HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER NETWORK GRANTS

The APF High School Psychology Teacher Network grants support the development of local and regional networks of high school psychology teachers. Specifically, these grants are meant to support the creation or continuation of local or regional teaching workshops or conferences for high school psychology teachers. For information on strategies for setting up a local teaching network and details on existing groups, please see http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/ptn/2014/05/local-psychology-teachers.aspx or http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/state-local-groups.aspx.

For details on how to apply, please visit http://www.apa.org/apf/funding/psychology-teacher-network.aspx. APF will award $3,000 in grants in 2015. The application deadline is July 1, 2015.
If you’ve used the classic pliers-and-string exercise to demonstrate functional fixedness, you know that it’s effective but limited. Granted, students seldom pass up a chance to ask “When am I ever going to need this?” anyway, but here they may just have a point: Okay, we get the need for seeing familiar objects in a new way, but what’s the likelihood of ever actually having to use a household tool as a pendulum weight?

So try this: The team responsible for the astronauts’ life support system approaches the flight director with bad news — that is, more bad news. It’s already several days into the disaster, but things have stabilized for the moment. But now the air filters onboard the crippled spacecraft are becoming clogged. If they fail, carbon dioxide will build up, and the crew will die. A spare set of air filters is onboard, but they are designed for a different system. “Tell me this isn’t a government operation,” mutters the flight director, who then orders his team to find a way to fit a square peg into a round hole — literally.

This scene is from the movie Apollo 13. The film’s tag line — “Houston, we have a problem” — also indicates how the entire movie is about overcoming cognitive blocks, thus how the movie can be used during a unit on problem solving in an Introduction to Psychology class. Students love the real-life sci-fi aspect of the story. (Because you’ll be showing only clips from the film, you might provide an outline of the actual events; see the resources listed at the end of this article.) Students also have a great time defining the problems and figuring out the solutions, as if they themselves are helping get the astronauts home. Plus, they get a kick out of the “primitive” feel of the film, with those engineers in their skinny ties using stone-age computers (and just what the heck is a slide rule anyway?), it’s hard to believe these guys could loft a rocket to the moon, never mind bring it back safely after a near-catastrophic onboard explosion. Which leads to the main point of this lesson: Our brains are miracles of problem solving, as the film shows. The issue is less a failing spacecraft and more the overcoming of functional fixedness, fixation and mental set.

FUNCTIONAL FIXEDNESS

Following the square-peg-in-a-round-hole scene (which begins at 1:20), we see an engineer at Mission Control dump onto a table all manner of items the astronauts also have onboard: hoses, wires, notebooks, plastic bags, a space suit, the inevitable duct tape. He explains that they have to make this — he holds up the square filter — fit into the hole for this — the round filter — using nothing but that — the material on the table. Once students have figured out that this situation involves functional fixedness, you might explain this scene was dramatized for the movie. In reality, the engineer was home when he learned of the situation; he immediately drove to Mission Control, coming up with a solution on the way by visualizing essentially what the movie depicts. An important point for your class: It wasn’t really the hardware; it was the thinking about the hardware. Students might also therefore learn to creatively visualize their own functional fixedness solutions as if dramatizing a scene for a movie.

FIXATION

Flight Director Gene Krantz tells his staff at Mission Control that he doesn’t care what anything was designed to do; he wants to know what it can do (1:08). As such, he encourages them to overcome not just functional fixedness but fixation, the inability to develop a new way of thinking. Both the crew...
and the team on the ground must revise two major assumptions: First, this mission is no longer about landing on the moon but rather about simply getting home; second, and more crucial, the catastrophe onboard does not mean not getting home. The small and fragile lunar lander, designed to support two people for a day and half, must now be a lifeboat supporting three people for five days. First step toward solving this problem? Assume it can be done. “Failure is not an option,” Krantz famously says (1:15) and encourages his team to believe that this will be NASA’s finest hour. One particularly effective sequence involves electricity: How do you power a spaceship when the available batteries won’t even run a vacuum cleaner? Finding a solution means changing the assumption from not how much power you need, but how little (1:44; you might introduce the anchoring and adjustment heuristic here).

The astronauts’ families are going through their own challenges with fixation. For one thing, they are understandably haunted by their memories of a fire that killed three astronauts on the launch pad (touch here on the availability heuristic); as such, it’s hard to avoid the paralyzing assumption that any problem in space is a death sentence; never mind one as huge as this. For another, Marilyn Lovell, wife of mission commander Jim Lovell, has to continually rethink her role as a wife, mother and woman, not only because of the current crisis but also because those roles themselves are changing. One assumption she makes involves Blanche, her aging mother-in-law, who appears to be suffering from some form of senile dementia. At first, Marilyn believes that Jim’s mother should be kept in the dark about what’s happening to Jim; eventually, she changes this assumption because she believes the entire family has to be united — and that women can be strong. In a touching moment, we see her informing Blanche, who, far from falling apart, provides some warm counsel and firm guidance for her grandchildren (1:33).

End the lesson with the end of the movie, specifically, the scene in which the spacecraft is about to touch down safely. … Tell your students this is how they will feel when they overcome their own blocks to problem solving. Houston, we have a solution!

MENTAL SET
Space travel itself is so new that precious few past solutions exist to begin with, but even those don’t apply. For example, navigation proves almost impossible because the onboard guidance systems are dead. The astronauts come up with the idea of using the terminator on the earth — the line that divides night from day — as a reference: Keep it at a particular position in the window, and the ship can be put back on course — as a riveting scene shows (1:48).

The families also face challenges with mental set, many of them related to the social chaos of the 1960s. Marilyn tells a NASA press agent that the news crews swarming outside her house may not set up shop on her front lawn. If anyone has an issue with that, she adds vehemently, they can take it up with her husband because he’ll be home in a couple of days (1:21). Not only do we see Marilyn struggling to persuade herself that Jim will in fact make it back; we also see Marilyn overcoming a mental set: In the past, a wife could solve her problems by asking her husband; now the wife has to do it. In effect, then, what Marilyn is saying here is, “Jim has other things to deal with, which means you have to deal with me.” This will be a deservedly popular scene with the young women in your class.

SOME FOLLOW-UP EXERCISES
1. Arrange students into pairs and have them come up with other examples of functional fixedness, fixation and mental set. These might be drawn from their own experiences, from another movie or story, from a well-known figure such as a politician or celebrity or from history. Ask them what the cognitive block was and how it did or did not get overcome.

2. Divide the class into groups of four or five and tell them to invent their own Apollo 13-style scenario. This could be something deeply serious and real (a public health threat, for example) or something to have fun with (the tragic fallout of not getting an A on last week’s algebra quiz). Again, what are the cognitive blocks, and how do they get overcome?

3. Finally, have students reflect in writing, either in class or for homework, about how this unit has helped them understand their own problem-solving methods more clearly. Encourage the students to share these reflections with the class.

End the lesson with the end of the movie, specifically, the scene in which the spacecraft is about to touch down safely. The screen fills with images of the Mission Control staff and the families wildly cheering (2:09). Tell your students this is how they will feel when they overcome their own blocks to problem solving. Houston, we have a solution!

RESOURCES
BOOKS

Smith, A. (2005). *Moon dust: In search of men who fell to Earth*. New York, NY: Harper. (This is for students who want to know more about the psychological effects of space travel and the social psychology of America first finding and then losing interest in space travel.)

ONLINE
http://airandspace.si.edu/explore-and-learn/topics/apollo/apollo-program/landing-missions/apollo13.cfm (This is a to-the-point outline from the Air and Space Museum.)

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/missions/apollo13.html#VN9PCLDF9OI (This official NASA account is concise but highly detailed.)

http://www.universetoday.com/62339/13-things-that-saved-apollo-13/ (This is a useful context for a discussion about the limits of problem solving given the role of chance.)

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**JOHN A. MINAHAN** teaches psychology at the Lincoln School in Providence, RI, where he also teaches AP English as well as courses in world religions. His scholarly interests include memory, learning and the brain, the relationship between gender construction and nonviolence and the intersections of psychology with the arts. He received his PhD in English from Brown University and taught at the college level for almost 20 years before joining Lincoln's faculty. He is the author of “Teaching Democracy,” a memoir; “Abigail's Drum,” a novel for young readers and “Word Like a Bell: John Keats, Music, and the Romantic Poet.” He has also been a professional musician and full-time father and enjoys hiking the woods of New England.

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**2015 APA TOPSS CHARLES T. BLAIR-BROEKER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS**

The APA TOPSS Committee and the APA Education Directorate congratulate Alan Feldman, MA, of Glen Rock High School in Glen Rock, NJ; Jessica Flitter, MA, of West Bend East High School in West Bend, WI; and Michael Sullivan, MA, of Hopkinton High School in Hopkinton, MA, recipients of the 2015 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award. The annual Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes outstanding psychology teachers.

Award recipients each received a framed certificate, an engraved award, a cash prize of $500 and a free TOPSS membership renewal for the 2016 membership year. Award recipients also receive the “Interactive (PowerPoint) Presentation Slides for Introductory Psychology” and the “Psychology Video Tool Kit for Students,” both generously donated to the 2015 award winners by Worth Publishers.

An interview with the three winners will be published in *PTN* this fall, and an APA press release on the 2015 winners is available online at [www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/05](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/05). The call for nominations for the 2016 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award will be released later this year.

Congratulations, Alan Feldman, Jessica Flitter and Michael Sullivan!
A

dmittedly, my title is a bit of an exaggeration, but only as a matter of degree (more on this, later). While psychologists have not been shy about using a variety of animal species for research, for most of our history the standard lab animals have been rats, pigeons and rhesus monkeys. Dogs rarely figured into the discussion. That is, until recently. Since the early 1990s there has been a virtual explosion in the field of canine cognition (Morell, 2009). Numerous canine research facilities at noted universities around the world have sprung up, seemingly overnight (see brief list of websites at the end of this article). Research into dog behavior, personality and cognition, it seems, has become respectable.

"Dogs get lost hundreds of times and no one ever notices it or sends an account of it to a scientific magazine. But let one find his way from Brooklyn to Yonkers, and the fact immediately becomes a circulating anecdote" (Thorndike, 1898, p. 4). Thorndike was describing the tendency to confuse anecdotes with evidence. In "The Genius of Dogs," Brian Hare (a biological anthropologist and founder of the Duke Canine Cognition Center) and Vanessa Woods (a science writer and researcher affiliated with the Duke Center) cannot be accused of having made this mistake. The genius to which they refer is dogs’ "ability to understand human communication, and their motivation to cooperate with us" (p. 234).

This book is a fascinating, well researched and wonderfully written account of canine cognitive capacities. The writing is accessible to the nonspecialist but does not talk down to lay readers (though, for the more serious researcher, it also provides a listing of all the authors’ primary sources). The authors tell many stories of their personal experiences with their own dogs, but these serve as the beginning of a discussion, not the end. They are clear that anecdotes are not evidence. They emphasize the importance of scientifically gathered data for making claims about their subject matter. In fact, an admirable element to this book is that whenever results of a specific study might point to a particularly amazing canine capacity, they also report if this investigation could not be replicated (e.g., on p. 144, the authors report mixed results about dogs’ capacity to communicate the location of an object to a naïve human observer). As good scientists, the authors recognize that research is not always as clean as we might like, and failure to replicate a finding raises serious questions about any conclusions one might form. By the way, Thorndike was right. According to research reviewed by Hare and Woods, dogs are not particularly good at finding their way home!

The book begins with an excellent discussion of evolutionary theory and the transformation of dogs from wolves; the probable selective pressures (especially friendliness); and how this same process may have differentiated chimpanzees and bonobos and Homo sapiens from other hominids. That is, a self-selection for tolerance and nonaggression may have been what led to the remarkable social and cognitive capacities that our own species enjoys. As evidence for what is admittedly conjecture, they give an interesting accounting of a Russian scientist (Dimitri Belyaev) and his research program to domesticate wild foxes. Surprisingly, the most notable consequence of the breeding program was in the foxes’ behavior and personality. That is, by selecting for foxes that were tolerant of humans, they developed very “dog-like” foxes. This research was begun in the 1940s (it should be noted, at great personal risk to Belyaev in Stalinist Russia). Hare and Wood’s description of the dangers endured and the results generated provide a fascinating report of a very human side of science. This research is still going on, and it provides impressive evidence in support of the evolutionary model Hare and Woods propose regarding dogs, humans and chimpanzees.

SEE SPOT—SEE SPOT RUN—SEE SPOT DECONSTRUCT COMPLEX SYNTAX IN HUMAN SPEECH AND FORMULATE CATEGORICAL CONCEPTS.

BOOK REVIEW

"THE GENIUS OF DOGS: HOW DOGS ARE SMARTER THAN YOU THINK"

Reviewed by
SALVADOR MACIAS, III, PHD

Author: Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods
Publisher: NY: Penguin Group
Copyright year: 2013
ISBN: 978-0-525-9319-7 (hc.); 978-0-14-218046-4 (pbk.)
The authors also offer a fascinating segment on the questions all dog owners want to ask: Which breed is the smartest? Gentlest? Has the best temperament? Spoiler alert: Beyond basic instinctive behavioral tendencies associated with some breeds (herding, retrieving, etc.), there isn’t much evidence that any one breed is “smarter” or has distinctive personality traits. Variation in cognition and personality within breeds is so great as to make any comparison meaningless. The reason is “It appears that only a small number of genes are responsible for the extraordinary physical variation in dogs” (p. 196). Moreover, what constitutes a breed is not universally accepted or understood.

Having been effective thus far in my review, there is a section that deserves a different evaluation. Hare and Woods give an incomplete and one-sided review of behaviorism and behavioral psychology. Having conflated the fields of learning psychology with Skinnerian radical behaviorism, they exaggerate what they perceived to have been the “chokehold” (p. 224) held by behaviorists on American behavioral science from the early 1900s through the 1950s, claiming that only behaviorists were hired and were successful in publishing their research.

Unfortunately, when attempting to describe the paradigm, they confuse what constitutes a behavior and a stimulus, a reinforcer and a response, and they misidentify as an example of classical conditioning a voluntary response followed by a reinforcer. But my main challenge is that they seem to not recognize that “behaviorism” had many different flavors. Psychologists who studied intentions, attention, perception and concept formation (among many other areas of modern cognitive psychology) often called themselves behaviorists. Hare and Woods seem to not understand that rather than being replaced by modern cognitive psychology, behaviorism has been subsumed within it (much the way Newtonian physics is by Relativity). Contrary to their implied message, operant and classical conditioning are still respected learning concepts that go a long way to contribute to our understanding of behavior.

The authors have even included a gratuitous quote from B. F. Skinner (from a TV interview) that he would rather burn his children than his books since his work would have a greater impact than his genes. While strictly true, the quote was taken out of context. Skinner was relating a conversation he had had with his children during which he quoted the French philosopher and essayist Montaigne, who had made such a claim (Goodell, 1977). I don’t know what Montaigne meant, but Skinner clearly intended this statement as hyperbole; it was not the egotistical ravings of a self-important madman. Still, he did express surprise and regret over the sensation this statement caused.

But, to end on a positive note (because I truly enjoyed the book and recommend it highly), let me return to my title. Hare and Woods describe Chaser, a rather famous border collie who has learned more than 1,000 words. In the process of learning these words, Chaser has also demonstrated the acquisition of categorical concepts. That is, he recognizes the differences between “ball” toys “Frisbee” toys and even “toys” and “non-toys” even upon first presentation with novel objects. Other dogs have demonstrated the capacity to learn the names of objects from simply hearing humans talk about them. In a series of controlled studies, two people repeatedly talked about a new object in the presence of individual dogs. These conversations were the only exposure the dogs had to the new word. Yet, when tested, these dogs were able to retrieve the object when requested. In still another study, a dog (Sofia) has learned to press different keys on a keyboard to request a walk or to play and to identify her crate, food, water or toys. On the first display of a novel toy, for example, she will correctly press “toy.” In one particularly amusing example (or horrifying, depending upon your brand of humor), upon the first presentation of a live Guinea pig, she immediately indicated “food.”

Hare and Woods have produced a captivating book full of exciting discoveries about cognition in general, about dogs in particular, primates, humans and evolutionary psychology; all things that should fascinate all psychologists and psychology students.

REFERENCES

RECOMMENDED READINGS

WEBSITES
Arizona State University: https://psychology.clas.asu.edu/lab/canine-science-collaboratory-wynne
Max Planck Institute, Germany: http://www.eva.mpg.de/psycho/dog-cognition.php
University of Florida: http://www.caninecognition.com/caninecognition/Home.html
University of Kentucky: http://www.uky.edu/~zentall/sciencedogs.html
University of Portsmouth, UK: http://www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/facilities/dog-cognition-centre/
Yale University: http://doglab.yale.edu/PTN
TEACHING ACTIVITIES

FROM AMY RAMPONI, KIMBERLY HIGH SCHOOL, KIMBERLY, WIS.

#Hashtag #psychology #erikson

Who doesn’t love Twitter? Have students create eight tweets about each of Erikson’s eight stages — including a hashtag in each one. Your tweet must clearly demonstrate your understanding of the stage. This is incredibly well received, and the kids run with it. For example, for Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt: “Yay! Just went in the potty for the first time! #gome #nomorepampers” PTN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2015 TOPSS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

If you would like to become more involved in TOPSS and are interested in gaining leadership experience and positively impacting the teaching of high school psychology, we encourage you to consider serving on the TOPSS Committee. TOPSS is encouraging individuals in all locations and from diverse backgrounds (including diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, ability/disability, sexual orientation, age and religion) to consider running for TOPSS office. In 2015, TOPSS members will elect a chair-elect and two members-at-large.

The chair-elect position is a 3-year position, and the others are 2-year positions. The TOPSS Committee meets twice a year, in spring and fall, in Washington, D.C. APA covers travel and accommodation expenses. Please consider nominating a colleague who would make a positive impact. Self-nominations are also welcomed. Nominations are due by July 1, 2015. For details, please visit the TOPSS website at http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/call-for-nominations.aspx.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: APA COMMITTEE ON ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION

In August 2014, the APA Council of Representatives established a new Committee on Associate and Baccalaureate Education (CABE) to broadly consider undergraduate education in psychology at both the associate and baccalaureate levels.

CABE consists of eight members: four who represent psychology faculty at two-year colleges offering the associate degree, and four who represent psychology faculty whose primary teaching responsibility is undergraduate coursework at colleges or universities offering the baccalaureate degree.

The Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) is now seeking nominees for CABE to join the committee in January 2016. Three members will be appointed. Please note that BEA encourages participation by early career psychologists and members of underrepresented groups and would particularly welcome such nominees. Self-nominations also are encouraged. BEA will consider all nominations for CABE at its October 2015 meeting.

CABE conducts its business through conference calls and two face-to-face meetings in Washington, D.C. APA covers travel and accommodation expenses. Nominees for CABE should submit a curriculum vitae and a brief personal statement that describes the basis for their interest in becoming a member of CABE. Please send electronic files of nomination materials to Martha Boenau at mboenau@apa.org. Nominations are due by September 1, 2015.
PROGRAMMING FOR PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS AT THE APA 2015 CONVENTION

TOPSS INVITED SPEAKERS 2015
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

TOPSS INVITED ADDRESS
“Technological Change: Everything That Is Old Is New Again”
Sue Frantz, MA, Highline College
Friday, August 7, 2015
1:00 – 1:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 717B

TOPSS INVITED ADDRESS:
The Lee Gurel Lecture
“Unsimplifying Mental Disorders: Principles for Understanding and Teaching Abnormal Psychology”
Richard Seefeldt, EdD, University of Wisconsin River Falls
Friday, August 7, 2015
2:00 – 2:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 717A

TOPSS INVITED ADDRESS
“Psychology Education and the Importance of Skills: Our Collective Legacy at Risk”
R. Eric Landrum, PhD, Boise State University
Saturday, August 8, 2015
2:00 – 2:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 717B

APA COMMITTEE ON ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION (CABE)
CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

CABE INVITED ADDRESS:
The Diane Halpern Lecture
“Undergraduate Study in Psychology: What APA’s National Survey Tells and Warns Us”
John Norcross, PhD, University of Scranton
Friday, August 7, 2015
1:00 p.m.-1:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 709

COMMITTEE ON ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION
DISCUSSION HOUR
Friday, August 7, 2015
2:00 p.m.-2:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 711

COMMITTEE ON ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION (CABE)
SYMPOSIUM
“Preparation for the Workforce with an Associate’s or Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology”
Bernie Carducci, PhD, Indiana University Southeast
Jaye Van Kirk, MA, San Diego Mesa College
Friday, August 7, 2015
3:00 – 3:50 p.m.
Convention Centre Room 717B

COMMITTEE ON ASSOCIATE AND BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION (CABE)/PSI BETA RECEPTION
Saturday, August 8, 2015
4:00 – 5:50 p.m.
Intercontinental Toronto Centre Hotel, Kingsway Room

SOCIETY FOR THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY (STP) CONVENTION SESSIONS
27th APS Annual Convention
May 21-24, 2015
New York, NY
http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/convention/

22nd Annual APS-STP Teaching Institute
May 20-21, 2015
New York, NY

APS and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) co-sponsor the annual day-long teaching institute before each APS annual convention, featuring workshops, concurrent sessions and plenary talks with content updates and methods to deliver psychology course material.

Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP)

The James Madison University Department of Psychology will host the next Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP) on Friday, June 26 and Saturday, June 27, 2015. ETOP features symposia, poster presentations and participant idea exchanges. Psychology teachers from any setting (high schools, two-year schools and four-year colleges/universities) are welcome to attend.

For more information about the conference, please visit the conference website: http://psyc.jmu.edu/etop/.