

APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2018 Annual Report

TOPSS Committee Members: Maria Vita, BA (Chair); Kristin Whitlock, MEd, Past Chair; Allison Shaver, MA, Chair-Elect; Chuck Schallhorn, MS; Dana Melone, MAT; Joe Swope, PhD; Ladonna Lewis, PhD; Brad Wray, BA, BS; Linda Woolf, PhD

Staff Liaisons: Emily Leary Chesnes, MBA; Robin Hailstorks, PhD; Yvonne Hill, MS

APA Summit on High School Psychology Education Deliverables

A top priority for TOPSS in 2018 was continuing to publish and disseminate deliverables that originated at the 2017 APA Summit on High School Psychology Education. The summit was held at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, and its mission had been to plan for the best future for high school psychology education.

In 2018, the following summit deliverables were posted to the TOPSS website:

- *A Case for Psychology as Science: A Review of the APA National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula and the NGSS Science Practices and Crosscutting Concepts*
This review of the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* (APA, 2011) and the Science Practices and Crosscutting Concepts from the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS Lead States, 2013), was published in the September 2018 *Psychology Teacher Network* newsletter.
- *Teaching Resources for High School Psychology Teachers on Skills*
A total of 20 resources, lesson plans, and activities on metacognitive, transferable and well-being skills, were posted online for teachers.
- *Assessment Guide for Psychology Teachers*
This guide was developed to help teachers continue to build confidence in their assessment skills in order to provide useful feedback to students about their intellectual progress.
- *High School Assessment Exemplars*
Ten vetted assessment exemplars for high school teachers to use in the introductory psychology class, were posted through APA's Project Assessment. Teachers can search for the "high school" topic area to find these templates.
- *Advocacy Toolkit for the Psychology Teaching Credential*
This guide encourages teachers to advocate for the psychology teaching credential in each state.
- *Teaching Psychology: Where Can I Find Help?*
This resource provides the psychology teacher with a quick reference for needs and questions that arise while preparing to teach the course.
- *Building, Guiding and Sustaining Regional Networks for Psychology Teachers*
This guide outlines the benefits of regional networks, a "how to" starter kit, which models formats and suggestions for overcoming obstacles.
- *Technology Tips & Tricks: Assessment and Engagement*
This blog post recommends formative assessment technology tools and mobile apps for the psychology classroom.

- *Audience Members, Collaborators and Competitors: Technology Tools to Connect*
This blog post provides suggestions to create technology tools to connect students to the curriculum.
- *Technology Tools for Psychology Teachers: How to Take Back Your Time*
This blog post provides time-saving teacher technology tools for the classroom.
- *Using Technology to Help Students Understand Content and Participate in Metacognitive Skills*
This blog post recommends online tech tools for creating interactive lectures, which allow teachers to give direct instruction with built-in quick activities for students to keep them engaged.
- *TOPSS High School Psychology Course Template Available in Canvas*
This course template, available in Canvas, provides teachers with resources, videos and test banks to use in class. The template, developed for teachers by teachers, is meant to be customized.

In 2018, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2), also published *Promoting Psychological Science: A Compendium of Laboratory Exercises for Teachers of High School Psychology* (Miller, 2018), a free e-book that provides lab exercises for most of the topics taught in a high school psychology course. The idea for the e-book came out of the APA high school summit. TOPSS committee members Joe Swope, MA, and Kristin Whitlock, MA, contributed to chapters of the e-book.

APA's Membership Office approved a new membership benefit for all APA teacher affiliates, per a recommendation from the summit. Starting in 2019, teacher affiliates will receive a digital subscription to *Translational Issues in Psychological Science (TPS)*, an APA journal that focuses on how psychological science contributes to important current topics. The summit working group on diversity and access made this recommendation noting, *TPS* is more accessible for introductory psychology students and teachers, and that its articles could easily fit into the Introductory Psychology curriculum.

There were also efforts made in 2018 to widely disseminate the summit deliverables. Presentations on the summit took place at the Eastern Psychological Association conference, a workshop at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association conference, the Eastern Teaching of Psychology conference, the New Jersey Council for the Social Studies conference, and the Mid-Atlantic Teaching of Psychology conference. Additionally, in the fall of 2018, both an email campaign and a hard copy mailing went out to over 6,000 high school psychology teachers around the United States, announcing summit deliverables and promoting TOPSS membership. This outreach was funded by grants from both the American Psychological Foundation (APF) and the David and Carol Myers Foundation.

Work continued throughout 2018 on additional summit deliverables, expected to be published in 2019.

APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools

In May 2018, APA fellow David G. Myers, PhD, and his wife, Carol, donated \$1 million to APF to support and strengthen the teaching of psychological science in secondary schools. The Fund will specifically support TOPSS, and the TOPSS Committee will make recommendations about the use of the fund through APA's Education Directorate. The types of activities that may be supported through the gift include:

- Summer teaching institutes held throughout the United States and abroad.
- Professional development opportunities for high school psychology teachers.

- Keeping high school teachers informed of best teaching practices.
- Public education campaigns to promote the benefits of introduction to psychological science in high school and the importance of psychology to high school students.
- Promotion of psychology as a science in high school.
- Outreach and support to high school psychology teachers to share APA and TOPSS teaching resources and opportunities with high school teachers.
- Revision and continued development of TOPSS unit lesson plans or other teaching resources.
- Support for webinars, innovative technology tools, and other forms of online learning, to promote high-quality teaching of psychology at the high school level.

The TOPSS Committee discussed the fund and TOPSS priorities that could be supported by the fund and recommended that an expanded workshop for high school psychology teachers, modeled after the successful APA/Clark University Workshop, would be a top priority for funding in 2019.

National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula Working Group and Advisory Panel

At the recommendation of the TOPSS Committee, the APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) approved an eight-person National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula Working Group, charged with revising the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* (APA, 2011). The current high school standards will expire in August 2021. BEA also approved a sixteen-person Advisory Panel to provide expert recommendations to the Working Group.

Over the summer of 2018, a survey was disseminated to high school psychology teachers to collect feedback on the current high school standards and to inform them of the revision process. Feedback was also solicited from APA boards, committees, divisions, state, provincial and territorial psychological associations, and APA members and affiliates. The National Standards Working Group held several conference calls in 2018 and met in-person on December 7th – 9th, at the APA headquarters. Funding to support the December meeting was approved by the APA Board of Directors.

APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers

The 14th annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, was held on June 27-29, 2018, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Twenty-five high school teachers from around the country participated in the workshop. The 2018 workshop presenters were Jessica Flitter, MA, of West Bend High School (West Bend, Wisconsin), and Scott Reed, MEd, of Hamilton High School (Chandler, Arizona). Regan Gurung, PhD, of the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, delivered the keynote address titled, *To Boldly Go (Beyond Content): Teaching High School Psychology, Skills, and Learning*.

This workshop was made possible through generous gifts from Lee Gurel, PhD, a Clark University alumnus, APA member, and longtime APF donor, to both Clark University and the American Psychological Foundation.

Regional Networks for High School Psychology Teachers

The APF High School Psychology Outreach Grants supported two regional teaching networks, four teaching conferences, and one Psychology Bowl in 2018, thanks to funding provided by APF. Supported conferences for teachers included, the Arizona Teaching of Psychology Conference, a Summer Teaching Workshop in Minnesota focused on Teaching the Science of Psychology, the Excellence in Psychology Instruction Conference (EPIC) in Wisconsin, a Psych Bowl in Wisconsin, and a Professional Development Day for the New Jersey Psychology Teachers Network. The development of regional teaching networks has been a priority for the TOPSS Committee in recent years, as a way of promoting local professional development opportunities for teachers. A panel of TOPSS Committee members reviewed the

applications and recommended the grant recipients.

APF Professional Development Awards for High School Psychology Teachers

The APF Professional Development Awards for High School Psychology Teachers helped teachers travel to the APA Convention in San Francisco, California on August 9-12, 2018. APF awarded grants totaling \$2,500 to five recipients in 2018. A panel of TOPSS Committee members reviewed the applications and recommended the award recipients, each of whom received a \$500 award.

APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Awards

The APA Education Directorate and the APA TOPSS Committee were pleased to recognize three teachers with the 2018 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award. The 2018 recipients were: Jeanne Turner, MA, of Linn-Mar High School, Marion, IA, Steven Turner, MEd, of Albemarle High School, Charlottesville, VA, and Jill Compher, of Colleyville Heritage High School, Colleyville, TX. The annual Excellence in Teaching Awards recognize outstanding psychology teachers.

In October 2018, a free webinar that included the three teaching award winners, was held for high school psychology teachers and focused on teaching tips. The webinar was sponsored by Bedford, Freeman and Worth Publishers and was announced to TOPSS members.

2018 APA TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students

For the first time, TOPSS held a video competition for high school students in 2018. The competition was inspired by APA President Dr. Jessica Henderson Daniel's "APA Citizen Psychologist" presidential initiative. APA Citizen Psychologists™ serve as leaders in their various communities, who, through prolonged engagement in significant activities, contribute to improving the lives of all. The competition invited students to create a 3-5-minute video to demonstrate how psychology can benefit society at a local, regional, or global level. Students were asked to identify a problem facing society and describe how psychological science can contribute toward a solution to the problem. Students were also asked how they would address the challenge through community service or volunteering. Each submission was supported by a written statement of 750-1,000 words.

The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee recognized four high school students as winners of the 2018 competition: Danielle Ji of Pennsylvania Homeschoolers (Kittanning, PA), Shuyi Jin of The Hill School (Pottstown, PA), George Main of Cocalico High School (Denver, PA), and Adren Setian of Denali Peak Correspondence Homeschool Program (Anchorage, AK). Each student received a \$400 scholarship for their winning videos. The award funding was generously provided by both the APA Education Directorate and APA President Jessica Henderson Daniel, PhD. The winning videos were posted to the TOPSS website, and a compiled video of all four winning entries was played at the Citizen Psychologist booth at the 2018 APA Convention in San Francisco.

Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates

TOPSS offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2018, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. Certificates were sent electronically to members, who could request hard copy certificates, if needed. Student award recipients were added to the TOPSS website.

APA Convention Programming

The TOPSS Committee sponsored three invited addresses at the 2018 APA Convention, held on August

9-12, 2018, in San Francisco, CA, and are listed below:

- Elliot Hammer, PhD, Xavier University of Louisiana, *Leveling the Field: Fostering Identification with School in all our Students*
- Paul Ekman, PhD, University of California, San Francisco, and Robert Levenson, PhD, University of California, Berkeley, *Lee Gurel Lecture: A Conversation with Dr. Paul Ekman*
- Linda Woolf, PhD, Webster University, *Randal M. Ernst Lecture: Politics, Sex, Religion, and Rights: Controversial Topics in the Classroom*

TOPSS also sponsored a reception for psychology teachers during the Convention.

A full-day pre-convention workshop for Introductory Psychology teachers was held on August 8, 2018. Presenters were Elizabeth Yost Hammer, PhD, and Elliot Hammer, PhD, both of Xavier University of Louisiana, and Annette Jordan Nielsen, MA, of Woods Cross High School (Utah). Over twenty introductory psychology teachers participated in the workshop. The workshop was supported by a grant from APF.

Resource Manual for New Teachers of High School Psychology

In August 2018, the *Resource Manual for New Teachers of High School Psychology*, first developed in 2012, and available through the TOPSS website, was updated. The purpose of this manual is to present new high school psychology teachers with some resources and helpful suggestions from teachers with many years of teaching experience. This resource includes sections on preparing to teach psychology, textbook selection, course-pacing formats, lesson planning, activities, ethics, maintaining teacher health, and other additional resources for teachers.

Membership Outreach and Services

Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. In 2018, the TOPSS Committee, through the APA Education Directorate, continued to support a Facebook page to enhance member engagement and communication. The TOPSS Committee also planned and held a “TOPSS night” at the Advanced Placement Reading in June, in Tampa, Florida, to share information about TOPSS with participating teachers. TOPSS continued to send regular email correspondence to the membership to inform members of resources and opportunities from APA and TOPSS. TOPSS also communicated with its members through postings on the TOPSS website and the TOPSS listserv.

In 2018, the APA Education Directorate participated as an exhibitor at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference in Chicago, IL. NCSS is the largest association for social studies educators in the country. The NCSS booth provided APA and TOPSS with good visibility at NCSS. TOPSS and the Education Directorate co-sponsored a reception with Bedford, Freeman, & Worth Publishers, and the NCSS Psychology Community for high school psychology teachers, at the conference.

The APA Education Directorate, in collaboration with TOPSS Committee members and members of the APA Committee of Associate and Baccalaureate Education, distributed four issues of the *Psychology Teacher Network* (PTN) newsletter. The *PTN* provides teachers with articles, activities, and book reviews to enhance psychology classroom teaching.

APF Lee Gurel Funds for High School Psychology Teachers

The TOPSS Committee greatly appreciated funding from the American Psychological Foundation (APF) through the following two funds:

- The American Psychological Foundation/Education Directorate Lee Gurel Fund for Professional Development of High School Teachers of Psychology, which supported, (1) the APF Professional Development Awards for High School Psychology Teachers, (2) the pre-convention workshop for High School Psychology Teachers, and (3) additional travel support for participants for the 2018 APA/Clark University Workshop.
- The APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology, supported the APF High School Psychology Teacher Outreach Grants, as well as outreach efforts to broadly disseminate deliverables and outcomes from the APA Summit on High School Psychology Education, with teachers across the country.

Other Collaborations or Recognitions

TOPSS representative Steven Turner, MEd, attended one meeting of the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education in 2018.

TOPSS members Lara Bruner, MA, MS, of Desert Vista High School (Phoenix, AZ) and Carlos Montalvan, MAT, of Richard Montgomery High School (Rockville, MD), participated in the Citizen Psychologist Summit, held at the APA headquarters in April 2018, as the TOPSS representatives. Lara and Carlos also helped to develop a curriculum for high school psychology teachers on preparing the next generation of Citizen Psychologists; a draft version of the curriculum was available as of July 2018, with a final version expecting to be published in 2019. The curriculum provides competencies and learning outcomes at the high school level and was part of a broader curriculum that covered education at the undergraduate, graduate, internship, postdoctoral, and continuing education levels. Lara and Carlos were both invited to participate in a session at the 2018 APA Convention in San Francisco, CA, related to the Citizen Psychologist Initiative. APA Citizen Psychologists™ serve as leaders in their various communities, who, through prolonged engagement in significant activities, contribute to improving the lives of all. This was the Presidential Initiative of APA President Dr. Jessica Henderson Daniel.

At the December 2018 APA Board of Directors meeting, Dr. Daniel awarded Lee Gurel, PhD, with a Citizen Psychologist Citation. The citation recognized Dr. Gurel for his sustained advocacy for psychology at the secondary level and high school psychology teachers nationwide. The TOPSS committee nominated Dr. Gurel for this citation.

References

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