

## **APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2019 Annual Report**

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The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) promotes excellence in the teaching of psychological science at the high school level and meets the curricular, professional development and networking needs of high school psychology teachers. This report provides information on the major activities of TOPSS in 2019.

### **APA Summit on High School Psychology Education Deliverables**

In 2019, TOPSS continued to publish and disseminate deliverables that originated at the 2017 APA Summit on High School Psychology Education, held at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. The mission of the Summit was to create the best future for high school psychology education. Therefore, the following deliverables furthered the strategic priority to prepare the discipline of psychology for the future. By allowing APA to better serve the needs of high school psychology teachers, these deliverables and outcomes also strengthened APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology. In 2019, five summit deliverables were added to the TOPSS website:

- *High School Psychology is Science:* This report was written to make the case that psychology should be included as a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) discipline at the high school level. It includes an executive summary, introduction, overview of psychology as a scientific and cross-cutting discipline, a history and current status of high school psychology, myths and misconceptions about psychological science, a conclusion and recommendations, and resources for teachers and others interested in advocating for high school psychology as science.
- *Talking Points for Advocating Psychology as a Science Course:* These talking points enable high school psychology teachers, students, parents, alumni, and allies of high school psychology (e.g., college and university psychology faculty, psychologists) to convey that psychology is a science course and to advocate that students be allowed to apply their psychology course towards satisfying the social studies or science requirements, as it advantages the student.
- *APA Performance Standards with Research: An Annotated Bibliography for High School Psychology Teachers:* This resource is designed to provide teachers with historical and contemporary research to support the APA's *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*.
- *High School Psychology: Better Understand Your World:* This video was developed to demonstrate the value of high school psychology as a course of study for all high school students. Teachers can use the video to encourage students to enroll in a high school psychology course. The video can also be played for students on the first day of class as an introduction to the course, or for parents on back to school night and/or school administrators, to demonstrate the value of the course. This video was the second highest watched APA video in 2019.

- *Integrating Technology in the High School Psychology Classroom*: This resource and a matching infographic provide technology tools for high school psychology teachers in six categories.

Additionally, at the 2017 APA Summit, a working group on Ongoing Professional Development, recommended that a second extended summer workshop be held to allow more teachers to experience an in-depth professional learning opportunity in psychology. Accordingly, on July 31-August 2, 2019, APA, APF and Oregon State University, hosted a three-day workshop for high school psychology teachers, at Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR: the *APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers*. Twenty-five high school psychology teachers participated in the workshop. The 2019 presenters included Michael Berndt, MA, of St. Cloud Apollo High School, St. Cloud, MN, and Virginia Welle, MS, of Chippewa Falls Senior High School, Chippewa Falls, WI; psychology faculty presenters from Oregon State University also presented. David Myers, PhD, of Hope College, Holland, MI, delivered the keynote address titled *Psychological Science: Full of Surprises!*

This workshop was modeled off the successful APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, that has been held annually since 2005 in Worcester, MA. Oregon State workshop participants were asked to further the impact of this workshop by engaging in the psychology community post-workshop. This workshop was held with generous support by the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools, the APF/Education Directorate Lee Gurel Fund for Professional Development of High School Teachers of Psychology, the APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology and the Oregon State University School of Psychological Science.

#### **Special Fall Mass Mailing to TOPSS members (APA High School Teacher Affiliates)**

In October 2019, a hard copy mass mailing was sent to 2,818 TOPSS members, to encourage them to use TOPSS resources, including deliverables that came out of the 2017 APA Summit on High School Psychology Education. A TOPSS laptop sticker was included in the mailing as a way to thank members and encourage them to share their pride in TOPSS. By sharing high-quality resources with teachers, who in turn use the resources to teach their students, helps prepare the discipline of psychology for the future.

#### **New Lesson Plan on Treatment of Psychological Disorders**

In April 2019, a revised TOPSS unit lesson plan on *Treatment of Psychological Disorders*, was published for TOPSS members and added to the TOPSS website. This six-unit lesson plan was revised by Christie Karpiak, PhD, and Mary Spilis. The lesson plan provides teachers with a content outline, activities, and resources on treatment. As a high-quality resource developed for teachers for class preparation, this helps to prepare the discipline of psychology for the future.

#### **APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers**

The 15th annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, was held on June 26-28, 2019, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Twenty-five high school teachers from around the country participated in the workshop. The workshop presenters included, Brad Wray, BA, BS, of Arundel High School, Gambrills, MD; and Amy Ramponi, BA, of Kimberly High School, Kimberly, WI; psychology faculty from Clark University also presented. Stacey Baugh, PhD, of Trinity Washington University, Washington, DC, delivered the keynote address titled, *Speaking Teen: Applying Psychological Concepts to Real World Examples*.

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. The APA/Clark University Workshop provides teachers with best practices in content and pedagogy, as well as the opportunity to network with fellow teachers.

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

In 2019, the TOPSS Committee, through the APA Education Directorate, received its first grant from the APF David and Carol Myers Fund. The Committee requested a \$10,000 grant to support the APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers. In late 2019, the TOPSS Committee submitted its second funding request for its 2020 grant.

The purpose of this fund is to support and strengthen the teaching of psychological science in secondary schools. Therefore, these initiatives further the strategic priority to prepare the discipline of psychology for the future. This fund also strengthens APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology by allowing the TOPSS Committee, APA, and APF, to better serve the needs of high school psychology teachers.

### **APA TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students**

In the 2019 competition, students were invited to write an essay of no more than 3,000 words that addressed the topic of research with non-human animals in psychology. The essays required students to describe the role and relevance of nonhuman animal research in psychology, by referencing peer-reviewed research with nonhuman animals. Students were asked to describe a hypothetical study that complied with, and referenced non-human animal research guidelines, and addressed the implications of not conducting psychological research with non-human animals. The TOPSS Committee collaborated with representatives from the APA Committee on Animal Research and Ethics, to develop the 2019 competition question and review the submissions.

The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee recognized four high school students as winners of the 2019 competition: Samuel Hansen of Pennsylvania Homeschoolers (Kittanning, PA); Seung Bin Hong of Mountain View High School (Mountain View, CA); Joseph Petchauer of Pennsylvania Homeschoolers (Kittanning, PA); and Aman Singh of Central Peel Secondary School (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada).

This competition elevates the public's understanding of psychology by engaging high school students to research and write a 3,000-word essay. The competition also helps prepare the discipline of psychology for the future by providing high school students with an opportunity to be recognized for their outstanding academic effort in psychology.

### **Regional Networks for High School Psychology Teachers**

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.

The APF High School Psychology Outreach Grants support these regional networks and other innovative programs for teachers and students. In 2019, two APF grants were awarded to support one regional teaching network and one teaching conference; NebTOPSS, a new local TOPSS network in Eastern Nebraska, and the 6th Annual Teaching Introductory Psychology (TIP) Northwest Conference, were awarded a \$2,000 grant. A panel of TOPSS Committee members reviewed the applications and recommended the grant recipients.

The regional teaching networks help prepare the discipline of psychology for the future by providing high school psychology teachers with low-cost and accessible professional development opportunities that support quality teaching. The APF grant funding to support these networks increases funding for educational opportunities as well.

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

The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee were pleased to recognize three teachers with the 2019 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award. The 2019 recipients were, Rachel Chapman, BA, of Freedom High School, Orlando, FL; Stephanie Franks, MS, of Springboro High School, Springboro, OH; and Casey Swanson, MA, of Plymouth High School, Canton, MI. The annual Excellence in Teaching Awards recognize outstanding psychology teachers.

These awards are APA's highest recognition for outstanding high school psychology teachers. The award winners are broadly publicized to local, state, and national outlets, applauding their teaching excellence and recognizing the importance of high school psychology courses. These awards support the strategic initiative of elevating the public's understanding of, and regard for psychology.

### **Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates**

TOPSS offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2019, 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. These certificates help to prepare the discipline of psychology for the future by attracting talented students to psychology.

### **APA 2019 Programming**

The TOPSS Committee sponsored three invited addresses at the APA Convention held on August 8-11, 2019, in Chicago, IL. The TOPSS speakers were:

- Cedar R. Riener, PhD, Randolph-Macon College, *Randal M. Ernst Lecture: Mythbusting with Care: Teaching Cognitive Psychology to Students Who've Made up their Minds*
- Jeffrey R. Stowell, PhD, Eastern Illinois University, *Lee Gurel Lecture: Find Out What Students Know Before it's Too Late! Assessment Strategies for Intro Psychology*
- Uma Tauber, PhD, Texas Christian University, *Improving Student Learning with Principles from Cognitive Science*

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

A full-day pre-convention workshop for Introductory Psychology teachers, was held on August 7, 2019, and was supported by grant funding from APF. Presenters were, Melissa Schaefer Adams, MA, of Mundelein High School, Mundelein, IL; and Steven Turner, MEd, of Albemarle High School, Charlottesville, VA. Eli Finkel, PhD, of Northwestern University, delivered the keynote address titled, *The All or Nothing Marriage*. Twenty-five teachers attended the workshop.

The APA Convention provides high school psychology teachers an opportunity for professional development, strengthening APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology and preparing the discipline of psychology for the future.

### **Building the TOPSS Community**

At its March 2019 meeting, the TOPSS Committee discussed ways to build a sense of community among TOPSS members. The Committee made two suggestions that took place in 2019:

- A “TOPSS member of the month” was profiled monthly on the TOPSS Facebook page starting in August.
- A virtual membership conversation titled, *How TOPSS Can Help You as a Teacher*, was held on October 24, 2019. There were 40 teachers who registered to participate in the conversation, and 10 took part in the virtual discussion. The call was held so members could learn more about what the TOPSS committee does, and what resources and opportunities are available to members, and for members to give the TOPSS Committee feedback on how TOPSS could serve them better.

### **Membership Outreach and Services**

Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. In 2019, 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 its resources and opportunities from APA and TOPSS. TOPSS also communicated with its members through postings on the TOPSS website and the TOPSS listserv.

In 2019, the APA Education Directorate participated as an exhibitor at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference in Austin, TX. 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 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.

By supporting and communicating with current TOPSS members and potential members, these services support the APA strategic priorities of preparing the discipline of psychology for the future, and strengthening APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.

### **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 in 2019 supported: (1) the pre-convention workshop for High School Psychology Teachers, (2) additional travel support for participants to the 2019 APA/Clark University Workshop, and (3) food costs associated with the APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers.

- The APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology, which in 2019 supported: (1) the APF High School Psychology Teacher Outreach Grants, (2) housing and honoraria costs associated with the APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers, and (3) efforts to broadly disseminate deliverables and outcomes from the APA Summit on High School Psychology Education, with teachers across the country.

These APF funds are designed to promote professional development for high school psychology teachers, and to directly reinforce and enrich the teaching of, and the teachers of high school psychology.