



Pursuing Happiness

David G. Myers, PhD

Hope College

How happy are most people? Who are the happiest? Is there more happiness among those of a particular age or gender? Does wealth breed well-being? Does happiness come with having certain traits or relationships? How might we become happier?

The sages of the ages offer us many ideas and much advice, some of it contradictory. Happiness comes from knowing the truth, and from preserving illusions. Happiness comes from being with others, and from living in peaceful solitude. Happiness comes from living for the present, and from living for the future.

During its first century, psychology focused more on the plague of negative human emotions. Thus, a PsycINFO search of psychology articles through 2005 yields 108,643 that mention “depression” and only 5,048 mentioning “happiness.” Beginning in the late 1980s, I noticed an upswing in interest in “subjective well-being” (happiness and life satisfaction). As I began to read research by University of Illinois psychologist Ed Diener and other psychologists from Australia to the UK, I found myself excited. “This is humanly significant research,” I thought. “People should know about this. It has the potential to inform our personal and public priorities.” And thus was born my impulse to write *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy, and Why* (Morrow, 1992; Harper softcover, 1993).

Then, as part of his 1998 presidency of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman (2004) boldly proposed, and then helped launch, a “positive psychology” movement, an initiative to promote a psychology concerned not only with weakness and damage, but also with strength and virtue. “Positive psychology,” say Seligman and colleagues (2005) “is an umbrella

term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions.” Positive psychology builds upon and extends the new scientific pursuit of happiness. “Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?”

Are Most People Unhappy?

A long tradition, from Sophocles (“Not to be born is, past all prizing, best.”) to Woody Allen (“life is divided into the horrible and the miserable”), views life as tragedy. Popular happiness books—many written by mental health workers who spend their days counseling those unhappy—have estimated that from 10 to 15% (as in John Powell, *Happiness Is an Inside Job*) to 20% (Dennis Wholey, *Are You Happy?*) of people are happy.

When asked to report on their own happiness, people worldwide paint a rosier picture. In the United States, for example, 3 in 10 say they are very happy. Only 1 in 10 say “not too happy.” The rest, the majority, report being “pretty happy.” The African Maasai also “are relatively happy,” report Ed Diener and Shigehiro Oishi (2005), “even though they live in dung huts without indoor plumbing or electricity; and the Inuit of Northern Greenland are relatively satisfied with their lives despite living in a very harsh climate” (from studies by Biswas-Diener, Vittersø, and Diener, 2004).

A positive set-point for mood may have biological wisdom. Positive emotions energize behavior. They are associated with strong immune functioning and health (Cohen & Pressman, 2006). And they define a comparison that enables negative emotions to signal us that action is needed.

Who is Happy?

Many believe there are relatively unhappy times of life (perhaps adolescence, or the midlife crisis years, or later life). But surveys of more than a million people in many countries reveal that happiness is about equally prevalent among people of all ages (despite greater mood swings among teens and young adults). Happiness also does not have a

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Kudos! Psychology Professors Honored

Five professors of psychology were among the 2006 winners of the prestigious U.S. Professors of the Year Awards. Through funding provided by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and additional support provided by a number of sponsoring organizations, this annual awards program is administered by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education to recognize extraordinary dedication to undergraduate teaching.

Please join us in congratulating these professors who were honored for their distinguished teaching:

Arizona

René Díaz-Lefebvre
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Connecticut

Scott Plous
Professor of Psychology
Wesleyan University

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Locations

Itasca Community College, Grand Rapids, MN:
May 21-23, 2007

St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN: July 9-11, 2007.

Purpose

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For more information, contact Howard Thorsheim (St. Olaf College) and Bob Gephart (Itasca Community College), NSF Project Co-Principal Investigators (E-mail: howard-and-bob@stolaf.edu)

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“The Art and Science of Teaching”

Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology

June 29 and 30, 2007

The James Madison University Department of Psychology will host the next Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP) on Friday, June 29 and Saturday, June 30, 2007. The conference will be held at the historic Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, VA. The conference will offer concurrent symposia and workshops, a poster session, a participant idea exchange, and two invited addresses on issues related to the teaching of psychology. Our target audience includes teachers from high school, 2-year, 4-year college/university, and graduate school settings.

Invited addresses will be given by:

Jane Halonen, University of West Florida
Minding the Muse: Making Creative Decisions in Teaching

Bill Buskist, Auburn University
Minding the Muse: Making Empirically Based Decisions in Teaching

For more information, visit <http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/undergraduate/etop.html>.

Psychology, Critical Thinking, and Scientific Literacy

Barney Beins, PhD

Ithaca College

Some questions are easy:

- What unusual behavior do lemmings display?
- Why did people object to Christopher Columbus's plan to sail to India by traveling west?
- What happens if you don't wear a coat in the cold winter weather?

There is a good chance that most people will answer these questions with a certainty that they should not have, as sometimes our knowledge involves information that simply is not true. If you make it to the end of this article on critical, scientific thinking, you will read about why what you think is true about these questions may not actually be true; you may also have a greater appreciation of why psychology is an ideal discipline to foster critical thought in our students.

Critical and scientific thinking are not natural to most people. Science, as a systematic and empirical perspective, is only a few hundred years old. For thousands of years prior to the emergence of science, people relied on other modes of knowing about their world. These are the modes that relate to answers to the questions above. They are all useful, but like all knowledge systems, they have their limitations.

Why Is Psychology a Useful Vehicle for Teaching Scientific Thinking?

Our discipline features the study of intrinsically interesting organisms—us. Students not only focus on what they like, but they also learn the way to learn more about themselves. Psychology students learn not only facts, which are always subject to revision, but how to think about those facts—about how we know what is “true.”

We don't want our students to embrace facts as entities independent of how we arrive at them. Consider autism. It used to be a “fact,” according to Bruno Bettelheim, that autism was caused by so-called “Refrigerator Mothers.” That fact came from theory, Freudian theory. Then came Ivar Lovaas and behavioral with its new fact of autism as a learned behavior that could be unlearned. Now we have physiologically based facts.

Facts are provisional and reflect the how of our thoughts as much as the what of our thoughts. Certainly, there are concepts out there that we can accept as fundamentally true. You don't have to believe in gravity if you don't want to, but there may be a price to pay if you don't. You don't have to believe that organisms

on the planet have evolved, but there will be a price to pay if you don't. That price isn't immediately obvious, but it is still there.

So it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we encourage our students to think critically and scientifically about what they know. But what does this mean? The key to critical thinking and scientific literacy is in the process, not the content.

According to the National Academy of Sciences, scientific literacy involves “understanding of the scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity” (National Academy of Sciences, 1995). Notice that there is no mention of facts. That does not mean that we can be scientifically literate without knowing anything. It just means that we have to be able to evaluate the validity of the facts that we need to know.

Supreme Court Justice Steven Breyer has defined his own brand of scientific literacy: Knowing how to choose experts and to understand the limitations, uncertainties, and likely bias of their expressed opinions, which, he recognizes, does not require knowledge of science itself. This attitude reflects the truth that we cannot verify every supposed fact we encounter—we have to rely on others most of the time.

National science leaders have recognized that the process of acquiring knowledge is paramount. As a result, *The National Science Education Standards* promotes scientific literacy that is less content-based and more process-based.

So What Do We Need to Do to Promote Scientific Literacy?

First, we need to identify what psychology contributes to the development of scientific thinking. The most important thing we can teach our students is to ask the question, “How do we know?” Scientific literacy means knowing the process of science—how to ask and answer questions (Jane Maienschein with students, 1998).

According to the Foundation for Critical Thinking, there are four essential components to critical thinking, which is obviously closely related to scientific thinking:

- Raising questions clearly and precisely
- Gathering, interpreting, and testing relevant information
- Recognizing our assumptions, the limitations to our data, and the practical consequences of our knowledge
- Communicating effectively to develop solutions

If we confine ourselves to teaching facts and skills, we will be training wonderful technicians. But to produce citizens who think effectively and critically about complex issues and who understand the implications of scientific research, theory, and knowledge, we need to promote scientific literacy.

Second, we need to distinguish between the tools we use and the concepts we address. I believe that this distinction—between tools and concepts—reflects the promise of psychology in producing scientifically literate students. When we categorize

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science disciplines, we often rely on the so-called hard and soft sciences. I think it is more sensible to talk about technical and conceptual sciences. Psychology, I believe, is a conceptual science, which means it is a difficult science.

Some sciences have difficult technical tools to study relatively simple concepts. Psychology has relatively simple tools to study complex concepts. David Kresh, a reference specialist at the Library of Congress, apparently noted, very wisely that “The understanding of atomic physics is child’s play, compared with the understanding of child’s play” (*The Awful Truth*, n.d.). Our students need to know that any measurement instrument will be imperfect. Thus, our knowledge is imperfect. This idea provides the perfect rationale for understanding the importance of questioning the way knowledge is developed.

Third, we should try to teach students to think about what they know and why they believe it to be true. Our concepts are theoretically based, so understanding psychology requires understanding the theory and how the theory leads us in certain directions.

Educating people is not an easy process; it is much harder than training them because in true education, we have to get people to contemplate complex issues. And thinking is hard work.

Are Some Questions Really Easy?

What do you know about lemmings?

If people know anything of lemmings, it is that they commit suicide by jumping off cliffs. It simply is not true. In the filming of *White Wilderness* in 1958, the film people wound up herding lemmings off a cliff in order to demonstrate what everybody knows is true—that lemmings commit suicide. People have “known” this since the Middle Ages. The filmmakers were not able to induce lemmings to do what most people believe lemmings do (*White Wilderness*, 1996).

The message: Just because most people believe something is true after it is repeated endlessly does not make it true.

Why did people object to Christopher Columbus’s plan to sail to India by traveling west?

Did the narrow-minded courtiers believe that the ships would sail off the edge of the flat earth? Not at all. Educated people in 1492 knew the world was round. They objected to Columbus’s plan because they thought the world was too large for Columbus to be able to sail successfully all the way to India. Columbus appears to have doctored his figures about the size of the earth in order to make a convincing argument. If he hadn’t bumped into a convenient continent that nobody suspected was there, he most likely would have perished; as it was, his men were on the verge of mutiny when they spotted land (Gould, 1994).

The message: Just because an authority figure, like your sixth-grade history teacher or the author of your sixth-grade social studies textbook, tells you something is true does not make it true.

What happens if you don’t wear a coat in the cold winter weather?

Many people believe that you will catch a cold. Research results suggest that being cold is not going to give you a cold. The problem is actually with viruses, which just happen to be easily communicated when people are trapped inside during the cold weather. Naturally, consequences can be dire if you go outside without a coat in a deep chill. Hypothermia, and maybe even death, might occur. But you wouldn’t die with a cold.

There is an occasional report of research indicating a cold weather-cold link, but the common wisdom among doctors (and in the research literature) is that the virus causes the cold, not the temperature. Resistance to viruses may be lowered by stress, but it is not the temperature per se that is the problem (*Ask a Scientist*, 2003).

The message: Just because you once caught a cold after you went outside without a coat, you should not rely on a single experience to make a broad conclusion.

How Should You Know What to Believe?

This is at the same time an easy question and a hard question. Most of the time, we can rely on our senses regarding the world around us. We may be wrong some of the time, but most of our observations have at least a grain of truth. The hard part is knowing which particular grains are truthful. For this, we have psychological science, which can help us discern the limits to our knowledge through critical evaluation of those sometimes slippery facts and can provide guidance on the processes of critical and scientific thought.

So, in the end, we need to stress to our students the fundamental rule of critical thinking and scientific literacy. How do you know? **PTN**

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Geropsychology In and Out of the Classroom

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The population of the United States is aging. People over the age of 65 now comprise about 13% of the population. By the year 2030, when most of the current class of high school students will be in mid-life, older adults will make up 20% of the population (APA, 1998). Although research suggests that older adults are just as satisfied with their lives as young adults and that they have no greater prevalence of psychological problems than young adults, rates of dementia increase dramatically in old age, and White males over the age of 75 have the highest suicide rate of any age group.

Unfortunately, older adults do not receive their fair share of mental health treatment. A relatively small percentage of the mental health services provided by psychologists and psychiatrists are with geriatric clients. In 1991, about 4.4% of the psychologists from Los Angeles County who were listed in the National Register of Health Service Providers were estimated to specialize in work with older adults and their family members (Gatz, Karel, & Wolkenstein, 1991). In a survey of practitioner members of APA, only 3% viewed older adults as their “primary professional target,” although more than two thirds spent some time working with older adults (Qualls et al., 2002). The job prospects for professionals well trained in geropsychology will undoubtedly become brighter. They will be hired not only to provide state-of-the-art psychological services, but also to conduct supervision of graduate students and to develop continuing education for those professionals who need additional training in working with older adults.

So why are there so few practicing geropsychologists? Part of the reason may be that many children, adolescents, and young adults are not taught about the psychology of aging, nor are they offered the opportunity to gain exposure to the rich variety of older adults in our society. Teachers who are attuned to aging issues may help sensitize their students to the emerging mental health public policy concerns of our aging population and to the vibrant career possibilities in this exciting cross-fertilization of the fields of psychology and gerontology. Contact across different age groups is recognized as healthy and leads to positive outcomes for all involved, and intergenerational programs have blossomed throughout the country. Indeed, some geriatric centers partner with nurseries, kindergartens, and child day care centers to promote this type of exchange.

Sponsored intergenerational experiences between adolescents and older adults are becoming increasingly popular. Gerontological service options in secondary schools appear to be a win-win situation for students, older adults, and administrators of geriatric programs. The infusion of high-energy youth allows

geriatric settings to appear more family like, less institutional, and more socially facilitative. Indeed, research suggests that intergenerational experiences improve school attendance for “at risk” teenagers (Brabazon, 1999) and improve the socialization and well-being of nursing home residents (Fees & Bradshaw, 2003; Newman, Lyons, & Onawola, 1985).

Intergenerational secondary school programs may foster students’ esteem for older adults by getting them to understand how older adults are so different from each other because of varied life experiences and that with aging not only come losses and limitations but unique gains and strengths as well. Older adults are afforded the opportunity to share their wisdom and the insights that they have accumulated over many years. Indeed, one of the greatest benefits of the service experience is to explode the myths of aging (i.e., older adults are all depressed, demented, end up in nursing homes, or can’t learn new things) and to show students first hand how people survive to old age by resilience and adaptability.

It has become a truism among geropsychologists that to get students interested in making a career of working with older adults, all that needs to be done is expose the students to older adults. High schools and community colleges can incorporate service learning into their curricula, thereby offering their students an opportunity to interact with older adults in community, senior center, hospital, assisted-living facility, or nursing home settings. These experiences give students a great opportunity to determine for themselves whether providing services to elders would be consistently rewarding and thereby a possible career choice to pursue.

A legacy of a fulfilling early life experience bestowed by older adults on young students can have a far-reaching long-term effect if a student’s interest is sparked to become a geropsychologist who practices, teaches, or does research and then passes on this knowledge to other generations. These experiences may prime the workplace pipeline by preparing a new cohort of geriatric mental health professionals who may be more likely to provide optimal treatment by instinctively developing a collaborative relationship with their elders, communicating respectfully with them, and honoring their continued contributions to society.

Teachers who are interested in addressing gerontological issues in their psychology courses have some fine resources to choose from. *Integrating Aging Topics Into Psychology: A Practical Guide for Teaching Undergraduates* by Cavanaugh and Whitbourne (2002) provides good practical tips on how to incorporate geriatric mental health material into a school curriculum. Please also see below some excellent online resources from the American Psychological Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and the Association of Gerontology in Higher Education. *PTN*

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Request for Proposals

Precollege Psychology Grant Program

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) is a nonprofit, philanthropic organization that advances the science and practice of psychology as a means of understanding behavior and promoting health, education, and human welfare.

APF is seeking proposals for programs that support the science and application of psychological science developed on behalf of talented high school students. More than 200,000 students are currently enrolled in high school psychology, and APF wants to support high-quality education in psychology and nurture the next generation of psychologists.

Amount

Up to \$30,000 will be available for projects.

Goals of the Program

- Reinforce the discipline of psychology as a science in secondary school curricula
- Expand the profile of psychology as a science to attract talented high school students to pursue the discipline
- Convey to high school students that psychological science is a tool to improve society
- Teach students about career options that apply psychology outside of an academic setting (e.g. NASA, organizational development)

Preference will be given to proposals for programs focused on supporting the education of talented high school students.

Eligibility

Applicants must be educational institutions or 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or affiliated with such an organization.

APF will NOT consider the following requests:

- Grants for political or lobbying purposes
- Grants for entertainment or fundraising expenses
- Grants to anyone the Internal Revenue Service would regard as a disqualified group or individual

APF encourages proposals from individuals who represent diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

Proposals should describe the proposed project and respond to the following questions in five pages

(1 inch margins, no smaller than 11 point font):

- What is the project's goal?
- How is the sponsoring organization qualified to conduct this project?
- What, if any, other organizations are involved in the project? What are their contributions to the work?

- How does the proposed project relate to the applicant organization's mission?
- Whom will this project serve?
- What are the intended outcomes, and how will the project achieve them?
- What is the geographic scope of the proposed project?
- What is the total cost of the project?

To Apply

Submit a proposal and curriculum vitae of the project leader online at <http://forms.apa.org/apf/grants> by May 1, 2007. For more information, visit www.apa.org/apf.

Questions about this program should be directed to Idalia Ramos, Program Officer, at iramamos@apa.org.

American Psychological Foundation

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Award-Winning Teachers in Action Promised for Teaching Conference

The Lewis M. Terman Western Regional Teaching Conference will take place on Wednesday, May 2, 2007, the day before the full Western Psychological Association convention. The teaching conference, an all-day event from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Vancouver.

Beth Rienzi (CSU, Bakersfield) has secured a stellar array of speakers for the 2007 conference, including Diane Halpern, Heidi Riggio, Yves Labisierre, Frederick Meeker, Anne Duran, Robert S. Feldman, Craig Gruber, and Luis A. Vega. At \$25 for the full-day event, the Terman conference is undoubtedly one of the best bargains available among educational programs today. For more information, visit the Western Psychological Association Web site at <http://www.westernpsych.org>.

The Terman conferences are designed for faculty who teach at 4-year universities and colleges, community colleges, and high schools. They include not only useful and interesting information directly related to the teaching of psychology, but also provide attendees with an opportunity to see award-winning teachers in action. Previous Terman conferences have received enthusiastic and excellent ratings from participants.

Challenging “Truthiness” With Critical Thinking

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The term “truthiness” was coined by Comedy Central’s Stephen Colbert, and it means “truth that comes from the gut, not books.” It was chosen as the word that best sums up 2006 by an online survey conducted by the dictionary folks at Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster’s president, John Morse, says that many people believe that truth is “up for grabs.” Unlike the doctrine of relativism though, in which truth is not absolute but varies by culture or social circumstance, truthiness propounds that absolute truth is what we “feel.”

Colbert’s “truth from the gut” is inimical to good critical thinking. Surprisingly, however, it is very hard to get most of us to think beyond our gut feelings. When we have a visceral reaction to something, we assume that we have discovered a truth. However, as psychologist David Levy points out, feelings and truth are conceptually unrelated.

One of my students last year refused to switch positions as part of a risk-assessment exercise, even though the class had demonstrated conclusively through a series of trials that the new position was twice as favorable as the position he held. The student’s explanation for refusing to switch was that he “wasn’t feeling it.” That thinking error is called belief perseverance, a phenomenon in which we commit to an initial position and stubbornly hold onto our belief despite evidence that suggests the belief is incorrect.

Critical thinking is the opposite of truthiness. According to Levy, critical thinking is a systematic cognitive strategy to examine, evaluate, and understand events. It involves solving problems and making decisions on the basis of sound reasoning and valid evidence. Levy identifies a variety of attitudes that characterize critical thinkers, including questioning assumptions, discerning hidden biases, avoiding overgeneralizations, developing tolerance for ambiguity, and exploring alternative perspectives. Critical thinkers learn to digest and use data. They adapt and refit hypotheses in accord with that data rather than attempt to force the data to fit their preexisting assumptions.

David Myers identifies instances in which intuitions go awry. For example, though research has shown that interviewers form impressions of job applicants in seconds and are confident about their judgments, those interviewers commonly overestimate their ability to predict who will become good employees.

We can often misconstrue situations because of our mood, too. The *Talmud* says that “we don’t see things as they are; we see things as we are.” Good critical thinking demands that we put aside our feelings and judge situations objectively. We should explore alternative possibilities and leave ourselves open to discovering new evidence that might point in other directions. The

difficulty is that our initial gut reaction may obscure our ability to pursue new leads. For example, our initial hunch may cause us to look for evidence confirming what we already believe and ignore evidence to the contrary. This is called confirmation bias, and it leads uncritical thinkers to find what they are looking for and only that for which they are looking.

Poor critical thinkers can be easily manipulated into believing in such things as weapons of mass destruction and led into destructive actions because they feel right. We can develop into good critical thinkers by initially recognizing the characteristics of good thinking as well as truthiness-type roadblocks to critical thought.

Patrick Mattimore teaches psychology at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory School in San Francisco. PTN

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Time to Apply for APA/Clark University Workshop

July 9-11, 2007

Clark University, Worcester, MA

The American Psychological Association (APA) Education Directorate and Clark University are pleased to announce the third annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers, sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation Lee Gurel Fund and Clark University. This 3-day workshop will provide participants with recent updates from various specialty fields within psychology. Additional sessions will be held on the history of psychology and on classroom activities. Charles Brewer, PhD, of Furman University (Greenville, SC) will deliver the keynote address on Monday, July 9.

We invite all teachers of high school psychology to apply for this great opportunity for which all expenses are paid! Participation will be limited to 25 high school teachers. For additional information and application forms, please visit http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/conf_wkshop.html. Contact Emily Leary (eleary@apa.org) at (202) 572-3013 if you have any question. The application deadline is **April 15, 2007**.

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favorite sex (although when things go badly, women more often ruminate and become depressed or anxious, while men more often abuse alcohol or engage in antisocial conduct).

Does wealth predict well-being? Three in four entering American collegians believe that it is “very important” or “essential” to become “very well off financially.” And middle-income people and those in middle-income countries do tend to report greater well-being than their poverty-stricken counterparts. But those with very high incomes and those in the richest of countries are typically no happier than those merely able to afford life’s necessities with a sense of security. It matters less than we might have guessed whether one bikes or is chauffeured to work. Moreover, as real income in Western countries has doubled over the last half century—and with it all the goodies that money can buy—happiness has failed to increase. We love our air conditioning, camera cell phones, text messaging, Internet search engines, iPods, TiVos, and Post-it notes, but we are no happier than were our grandparents growing up without such. Gallup surveys reveal that in the decade after 1994, while telephones and television went from uncommon to commonplace among households in China, satisfaction with life actually declined slightly. Even super rich lottery winners have found that their happiness only temporarily soared. Ergo, economic growth has produced no improvement in human morale.

If money and materialistic strivings do not entail the good life (and, worse, are fueling a global climate crisis) then one wonders with the *Old Testament* prophet Isaiah, “Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” What’s the point of accumulating stacks of unplayed CDs, closets full of seldom-worn clothes, and ever-bigger houses with three-car garages—all purchased in a vain quest for an elusive joy? And, as Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet have asked, what’s the point of leaving significant inherited wealth to one’s heirs (and protecting it by eliminating estate taxes), as if inherited wealth could spread more happiness than applying it to a hurting world?

If knowing your age, gender, and affluence give me little clue to your happiness, then what does? Some people are happier than others. Who are they? Here are some answers that I have gleaned from the scientific pursuit of happiness (Myers, 1993, 2000):

Positive traits. Optimism, self-esteem, and perceived control over one’s life are traits that mark happy lives. (These are genetically influenced traits, so it came as no surprise when twin studies revealed that happiness, too, is genetically influenced.) Happy people typically report feeling an “internal locus of control” (they feel empowered). People suffer lower morale when deprived of control, an experience common among prisoners, nursing home patients, citizens under totalitarian rule, and those plagued by severe poverty.

Flow. Between the stress of being overwhelmed and the apathy of being underwhelmed lies a zone in which people experience flow. In this optimal state, we become so absorbed in an

activity that we lose consciousness of self and time. Flow researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi found people reporting their greatest enjoyment not when mindlessly passive, but when engrossed in a mindful challenge. Thus, work and leisure experiences that engage our skills promote happiness. Most people are happier gardening than watching TV.

Close, supportive relationships. We humans are social animals. We have a deep “need to belong.” We, therefore, benefit from having loving companions through the journey of life, from having people with whom we can share our suffering and sorrow and our good fortune and celebration. This partly explains why, among more than 42,000 Americans surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center since 1972, 40% of married adults, and 23% of never-married adults, have declared themselves very happy.

Faith communities. Those same surveys of 42,000+ Americans also revealed that 26% of those rarely or never attending religious services declared themselves very happy, as did 47% of those who attended more than once a week. Faith communities are, for many of their members, sources of social connection, of meaning, and of ultimate hope.

These findings are joined by others which indicate that happy people tend to have energy that is bred by regular aerobic exercise, sufficient renewing sleep, and positive attitudes such as a sense of gratitude for one’s health, friends, and family. Such findings offer pointers to a happiness enabled by positive traits and attitudes, engaging activities, caring relationships, and a hope-filled faith. **PTN**

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Psi Chi Celebrates Success of First Psi Chi National Leadership Conference

Virginia Andreoli Mathie, PhD

Executive Director, Psi Chi

Psi Chi got off to an exceptional start in 2007 with its first Psi Chi National Leadership Conference (NLC), held in Atlanta, GA, January 5–7, 2007. The goal of the NLC was to provide workshops, keynote speakers, and interactive sessions to help chapter presidents develop skills to be effective chapter leaders and leaders in the profession and to help chapter advisers enhance their leadership skills and expand their impact on psychology education. By all accounts, the NLC was successful in meeting these goals.



Dr. John Davis, Psi Chi President, and guest speaker Dr. Alan Kraut, executive director of the Association for Psychological Science.

At the opening reception on Friday evening, Dr. John Davis, the Psi Chi National President, welcomed 39 chapter presidents or presidents-elect and 35 chapter advisers as well as National Council members, National Office staff, and guest speakers. For some chapters, both the chapter's faculty adviser and student president attended the conference. A highlight of the evening was the tribute to Paula Miller, Psi Chi's outgoing executive officer/chief operations officer, for being such a wise administrator, inspirational leader, astute business-woman, supportive colleague, and caring friend.

On Saturday, one of our keynote speakers, Dr. Diane Halpern—director of the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children, professor in the Psychology Department at Claremont McKenna College, and the 2004 president of the American Psychological Association (APA)—described the skills and abilities that are the



Students, faculty advisors, and Psi Chi Council interact at the Participant Idea Exchange.

hallmarks of good leaders and how participants could help each other learn to be better leaders. During her presentation, participants assessed their leadership styles and reflected on their leadership strengths or weaknesses. Our other keynote speaker, Dr. Alan Kraut, executive director of

the Association for Psychological Science (APS), provided an example of organizational leadership as he described the key role APS played in persuading federal government agencies to be more supportive of psychological science. The conference included sessions led by Dr. Robert Youth (Dowling College; Psi Chi National past-president), Dr. Susan Krauss Whitbourne (University of Massachusetts Amherst; Psi Chi Eastern regional vice president), Dr. Kenneth Weaver (Emporia State University; chapter adviser and winner of the 2005–2006 Psi Chi Florence L. Denmark National Faculty Adviser Award), Dr. Martha Zlokovich (Southeast Missouri State University; the Psi Chi 2003–2004 national president), Dr. Richard Kasschau (University of Houston; Psi Chi Southwestern regional vice president), and Dr. Betsy Morgan (University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Psi Chi Midwestern regional vice president). Participants also met in small groups, led by members of the Psi Chi National Council, to discuss ways they could apply information from the NLC to their own chapters and leadership efforts and to share potential solutions to issues they confront in their chapters. The NLC concluded with a lively evening session of participant idea exchanges in which Dr. Vincent Prohaska (Lehman College, CUNY; Psi Chi National president-elect), Dr. L. Joseph Achor (Baylor University chapter adviser), Dr. Bruce Kelly (Lindenwood University chapter adviser), Dr. Marjorie Marcotte (Springfield College chapter adviser), Dr. Christina Sinisi (Charleston Southern University chapter adviser), and Dr. Jason Young (Hunter College; CUNY chapter adviser) led small group discussions on chapter leadership issues.



Heather Barber (Wake Forest University), Dr. Fabiana DesRosiers (Dominican College of Blauvelt), Kristen Newman (Dominican College of Blauvelt), and Amanda Walsh (Hillsdale College) at the NLC opening reception.



Dr. Vincent Prohaska, Psi Chi president-elect, and guest speaker Diane Halpern, director of Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children, professor of psychology at Claremont McKenna College, and 2004 APA president.

Psi Chi, continued on page 12

Regional Psychological Association Meeting Dates—2007

Mark your calendars for the 2007 annual meetings of the regional psychological associations! The annual regional meetings are an excellent opportunity to hear distinguished scholars and leaders in psychology and to network with colleagues in your region. Please visit the Web sites below for additional information.

February 21-24, 2007

Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA)

New Orleans, LA

<http://www.sepaonline.com>

March 22-25, 2007

Eastern Psychological Association (EPA)

Philadelphia, PA

<http://www.easternpsychological.org>

April 5-7, 2007

Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)

Ft. Worth, TX

<https://www.swpsych.org>

April 12-14, 2007

Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA)

Denver, CO

<http://www.rockymountainpsych.org>

May 3-5, 2007

Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA)

Chicago, IL

<http://www.midwesternpsych.org>

May 3-6, 2007

Western Psychological Association (WPA)

Vancouver, BC, Canada

<http://www.westernpsych.org>

Oct 19-20, 2007

New England Psychological Association (NEPA)

Danbury, CT

<http://www.nepa-info.org>

Erratum

Last fall, we published a book review on *Teaching Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives From Exemplary Psychology Teachers* in the *Psychology Teacher Network* (Fall 2006) that did not include the names of the reviewers. Dana S. Dunn, PhD, and Sarah E. Hopkins of Moravian College were the authors of that review. The editors of *PTN* regret the omission.

Geropsychology, continued from page 5

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Geropsychology Web Resources

APA geropsychology career fact sheet, *Geropsychology: It's YOUR Future*, with links to education and training, research, and practice opportunities:
http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/student_fact_sheet.pdf

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education
Careers in Aging Web site:
<http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/>

Gerontological Society of America
Agework: <http://www.geron.org/agework>

National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula

The APA invites feedback on the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula. These standards outline what high school psychology students should be taught in the introductory psychology course. The standards emphasize the importance of the scientific foundations and applications of psychology and demonstrate the breadth of the field of psychology in the high school curriculum. The document is available online at <http://www.apa.org/ed/natlstandards.html>.

Comments and recommendations for revision will be accepted via an online submission form found at <http://www.apa.org/ed/natlstandards.html>. Recommendations must be submitted by **May 1, 2007**.

First Psi Beta National Conference Held

Jennifer L. O’Loughlin-Brooks, MS and Valerie T. Smith, MA

Collin County Community College, Plano, TX

Psi Beta, a member of the Association of College Honor Societies, is the national honor society in psychology for students in community colleges. In 2006 Psi Beta celebrated its first 25 years, and it was fitting that this would also be the year that Psi Beta hosted its first national conference. Collin County Community College in Plano, TX, played host to the inaugural Psi Beta Psychology Synergy Conference on October 6th and 7th. Faculty, students, and advisers from institutions as far away as California, Florida, and Georgia and as near as McKinney High School heard prominent guest speakers and participated in workshops and symposia emphasizing both faculty and student interests. Concurrent sessions ranged from leadership training to fundraising to multicultural and honors psychology. In celebration of Psi Beta’s anniversary, the conference featured exclusive workshops coordinated by Psi Beta National Council Members for advisers and student officers of Psi Beta. Workshops included adviser and officer training, Induction Ceremony 101, and from Psi Beta to Psi Chi: Making the Transition and Facilitating Student Research.

More than 350 people attended the conference, and on Friday afternoon attendees gathered to hear the keynote address “Cheating in High School is for Grades; Cheating in College is for a Career: Academic Dishonesty in the 21st Century” delivered by Distinguished Visiting Professor of Psychology Dr. Stephen F. Davis of Texas Wesleyan University. Davis, former president of Southwestern Psychological Association and APA Division 2 and author of more than 250 publications and 850 presentations, provided in his presentation a synopsis of his years of research in the area of academic ethics. Outlining some of the techniques students employ to cheat, Davis exposed some novel strategies and also elucidated the reasons students give to rationalize such behavior. He ended with a discussion of the impact of such behavior on careers and future relationships, both personal and professional. Davis also held a workshop on student research that inspired students to begin their careers immediately and provided concrete assistance in doing so.

On Saturday morning, Dr. James W. Kalat, professor of psychology at North Carolina State University, spoke on “Recent Developments in Biological Psychology.” Kalat, author of textbooks in both introductory and biological psychology and numerous peer-reviewed publications, captured attention with a demonstration that turned the experience of eating chocolate into one of eating chalk. He then followed with a brief and yet comprehensive outline of current issues in sensation and perception, concluding with an excellent overview of the problem of perceptual binding.

“The synergy—the cooperative interaction between groups of conference participants—was almost as dynamic and engaging as the sessions were.” Participants discussed building awareness of Psi Beta on different campuses from the perspective of the academic faculty and setting up a networking system. Students were able to interact with professors from different colleges and gain direction about their prospective careers.

On October 4-6, 2007, Collin County Community College will host the second annual Psi Beta Psychology Synergy Conference. See details about the conference at <http://psibeta.ccccd.edu>. *PTN*



Guest speaker Dr. James Kalat



Guest speaker Dr. Steve Davis and students



Psi Beta President Dr. Alberta Johnson; Dr. Valerie T. Smith and Dr. Jennifer O’Loughlin-Brooks, Psi Beta Advisors at Collin County Community College; and Psi Beta Past President Dr. Sharon Burson

Photos courtesy of Dan White Photography

Call for Nominations

APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC)

2007 Elections

Consider serving on the APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) Committee! The PT@CC Committee consists of six members whose mission is to:

- Promote, within the 2-year-college community, the highest professional standards for teaching of psychology as a scientific discipline;
- Cultivate a professional identity with the discipline of psychology among psychology teachers at community colleges;
- Develop leadership qualities among psychology teachers at community colleges and increase their participation and representation in professional psychology activities and organizations;
- Establish and maintain communication with all groups involved in the teaching of psychology and with the greater psychological community; and
- Encourage psychological research on teaching and learning at community colleges for the purpose of giving students the best possible educational opportunities.

The members of PT@CC will elect two new members who will join the committee in January 2008 for a 3-year term of office. The PT@CC Committee meets twice a year in Washington, DC. The APA covers travel and accommodation expenses.

Consider self-nominating for a position on the PT@CC Committee or nominate a colleague who would make a positive impact. Nominations are due by **June 1, 2007**.

Nomination Form

APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges

Nominee's name

Nominee's address

Nominee's work phone

Nominee's home phone

Nominee's e-mail address

In submitting this form, the nominee agrees to have his/her name considered for placement on the 2007 PT@CC Election ballot. Candidates must be current members of PT@CC. This form must be received by **June 1, 2007**.

Nominees for the 2007 PT@CC Election must submit the following materials/documents: curriculum vitae, brief personal statement, and a photo. **Please send to PT@CC Elections, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Please send electronic files of nomination materials to Martha Boenau at mboenau@apa.org.**

Psi Chi, continued from page 9

Participants left the NLC with new and practical strategies to enhance their leadership effectiveness, inspire chapter members to increase their involvement in Psi Chi, mentor future leaders, address diversity issues in their chapter, increase fundraising, and deal with difficult situations chapter leaders often confront, and many other leadership matters. Participants commented that they found the NLC interesting, informative, inspiring, and fun.

The success and thanks of the NLC is due to many people: Dr. Robert Youth, Dr. John Davis, Dr. Christopher Koch, and Ms. Paula Miller, who served with Dr. Mathie as members of the NLC Task Force, for their work and creativity in developing the program; all members of the Psi Chi National Council for their support of the NLC; staff members at the Psi Chi National Office for their assistance with conference preparations and staffing the conference; all the NLC speakers for providing the

excellent program; and all participants for taking the time out of their busy schedules to attend and contribute to the conference. Psi Chi would also like to thank the APA Education Directorate for providing funding to assist with NLC planning and books to display at the conference and the APS for offering free 1 year APS memberships to NLC participants and materials for display.

Psi Chi is already starting to plan for the next NLC in January 2009! Psi Chi will post announcements about the 2009 NLC in the *Eye on Psi Chi* and on the Psi Chi Web site (www.psichi.org). We hope to see many more Psi Chi chapters represented at the next Psi Chi National Leadership Conference. *PTN*

Psychology Well Represented in National Council for Social Studies Conference

Laura Brandt

Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, IL

More than 4,000 social studies educators attended the 2006 National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) Conference, held in Washington, DC, December 1-3, 2006. The field of psychology was well represented with 9 hours of psychology programming. The psychology sessions were well attended some hosting more than 70 participants! The APA Education Directorate and TOPSS again sponsored an exhibit booth at the conference. Psychology highlights at NCSS included:

- Amy Fineburg, 2006 past-chair of TOPSS, presented activities for teaching the psychology of learning. Specifically, her presentation focused on the work of Pavlov, Skinner, and Bandura and how to get students beyond the new vocabulary that often confuses them when they are first introduced to the psychology of learning concepts.
- The leaders of the NCSS Psychology-Special Interest Group (or Psych-SIG)—Daria Schaffeld, Lindsay Hackman, and Joe Geiger—presented a session entitled “Psychology Alive!” Their presentation focused on making the psychology classroom come alive for students by involving them more in the learning process.
- Tina Athanasopoulos and Barney Beins, PhD, members of the Advanced Placement Test development team, presented a session that provided participants with novel methods for

teaching the research methods and biological bases of behavior units.

- Former TOPSS Committee members Charlie Blair-Broeker and Randy Ernst presented a session that focused on dynamic activities to enhance critical thinking.
- Marie Smith, PhD, TOPSS member-at-large, and TOPSS member Geri Acquard presented a session for those interested in beginning psychology internship programs.
- Hilary Rosenthal, Psych-SIG member and TOPSS member-at-large, and Peter Masciopinto presented a session on creative assessments in the psychology classroom.



Laura Brandt

The weekend ended with a reception cohosted by TOPSS and Psych-SIG. The reception was well attended and allowed members of both organizations to talk informally and to debrief each other on the sessions they attended at the conference. We look forward to future collaboration between the two organizations and hope to make the reception an annual event. NCSS will hold its 87th annual conference November 30-December 2, 2007, in San Diego, CA. Visit <http://www.socialstudies.org> for details! **PTN**

Save the Date! 2007 Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association August 17-20, 2007 San Francisco, CA

The 115th Annual APA Convention will be held on August 17-20, 2007, in San Francisco, CA. Details about special programming for teachers of psychology will appear in the summer 2007 issue of the *Psychology Teacher Network*. The APA convention is a great opportunity to attend lectures, panels, and symposia by leading experts in the field. And, with 13,000+ other psychologists attending, it is a wonderful opportunity for networking! Visit the APA Web site (<http://www.apa.org/convention07>) for convention registration information and additional details.

PT@CC Election Results

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) is delighted to welcome two new members who joined the committee this year. Salvador Macias, III, PhD, of the University of South Carolina, Sumter, and Nancy Schaab, PhD, of Delta College, were elected to the committee in the 2006 elections.

Drs. Macias and Schaab will fill the positions left vacant by off-going committee members Donna Duffy, PhD, of Middlesex Community College, and Patricia Puccio, EdD, of the College of DuPage. The PT@CC Committee and the APA staff extend thanks and appreciation to Drs. Duffy and Puccio for their service to PT@CC and their commitment to excellence in the teaching of psychology.



Salvador Macias, III, PhD



Nancy Schaab, PhD

Call for Nominations

TOPSS 2007 Elections

The mission of the APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) is to promote the scientific nature of introductory and advanced high school psychology, meet curricular needs of secondary school teachers, and provide opportunities for high school students to be recognized and rewarded for their academic excellence. If you would like to become more involved in TOPSS and are interested in gaining leadership experience and making a positive impact on the teaching of high school psychology, we encourage you to consider serving on the TOPSS Committee. In 2007, the following three elected positions need to be filled:

- Chair
- Membership Coordinator
- Member-at-Large

The chair position is a 3-year position, and the others are 2-year positions. Please consider nominating a colleague whom you feel would make a positive impact. Self-nominations are also welcomed.

Descriptions of officer responsibilities and sample platform statements are available on the TOPSS Web site (www.apa.org/ed/topss/homepage.html). The TOPSS Committee meets twice a year, in spring and fall, in Washington, DC. The APA covers travel and accommodation expenses.

Nominees for the 2007 TOPSS election are asked to submit the following materials/documents:

- Vitae or resume
- Platform statement (Examples of platform statements are on the TOPSS Web site at www.apa.org/ed/topss/homepage.html.)
- Photo

Nominations are due by June 1, 2007.

Please send nominations and materials to Emily Leary, APA Education Directorate, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Electronic submissions will be accepted. Please send electronic files of nomination materials to Emily Leary at eleary@apa.org.



Amy House



Scott Reed



Hilary Rosenthal

Announcing the 2007 Teaching Tips Contest for Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites you to participate in the third annual Teaching Tips Contest! Sponsored by the APA Education Directorate and PT@CC, the Teaching Tips Contest aims to encourage sharing of instructional techniques that community college faculty have developed and used in psychology classes.

Community college instructors are invited to submit an original demonstration, an individual or group class activity, an interactive teaching/learning module, or other pedagogy designed to illustrate a psychological concept or theory. Preference will be given to active-learning approaches.

The competition is open to psychology teachers who are members of PT@CC. Faculty members interested in joining PT@CC can obtain more information on the Web or by contacting Martha Boenau at 1-800-374-2721, ext. 6140 (e-mail: Mboenau@apa.org). An award of \$400 will be given to the first place winner, \$300 to the second place winner, \$200 to the third place winner, and \$50 each to two honorable mention winners. Certificates for all winners will be presented by PT@CC at the American Psychological Association annual convention.

Look for details and a new format for submissions on the PT@CC Web site (www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html). Submissions may be mailed to Martha Boenau (APA Education Directorate, 750 First St., NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242, or sent via e-mail). Entries must be postmarked by May 18, 2007.

New TOPSS Committee Officers Elected

Congratulations to the newly elected TOPSS Committee officers! **Hilary Rosenthal** of Glenbrook South High School, Glenview, IL, is the chair-elect; **Amy House** of Astronaut High School, Titusville, FL, has been elected member-at-large; and **Scott Reed** of Hamilton High School, Chandler, AZ, has also been elected member-at-large. Rosenthal, House, and Reed began their new positions on January 1, 2007.

The TOPSS Committee thanks Amy Fineburg (past chair) of Spain Park High School, Hoover, AL, and Carol Farber (member-at-large) of Miami Killian Sr. High School, Miami, FL, for their service on the TOPSS Committee. Fineburg and Farber completed their terms in December 2006.

Book Review:

First Day to Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching, Second Edition

Authors: Anne Curzan and Lisa Damour

Publisher: The University of Michigan Press

Copyright: 2007

ISBN: ISBN: 0-472-03188-0

Length: 200 pages

Price: \$19.95

Reviewed by: Jessica G. Irons, Auburn University

In their role as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) or even teachers of record, new graduate students are faced with teaching undergraduates for the first time. *First Day to Final Grade* is a practical and accessible guide to preparing for and executing all kinds of GTA duties and responsibilities, irrespective of academic discipline. This book presents issues that GTAs often face, including how to organize class time and structure, how to deal with problem students, and how to collect and use student feedback. Indeed, this book is a useful introduction to college and university teaching for both new and experienced teachers. Curzan and Damour offer a highly organized and engaging look at what graduate students should expect from the first day of class until final grades are assigned (hence, the catchy title of their book).

The authors take a developmental approach to their presentation, progressing from the most immediate and basic of concerns to more long-term and advanced issues. The first few chapters (Chapters 1-3) introduce the joys and agonies of teaching, what to do before and on the first day of class, and how to prepare for classes throughout the semester. Reading these chapters reminded me of my own GTA experiences; my recollections vividly mirror the descriptions offered in the book. For example, Curzan and Damour suggest that GTAs develop a teaching persona or role that may or may not be much like our out-of-classroom selves. To be sure, I confess that the “teaching me” is far more patient with people than the other me.

The authors also include some realistic scenarios about key issues that most teachers face, regardless of how long they have been teaching. For example, should we use lectures, discussions, active learning strategies, or some other teaching format in presenting our subject matter? Curzan and Damour provide several possible solutions to common teaching dilemmas, but leave final judgment to the reader by describing the important points to consider regarding these sorts of critical decisions. When we use lectures, for instance, we have an easily defined goal: to disseminate information. However, when we use discussions in class, our goals may not always be immediately clear to students—thus, we

must not forget to define our goals in discussions as well as in lectures. The authors also provide useful advice regarding aspects of teaching that we might otherwise overlook. For example, our organization of classroom space may influence the nature of the interactions that take place between us and our students. If we intend to lecture, we may want to be in the front of the room; if we wish to generate discussion, a round-table organization might facilitate better communication.

The next several chapters (Chapters 4-6) focus on preparing for class throughout the term and potential variations on course activities, including discussions, problem sets, and sundry other useful activities. New GTAs have often been exposed only to lecturing professors as role models and thus have little or no experience with engaging in other sorts of classroom activities, let alone developing such tasks for their own teaching. Curzan and Damour provide unbiased descriptions of the potential class formats we might choose. For example, Chapter 4 describes running discussions in a “do” and “don’t” format regarding important considerations for classroom discussion. This chapter includes sound advice on asking good questions, encouraging all students to participate in class discussion, and dealing with students who monopolize discussion. Chapter 5 describes the use of problem sets and offers a more structured set of guidelines for developing and using this teaching format. The authors offer advice on alternative class formats, such as structured debates, videos, guest speakers, or exam reviews in Chapter 6. Curzan and Damour describe each of these activities and offer sound suggestions for (a) when to use them and (b) the essential preparatory work in which teachers must engage in order to make them successful in the classroom.

The discussion of course planning and subject matter dissemination is followed by chapters on issues related to interacting with students, grading, and feedback (Chapters 7-9). Chapter 7 addresses the serious issues of plagiarism and cheating, sexual harassment, and dual relationships. It also discusses the more routine problems involved in teaching, including motivating students to do their best work, encouraging students to attend class, and dealing with antagonistic students. Chapter 8 offers appropriate protocols for grading all types of activities (e.g., papers, exams, and group work) and how to confront problems of late or missed work. Although grading seems to be one of the more structured activities in which GTAs might engage, there are often ample opportunities for subjective evaluations, which introduce GTAs to the gray areas of grading. The authors remind us that grading rubrics can be helpful for consistency and clarity when assigning points to subjective activities. Chapter 9 outlines the benefits of general and specific informal feedback and more formal assessments.

Finally, Chapter 10 reminds GTAs of the integral role of balance in their lives. In particular, this chapter focuses on issues of time management outside the classroom. Graduate students often take on multiple roles with diverse demands of effort and time. Decisions about how to spend each moment of the day are often important for success as a student and as a GTA. Although course preparation time may seem like an obvious obligation,

Psychology Spotlight: Sharing your Stories of Significant Moments in Teaching

Kathleen Stassen Berger, PhD

Bronx Community College, City University of New York (CUNY)

At 8:00 a.m., on the fifth and final test of the term, I reminded my students that they could take the whole hour to do the test if they wished, but that those who finished early could not leave until 8:20. I also reminded them that latecomers after 8:20 could not take the test. This is a security measure; at this point in the semester, they all know it.

Frances, usually a punctual and conscientious student, came rushing in at 8:23.

“Can I take the test?”

“No, Frances, you know you can’t, I am very sorry.”

“But it wasn’t my fault, the cops ...”

“Wait for me outside. I will listen to you; don’t disturb the class.”

Frances waited in the hall. All my students were diligently and quietly taking the test, so I stepped outside for a moment.

“I was early, a block away. The cops stopped me. I had done nothing wrong; they stopped me because I had signs in the back of my car from a protest about Sean Bell.”

Frances was holding back tears. [Bell was a 23-year-old unarmed African American man killed by the police; the police had shot 50 bullets into his car a week before. Even Mayor Bloomberg said this seemed excessive.] Because this was the last test of the term, I rationalized that an exception now would not create problems later.

“Okay, you can take it. Come in as soon as you get yourself together.”

I went back into the classroom. Hamne, a Hispanic man who has no connection to Frances that I can see and usually sits far from her, looked up from his seat in the back.

“Dr. Berger, you should let her take it,” he said, having heard nothing of Frances’ explanation.

Then, I saw many pleading faces.

“I already gave her permission. She will join us in a minute.”

The class burst out in applause.

As Bronx Community College students are from dozens of ethnic groups, many ages, and often self-absorbed, my highest

goal is to get them to respect and care for each other. Thanks to Frances, Hamne, and all of them, I was thrilled to see it happen that day.

Dr. Berger teaches introductory and developmental psychology at Bronx Community College, City University of New York (CUNY). She has been at BCC for 30 years, and has also taught psychology as an adjunct at Montclair State (in New Jersey), Quinnipiac University (in Connecticut), and Fordham University Graduate School (in Manhattan). Dr. Berger is now a full professor and an author of textbooks in developmental psychology.

How many lives have you touched? Do you recall an important moment in the classroom that reminded you why you teach? Share your story about a significant moment in teaching! If you have a story to share (250 to 300 words), we would like to include it in the *Psychology Teacher Network*. Please send your submissions to Martha Boenau (Mboenau@apa.org). We look forward to hearing from you! **PTN**

Introducing the Diversity and Teaching LISTSERV

If you’re interested in diversity and teaching, please join us.

The Society for Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2) Diversity Committee is proud to introduce a LISTSERV devoted to diversity and teaching in psychology (DIVERSITY-TEACH-L@LISTSERV.BSU.EDU).

Purpose: This discussion group will focus on issues related to infusing diversity and international perspectives into the psychology curriculum in addition to diversity-specific courses. The forum is open to all who are interested in incorporating diversity into their teaching at all levels (including high school, 2-year, 4-year college/university, and graduate school settings).

Please join our LISTSERV and share your experiences, teaching strategies, resource materials, recommendations, and/or questions.

How to Join: To join the Diversity-Teach LISTSERV, please send your name and e-mail address to Linh Nguyen Littleford at lnlittleford@bsu.edu. Although membership in Division 2 is strongly recommended for the resources it maintains and provides, membership is not required to join the LISTSERV. Division 2’s exceptional resources to enhance instruction can be found at: <http://teachpsych.lemoyne.edu/teachpsych/div/divindex/html>.

Teaching the Science of Psychology in the Introductory Course

Robin Hailstorks, PhD

APA Education Directorate

As a teacher of introductory psychology for more than two decades, I am often struck by the way this course is taught. As a former department chair, I and my colleagues would focus our attention on the content to be covered in this course. We would spend countless hours discussing *what* needed to be included and what would be great to teach if time permitted. Yet, little energy was devoted to discussions about *how* to teach the science of psychology in an introductory course. By this statement, I am referring to how we present our discipline to students in their first psychology course. This statement is so profound to me today and yet for several decades it didn't occur to me. It wasn't until I had a conversation with colleagues from other disciplines that the approach to teaching introductory psychology became obvious: Why not focus on goals and learning outcomes rather than focus on what should be covered in such a course?

Part of the rationale for spending so much time focusing on the content of the introductory psychology course is that the course serves as the foundation for all upper level psychology courses. Teachers who teach upper level psychology courses expect their students to have a solid foundation in introductory psychology. Students also recognize the need to have a solid foundation, so they, too, have certain expectations about how much knowledge they should acquire in this course. This is especially true for psychology majors. In fact, many students decide to major in psychology after completing the introductory psychology course. If students have taken introductory psychology in high school, they also have certain expectations about what should be covered in this course.

Introductory psychology is considered one of the general education requirements at most colleges and universities. As such, students take this course because it's mandatory and because they think they know the subject matter. General education courses are approved and reviewed by committees appointed by the academic officer of the institution. Committees review general education courses in the context of requirements mandated by the state and accrediting bodies that their particular college adheres to when it is up for review or reaccreditation. Every general education course must meet one of several learning goals espoused in a liberal education.

What gets lost in the conversation about teaching introductory psychology as a general education requirement is that the goals of a liberal education should be infused throughout the undergraduate psychology major. Our discipline has approved guidelines for teaching the undergraduate psychology major.

These guidelines include 10 learning goals and outcomes that are consistent with the essential learning outcomes for a liberal education as espoused by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

Psychology faculty members spend their time demonstrating how the introductory psychology course meets the general education requirements espoused by the accrediting body. There is very little discussion about "how" the discipline of psychology is taught in the introductory course. Rather, the discussion centers on "what" to include in this course. One could argue that this same conversation is lost on the ears of teachers who teach introductory psychology in high school, although the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* are a great resource in this regard.

Moreover, we live in a time in which educators are being challenged to be more accountable for what they teach and for assessing their students' knowledge. No matter how often we are told as teachers that students only retain a small percentage of the knowledge presented in a course, we are conditioned to present as much content as possible with the hope that our students will retain more knowledge. We also tend to assess their learning by using the multiple-choice examination. My point is not to criticize this method of assessment, but to call attention to the fact that it requires students to remember a lot of concepts, principles, and theories. Hence, we are primarily assessing factual knowledge or what's been taught in the course. Even when we are careful about creating items that assess conceptual knowledge or creating items that require students to apply the knowledge they have gained in our courses, the same can be said.

As teachers of psychology, we need to address a great deal of content because of how our discipline is organized, but we can do a better job of presenting this content if we focus our attention on teaching psychology as a *science*. In other words, we don't want students to walk away from our introductory psychology course with 20,000 pieces of information about psychology. This is essentially the jigsaw puzzle approach as I see it. This approach requires us to help students fit all the pieces of information that we teach into some sort of structure that will ultimately convey to students the depth and breadth of the discipline. This approach also encourages much debate about whether the course should be taught in one semester or two semesters, because we feel a need to teach as much as possible so that students have a complete picture of our discipline.

What we want students to know is that psychology is a science and that we use the scientific method to understand behavior.



Robin Hailstorks, PhD

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many of us may dismiss the importance of scheduled time to prepare for class. The authors note that weekly course preparation is more often a sprint than a slow and steady pace to each class presentation. I have been a victim of my own poor planning on more than one occasion—I have the perfect demonstration for my class, but I only think of it while driving to campus to teach! If only I had done as the authors suggest and explicitly scheduled course preparation time, I could have been a much more effective teacher for that day's class. The book concludes with several appendices, including a sample syllabus, a lesson plan, and a feedback form, among others—all great tools to use and, thus, increase time management effectiveness!

Among my favorite aspects of this book are the delightful quotes sprinkled throughout—quotations from teachers reflecting upon their good and bad days, early experiences, and training. I also enjoyed the way in which the authors presented all possibilities that might arise from any given teaching decision so that readers may make informed and reasoned judgments about their teaching. Curzan and Damour project a strong and supportive voice that provides a bounty of useful information for new teachers. *PTN*

Associations of Various Disciplines Brainstorm on Education for a Sustainable Future

Robin Hailstorks, PhD, associate executive director and director of Precollege and Undergraduate Education, represented the American Psychological Association at a January 12 meeting of leaders from more than a dozen national associations to discuss education for a sustainable future. Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations as “meeting the needs of the present, while allowing future generations to meet their own needs.” Education for a sustainable future produces graduates who are knowledgeable about and engaged in the solutions for society's social, economic, and environmental challenges. As we move forward with our own discipline of psychology's engagement in creating a sustainable future and in interdisciplinary collaborations, we want to hear from you.

If you are engaged in teaching, research, or practice in areas related to creating healthier social systems and less human suffering, healthier ecosystems, and/or healthier economies, please share a summary of what you are doing by e-mail to Dr. Debra Rowe at dgrowe@oaklandcc.edu. Also let us know if you are interested in helping us catalyze sustainability initiatives within our association and among our members.

For more information on education for a sustainable future, including resources and professional development for educators and practitioners, visit the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (www.aashe.org) and the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (www.ulsf.org).

Beginnings & Endings: Best Practices for Introducing and Bringing Closure to the Undergraduate Psychology Major

Friday & Saturday, October 12-13, 2007
Crowne Plaza Atlanta-Perimeter NW Hotel
6345 Powers Ferry Road
Atlanta, GA 30339

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP, Division 2 of APA), the Society for the History of Psychology (Division 26 of APA), the National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP), and the Kennesaw State University Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) are excited to announce the sixth conference in the popular “Best Practices in Teaching Psychology” series, which started in 2002. The 2007 conference will focus on innovative and effective strategies both on ways we start off majors (e.g., the introductory course, a careers course) and on how we bring closure to the major (e.g., a specially designed capstone course or experience; a senior seminar; a history and systems course; research or applied internships/practicum). Modeled after the format of the previous conferences, the conference will include keynote speakers, concurrent symposia and workshops, and poster sessions. Our target audience includes teachers from high school, 2-year, and 4-year college/university settings.

We are seeking innovative symposia, workshops, and poster presentations that address the practical needs of psychology teachers in designing content- or course-specific activities and assignments; out-of-class experiences; and curricula that either introduce students to the breadth of the discipline, including career opportunities, or are effective in providing students with a capstone experience at the end of the undergraduate major.

For further information, please visit the conference Web site: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/cetl/conference/bp6/bp6index.htm> or contact STP Program Director Bill Hill at bhill@kennesaw.edu.

Sexualization of Girls Is Linked to Common Mental Health Problems in Girls and Women—Eating Disorders, Low Self-Esteem, and Depression—an APA Task Force Reports

Full text of the executive summary, report, and tips on “What Parents Can Do” are available at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>.

An Interview With Dr. Lee Gurel, APA/Clark Workshop Benefactor

Emily Leary

APA Education Directorate

“ support education. I want the world to make progress; we can't progress if we're not educated.”

In July 2007, the third annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers will be held in Worcester, MA. The workshop has been made possible through the vision and generosity of Dr. Lee Gurel, an APA member and Clark University alumnus, and is sponsored by the American Psychological Foundation and Clark University. In October 2006, Dr. Gurel met with Emily Leary, Precollege Psychology Programs Officer.

Q: Where did you grow up? Why did you decide to go to Clark?

A: I grew up in Worcester, MA, although I was born in Poland and lived there until I was 3. As a teenager, I lived about a mile from the Clark campus. I was unaware of what Clark represented even though I passed the campus frequently. It was expected that I would go to college, since my parents felt the way up in life was through education. But, I had no idea what going to college meant, and I didn't even know you had to apply for admission. Fortunately, there were two college-age neighbors nearby who clued me in. One day I picked up an application, took the trolley to Clark, and presented myself to the Dean with the application. This was 1943 and World War II, and they would take almost anyone who presented himself to the Dean. The campus had only just begun admitting women. I literally didn't graduate from high school, since the Clark summer classes started before high school classes finished.

Q: You studied psychology at Clark and graduated with a BA in 1948. Why did you major in psychology? What are some of your favorite memories from Clark?

A: Initially, I did not plan to study psychology, but rather I goofed off because I was young. In those days you went to college as young as possible. After a year or so at Clark, I spent 2 years in the Navy. I was fortunate to have that time in the Navy, because when I came back I was 2 years older and that much more mature. I still had no thought as to what I was doing in college except getting an education. Finally, I took a course with John Bell, and I said to myself, “This is what I want to be, I want to be like John Bell.” I didn't know the term role model yet, but he was such a warm, approachable teacher. What I remember about him is that in class there were people who would ask what seemed to me at the time as terribly dumb ques-

tions, but he would never knock them down or tell them that that was a stupid question (and I know what stupid questions are because that's part of what discouraged me from teaching. I had them when I was teaching in Colorado). Bell would phrase his responses to be like “well, that is one way to look at it, but couldn't you look at it this way...”, and the person who asked the dumb question would never know what he or she had done. Bell did counseling and taught abnormal psychology, and I thought that looked like a great vocation and decided I wanted to be like Dr. Bell. I ended up with a BA in psychology.

My favorite memories from Clark have little to do with psychology. I became the editor of the school newspaper, *The Scarlet*. Once we ran a series on the dining hall, and we headlined the words “Dining hall facts bared” in big black type on the cover so that when it was folded, all you saw were the words “all red.” This was at the time when anticommunism was big. That's probably one of my favorite memories of Clark.

Q: What did you do after you graduated from college?

A: After college I went to Purdue for graduate work (Why Purdue? They were the first ones who accepted me.). By then I was married and in a hurry. My degree at Purdue was in clinical, but my dissertation was in perception, which was very big at that time. My stay was between 1948-1952. Personality differences in sensation and perception were in vogue at that time.

I got into the Veteran Affairs (VA) training program, which was a godsend, since it paid money to work at the VA hospital in Marion, IN, and at the Indianapolis General Medical Hospital. After graduation, I spent a year at the Martinsburg, WV, VA Hospital; a year when my graduate students from Catholic University may have taught me more psychology than I taught them; then almost 4 years at the VA's psychiatric hospital in southeastern Colorado before coming into a research position at the VA Central Office here in Washington.

Because it arrived during a period of uncertainty and reorganization in my VA office, I welcomed a 1972 request from the American Psychiatric Association that I be granted a 6-month leave of absence and detailed to the American Psychiatric. Six months stretched to 12 years because the “little APA” turned out to be a challenging and enjoyable place to work. I did return to the VA and stayed until retiring in 1987. However, I continued as statistical editor for the *American Journal of Psychiatry* until 1993—my last paid employment. (See Baker & Pickren, 2006, for a chapter by Gurel on his VA experience.)

Q: What famous psychologists have you met and who would be your favorite psychologist?

A: Of course I knew John Bell from my undergraduate days. Franklin Shaw at Purdue struck me as impressive and a good teacher. After that, there are so many people. Vic Raimy, Jacob Cohen, Len Ullmann, to name just a few. I was always impressed

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by George Albee [former APA President and advocate for the prevention and early intervention of mental illness].

Q: You have been so generous to high school psychology teachers through the Clark workshop—when and why did you become interested in high school psychology?

A: I was well along in my career before I learned some basics such as you have to publish to get tenure, etc. There were so many areas of psychology of which I was unaware; I kind of knew they existed, but I didn't know much about them. I just felt that high school would be a good place to be teaching psychology. Then Joyce Hylton (a former high school psychology teacher from West Springfield High School, Springfield, VA, and a member of TOPSS) let me know that psychology was being taught in high schools. This was back in 1997 or 1998. I arranged a breakfast at the APA convention in Chicago with Joyce and Pam Hannah (also a former high school psychology teacher and TOPSS member) and was updated on what was being done to implement what was still to me the novel idea of teaching psychology in high school. It was something I thought was a great idea, although I came to find out that it of course wasn't a new idea.

I think that giving students a head start on psychology before college if they are going to become psychologists is great because there is so much in psychology to cover. These students will be that much further ahead in college if they have already learned about psychology in high school. It is such a good grounding. If we can reach youngsters who take psychology in high school who get a feel for the discipline and what it's all about, it gives us a pool of kids who know something about psychology and who may want to go on to study psychology who otherwise might not. It seemed like a heck of a good idea.

Q: What have you seen at the two Clark conferences that inspired you? That surprised you?

A: I've been quite impressed with the teachers who have attended the two workshops. These teachers are so hard working, interested, and anxious to learn. It's been an impressive group each year. I've enjoyed getting to know them. I've

been surprised at how little support these high school teachers have back at their schools, and how little prominence psychology has in the high school setting.

Q: How are you still involved with APA, APF, and Clark in your retirement?

A: My two major contributions to APF have been toward a library resource center at APA and to the Clark workshop. However, it has been many years since I was involved in the APA governance structure—and minimally even then. At Clark, I support a prize given each year to one outstanding graduating student in Asian Studies. I also support an annual award to honor an outstanding graduating senior in psychology and the student's faculty mentor (the Lee Gurel '48/John E. Bell Achievement Award).

Q: What would you like to share with high school teachers reading this article?

A: When you are in the classroom teaching you are likely not in a position to evaluate the long-range impact you are having. But you are having one. When people say to me that I write well, I think it's not Lee who is writing well, but it is Miss Wilmott, who was my seventh-grade English teacher. It took me a long time to realize how much impact this teacher has had on my life. My old grade school is now part of the Clark campus, but I can tell you the names of my teachers I had. Teachers stay with you.

Q: What advice would you give a high school student or undergraduate student planning on majoring in psychology today?

A: Pick your teachers carefully (laughs). *PTN*

References

Baker, R. R., & Pickren, W. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Psychology and the Department of Veterans Affairs: A historical analysis of training, research, practice, and advocacy*. American Psychological Association: Washington, DC.

Editor's note: In a previous interview at Clark University, Dr. Gurel was asked about his interest in the APA/Clark Workshop. The Clark Web site notes that Gurel believes "not only in the importance of education in helping students achieve their goals, but also in the influence and inspiration teachers can have on their students." Those convictions—[combined with his] belief that psychology has significant value in so many forms to offer humanity—are at the heart of the [workshop]. "Psychology is central to our lives," he explained. "[If] taught at the secondary-school level, this subject can get at issues that are essential—and often neglected—in our culture" (Retrieved January 18, 2007, from <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/president/pr/endowment/gurel.cfm>.)

Biopsychology Teaching Institute

July 22-27, 2007

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Green Bay, WI

The American Psychological Association (APA) and the APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) are pleased to announce a week-long institute for high school psychology teachers focusing on biopsychology. The Institute will be open to about 30 teachers. For more information and application forms, please visit the TOPSS Workshops and Conferences Web page at http://www.apa.org/ed/topss/conf_wkshop.html. Application deadline is April 15, 2007.

Teaching Concepts of Sustainability in Introductory Psychology

Debra Rowe, PhD

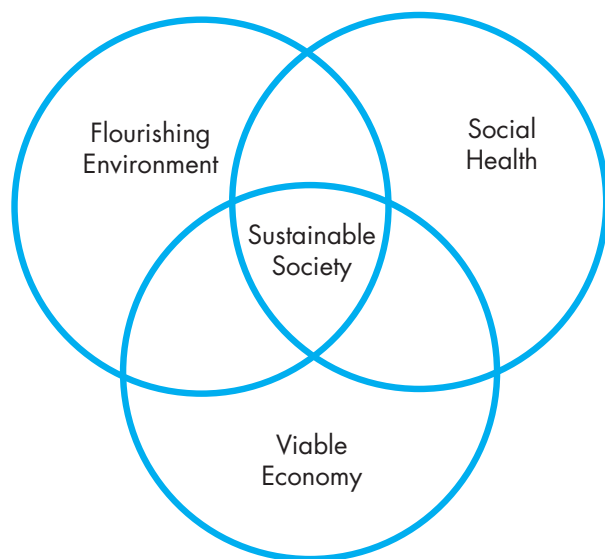
*Professor of Psychology, Oakland Community College
Senior Fellow, University Leaders for a Sustainable Future*

We live in a unique generation. Every major ecosystem is degrading, causing human suffering. This is the first generation impacting the habitability of the planet for this and future generations. Imagine a society where students become literate about our sustainability challenges and engaged in the solutions.

— *Anthony Cortese, PhD, Cochair, Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium*

Background on Sustainable Development

The United Nations declared a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) to promote the local and global understanding of principles of “sustainable development” (www.uspartnership.org). The vision of sustainable human society resides in the simultaneous creation of healthy economic growth and equity, healthy ecosystems and conservation of natural resources, and worldwide social development. It is often visually represented as follows and is known in the business world as the triple bottom line:



The American Perspective

There is special urgency that education for sustainable development blossom in the United States. The extent to which we, the people of the United States, adopt and embrace the principles of sustainable development may well determine the quality of life

that our nation and all humanity enjoy in the decades ahead. Around the world, billions of people seek our lifestyles. As 5% of the world’s population, we consume 25% of the world’s resources. The Earth simply cannot tolerate billions of people following the path we chose. Now, as responsible leaders, we must show new paths to future prosperity for ourselves and for all.



Debra Rowe, PhD

What Is Sustainability?

Sustainability is achieved when all people on Earth can live well without compromising the quality of life for future generations.

— *Rolf Jucker*

Jucker, R. (2003). UNESCO's teaching and learning for a sustainable future: A critical evaluation. Trumpeter, 19(2).

The interdependencies of the economic, environmental, and social justice elements of our world require new ways of thinking and taking action that will create a future where human society and nature coexist with mutual benefit, and where the suffering caused by poverty and natural resource abuse is eliminated.

Sustainable development calls for improving the quality of life for all of the world’s people without increasing the use of our natural resources beyond the earth’s carrying capacity. While sustainable development may require different actions in every region of the world, the efforts to build a truly sustainable way of life require the integration of action in three key areas:

Economic Growth and Equity. Today’s interlinked, global economic systems demand an integrated approach in order to foster responsible long-term growth while ensuring that no nation or community is left behind.

Conserving Natural Resources and the Environment. To conserve our environmental heritage and natural resources for future generations, economically viable solutions must be developed to reduce resource consumption, stop pollution, and conserve natural habitats.

Social Development. Throughout the world, people require jobs, food, education, energy, health care, water, and sanitation. While addressing these needs, the world community must also ensure that the rich fabric of cultural and social diversity, and the rights of workers are respected, and that all members of society are empowered to play a role in determining their futures.

— *World Summit on Sustainable Development brochure, 2002*

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Infusing Education for a Sustainable Future Into the Teaching of Psychology: A New Norm

College professors in all disciplines have an opportunity and a role to play in integrating related sustainability concepts and examples into their courses. Incorporating a theme of sustainable development throughout a course can make the material more relevant to the challenges today's students face. Recent research supports that including sustainability education throughout the curriculum engages students more and improves test performance (see <http://www.seer.org/>).

Psychology has a unique role in furthering the mission of sustainable development. With its emphasis on the study of mental processes and behaviors, the discipline provides knowledge and skills for the following components of sustainability that are acquired at the K-16 levels of education:

- healthier relationships;
- healthier self-concepts;
- behavior changes to protect the environment, reduce social injustice, and create healthier communities; and
- the building of commitment to positive, more sustainable scenarios for the future of our society and the skill development to help implement these scenarios.

The issues of environmental protection and sustainability already receive attention as a section in a few psychology textbooks (e.g., Lahey's *Psychology— An Introduction*, 9th edition published by McGraw-Hill and Myers' *Psychology*; 8th edition, published by Worth). The societal necessity of a paradigm shift from "man conquers nature" to "humans learn to live interdependently with nature" requires that the environmental protection section be expanded. The material needs to be integrated throughout the course so students can learn to apply all the chapter topics to sustainable development. The expansion from environmental protection to sustainable development and the incorporation of sustainability throughout the semester can be easily accomplished. Sustainability material can be included in the examples and applications used within the chapters as well as in any special sections of the textbook on thinking critically about psychology. Moreover, this material can be included in the human diversity sections already available in most textbooks.

Examples of Ways to Include Information on Sustainability in Psychology

1. Interpersonal intelligence as described by Howard Gardner of Harvard University and conflict resolution skills are both necessary to create healthier relationships. Inserting learning activities in listening skills, effective and appropriate emotional expression, and conflict-resolution steps can help students build their skills to create healthier relationships. Gardner's intrapersonal intelligence and the contemporary theory of emotion can both be used to help students develop "emotional intelligence."

2. A learning activity or inset box about Stanford's Hazel

Markus and her work on actual and ideal self-concept can empower students to actively sculpt a healthier self-concept for themselves, where they see that their consumption and investment choices affect the quality of life of people around the globe. By making more educated choices committed to social and environmental responsibility, students can help create a world with less pollution, safer working conditions, and more people making a livable wage and thereby reducing poverty.

3. Gilligan's and Kohlberg's theories of moral development can be utilized to discuss what and how moral values might be developed for a sustainable society.

4. In the "stress and health" section of a course, in discussions of the sources of stress, environmental stressors are always included, and metal toxins in the environment are often the example. It is appropriate and easy to add information in the section on ecopsychology to discuss the stress that is caused by worrying about the environment and human suffering, and the positive stress management that occurs when people move from a worrying mode into becoming an active participant in creating solutions to societal problems.

5. In a course with a section on learning, examples of classical and operant conditioning could easily include how we are conditioned to act in manners harmful for the environment because of the rewards and punishments in our environment. Students could design, implement, and measure the impacts of campaigns for energy conserving behavior on campus and in the community, or support for sustainability oriented policies as a course project.

6. In social psychology, teachers could include examples of societal norms that could be changed to create healthier communities, such as energy conservation that reduces our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels; reduces pollution, climate change, and respiratory disease; and creates healthier local economies. Explaining research on how to change the behavior of groups and communities regarding energy conservation could help explain cognitive dissonance theory and extend the exploration of obedience, conformity, stereotyping, and persuasion.

7. In teaching about cognition, language, and intelligence teachers discuss the availability heuristic, the examples used now are typically about the relative safety of dying by drowning instead of by fire, or the relative number of deaths from cars versus airplane crashes. Instead of using these examples, a teacher could explain the dominant belief in the United States that increasing consumption of nonrenewable resources is good for the country. Students would then be exposed to two facts:

- the United States has 5% of the world's population and is consuming 25% of the world's nonrenewable resources, and
- present consumption rates are exceeding the carrying capacity of the planet.

This example, while still demonstrating the availability heuristic and the danger of relying on the availability heuristic to make decisions, also educates students within the more accu-

Teaching Concepts, continued from page 22

rate and updated sustainability paradigm.

8. When teaching about perception, the teachers could easily include an example of the interactive effect of culture and politics on individual perception. Students could learn about a comparison of German versus U.S. citizens' perceptions regarding global warming and how the two governments' stances on this issue effected these perceptions.

9. Essential questions about sustainability can be added to any lesson. Throughout the semester, instructors can ask the students, "How can you use the material from this section of the course to help create a more sustainable future?" or "How can you use what you just learned to improve the quality of life in society?"

The U.S. Partnership for Sustainable Development (www.uspartnership.org) and the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (www.ulsf.org) are interested in working with teachers to infuse sustainability concepts and examples in all courses. More than a dozen national disciplinary associations are involved in discussions about higher education and work to include sustainable development more thoroughly throughout the disciplines.

Within psychology, a new resource has been made available by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (www.teachpsych.org). This new Web site, entitled "Teaching Psychology for Sustainability: A Manual of Resources" (<http://www.lemoyne.edu/OTRP/teachingresources.html#Conservation>) appears on the Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP-Online). The Web site includes a focus on the environmental component of sustainability to help instructors begin integrating psychology and environmental issues in their courses (<http://www.teachgreenpsych.com>). The site includes: general resources to introduce connections between psychology and environmental issues, instructor resources (including lecture and discussion topics, class activities, multimedia resources, and suggested readings for students), a bibliography, and a compendium of syllabi from instructors who currently teach psychology for sustainability.

In June 2007, there will be a Psychology-Ecology-Sustainability Conference at Lewis and Clark College in Oregon (<http://www.earthleadershipcenter.org/events/psychology-ecology-sustainability-conference/>).

To join an electronic mail list of interested faculty and for more information on sustainability education, visit the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education at www.aashe.org and click on E Mail Lists.

*i*The above examples are taken from activities used in Dr. Rowe's course. *PTN*

Teaching the Science, continued from page 17

ior in the broadest context. We want our students to be familiar with the various psychological tools of inquiry and how important psychology is and can be for influencing public policy. We want to dispel the myths that psychology is not a science and that psychologists are only interested in mental illness. Recognizing that the public's best prototype for a psychologist is a clinician, we have a lot of work to do. However, we can do our profession and discipline a huge favor by taking a giant step back when planning to teach our courses. We simply need to put the science of psychology in the forefront of our teaching.

Our challenge as teachers of psychology is to present our discipline in a manner that conveys its value and that demonstrates the contributions that psychologists have made to all areas of our lives, especially in the field of education. Indeed, this may be the area where we have made some of our greatest strides. The measurement of behavior has been probably the single most important contribution that the discipline of psychology has made in its history. Because of the efforts of many psychologists, we have psychometric instruments that help us diagnose and create interventions for children with exceptionalities.

Our challenge is to also recognize that in order to change the misperceptions of our discipline, we as teachers of psychology must accept our responsibility as change agents. We must present our discipline in such a way that students see its relevance and importance for improving the human condition. After all, our unit of analysis is behavior, and we have the tools and the knowledge to effect change in a positive way.

The question becomes how do we go about doing this in an era when we are not perceived as a science by the public and other scientists? The answer lies somewhere between rethinking our teaching of introductory psychology and our commitment to teaching the scientific method of inquiry. Our students were first introduced to the scientific method in elementary school. Our goal should be to reengage them in this thinking by applying this method to solving human problems. Psychology is the best discipline for doing this, and introductory psychology courses give us the best platform for getting the job done. *PTN*

TOPSS Celebrates Its 15th Year

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) was officially established during the 1992 APA Convention, held that August in Washington, DC. (Coincidentally, this was also the 100th annual APA convention.) This year—2007—marks the 15-year anniversary of TOPSS. *PTN* will help TOPSS celebrate by publishing articles and photographs of the past 15 years of TOPSS in *PTN* issues throughout this year.

PT@CC Electronic Project Contest

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) invites your students to participate in the fifth annual APA PT@CC Electronic Project Contest! Supported through funding by the APA Education Directorate and Allyn & Bacon Publishing Co., the Electronic Project Contest recognizes innovative and high-quality electronic presentations.

The Electronic Project Contest aims to promote active learning by means of electronic presentations developed by psychology students in either of the following categories:

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

Entries should be developed primarily by students and designed to explain the concept, research, or application to a 2-year college student audience. It may be helpful to think of these presentations as computerized teaching/learning modules or electronic "poster" pre-

sentations. Nearly any class project that can be put into a PowerPoint or similar electronic format will be acceptable.

The competition is open to students currently enrolled at a community college or other 2-year school. Students are eligible for the contest if they are community college students who have not previously completed a bachelor's degree. Faculty sponsors must be members of PT@CC. If you have students who might be interested in entering, tell them about this opportunity and urge them to begin work on their presentations right away. The entry deadline is April 30, 2007.

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

Look for the contest entry form and guidelines about the 2007 Electronic Project Contest on the Web at www.apa.org/ed/pcue/ptatcchome.html. For more information about this competition or PT@CC, please contact Martha Boenau (mboenau@apa.org).



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