

Suggested Reference Format

Overall Text

Irons, J. G., Beins, B. C., Burke, C., Buskist, W., Hevern, V., & Williams, J. E. (Eds.). (2006). *The Teaching of Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives from Exemplary Psychology Teachers (Vol. 2)*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology website: <http://teachpsych.org/ebooks/tia2006/index.php>

Individual Chapters

Buskist, W. (2006). Intention and commitment. In J.G. Irons, B.C. Beins, C. Burke, W. Buskist, V. Hevern, & J.E. Williams (Eds.). *The Teaching of Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives from Exemplary Psychology Teachers (Vol. 2)*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology website: <http://teachpsych.org/ebooks/tia2006/index.php>

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**The Teaching of Psychology
in Autobiography:
Perspectives from
Exemplary Psychology Teachers
Volume 2**

Edited by

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Bernard C. Beins
Caroline Burke
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Society for the Teaching of Psychology

2006

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Edition/Version

Because this book is being published electronically, we will periodically correct errors that may be present in the text. Updated edition/version numbers will be reported here.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Version</i>
March 22, 2007	1.0

Suggested Reference Format

Following examples in the 5th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for reference materials found online, we suggest that the overall text be referenced in this fashion:

Irons, J. G., Beins, B. C., Burke, C., Buskist, B., Hevern, V., & Williams, J. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Teaching psychology in autobiography: Perspectives from exemplary psychology teachers, vol. 2*. Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Retrieved [insert date] from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology Web site:
<http://www.teachpsych.org/resources/tia2006/>

Individual chapters may be referenced in this fashion:

Weiten, W. (2006). A Fortuitous Life Path. In J. G. Irons, B. C. Beins, C. Burke, B. Buskist, V. Hevern, & J. W. Williams, (Eds.), *Teaching psychology in autobiography: Perspectives from exemplary psychology teachers, vol. 2* (chap. 18). Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Retrieved [insert date] from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology Web site: <http://www.teachpsych.org/resources/tia2006/>

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Preface

A collection of 53 outstanding teachers contributed to STP's first volume of *Teaching Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives from Exemplary Psychology Teachers*. Each contributor to this volume had received national recognition for his or her excellence in teaching and/or leadership in advancing the teaching of psychology at some point over the last four decades. *Teaching Psychology in Autobiography* serves as an insightful and inspirational account of success becoming an outstanding teacher of psychology.

Volume 2 of *Teaching Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives from Exemplary Psychology Teachers* extends the mission of the first volume by including 19 more invited autobiographies. The authors enthusiastically shared their teaching stories by addressing their early development and maturation as teachers, offering insights to their personal philosophies of teaching, and sharing their advice about how others might become effective teachers of psychology.

In keeping with the ideals of the first volume, we invited recipients of all five of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) teaching excellence awards (Robert S. Daniel (Four-Year College or University) Award; Two-Year College Award; Moffet Memorial (High School) Award; Early Career Award; and the McKeachie Graduate Student Award), all recipients of the American Psychological Foundation's Teaching Excellence Award (now called the Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award), past and present editors of *Teaching of Psychology*, and all past-presidents of STP to contribute chapters to this volume.

To provide consistency in both content and style across all chapters and volumes of this series, each contributor responded to the following 12 questions:

- What kind of preparation for teaching did you receive in your doctoral or master's program? If you had a course on teaching, please describe it.
- Did you have a teaching mentor or mentors? If so, please describe any unique characteristics of that relationship.
- If you did not have any formal training in teaching or teaching mentors, please describe how you "taught yourself" to become an effective teacher.
- What factors may have led to your decision to become a college and university level teacher?

- Have you faced any obstacles in your teaching? If so, how have you attempted to overcome these obstacles in your own teaching? Please describe any issues with which you continue to struggle and how you attempt to deal with them.
- Many academics see their work as a zero sum game—for example, time spent in the lab is time that necessarily cannot be spent working on teaching and so on. Have you felt that you have to sacrifice your research, service, or outreach efforts in order to become an effective teacher. Why or why not?
 - What principles rest at the heart of your personal philosophy of teaching?
 - In what interesting and significant ways has your approach to teaching changed over your academic career?
 - What sorts of things do you find most rewarding from your teaching? What are the greatest frustrations and how do you try to overcome them?
 - What methods and processes do you use to evaluate and reflect on upon your teaching? How has your view of the role of assessment of teaching changed over the course of your teaching career?
 - In what efforts do you engage to continue to improve your teaching? How frequently do you engage in these efforts?
 - If someone wants to become a good or even outstanding teacher, what would you advise him or her to do?

As you will see when you read any chapter in this volume, the authors organized their answers to these questions under the following headings:

- My Early Development as a Teacher
- Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher
- The Examined Life of a Teacher
- Advice for New Teachers
- Final Thoughts

We are grateful to all those who have shared their teaching stories so that others might benefit from their experiences and sage advice. We would also like to thank the STP leadership, particularly members of the Publications Board, for their support and encouragement of this book. Without such leadership, STP would not be the organization that it is today.

It has been our privilege to read and edit the stories of such wonderful teachers of psychology and we hope that the readers of this volume will enjoy the autobiographies as much as we have. It is difficult at best to capture the essence of effective teaching but these autobiographies offer a glimpse at the stuff of which good teaching is made. We hope that all of our readers will benefit from the wisdom that our authors have so generously shared with us.

Jessica G. Irons
Bernard C. Beins
Caroline Burke
Bill Buskist
Vinny Hevern
John E. Williams
December 2006

Intention and Commitment

William Buskist
Auburn University

Once upon a time a skinny, quiet little boy who wore glasses lived in upstate New York. His dad, who owned a candy factory, always brought home lots of broken lollipop pieces, making the little boy's house the most popular place in the neighborhood. Despite the frequent sweet-toothed visitors, the little boy did not have a lot to say to them—he was too embarrassed by his stuttering to try to speak. The little boy kept to himself a lot and lived in a dream world in which he imagined himself becoming a pitcher in the major leagues.

He loved baseball and played it every chance he got. He became pretty good, but not great, at it. Eventually, after many years of hard work, he earned a baseball scholarship to college. By then he had conquered most of his stuttering problem, although he rarely participated in class unless he absolutely had to—he was still too self-conscious to risk the chance of stuttering before his classmates. However, he made some new friends, and he got to play a lot of baseball with some very talented teammates. He never made it to the major leagues, though—a shoulder injury cut his college baseball career short and fatally wounded his dream.

Of course that stuttering little kid was me. I share this story with you because it reveals a key ingredient to my life as a teacher: working hard. I worked hard to learn not to stutter and harder still at learning to speak with confidence in public. It was my practicing baseball day in and day out as a kid that led me out of my home town of Jamestown, New York to a far college away in Provo, Utah to play baseball. It was at Brigham Young University (BYU) that I met two people who influenced my life as it had never been influenced before. First, my wife, who inspired me to become a better human being, and second, a remarkable teacher, Hal Miller, who inspired me to become a college professor. Their guidance, combined with my hard work as a student, has afforded me more good fortune in my career than I ever imagined possible. To borrow from the late, great New York Yankee, Lou Gehrig, on the occasion of his famous farewell speech in July, 1939: "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

My career did not exactly get off to a smooth start, though. I completed all the requirements for my PhD in 1980, but I couldn't find a job, so I deferred my dissertation defense to the next year, but I couldn't find a job then either. Over these two years I applied to 53 different positions and in return received 53 letters of rejection. That may not be any sort of

record, but it was enough to make me start doubting myself. Finally, through a series of unusual, but happy, last minute events, I landed a temporary position at Adams State College, a master's level school in located in south central Colorado. From there I moved to Auburn University, a doctoral level university in east Alabama.

Except for a wonderful year that I spent teaching at Appalachian State University in western North Carolina, I have spent my entire career at Auburn where I currently am the Distinguished Professor in the Teaching of Psychology and where I direct the Psychology Department's Teaching Fellows Program. The Psychology Department's unflinching support of my work as a teacher has permitted me the opportunity to win several teaching awards, including the 2000 Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Robert S. Daniel award, and Auburn's first Gerald and Emily Leischuck Endowed Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2005. Although I am eternally grateful, and indeed, humbled, by the recognition my teaching has received, my greatest reward centers on the success of my students—both undergraduate and graduate. I am particularly proud of my graduate students who themselves have worked hard to become outstanding teacher-scholars.

My Early Development as a Teacher

As a graduate student I had no training for college and university teaching, but I did have multiple opportunities to teach. During my first year in graduate school, I served as a teaching assistant. I mostly created and graded exams. I seldom had the chance to do any real teaching, except for some one-on-one tutoring during my office hours. During my second year and beyond I taught upper division courses such as research methods, learning, and sociobiology without faculty supervision. I shudder to think of what a horrible teacher I probably was in those early years. I am sure that my students' learning would have been greatly enhanced had I any clue as to what I was actually doing.

A teaching assistantship at BYU in the late 1970s paid about \$225 per month, which was not quite sufficient support for a young married couple with a small family. After working for a year or so at an odd assortment of part-time jobs, including custodial work in the local mall and unloading and reloading semi-trucks on a loading dock, I landed a position with BYU Extension Services. This job entailed teaching psychology courses to military personnel at Dugway Proving Grounds, a military installation located about two hours from BYU near the Utah-Nevada Border. I learned a whole new appreciation for the word "intimidation" at Dugway—students showed up for class in military fatigues and sometimes carried their weapons. I was extra careful to be respectful to all my students!

My teaching at BYU and Dugway was simply a means to an end. At the time, I liked teaching, but I did not love it. It was a way to make some money to help support my family and so I could do what I really wanted to do in graduate school—learn to become a laboratory researcher. In hindsight, though, I realize that graduate school was a type of intellectual foreplay that set the stage for me to get so excited about teaching. One person in particular had a strong influence over me: Hal Miller, whom I've already mentioned.

Hal portrayed psychology as *the* essential discipline for identifying and solving the world's greatest mysteries. Hal didn't give us any definitive answers to why psychology is such a powerful lens through which to view all aspects of life. Instead, he gave us questions, and those questions challenged us, in the most compelling ways, to seek our own answers. Many of us found his questions so irresistible that we became undergraduate research assistants to work on the answers. His intelligence, engaging style, candor, and sense of humor nurtured my growing fondness of psychology and helped solidify my idea to go to graduate school in psychology.

I had the good fortune to stay at BYU and complete my PhD under Hal's direction. Our relationship centered almost wholly on our research. He never observed my teaching. In fact, I don't recall even ever talking with him about my teaching. What Hal did do, though, was to become my role model for becoming a teacher-scholar. He demanded excellence from himself in his research, teaching, and in his interactions with others. His deep commitment to and passion for psychology, teaching, and his students was nothing short of spectacular, and that's led me to want to be like him—to become a college professor.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

I left graduate school focused on a research-centered career. Hal and I had much success in publishing our work together, and I was certain that I would find my deepest professional fulfillment in the laboratory. But careers are messy things; despite the best laid plans, careers take on trajectories of their own through changes in circumstance and chance occurrences. Mine certainly did.

I had been at Auburn for five or six years when Peter Harzem, who was Department Chair at the time, asked me to help him redesign the way our introductory psychology course was taught. In those days, graduate students taught the course with almost no supervision. To make a long story short, we revamped the course so that faculty taught it, using graduate students as teaching assistants who led small discussions sections of the course once a week.

During the process, I became fascinated by some of the inherent problems involved in teaching large sections (450-plus students) of the course well: what topics to cover and in what depth, how to keep so many students engaged during class, how to encourage thoughtful

discussion during the class, how to train graduate student teaching assistants, and so on. Eventually this curiosity led me to ask a simple personal question: How might I become a more effective teacher?

Naturally, seeking an answer to that question led me to the library. While studying the literature on college and university teaching, I was struck by how much psychologists and educational researchers didn't know at the time about the basic elements of effective teaching. Because I was trained as an experimental psychologist, I started developing research questions, and before I knew it, I had a whole new program of research.

At the time I first asked myself how I might become a more effective teacher, I had a strong program of research focused on developing operant analogs of human cooperation and competition in the laboratory. However, I gradually lost interest in my laboratory research and surrendered to the allure of teaching and research on teaching. Some of my colleagues were surprised, if not disappointed, with my decision to leave the laboratory—and I can understand their dismay. Why give up promising laboratory research for a teaching career, especially at a research institution like Auburn?

That is a tough question, and one with which I struggled mightily before I became wholly committed to the change in my career trajectory. I was torn—should I stay in the lab or should I commit fully to the classroom? I knew that I was neither smart enough nor energetic enough to do both well. I took my dilemma to my good friend and trusted advisor, Peter Harzem. I posed the question to him, and as is his style, he answered with a question: “Which audience is more important to you?” Taken aback by this question, I asked him what he meant. He replied, “Figure out which audience matters more to you—the people who read journals or the people who take your classes—and everything else will take care of itself.”

I thought about the question for a long while and eventually decided that although I might influence a few people over the long run with my laboratory research, I had the chance to influence hundreds of students on more important matters every time I stood before them in class. Rather than influence a few researchers about the nuances of operant competition and cooperation, I had the chance to influence students on what I now consider much more important matters, such as the value of psychology to society, whether to seek a psychologist's help in the face of pressing personal issues, or how to manage better their own psychological resources in order to lead satisfying lives.

The struggle ended late one morning when a quiet, calm feeling came over me as I walked into Haley Center 2370, then a 450+seat classroom. That feeling left me with a clarity that I've rarely experienced when making weighty decisions. To this day, not even a twinge of

regret or doubt about that decision has entered my thoughts. The decision to teach has been the single best career decision I've made outside of deciding to go to graduate school. I am not saying that laboratory research is not important—indeed, it is essential to advancing knowledge our discipline. Rather, for me, my preference became, and will likely remain, teaching.

Although I am happy beyond measure as a teacher, teaching well remains a constant challenge for me. To be sure, I've walked out of the classroom many times with my head hung low. Making errors of fact, getting off track, misunderstanding a student's question, rushing through material simply to get it covered, uttering an off-hand remark that unwittingly hurts a student's feelings, are all things that contribute to less than stellar teaching.

Unfortunately, such mistakes do happen and will continue to happen. There is probably no such thing as a perfect class session let alone a perfect class. Although I do my best to try to teach well, teaching is live, and I do not have ultimate control of what will transpire over the course of a class period. I find such uncertainty exhilarating—not knowing how a class may turn out helps keep me motivated to give each class my best on any given day.

The one problem with which I wrestle most is the same one that all academics struggle with, and that is time. There is just not enough time in a day to do all things we would like to do in our jobs as academics. I attempt to deal with the zero sum nature of time by making careful choices as to where best to allocate my energies. Because my two top priorities are classroom teaching and the training of graduate student teachers, I tend to devote the bulk of my time in these two arenas. I devote the little professional time that is left over to research and writing in the area of teaching. Through trial and error, I have found the best way to keep productive as a researcher and writer is to block out a small parcel of time each day for these activities. Two hours is not a lot of time, but two hours multiplied by, say 300 days, is 600 hours or roughly 25 full days or almost a month each year that can be devoted to carrying out research, analyzing data, and writing it for publication. Viewed this way, two hours a day really adds up to a large chunk of time!

The Examined Life of a Teacher

One of my favorite movies, "The Natural" (Levinson, 1984), is about baseball (of course). It's a wonderful story of a very talented young baseball pitcher named Roy Hobbs, who as a middle-aged man, finally gets his chance to play major league baseball. Early in the movie, when he is still a boy, Roy's father tells him that he has a "great gift," but that it is not enough—to become truly great, he must work hard to develop his natural athletic ability. I believe that the same is true of teaching. As I noted in my Harry Kirke Wolfe (2005) address,

No one ever achieves excellence in teaching by accident. Excellent teachers are made, they are not born. Sure, it may be true that some of us may have natural propensities that lend themselves to good or even excellent teaching, but it is no less true that excellence in teaching requires extraordinary effort and hard work.

Working hard at becoming an effective teacher centers on leading a thoroughly examined life as a teacher, which means becoming fully aware of one's motivations, actions, goals, and foibles. It means reading and thinking about effective teaching and observing the teaching of individuals known for their teaching excellence. It necessarily entails tinkering with the elements of our teaching and taking calculated risks in expanding our repertoire of teaching skills. Finally, it requires constant monitoring and assessment of teaching and being totally open to student and peer feedback regarding how it might be improved.

In my case, I subscribe to several journals on teaching, including *Teaching of Psychology*. Although I do not read every single article in each issue of these journals, I try to read as many as I can that I think will either help me improve my teaching or be useful in helping conduct teaching research. I keep copies of McKeachie and Sviniki's (2006) *Teaching Tips*, Perlman, McCann, and McFadden's *Lessons Learned*, and a few other books on teaching (e.g., Davis & Buskist, 2002; Buskist & Davis, 2005) within an arm's reach in my home office. I attend every teaching conference that I can—and without fail, I find at least one or two ideas at each conference that I can modify to use in the courses I teach. I frequently observe colleagues known to be excellent teachers in and outside my department, and I often “steal” ideas from them and use them in my own teaching. Every semester I try to revise my courses in some way—sometimes remaking them completely and sometimes making only subtle changes. I experiment with new demonstrations, lectures, in-class activities, and PowerPoint slides nearly every semester. I generally assess my teaching formally twice a semester—once at midterm and once at the semester's end. I also frequently do less formal assessments, particularly in-class assessments of student learning and student reactions to demonstrations and other class activities I am experimenting with for the first time.

All this hard work keeps me busy, but I have found that I don't perceive it as genuinely hard work because I am having so much fun teaching. After 25 years in the classroom, I am still very much motivated to teach well. I still look forward to preparing for class, interacting with students in and outside the classroom, and reading student essays and portfolios. I still get just a tad nervous before each class, knowing that I am putting myself on the line and that I might fail. But even failure is not all that bad because it teaches me something about what I may need to do

to become a better teacher. That's the challenge I enjoy most—finding new and more effective ways of teaching.

Advice for New Teachers

Young academics aspiring to become effective teachers need not look far to find “how-to” books and articles chock full of excellent advice on teaching. In the past 20 years, the teaching literature has exploded with such writings. For example, in addition to continued revision of the “bible” of college and university teaching, *Teaching Tips* (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006) and Volumes 1 and 2 of STP's e-book *The Teaching of Psychology in Autobiography: Perspectives from Exemplary Teachers* (Benson et al., 2005; Irons et al., 2007), books by Buskist & Davis (2006), Curzan & Damour (2000), Davis (1993), Davis & Buskist (2002), Dunn & Chew (2006), Forsyth (2003), Goss-Lucas & Bernstein (2005), and Perlman, McCann, & Buskist (2005), and Perlman et al. (1999; 2004) are excellent resources for learning more about becoming an effective teacher. My best advice to new teachers is to get a hold of at least one of these books and read it from cover to cover.

Other than that, I don't have any new advice to add beyond the many good words of wisdom offered in these volumes, but I do wish to underscore one point that is omnipresent in them. Teaching is primarily about opportunity and influence. Effective teachers create opportunities for students to acquire new knowledge and new skills within an academic domain and within the larger framework of life. Effective teachers also create opportunities for themselves to deepen and broaden their knowledge base and skill levels within and across academic fields and to mature as educated individuals.

Final Thoughts

Taking advantage of these opportunities is the chief means by which a good teacher becomes a great teacher and a great teacher becomes a master teacher. As a teacher's skill level increases, so does the likelihood that he or she will have lasting influence on how students think about psychology and how they personally connect to it. It is in this way that teachers alter the future of their students and their discipline—effective teachers inspire many of their students to work incredibly hard and earn good grades in their courses. Some of these students decide to major in psychology and many of these students will go on graduate school in psychology. Charles Brewer (1996), one of psychology's most famous and articulate master teachers, speaks of this process as “bending twigs and affecting eternity.” I think he's right on the money.

Good teachers never stop being students. They intentionally continue learning the facets and nuances of their discipline, and they tinker with unique ways of sharing this knowledge with others. This sort of commitment to the discipline and to teaching is the best way to prepare for

the opportunities that lie ahead of us to exert positive influence over our professional futures and the futures of our students. Indeed, it is the only way.

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Teaching as a Problem in Applied Psychology

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I am currently professor and chair of psychology at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, a position I have held since 1993. I earned my undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Texas (UT) and my PhD in experimental psychology from the University of Minnesota. I spent nine years teaching at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota before moving to Samford. In 1998, I was selected to be a Carnegie Scholar by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. I was awarded the James Buchanan Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching by Samford in 1998. In 1999, I was named “Professor of the Year” for Alabama by the Carnegie Foundation. In 2005, I received the Robert S. Daniels Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I am the first to admit that my academic career has been shaped more by fortuitous circumstance than any grand plan or ambition. I entered UT as an engineering major. I had always liked science, but engineering was awfully dry stuff. My father suggested I try psychology. I took general psychology in a class of 500+ students with a professor named John Belknap. I was entranced by his ability to engage and influence so many students. I decided that I wanted to be a college professor. I wasn’t completely sold on psychology at that point, but I found it interesting enough to switch my major and give it a try.

I grew to love psychology because it blended science and the human element, and I had wonderful mentors in Bob Young and Janet Spence. I had the great good fortune to be accepted at Minnesota for graduate school as a student of Jim Jenkins and as a member of the multi-disciplinary Center for Research in Human Learning (CRHL). There could not have been a more stimulating, supportive place to train. Jim was my advisor until he decided to seek warmer weather at the University of South Florida. I finished my degree under Herb Pick. In both Jim and Herb I had tremendous mentors and role models about what a psychologist, and specifically, a teacher of psychology, should be.

My first teaching experience was in graduate school. Few graduate programs in those days offered any instruction in how to teach. The CRHL offered periodic training meetings on professional topics such as teaching. I had sat through about three meetings on teaching given by

fellow graduate students. I figured that made me pretty well prepared to teach. The first course I ever taught was, as is usually the case, introductory psychology. It was an evening, continuing education course that met once a week for almost 3 hours. I was the second youngest person in the room, and I spent the entire time lecturing. I enjoyed teaching and my evaluations were (surprisingly, in retrospect) positive. My teaching career had begun. My first full-time job was as a sabbatical replacement at Gustavus, which eventually turned into a permanent job.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

I went through a course of development that I believe is typical for most teachers. My two main goals in my first year of teaching were to avoid looking like an idiot in front of my students and to make sure my fly was zipped. During my second year, I tried to decipher the hastily scribbled notes I had written out the previous year. In my third year, however, I began reflecting on my courses and thinking about how they might be improved. I began attending teaching conferences in search of tips. I discovered the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Activities Handbooks for the Teaching of Psychology* and the journal *Teaching of Psychology*. I incorporated many activities into my teaching, but was disappointed to find that many of them really didn't fit the way I teach. They were too cumbersome to carry out, too time consuming for the amount of information learned, or too complex for students to grasp. After attending teaching conferences for a few years, I realized that many of the activities get recycled from year to year, like recipes for potato salad in church cookbooks, and I found less and less of value in attending them. Although I enjoyed teaching greatly, I knew that I was still not the kind of teacher I wanted to be. I began to ask questions that went beyond teaching practice. What are my students learning in my classes? Will they remember and use the information after the class is over? I think every teacher confronts these tough questions at some point. Mediocre teachers turn away from them, and content themselves with defining teaching as merely presenting information. The best teachers, however, accept the challenge of trying to understand what students have learned and search for ways to deepen and shape that learning.

Early in my career, I had teaching experiences that taught me important lessons about how students learn. These were teachable moments for me as a teacher, and I reflect on them often. Here are some key ones and what I learned from them.

Teaching Moment 1

In general psychology, I used to offer review sessions for which I prepared practice exams. The idea was to provide formative assessment for students to identify their areas of weak understanding. The sessions were always lively and well attended. I created the practice exams from old exams, and there would be questions on topics not covered in the current class. Usually

I cut these questions out, but one year several questions ended up on the practice exam by accident. When I realized it, I figured I would just explain the oversight when the students noticed that the questions didn't belong. To my surprise and chagrin, only a few students (all of them top students) noticed these questions. The rest of the students simply guessed at the answers in blissful ignorance that they had never been taught the material. I realized that most students were treating the practice exam as a guessing game, not a diagnostic tool. Often they read the question and then looked up the answer without really trying to solve it. Through confirmation bias they would decide that they could have answered the question correctly. Even when students took the practice exam seriously, they might do miserably on it but still be shocked when they did miserably on the real exam. I learned several lessons from this episode. First, I discovered the importance of metacognition for successful learning (e. g., Hacker, Dunlosky & C. Graesser, 1998). The best students had a good understanding of what they did and did not know. Hence they knew when they encountered questions over topics they had not studied. Not so for weaker students. Second, students often engage in pseudo-study in place of actual study. Students believed that by treating the practice exam as a guessing game, they were actually studying for the exam. There are many examples of pseudo-study, such as studying what you know rather than tackling what you don't know, or skimming eight chapters in one night. Third, it showed me the tenacious denial some students show to feedback that is contrary to their beliefs or self-image (Chew, 2005). I stopped giving review sessions. Even though they were popular, they were having no effect, or even a negative effect, on most students' learning. Now I use formative assessments that force students to confront whether they understand a concept (Chew, 2005).

Teaching Moment 2

In my cognitive psychology class, I use a demonstration for tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon where I ask students trivia questions. If any student gets tip-of-the-tongue, they raise their hand and report what they can about the answer. The demonstration is always fun. One year, I saw a student several days after the demonstration. She told me how much she had enjoyed it. In talking with her, though, I realized that she remembered the demonstration in detail, but had no recollection of the concept being demonstrated. I realized that students may remember a fun and striking demonstration without remembering the point of the demonstration. I have also come to realize that demonstrations and activities can easily become too complex to be effective. Students concentrate so much on doing the activity that they have no cognitive resources left available to reflect on and learn the lesson of the activity. Students can successfully complete an activity and learn nothing from it. I've learned the importance of both carefully

monitoring the cognitive load imposed by an activity and requiring students to reflect on the activity in a way that promotes schema development (Chew, in press).

Teaching Moment 3

When I first started teaching, I strived to come up with clear, precise definitions of concepts. Often though, I would have several ways of defining a concept that I liked. So, in class, I gave all the definitions, explaining a concept in several different ways. One year I got a comment on my evaluations that read “Dr. Chew has trouble explaining concepts the first time, but he gets it right at about the third try.” This comment showed me the importance of explaining concepts in multiple, diverse ways and building some redundancy into presentations, because students learn and understand in different ways and at different rates.

Teaching Moment 4

In my cognitive psychology class, I test using essay questions that I select from a pool of about 10 questions that I give to students to prepare in advance. One year I asked students to use the cognitive principles they had learned to design how a class ought to be taught and assessed. I expected essays applying attention, levels of processing, and transfer appropriate processing to the classroom. Instead, I got stock beliefs such as, essay questions test understanding while multiple-choice questions test memorization and repetition is the key to learning. Despite all they had learned in the class, students had failed to apply the knowledge and reverted back to the preconceptions they had when they first started the course. This episode demonstrated the power of misconceptions that students bring to the classroom and their resistance to correction. I now use formative assessments to anticipate and correct common misconceptions (Chew, 2005). I also write conditions and constraints into my assignments to try to prevent simplistic answers and induce the students to think more critically about issues.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

As my career developed, I applied what I know about cognitive psychology to my teaching. I developed methods of having students process information at deep levels and develop schemas rather than memorizing facts. My training in cognitive psychology gave me an advantage in teaching over non-psychology faculty. When I give teaching workshops, I usually introduce basic concepts of cognitive psychology to the participants. But I also became increasingly aware that most teaching is not based on sound psychological theory or a body of empirical research about how people learn. Most teachers base their pedagogy on intuitive, untested assumptions and beliefs, or by uncritically modeling other teachers. Teachers usually can't offer any direct evidence of student learning. Evidence comes primarily from grades or anecdotes (Chew, 2006).

Teaching is strongly fad driven, and most fads are presented as improvements in teaching without any sound rationale or convincing evidence. My university received a grant to implement problem-based learning (PBL). Leading practitioners of PBL instructed us in its components. I kept asking for a theoretical rationale for why PBL is supposed to lead to better learning, but no one could provide a meaningful answer. We were instructed in a process, and the assumption seemed to be that if we followed the process, students would automatically learn more. Psychologists know more about learning, attention, and motivation than any other field and we know that none of these issues are simple. Our teaching, more than anyone else's, should be based on sound empirical principles. Our training should make us critical and skeptical of educational fads.

After teaching for about 10 years, I had implicitly grasped the notions that the goal of teaching is helping students to develop enduring understanding, that activities differ in their ability to promote understanding, and that understanding is multifaceted. These ideas, along with my concerns about the current state of teaching crystallized into a deeper understanding of the teaching process when I became involved with the Carnegie Foundation through the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) program. Lee Shulman and others at Carnegie introduced me to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) framework that elevates innovative acts of teaching to a form of scholarship (Shulman, 2004). In effect, SoTL conceives of teaching scholarship as acts of creativity, insight, discovery, and integration that are documented, critically assessed, and shared. Teaching becomes a research field. Intuition and trial-and-error are replaced by systematic studies of teaching effectiveness guided by principles of how people learn. For psychologists, this idea means that teaching becomes a subject of applied psychology like human factors or clinical therapy.

This view resolves much of the paradoxical thinking psychologists have held about the relationship between the teaching of psychology and research in psychology (Chew, 2006). Somehow, when we do research in learning, we view it as a complex behavior influenced by many factors, but when we teach, we tend to think of learning as a simple matter of presenting information that the students will absorb. As researchers and clinicians, we know that people possess prejudices and misconceptions that are highly resistant to change. We also know there are many ways to influence peoples' thinking and behavior. We often treat students as empty vessels who will passively take in whatever information we give them. We feel there is nothing we can do to influence student motivation or learning. Our sole responsibility as teachers is to present the information clearly and accurately. Helping students develop an enduring understanding is not our responsibility or even within our power. This simplistic view of

teaching allows us to believe that teaching is easy; anyone can be a good teacher as long as he or she can present accurate information. Once we view teaching as an applied problem in influencing understanding, all these simplistic misconceptions no longer hold. Teaching becomes as complex a field as any other in psychology. We move beyond teaching tips to theories and research that guide best practices in teaching.

When we view teaching as an applied research problem and the classroom as a natural laboratory, we appreciate the complex interaction of factors that teachers must monitor, manage, and manipulate for successful student learning. Teaching is a dynamic interaction among students' preconceptions and learning strategies, the nature and format of the material to be learned, the strengths and pedagogical practices of the teacher and the learning goals. In the classroom, I have conducted research in designing and implementing examples that lead to deep learning, the tenacity of student misconceptions and how to address them, and the importance of cognitive load in designing effective instruction. Without the SoTL framework, I probably would not have considered any of these issues relevant to teaching or worthy of investigation.

Advice for New Teachers

New teachers are mostly concerned with teaching technique, and rightly so. Creating new courses is a daunting task. Assuming the role of teacher is a huge responsibility. There are plenty of excellent resources on technique for the beginning teacher. I concentrate here on advice that teachers might use throughout their careers.

Effective student learning is the sole measure of good teaching. Teaching is not about presentation, it is about learning. It is not about impressing students with one's brilliance, preparation, or use of technology; it is about developing student understanding. As a corollary, good teachers always use assessment to make learning visible. Teachers should always ask themselves, "What evidence do I have that my students are learning?"

Always meet the students where they are. What are their goals and expectations for taking the class? What knowledge and preconceptions do they bring to the class? Good teachers have a grasp of these issues and tailor pedagogy to take students from where they are to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. I am not advocating lowering one's standards, but rather helping the class reach those standards by understanding the students. Do some students not try to learn? Yes, but I am arguing that before we conclude that students are not trying to learn, we need to make a comprehensive effort to enable them to learn.

One's development as a teacher is never finished. Like research, it is a lifetime process. We never feel that any issue is completely understood in research nor do we feel we ever know all the research tools that we need. The same is true for teaching.

Think of teaching as “disciplined improvisation” (Sawyer, 2003). Teaching is in many ways performance, but it is a performance tailored to an audience to get them from one level of understanding to another. The methods and content change depending on the audience. Good teachers constantly monitor the class’s level of understanding and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Don’t be afraid of fruitful failure. Sometimes we try promising innovations and they do not work out, leading to negative teaching experiences. We tend to see negative teaching experiences as a personal failure on our part. In traditional research, a researcher can pursue a reasonable hypothesis; and even if the hypothesis is not supported, the work is seen as useful and beneficial. We need to adopt the same attitude in teaching.

Final Thoughts

Too many teachers think the key to good teaching is getting good students, because good students get good grades and appreciate our efforts. It is much easier to complain that the admissions office does not recruit students who match our teaching styles than to modify our teaching to serve the students we have. For me, good learning experiences make good students. It is up to us to provide those experiences for our students.

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The Fears and Joys of Teaching High School Psychology

Amy C. Fineburg

On the filing cabinet in my classroom, I have a picture of my first teaching job. I am three years old playing school with my 6-month-old sister. She is sitting in a desk my grandfather had from the school where he had taught. She is gripping a fat pencil and waving a piece of paper in the air. I am holding a notebook, pointing at some important concept I'm sure she needs to learn before moving on to her next developmental milestone.

I have been teaching professionally since 1995. I earned my bachelor's degree in psychology and English (with teaching certifications in each subject) from Samford University in 1994. In 2000, I completed my master's degree in educational administration, also from Samford University. I am now "all but dissertation" toward a PhD in educational psychology from the University of Alabama. In addition to formal schooling, I also attended a month-long NSF-funded summer institute for psychology teachers at Northern Kentucky University. Further, I have been fortunate to share my knowledge and experience at several psychology and social studies conferences.

I am the only psychology teacher in the Social Studies Department at Spain Park High School in Hoover, Alabama. In 2003, I started a psychology program at Spain Park, Hoover's new high school. The psychology program has grown to three AP Psychology classes and two regular psychology classes catering to juniors and seniors. I have served as member-at-large and chair of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS), the high school teacher affiliate program of the American Psychological Association (APA). Through my work with TOPSS, I have served on the working group that revised the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*. I am a Table Leader at the AP Psychology Reading, and I wrote the College Board's *Teacher's Guide for AP Psychology* (Fineburg, 2003d). I am the author of the *Instructor's Resource Binder* (Fineburg, 2003a) and *Teacher's Edition* of Worth Publisher's *Thinking About Psychology* (Fineburg, 2003c), a high school psychology textbook written entirely by high school psychology teachers. I wrote a 7-day unit plan for teaching positive psychology (Fineburg, 2003b). I have also authored book chapters, articles, and essays about teaching high school and positive psychology. I have been named the 2005 Secondary Teacher of the Year for Hoover City Schools and the 2006 Moffett Memorial Teaching Excellence Award winner for the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP). Throughout my career, my

husband Ben and my son Micah have been supportive and encouraging of my growth as a professional teacher.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I entered college majoring in psychology. I loved psychology, but was not quite ready for graduate school. Upon learning about the certification program to teach psychology in high schools, I changed my major to secondary education and added English to be more marketable. I enjoyed my English courses, but my heart became more endeared to psychology, and my desire became more fervent to teach psychology in high school. I hoped that if I could not find a school with a psychology program, I could start one, building toward teaching only psychology.

Certification requirements to teach in high schools include a certain number of credit hours of content-specific courses in addition to courses in pedagogy, school law, educational psychology, special education, and technology. The pedagogical courses focused on equal parts theory, anecdote, and application. Much of the theory presented in the courses was exactly the same as the theories I learned in psychology. I prepared lesson plans for my certification area subjects. These lesson plans followed a specific format: lecture outlines, classwork, homework, formative and summative assessments, and remediation activities. Working on these plans required thinking through the information and how to present it, which was valuable, even if the volume of information I thought could be included in a day's lesson was completely unreasonable. My early lesson planning was very ambitious, cramming way more information into a day's lesson than I could teach. I would then be frustrated because I couldn't cover everything I thought I should in a particular day. I've learned to over-plan, but to be flexible about the directions my students take each class. I am more a director of the learning than a dictator.

All teacher education candidates in Alabama must complete 14 weeks of student teaching in their certification areas. I did my student teaching at a high-performing suburban high school working with the AP Psychology and the advanced-level English teacher. I was supposed to teach my first 7 weeks in psychology and the remaining time in English. On my first day, the psychology teacher informed me that the English teacher's son had committed suicide the previous spring, and he had been in his mother's class. This English teacher was renowned for her teaching, and she was coming back to work only because she would have a student teacher. I took over her junior-level American literature course and taught two AP Psychology classes and one regular psychology course. I went from carefree college student to full-time teacher in one day. I had to introduce myself to a class of overachieving students who had expected a fully

qualified, experienced teacher. Baptism by fire would not have been as tough as my first few weeks of student teaching.

My psychology cooperating teacher, Barbara Gajewski, was the best mentor I could have asked for in this stressful situation. She was an award-winning psychology teacher who advised me to join TOPSS and go to an NSF workshop, both of which I did within the next 3 years. Barbara helped me comfort and encourage my English cooperating teacher as she grieved the loss of her son and tried to move forward. Perhaps it was fortunate that I was a psychology major. I may have been more sensitive to her mood swings, frustrations, and attempts at strength. Despite all of the stress and struggle that semester, my student teaching prepared me for “real” teaching more than any other experience I could have had.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

Teaching is a non-stop profession. People who work in traditional lines of work get to leave their work at the office. Teachers never stop thinking about and working on school. Papers always need to be graded. Lessons always need to be planned. I find the volume of work to be the most overwhelming obstacle in teaching. In my early years, I did not manage my workload very well. I gave so many assignments that I could not keep up with the grading. Students can smell busy work a mile away, so I have tried to avoid giving them work that did not serve my objectives. I used to bring papers home to grade, but would end up spending time with my family instead. I decided to avoid the guilt and just not bring work home. Now I spend time each day after school grading papers so they do not pile up.

The pace of my lesson planning has not changed. I still find myself involuntarily waking up at 4:00 am planning the next day’s lesson. Nothing is worse than a classroom full of aimless teenagers. Their keen sense of smell extends to knowing when teachers are just filling time. I learned early on to over plan for each day. I plan for an entire unit, sketching out what needs to be taught in a window of time. That way, if a lesson goes more quickly than I had anticipated, I know what I need to teach next with activities ready to go. Rarely do my classes give students “free time.”

My work as a teacher does not afford me time for extracurricular activity. When I get attached to a project, I work on it during each undistracted waking moment. Unfortunately, the structure of high school does not give me many undistracted moments. I teach five 50-minute class periods each day, with two 50-minute class periods to plan and take care of other school duties. I have 20 to 30 minutes each day to get anything done that is not related to Spain Park High School. My teaching responsibilities and school-related duties must come first. Hoover City Schools is paying me to educate the city’s young people, and I am committed to doing my

best for my students. I would love to spend more time mentoring student research, promoting professionalism for psychology teachers, and engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. I do carve out time for these things. I believe that all my efforts outside the classroom make me a better teacher, and I prioritize these other activities based on the contributions they can make to my students and my profession.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

I believe all students can learn. On some days, I want to see a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs over time. On other days, I just want my students to know how to spell “psychology.” Some students come with the knowledge and skills to enable them to do well. Other students barely realize what it takes to succeed. Because both types of students—and all types in between—participate in the same lessons, the challenge to teach all of them taps my resources. I keep us all on our toes by varying how I teach. I reveal why we are learning a particular concept in a particular way. Students respond to sincerity and appreciate being partners in their learning experiences.

I believe failure is good for the learner’s soul. School, though, has taught many students that failure is unacceptable and irreversible. We spend little, if any, time working through misunderstandings students have about the information we teach. Students look at their failures as obstacles rather than challenges. To combat this mindset, I give make-up tests. Students can take the make-up as many times as they’d like to earn the grade they want. The higher grade always prevails. By offering make-up tests, students can take control of their grades. They can learn the material via repetition. They must study in ways that will enhance recall rather than recognition. Sadly, few of my low-performing students ever take advantage of these make-up tests. They claim the make-up tests are too hard because they are short answer rather than multiple choice. Only my high-achieving students return to earn the highest grade possible. They are not thwarted by failure. This phenomenon spurred my research into the role of explanatory style in teaching and learning. If we can discover the mechanisms that differentiate those who give up from those who persevere, we can help students understand the value of periodic failure in a successful life.

In the beginning of my career, I thought I had to tell the students everything that was going to be on the test. However, being the sage on the stage became too exhausting. Through the years, I have changed my teaching approach to alleviate the pressure to cover everything and to instill good habits in my students. I focus on concepts that have proven to be difficult, less obvious, and easy or fun to demonstrate. I give reading comprehension quizzes on textbook chapters before we begin each unit so the students will be held accountable and discuss more

deeply during class. Instead of just viewing psychology as a set of knowledge to be learned, I try to use psychology to make my teaching better.

People outside of teaching think that summers off and an 8 to 3 work schedule are teaching's greatest rewards, yet they are actually teaching's greatest myths. I spend almost every summer day attending workshops, planning lessons, and taking graduate courses. I arrive at school at 7:30 in the morning and leave at 5:00 in the afternoon each day. I do not get to go to the bathroom when I want to or have a lunch break that lasts longer than 25 minutes. I must call parents every 4.5 weeks if their child is doing poorly, and I have to accommodate students with special needs. Yet all of this effort is worth it when students tell me they want to major in psychology now that they have taken my class. I revel in the moments my students tell me that psychology is their hardest course, but it is also the one they look forward to most each day. I rejoice when my students tell me they talked to their parents about the effects of split-brain surgery when it was shown on *Grey's Anatomy*. I can take a bad parent phone call and frustrating administrative paperwork when learning is happening in my classroom. I see in those moments that all my hard work and dedication to my profession are paying off as students' lives are being transformed.

As a young teacher, I relied on personal reflections to evaluate my practice. But as I taught my students about confirmation and hindsight bias, I realized I needed to engage in more systematic examination of my practice. I learned ways to analyze the mounds of data that I collected each day. Do students who missed the review day do worse on the test? Do students who take make-up tests do better on the final exam? Do quiz scores correlate with test scores? Because I teach psychology, I am equipped to analyze these sorts of data in meaningful ways. I believe all teachers should be so equipped. Teacher education programs focus mainly on practices over evaluation. Perhaps educators are overwhelmed by the number of variables in a given classroom environment, which makes empirical study of teaching challenging at best. Perhaps we are stymied by other duties and responsibilities and cannot focus on formal evaluation of our teaching. Teachers should be committed to evaluation of what goes on in the classroom. If we are not, we will continue in an endless cycle of fads and other practices that may not work. Fortunately, calls for accountability have heightened our attention on evaluation, but the skills to do proper assessment need to be an integral part of teacher training and professional development.

I constantly think about how I can improve my teaching. I tell my students that everything they do is being studied by psychologists somewhere in the world. I, too, see how psychology plays a role in life, and I share those anecdotes with my students. I ponder constantly

how I can make my lessons better. One day, I hope my students will tell me that there was not one day that they were bored, uninterested, or confused about what I taught them. A girl can dream.

I am always on the look out for opportunities to mold my identity as a professional psychology teacher. I am the only psychology teacher in my building, so I do not get to bounce ideas off flesh-and-blood colleagues. I have to seek out others who share my passion for psychology. Fortunately, I have found them as a member of TOPSS, STP, and electronic discussion lists. I count the days until the AP Psychology Reading each year, relishing-the camaraderie and intellectual stimulation I get that week in June. I also attend and present at conferences both at home and across the country. I love finding high school psychology teachers who are eager to make their courses significant. Through networking, I become a better teacher. I “steal” activities from others, giving my students an experience they wouldn’t have had if I had stayed home. I learn about others’ philosophies and reflect on whether I should take on a new perspective. For high school psychology teachers, I could not recommend more highly the importance of establishing contacts with others who teach psychology, whether they are around the corner or across the country.

Advice for New Teachers

Outstanding teaching is a skill that can be learned. I reject the notion that “those who can’t, teach” or that “teaching is something one is born to do.” I have known outgoing, gregarious people succeed mightily at teaching—and fail miserably. So, what might it take to be a successful teacher?

- Become a student of teaching. Learn all you can about different theories and practices, and then try them out. Evaluate systematically whether they work.
- Be flexible each and every moment of the day. Students who were on fire for learning one day may be not be so the next. Having multiple plans for teaching each day’s lesson helps give students the learning environment they need.
- Be the authority, but not the overlord. Students appreciate structure in their classes, but they resist restrictions. Be a partner with them in their learning—just be the senior partner.
- Admit when you are wrong. When I mix up retroactive and proactive interference, I am not afraid to admit it the next day—or even when students point out my mistake at that moment.
- Overprepare for each day. You never want to run out of things for your students to learn, so plan for more than you could possibly teach in a day.

- Choose your battles wisely. Federal law may mandate accommodation of your rules. Federal regulations may require you to accept late work or extend time on tests for some students. Although you may feel your rules are important for students, their rights trump your rules. If you fight the battle to keep your rules, you will lose.
- Difficult situations may force you to rethink your policies. These situations are not failures of your policy, but testaments to your fairness, compassion, and respect for individual differences.
- Always enjoy your teaching moments. If there comes a day when you dread facing the students, stop and reconsider what you're doing. Do you need to work on different classroom management techniques? Are your lessons boring even to you? The moments interacting with students should be the pinnacle of each teaching day. Figure out how to make those moments the best they can be.

Final Thoughts

I love being a high school teacher. Because I have a certification in administration through my master's degree, people ask me when I plan on becoming a principal. I have interviewed for administrative positions a few times, and some day I may eventually leave the classroom. But if that right job never comes, I will not be disappointed. Every class period of every day offers new challenges. I have to convince 16- and 17-year-olds that what I have to say is both important and interesting when they have already decided that school is neither. My greatest professional joy occurs when my students tell me they look forward to my class all day long. My greatest pain happens when their eyes glaze over during a lesson. I work daily to make the former happen more often than the latter. The intellectual challenge my job provides me keeps my back to the whiteboard facing each class with a sense of joy, excitement, and satisfaction.

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The Road Not Taken

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I am currently a professor of psychology at Prince George's Community College (PGCC) in Largo, MD. PGCC is a very large community college (40,000 students). I also teach part-time at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC). In 2005 I received a Teaching Recognition Award from UMUC. In 2006, I was honored to receive the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's (STP) Teaching Excellence Award for teachers at two year/community colleges.

I earned my BA in English with minors in education and political science at the College of Notre Dame (NDC) in Baltimore. I began college at Boston College with the intention of being a political reporter. After one semester, I decided college was not for me. I was going to drop out of college and work on Capitol Hill. My father had other plans and so I ended up at NDC. It was the first twist in a series of many detours I took to get where I am today.

While at NDC, I majored in English, still planning to be a writer. At the urging of my father, I student-taught and I discovered that I actually enjoyed teaching. After graduation, I taught at a small, private high school. I enjoyed those years of teaching but the desire to be a writer was still strong so I enrolled in the Creative Writing program at the University of Florida.

Before I could begin my thesis, however, life intervened. My father was transferred, so I moved back to Maryland and took custody of my youngest brother so he could finish high school. I found a job teaching English at a large public high school. It was there I encountered a student who had been thrown out of her home. I was at a loss as how to deal with such a situation. In my experience, parents did not throw their children out. I decided then I needed some training in counseling and that began my journey into the world of psychology.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I earned a Master's in counseling at Louisiana State University. After completing my degree, I was offered a job as a counselor and campus minister at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. I realized that what I really enjoyed most about my work were the workshops I conducted, not the counseling. I also discovered that I enjoyed working with college students. I knew that I would need a doctorate to teach at the college level, so I went back to school.

I completed my PhD in human development with a minor in sport psychology at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP). After graduating, I taught at Presbyterian College

in South Carolina. Family issues brought me back to Maryland once again where I served as an adjunct faculty member at several local colleges. During one term I taught introduction to psychology at four schools using four different textbooks! Finally, a full-time position at PGCC became available, and I was fortunate enough to obtain it. Once again, a twist brought me to where I was supposed to be.

I have been at PGCC full-time since 1999. I teach five courses per term. I usually teach Introduction to Psychology (regular and honors), Abnormal, Adolescent, and Educational Psychology. Occasionally I teach Human Development and Child Psychology as well as Sport Psychology. Much of my teaching lately has been online. Our online program has grown exponentially, and a student can earn their entire degree online. Learning to teach online has energized my teaching.

I have been active in STP as well as in Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology) where I am currently the Secretary-Treasurer. I have served as national President of the Council of Teachers of Undergraduate Psychology. I have presented at numerous conferences, and I have authored the *Grade Aid Study Guide for the 5th edition of Psychology: Core Concepts* (Zimbardo, Weber, & Johnson, 2006). These professional activities keep me connected to the larger professional community.

My preparation for teaching is atypical for many psychology professors. I earned my teaching certificate as an undergraduate and later qualified for an advanced certificate. I undertook formal coursework on teaching. Student teaching in the inner city of Baltimore was probably the best preparation for teaching I could have had. I learned to teach without resources and to be creative. I learned that students' lives outside of school have a great impact on their learning.

As a graduate assistant at UMCP, I did not have very much formal training in college teaching. We met monthly as a group, but those meetings were more like a support group than a formal introduction to the professoriate. Without my secondary experience, I would have had the same difficulties in teaching that many of my fellow TAs had.

Although I did not have any formal teaching mentors, I learned a great deal from my department chairs in my early teaching experience. I found unofficial mentors and colleagues who were interested in teaching excellence when I became a Reader for the Advancement Placement Psychology Exam. During my first reading, I met people such as Charles Brewer, Randy Ernst, Martha Ellis, Sam Cameron, Jim Freeman, and Randy Smith who were not afraid to talk about teaching and share their secrets about what works well and what doesn't work so

well. These interchanges were also my introduction into the community of teachers that is STP, a community that continues to mentor me today.

My formal training in teacher education and my early high school teaching, have served me well. Although there are some differences in teaching college students, the basics of good teaching that I learned while preparing me for high school teaching are the same. I learned about planning and assessment and teaching with different types of students.

I moved to teaching college for several reasons. First, I had more freedom in the classroom to develop teaching techniques. Although some secondary schools allow teachers such freedom, often there are more constraints. Second, I liked the flexibility of time offered in college teaching. Third, I had moved into the field of psychology and there were few opportunities to teach psychology at the secondary level at that time.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

All teachers face obstacles and I am no exception. I find dealing with large classes in which many students are unprepared for college level work to be challenging. It is a constant effort to find time to work with students individually so that they can succeed. I also find it a challenge to work with unmotivated students. It is frustrating when students will not do their work and do not respond to queries about ways I could help. I continue to try to find new ways to reach these students by asking previous classes for advice on ways to best motivate students. There are also financial obstacles so I cannot purchase all of the materials I want or take advantage of more professional development opportunities.

I have never viewed teaching as a zero sum game. I feel fortunate in that I have not had pressure to publish (one of the joys of teaching at the community college). However, we are expected to develop professionally and to participate in committee work as well as to be involved in the community in some way. I feel obligated to stay connected professionally with my peers around the country, partially to benefit my students and partially so I can give something back to the profession.

I sometimes feel pulled in multiple directions with all of these obligations, but I think that meeting each one makes me a better teacher. Understanding how the college functions enables me to give better advice to my students. Professional connections let me give students contacts at a transfer school. Community service helps me understand the contexts in which my students live. I see all of these activities as pieces of a large and complicated puzzle. Individually, these pieces reveal little about the larger picture of teaching and learning, but put together, that picture becomes much clearer.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

I believe that teaching is the most important component of the professor's role. Teaching involves imparting knowledge about the discipline as well as helping students learn to think critically about that knowledge. It includes showing students how psychology affects their lives and their world. Good teaching excites students and arouses their curiosity. Good teaching helps students see the interplay among all disciplines and how this interaction plays a role in their everyday lives. Good teaching involves more than standing in front of a classroom or checking an online classroom once a week. Good teaching involves students in their own learning, a process that requires a great deal of the teacher's time and resourcefulness.

I strongly believe, as research shows, that we learn best and retain the most when we are actively involved in the learning process (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Bonwell & Eison, 1991). As a constructivist following the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, I require students to become involved in the material and to think critically about the concepts that they are learning. I make students stretch their comfort zones and wrestle with concepts such as prejudice, cognitive dissonance, and obedience. Students often simply want to memorize definitions. I challenge them to apply psychology to their worlds. Such application can cause them discomfort, but I think much learning occurs as students struggle to understand why concepts such as these are important.

It is important that students understand how the discipline of psychology applies to their lives. Psychology has much practical information to offer students that can help them understand the world. I also think that it is important for students to learn how to learn. Learning to learn is a skill that transfers to other settings and sets the stage for lifelong learning.

I believe that teachers need to help students advance through Bloom's levels of thinking (Woolfolk, 2007). As a teacher, I need to help students acquire the basic knowledge they need for thinking at progressively higher levels. I want them to comprehend the material, analyze it, and apply it in new domains. I want them to synthesize what they have learned, and to be able to evaluate sources of information. I want students to learn to think and express themselves as psychologists.

I also believe that it is important that I maintain high expectations for all of my students and that I challenge them to meet those expectations. This belief can cause consternation among students who are not used to being so challenged. I have found that helping those students persist yields great rewards. Students demonstrate critical thinking and bring in newspaper articles that relate to psychology. They come back from 4-year colleges and share their academic successes.

I believe that it is important for teachers to stay active in their professional organizations because such involvement energizes them as well as establishes connections with other

professionals. Such involvement exposes me to new ideas, trends, and research that are not easily found elsewhere. My involvement allows me to give back to the profession, and on occasion, to help shape the direction the discipline is taking. I am able to share teaching techniques and mentor new faculty. My involvement in professional organizations provides a model for students and gives me credibility when I encourage them to join such organizations and spend their own money on membership dues. Besides, this interaction is great fun!

There are three important ways in which my teaching has changed over the years. First, I have become much less didactic. I give only mini-lectures now rather than lecturing straight for 50 minutes. Second, I have incorporated much more active learning activities into my assignments. Third, I attempt to cover much less material and I cover that material in more depth. I am more comfortable in the classroom and feel less pressure to know all of the answers. I am no longer the “sage on the stage,” but I have become the “guide on the side.”

There are many things that I find rewarding about teaching; it is hard to narrow them down to just a few. One of the greatest joys of teaching is watching a student who did not believe he or she could succeed academically graduate and go on to a four-year college. One of the best things about teaching is watching a student grasp a difficult concept such as “negative reinforcement.” Another reward is receiving letters or e-mail from former students in which they let me know that they have used something they learned in my classes. I recently received an e-mail from a student I taught during my second year as a high school teacher. I still marvel that she found me! She was completing a program to become a science teacher and said she modeled her teaching after mine. I still view that e-mail as one of the most significant compliments I have ever received.

However, there are frustrations in teaching as well. I continue to struggle with how to reach students who make little effort to learn. Students who could perform better and choose to waste their academic talents are another source of frustration. Although I earned good grades as a student, I had to work hard. I get very frustrated when I see students who have enormous innate ability refuse to cultivate it. I constantly try new ways to motivate these students and I consciously encourage small successes.

I think it is incumbent upon teachers to evaluate their teaching on a continual basis. I use student evaluations that include several questions I construct as a starting place for reflecting on the strong and weak aspects of my teaching. I do quick assessments such as minute papers or activity feedback throughout the course for ongoing feedback.

At PGCC our teaching is observed by both our Department Chair and Dean as part of the College’s evaluation process. I try to view these observations as collegial and as opportunities to

learn how to better my teaching. It can be difficult not to get defensive during these observations, but it does help to have another set of eyes look at how I structure and run my classes.

I have seen many changes over the years in how assessment is used. I think that many of the changes are good and move us in the right direction. We now routinely begin with our goals and objectives and then assess our success in achieving them. I don't remember really thinking about what I wanted students to do and learn in much detail in my first years of teaching.

Another change in assessment has been the increase in ways we assess student learning. I now use portfolios, case studies, and other creative ways to evaluate student learning. In my early years of teaching, my assessment techniques for student learning were primarily multiple-choice and essay tests.

I continue to work to improve my teaching. I am a faithful reader of *Teaching of Psychology*. I glean new and interesting techniques from its pages. I also read *Psychology Teacher Network* as well as books on teaching. I also find the free STP e-books to be a valuable resource. I am a member of several teaching-related electronic discussion lists. I attend at least one professional conference each year, and I eagerly await the sessions on teaching. I have found such sessions particularly useful at the Eastern Psychological Association annual meeting, but most regional conferences feature similar teaching-related programs. I think that it is critical to stay connected to the teaching community and to stay current in the field of college and university teaching. Teaching conferences can also be energizing as I meet with other teachers and we share our experiences.

Advice for New Teachers

What do I have to say to someone who wants to teach and wants to become a good teacher? First, I recommend examining the reasons for becoming a teacher. Teaching is a calling, not just a job that pays the bills and occupies the hours of 9 to 5. Second, I recommend shadowing someone for several weeks to see what life as a teacher is really like. Third, I recommend being realistic about the time needed to be a good teacher. Although there are those talented individuals who become great teachers right away, most of us do not. For most teachers, it is a long and twisting journey with no fixed end point. Fourth, I recommend reading everything available about teaching. Bill McKeachie's *Teaching Tips* (2006) is a great resource. I reach for it on a regular basis and find it immensely helpful. Finally I would say, do it! Teaching is a great life. It is not without its struggles but nothing worth doing is without some struggle.

Final Thoughts

I also have a few final lessons I have learned on my journey as a teacher that I want to share:

- First choices are not always last choices.
- Stay open to new possibilities.
- There is always someone better than we are but that knowledge does not have to be devastating.
- We can change our minds and it won't be the end of the world.
- Family is more important than any job!
- We end up where we were meant to be.
- Success can be defined in lots of ways.

There are many routes we can take to get us where we want to be and where we are meant to be. We should be open to those roads that take us in new directions. We have to keep our eyes on what is really important in life. We have to keep trying to reach those reluctant students. We have to continue to be open to unexpected opportunities and we need to continue to develop professionally.

I want to conclude with this thought that is attributed to Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's great teacher:

Keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again and you will grow stronger until you have accomplished a purpose—not the one you began with perhaps, but one you'll be glad to remember.

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Teaching as an Unplanned Career Path

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...in teaching, you must simply work your pupil into such a state of interest of what you are going to teach him that every other object of attention is banished from his mind; then reveal it to him so impressively that he will remember the occasion to his dying day; and finally, fill him with devouring curiosity to know what the next steps in connection with the subject are.

William James (1914)

Being a professor was never something that occurred to me as a possible career. Post-secondary education was not an overly familiar concept in my family when I was growing up in Anderson, SC. My father earned a bachelor's degree after a decade of night school, my mother never finished high school, and no one in either of their families had ever gone to college as far as I know. However, most of the students in my high school classes were college bound, so I planned to go to college, too.

My career in psychology began as an intimidated undergraduate at Furman University. Furman offered me a music scholarship to play the cello. Even though I began college majoring in music, there was a fascination with animal behavior that was always close to the surface. Before I accepted the offer from Furman, I made certain I would be able to switch majors without losing my scholarship. When I examined the course catalog that first year, I wanted to enroll in every course and have a quadruple major. I still remember my heart racing when I first laid eyes on the animal behavior course in the Department of Psychology. I did not understand why this course was in psychology and not biology, but I signed up for Introductory Psychology as soon as possible. I had never paid much attention to psychology because it had a reputation at my high school of being an "easy A." At Furman, psychology had the reputation of being one of the two most difficult majors, a distinction shared with chemistry. The challenge of being a psychology major was alluring to me, and after taking a few classes with fabulous professors, I had no choice but to declare it my major. I was enthralled. It was even worth suffering my father's ridicule for majoring in something which, from his point of view, was ridiculous.

By the time I broke the news to my parents that I wanted to pursue a graduate degree in animal behavior, they had grown accustomed to the fact that I had no interest in being practical about my career. My father thought I should be a music teacher, but my mother encouraged me

to dream. She did not have specific ideas about what I should major in, but she hoped that somehow I would win the Nobel Peace Prize. Bucknell University had an interdisciplinary (psychology and biology) terminal master's program in animal behavior, and the department offered me an assistantship to study there. I explained to my father that the assistantship meant that even though I would be getting what was, in his eyes, a useless degree, at least I would not go into debt. When I decided to attend a doctoral program, I found myself back in the south at the University of Georgia (UGA). My teaching career started at UGA. While there, I received several teaching awards, including the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's McKeachie Early Career Award for teaching. Following graduate school, I worked in a teaching postdoctoral position at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI. I then completed a research postdoctoral position at Pennsylvania State University. While at Penn State, I conducted research in developmental psychology with Dr. Leann Birch, focusing on the development of eating behavior in children. At UGA, my research focused on the development of eating behavior in tufted capuchin monkeys, *Cebus apella*. During my postdoctoral experience at Penn State, I investigated the development of eating behavior in children. Currently, I primarily study eating behavior in children, but I also collaborate occasionally with researchers who work with nonhuman primates.

A faculty position at Appalachian State University had been my dream job during my postdoctoral years, so I was thrilled when I noticed their advertisement for a developmental psychologist. Originally I sought out Appalachian because of its location and nice balance of teaching and research. It became even more appealing during my interview, when I discovered the remarkable collegiality in the department.

My Early Development as a Teacher

My pedagogical experiences as a graduate student played a significant role in my development as a teacher. At that time, the UGA Psychology Department permitted most of the graduate students without a master's degree to teach the Research Methods laboratory. Students who had received their masters' taught the lecture part of the course. Usually the master's level students lectured 4 hours a week and the non-master's students covered the 1 hour lab. Because I started the PhD program with a master's degree from another institution, I did not have the benefit of being familiar with the course. I was daunted by the task, but also excited about teaching and I worked hard to do well.

At this point in my career as a graduate student, I did not have much support for teaching, except from the other graduate students. They were my most important mentors. I am not sure if the collegiality among the graduate students in my program was unusual, but I am certain I took

it for granted at the time. Experienced graduate teaching assistants in my program gave me an incredible amount of support and guidance the first time I taught the Research Methods and Statistics courses. Most importantly, they shared their course structure and notes with me. Although I ended up adjusting the lecture notes to fit my own classroom goals, it was initially beneficial to have them. Being organizationally challenged, it was useful for me to have everything laid out to use as a road map for the semester.

After teaching for a year or two, I received a departmental graduate teaching award. Receiving this award made me eligible to participate in a university-level Teaching Assistant (TA) Mentor Program, offered by what is now called the Center for Teaching and Learning. Participating in this program enabled me to receive high-quality teacher training. I still use this program as a model for the graduate student teaching preparation program I currently supervise in my department.

The TA Mentor Program at UGA is an interdisciplinary program designed to train departmental award-winning graduate teaching assistants to mentor other students in the department. Program administrators hoped that by providing teacher training for a few students they would then have the skills to transfer what they learned to other graduate students in their own departments. The university provided a snack and paid 12-15 graduate students to meet every 2 weeks for 2 hours. I am not sure whether the snacks or the payment was more enticing, but the snack was important for helping us make it through the 2-hour class. Although the payment was a strong motivator for participating in the program initially, in the end I felt as if I needed to pay rather than be paid because the program was so beneficial to me.

During the classes, we learned about teaching techniques, teaching philosophies, and the scholarship of teaching. In addition, the program facilitators provided much-needed information about professional development, such as *curriculum vitae* advice, interviewing skills, and job negotiation skills. Overall, this program provided numerous benefits to me. First, I have always enjoyed cross-disciplinary interaction, so I looked forward to the meetings with the other graduate students from across the university. Second, the material I learned at the meetings was invaluable and the climate of the meetings was always inspirational. The facilitators created an extremely effective collaborative and productive program. They gave us a large 3-ring notebook that by the end of the year was stuffed with articles about teaching and descriptions of demonstrations and techniques. Third, I think the facilitators made the program even more relevant by including information about professional development. There was never a problem with attendance or attention at the meetings because we all felt it was important for us to be there. By the end of the year I had created a Web page (cutting edge at the time), a teaching

dossier and teaching statement, and had presented at a regional teaching conference with another student from the TA Mentor program. I felt well-prepared for more teaching and to begin the job search.

When I decided to go to graduate school, I did not give much thought about the possibility of becoming a teacher or academician. Teaching was not part of my long-term plan at that stage, but I think it only took two weeks of teaching for me to re-structure my thinking. I immediately enjoyed teaching and felt passionate about it. At some point in my graduate career I became disenchanted with research and more focused on teaching. I think this change is common for graduate student teachers. Teaching has more immediate rewards compared to research, in which there often is a long delay between the initial interest or question and the outcome. When I first applied for jobs during my final year of graduate school, I was unsure about how I wanted to balance teaching and research. In the end, I declined offers at teaching-intensive institutions because I thought that teaching four or more classes a semester would be too much. Instead I accepted a temporary “teaching postdoctoral position” at Northern Michigan University. This position was perfect for me because it enabled me to get experience teaching several different courses and allowed me the time to write a National Institutes of Health (NIH) proposal to conduct postdoctoral research at the Penn State. Even though I still very much valued teaching, it was important for me to gain additional research experience so that I could apply to institutions that were more balanced in teaching and research.

In the end, it turns out that my love for teaching was one factor that changed the focus of my research interests. I became curious about the development of eating behavior in children after working with children in a project during my last year at UGA. While teaching in graduate school, I became more interested in pursuing a traditional academic career for the first time. It occurred to me that it might be more compatible to do research with children, rather than nonhuman primates, at an institution that is not research-intensive.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

In my department, the faculty members value a balance among teaching, research, and service and between work and life outside of work. We are equally excited about teaching and research and we find both endeavors to be both challenging and rewarding. My colleagues and I also have rich lives outside of our lovely old building, and we are involved with the community. Being in a department that shares my values helps me to integrate research and teaching without sacrificing one for the other.

In my classes I incorporate as much research as possible and feel that students become more engaged if I describe actual research studies rather than just reporting a finding from a

study as fact. Incorporating my own research into my Research Methods class has been mutually beneficial for my students and me. I ask students to read peer-reviewed articles related to my research in addition to asking them to read articles about something in which they are interested. I also ask them to analyze “old” data from my studies so that I can walk them through the process of discovery. The students gain experience working with real data, and I benefit when one of these students asks to join my lab group. Students who join the lab group are well prepared for doing research with me because they have read relevant articles and are already generally familiar with the methodology and with my research. Another benefit is that I know exactly what type of research training they have had and I can work with them more effectively having this knowledge.

This interdependency teaching and research carries over into the laboratory. I have designed my research to be student-centered. I try to consider how I can incorporate student involvement when I design studies. Students learn about my specific area of research, but they also learn about research methods, statistics, developmental psychology, and biological psychology when they work in my lab. They also have the opportunity to improve their critical thinking, writing, data analysis, and oral communication skills. Another goal in my lab is for students to make some progress with their professional development. For instance, recently we discussed an article at our lab meeting about successful graduate school applications (Appleby & Appleby, 2006). I also try to create an environment conducive to collaboration, encouraging students to work on projects in small groups and to *use* one another. For example, I ask my first-year and second-year graduate students to read one another’s drafts of their thesis work. I also ask my graduate students to mentor undergraduate research projects for the purpose of improving the writing before I read it, and because it helps them gain more experience writing and thinking logically about research. I request undergraduate and graduate students to make presentations to the lab group as often as possible.

Obviously, this collaboration is very beneficial to me because the quality of the work is better before I ever lay eyes on it, but my students tell me that it is an invaluable experience for them, as well. They have the opportunity to be exposed to the thesis or grant writing process before going through it themselves.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

When I started teaching in graduate school, my first inclination was to give traditional lectures. My fellow graduate students gave me mostly lecture notes, but they also provided me with ideas about demonstrations they had used successfully in the classroom. Knowing nothing about the scholarship of teaching at that point in my career, I decided to do something

nontraditional at least once a week. I have the distinct memory of being concerned that my graduate professors might walk by when my students were working on group activities because I did not think the departmental faculty would approve. It seems unbelievable now when I think about it, but it shows how little I knew about teaching and how little dialogue there was about teaching between faculty and graduate students in my graduate department. It also explains why the TA Mentor Program was so worthwhile to me. Participating in that program validated many of my ideas about what would be effective in the classroom.

My devotion to mixed methods in the classroom has not changed. My primary aim in teaching is, as William James said so eloquently, to fill students with “devouring curiosity.” Although I may never attain this goal, I am happiest when I sense that my teaching stimulates students’ about the things we discuss in class. Although I now teach approximately 100 students each semester, compared to 20 while I was in graduate school, it is still important for me to learn every student’s name as soon as possible.

I value the use of technology in the classroom for some subjects, but I have not found those tools to be particularly useful in my own classroom. I find myself using less technology now than earlier in my career, although I feel more pressure to use it. One simple reason for my decreased use of technology is that I have found that the more of it I incorporate into my teaching and communication with students, the less I interact personally with my students. Sometimes one-on-one interactions begin with a student asking for another copy of the syllabus. If this student could simply print the syllabus from an electronic source I provide, then that is one less interaction I have with them. From my experience, it is the trivial interactions with students that sometimes lead to important conversations. I still find video clips and films to be an extremely valuable use of technology inside and outside of the classroom. For instance, I teach about teratogenic influences on development in my Human Development class and ask students to watch a Bill Moyers’ PBS special, “Kids and Chemicals” (Ablow, 2002), on their own at the library. Class discussions became much more interesting and complex after I started requiring them to see the film.

Another aspect of my identification as a teacher includes mentoring new teachers. Soon after I began my position at Appalachian State University, I started co-teaching a course for graduate teaching assistants. Working with the GTA course helps satisfy my desire to discuss pedagogy and to critique my teaching constantly with others. One advantage that I have in working with this course is that I have been able to co-teach it with my colleague, Dr. Paul Fox. Even though Dr. Fox is a seasoned professor, he is as enthusiastic a teacher as first-time teachers. Dr. Fox and I both teach the course as an overload but co-teaching this course is well worth the

extra time I spend on it. The most rewarding part of this experience has been to observe the development of our graduate students. It is a joy to watch the GTAs blossom as good teachers and to see them discover something about themselves during the process.

Advice for New Teachers

Being a relatively new teacher, I am hesitant to offer advice. There are many individual differences in teaching, and thus there are just as many paths to being successful in the classroom. One of the most important lessons I have learned is that you really do have to be confident with your own style of teaching. When I have tried to emulate too closely the style of teachers I admire, I invariably fail. I do best when I am myself.

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With a Little Help From Our Friends: Teaching in Community

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I am currently a Professor of Psychology at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, AR where I have served as chair both of the Department of Psychology and of the Division of Social & Behavioral Sciences during my more than 25 years there. I earned my PhD in experimental social psychology at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, where in 1979 I received the Rolland H. Waters Teaching Award for excellence in teaching by a graduate student. In 1999, I received the Distinguished Alumnus Award and was inducted into the Fulbright College Alumni Academy at the University of Arkansas. I am a past president and a Fellow of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP; Division 2 of the American Psychological Association (APA)). I have been a strong proponent of active learning, and with Mark Ware, co-edited a 3-volume set of demonstrations and activities for the teaching of psychology. I also served as a Consulting Editor for the journal *Teaching of Psychology (ToP)* and currently serve as News Editor of *ToP*. My primary research interests are in pedagogy, attribution theory, and counterfactual thinking.

My Early Development as a Teacher

As the title of my essay suggests, I intend to address, along with other issues, one of the more interesting ironies of teaching (at least, in my opinion!). We sometimes talk of our involvement in “learning communities” in which both students and teachers strive to master academic material and develop professional skills. We occasionally participate in wonderful collaborative programs that stress our connections to one another as teachers (e.g., Psychology Partnership Program; Andreoli Mathie, 1998). Yet, more often, I suspect that we view teaching as a distinctly solitary activity. We stand or sit in front of the class by ourselves unless we are involved in that rare team teaching opportunity. We spend countless hours alone preparing for classes. We grade papers and assign grades alone. Teaching awards hail individual achievement. In many ways, teaching is a solitary endeavor. But I would argue that we should not view it as such. How did I come to this conclusion? I hope to make my case by demonstrating the value added to my teaching career by colleagues and by citing research that suggests the critical role colleagues play in avoiding disillusionment with academia. We benefit greatly from our contacts

with colleagues in person, over the Internet, or by using teaching-related materials developed by fellow teachers.

I did not envision myself in the role of teacher as I began and finished my undergraduate program. Due to my naiveté, it was only in graduate school that I considered teaching as the most likely outcome of my degree-seeking endeavor. Fortunately, my graduate program was teaching friendly compared to many other programs at the time: Students frequently served as pre-masters teaching assistants in upper division courses taught by full-time faculty. The department usually limited graduate students to assisting faculty in the mechanics of day-to-day course activities such as grading papers, helping with classroom demonstrations, etc. In general, once a graduate student obtained the master's degree, the opportunity to have full responsibility for a course became available. All graduate students teaching courses (typically the general psychology course) enrolled in a one-credit hour Teaching Seminar. At the time, responsibility for the Teaching Seminar rotated among a handful of full-time faculty. The weekly meetings with faculty and other graduate students proved to be useful adjuncts to our preparation. We discussed teaching approaches and commiserated with each other about the difficulties of teaching. It was during one of these teaching seminars that I was introduced to the fledgling journal *Teaching of Psychology (ToP)*, which afforded me the opportunity to improve my teaching by using tried and true methods developed by colleagues worldwide. The “community” of teachers, both locally and beyond, began to have an impact on my teaching.

In my time as a graduate student, my teaching style evolved as I observed several of my graduate instructors modeling excellent teaching. The aspects of their teaching that had a profound impact on my own teaching involved (a) being dynamic in the classroom, (b) providing a well-organized class schedule, and (c) fostering a comfortable atmosphere. My major advisor, Dr. David Schroeder, proved to be an excellent model for these aspects of good teaching. So, too, did Dr. Jeffrey Stripling and Dr. Richard Dana. Each proved to be influential in one way or another to my development as a teacher.

Those were the days before demonstration/activity handbooks (Benjamin & Lowman, 1981; Ware & Johnson, 1996, 2000) and instructor's manuals that fill up huge 3-ring binders. The primary mode of classroom communication was through lecture. Even so, I began to believe that there were alternatives to lecture that would prove to be useful. My department owned several 16mm films that allowed me to vary the class format and give students perspectives that were difficult to reproduce “live” in class. Students seemed to appreciate the diversion, and their increased interest and attention motivated me to continue thinking about new ways to present material.

Even though I had good role models in graduate school, moving into my first academic position required many adjustments. In 1980, I began my first full-time faculty position with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with that position. My new role involved the development of a fledgling psychology department at a small institution. I was to be one of a 1 ½ person department. I took the lead administrative role in the department, which required considerable time in addition to new preparations.

Unlike my days as a graduate student, in my new position I attended committee meetings and spent significant time planning for the development of this new department. Campus culture dictated involvement with students in our Psychology Club. Although I attempted to maintain a small research program, it became clear to me after a few years that there simply was not enough time to prepare for a 12 credit hour per semester teaching load, attend the required committee meetings, develop the department, and engage students on a personal level at the same time (not to mention have a personal life). As is often the case in an institution whose primary orientation is teaching, the default option for faculty members is to terminate their content research program. Because I didn't want to drop my research, I found myself becoming increasingly isolated in order to fulfill all the "obligations" I believed important for my success as a college professor.

In fact, after just a few years in academia, I considered other career alternatives. Academia had become drudgery compared to my experience in graduate school. However, several events conspired to keep me in my position. All of these events involved a community of colleagues, even though not all of the colleagues were local. Through my contacts with this teaching community, I began to evaluate who I was as a teacher and what I wanted to accomplish in that role.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

In the 1980s, the Zeitgeist for teachers changed. In many ways, it was the decade in which psychology teachers began to engage in activities that promoted fundamental changes in their classroom teaching methods. Some of these changes probably occurred as a result of increasing calls by politicians for greater accountability for student learning. Becoming more student-focused also seemed to be the order of the day. Textbook authors began to write in more conversational styles and attempted to make their texts more student-friendly. Instructor's manuals (IMs) became a necessary ancillary, and they began to grow eventually to fill large 3-ring binders for the courses with high enrollments (e.g., introductory psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology). *ToP* now had several years of psychology pedagogy that psychology teachers could use. The first volume of the APA-published activities handbook

became available (Benjamin & Lowman, 1981). Teaching and the effectiveness of pedagogical methods used in the classroom began to take on greater importance.

In another important development, teaching conferences began to spring up around the country. The National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP), the long-standing national conference, moved to Florida and became more visible drawing from a country-wide constituency. The Mid-America Conference for Teachers of Psychology (MACTOP) marked the advent of regional teaching conferences. Teaching conferences became an important vehicle for sharing teaching techniques and discussing the topic that occupied so much of our time. Even more important for me was the fact that these conferences afforded me the opportunity to network with my peers. I attended one of the early MACTOP conferences. It was the first of many trips to southern Indiana to attend this gathering of teachers. It was at MACTOP that I met individuals who were active in STP. Little did I know that the contacts I made at my first MACTOP were to continue to this day, 20 years later. As a result of my attendance, I became involved in reviewing manuscripts for *ToP* and I began a long-standing participation in STP activities. At last, I had found my niche! It became clear to me that there were many colleagues “out there” who were interested in teaching and improving the teaching enterprise through research on pedagogy and by developing teaching resources and methodologies.

The 1990s brought more of the same. Publication of Ernest Boyer’s (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* provided much-needed motivation for me to continue a path that began in the 1980s. Boyer’s conception of scholarship encompassed four overlapping types of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Research on pedagogy and developing teaching materials became potential sources of legitimate scholarship. In my own case, I gladly joined this community, which began a long history of professional activity supporting teaching and pedagogy.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

Over the course of my career, my teaching experienced considerable evolution. I began with the common view of “Teacher as Imparter of Knowledge.” Although this view is a legitimate perspective, it is much less visible today in my teaching compared to earlier years. Now, I view myself as both teacher and student. I am a resource for students, but I’m also a student of psychology. I try as best I can to let students know that I am right there with them trying to master the content of psychology. I am trying to understand the complexities of behavior and mental processes. My background gives me the opportunity to act as a scaffold for my students’ development of skills and knowledge, but I continue to be a student nonetheless.

My classroom behavior also has changed in several notable ways. I no longer try to “teach everything” in class. I hold students more responsible for learning the textbook material and I try to spend more time developing integrative themes that tie the content together. Seeing the “big picture” is now more important to me than whether students remember an isolated fact about psychology.

I also try to engage students more actively and I use many visual aids to elaborate issues that are not particularly suited for verbal description alone. Short video clips allow me to bring topics to “life” that would otherwise suffer only bland verbal description. Teaching demonstrations and classroom activities also serve to promote active learning and I make liberal use of them.

My reward for these changes in teaching methods and style is seeing students “getting” it. I feel gratified when students make connections between the course content and their personal life experiences. I am delighted when students see connections between psychology and other academic disciplines, something that I view as essential in a liberal arts education. Seeing graduates of my department working as professionals is particularly rewarding. One of the most rewarding situations is when I form collegial relationships with those former students.

Virtually all of my evolution as a teacher was facilitated by contacts with other colleagues that occurred in a variety of ways. Reading the literature on pedagogy is essential. This work is produced by a large contingent of colleagues around the world, some of whom I know personally and count as my distant colleagues.

Conference attendance is also an important part of my efforts to improve my teaching. When I attend a conference (teaching or otherwise) I rarely return home without bringing with me at least a few new ideas to try in the classroom. Teaching conferences provide both the knowledge and impetus to implement new methods.

Advice for New Teachers

Over the years, I found that several things contributed to my enjoyment as success as a teacher. Hard work and long hours are a given for the instructor. Schedules of academics often permit some flexibility compared to working in business or industry, but long hours are required to keep up to date in the content of psychology, grade assignments, perform committee and other administrative duties, and maintain some semblance of professional activity. It is not a 40 hour per week job.

Consistent with the title of this essay, I suggest that new teachers develop a network of colleagues and maintain both professional and social contacts with them. Why? It appears that many successful academics thrive on these relationships. For example, in her 1977 book,

Scientific Elite: Nobel Laureates in the United States, Harriet Zuckerman notes that Nobel prize winners usually maintain many ties to colleagues and are frequently the center of many mentoring relationships. John Creswell, in his monograph, *Faculty Research Performance: Lessons Learned from the Sciences and Social Sciences* (1985), found that productive researchers maintained regular and close contact with colleagues on and off campus who have similar research interests. Creswell cites additional evidence that these contacts are not sporadic, but often occur daily.

Some research also suggests that not having collegial contacts is potentially detrimental to academics. In a large body of data collected over many years, Robert Boice (1988, 1992, 2000) pointed out that social isolation by academics is often related to academic dysfunction. He found that faculty who became disillusioned with academia experienced collegial isolation or neglect. They often perceived their colleagues and students as disapproving. Boice's research showed that new faculty who "make good starts" and avoid disillusionment tend to find useful social supports or networks among colleagues. He also found a high correlation between social isolation and low publication productivity. One of the most detrimental feelings expressed by new faculty was the feeling of isolation; that there was little personal and professional support. Unfortunately, our academic system often promotes isolation. Trower, Austin, and Sorcinelli (2001) characterized the relationship between the academy and new faculty as "Paradise Lost." They suggested that the academy transforms eager new teachers into academic hermits who isolate themselves from students and colleagues in an attempt to meet standards for attaining tenure and promotion. Many of these new faculty members do not believe that they have enough information to navigate this process successfully, let alone form a network of collegial relationships.

My advice to new teachers is to refrain from isolating themselves from colleagues. There is much to learn from colleagues whether they have just a few years of experience or many. Although contacts with colleagues may be professional in nature, I suggest that new faculty not rule out time spent in less "official" settings. Three times each week I attend a "coffee hour" with colleagues from a variety of departments across campus. The conversations of this group span the profound to the profane. Sometimes we discuss teaching, but just as often we discuss other issues. I always leave the group feeling reenergized and much more ready for teaching than if I spent that time alone in my office. This gathering has become so important for several of its members that we rarely miss a "meeting" and may even try to schedule other official duties around it.

Over my career as a teacher, the worst of years were those in which I tried to “go it alone” and I isolated myself from my colleagues. I take full credit for those years. My best years to date involve sharing my work and the pleasures and joys of that work with my colleagues, and those I expect to experience in the future. My successes in teaching were not the result of a little help from my friends, but the result of a *lot* of help.

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A Wonderful Life

Mary E. Kite
Ball State University

Save a year spent residing in the state of Texas, I have been a lifelong resident of Indiana, moving first north (in 1977) from my hometown of Clinton, Indiana to Purdue University in West Lafayette. There I earned my bachelor's, master's, and doctorate, after which I moved approximately 2 hours due west to join the faculty in the Department of Psychological Science at Ball State University. I am currently Professor of Psychological Science, but also have filled administrative roles in the Graduate School and now serve as Acting Graduate Dean. Although my current job has taken me out of the classroom, my faculty role remains an important part of my identity and, as I will discuss in more detail later, I view my administrative role as an extension of that role and believe that many of the qualities that define good teaching also define successful administration.

My research interests center on social justice issues, focusing primarily on stereotyping and prejudice, and these interests strongly inform my teaching. Because of this, people are often surprised to learn that my favorite courses to teach are Research Methods and Statistics; I will say more about this later in my story. I also find it richly rewarding to mentor students in the research process and continue to supervise at least one Master's and/or Honor's Thesis student each year. I also have interest in the scholarship of teaching and believe this scholarly pursuit is inextricably linked to excellence in the classroom. Most recently, my colleague Bernie Whitley and I (2006) co-authored a textbook, *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*, which I consider the perfect intersection between my research and teaching.

As I look back on my career, I can easily point to the significant influence of people who believed in me and gave me opportunities that shaped my career path. Kay Deaux was a mentor and role model, beginning in my undergraduate years and Alice Eagly similarly was a significant influence on my academic career. I am indebted to Deborah Balogh, who was my mentor as a new faculty member and became a friend and collaborator in both research and administration. I owe a debt to Patricia Keith-Spiegel for nominating me for the Outstanding Junior Faculty Award at Ball State University, which I received in 1991, and also for encouraging me to become involved in the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP). Both had a significant impact on my career, although in very different ways. I was named a Fellow of the American

Psychological Association, first by STP (Division Two) and later by the Society for the Psychology of Women (Division 35) and the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues (Division 44) and mentors played a role in those recognitions as well.

I have contributed nationally to my profession; for example, for STP, I chaired the Task Force on Multicultural Issues, and I served as Teaching Awards Chair and as Secretary; at this writing, I am finishing my tenure as President. Also at the national level, I served as a member of the Committee on Divisions and APA Relations (CODAPAR) and was co-chair in 2001. I was a member of the Task Force on Status of Women and currently chair the Task Force on Diversity Education Resources. I have been very involved in the Midwestern Psychological Association, serving as Program Moderator and as Council Member. Next year, I will become Secretary-Treasurer of that organization. Each opportunity for service to my profession led to tangible outcomes that I am proud to have been a part of and to relationships that shaped my thinking and, indeed, my core academic identity. As I pause midcareer and consider my wonderful life, I can not help noting that the relationships, whether with mentors, colleagues, or students, are inseparable from the outcomes, be they courses taught, scholarly publications, service obligations, or administrative initiatives seen to fruition.

Early Development

As long as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher. Early in my undergraduate career, I had planned to teach high school Spanish and, toward that end, studied one summer in Madrid. But even the pull of that rich experience was not enough to hold my attention. As is true of many psychologists, once I took introductory psychology, I was hooked. I moved from a double major in Spanish and psychology simply to psychology.

As a senior at Purdue, I served as a teaching assistant for abnormal psychology, which involved teaching my own recitation section. That is, I offered 1 hour of instruction to 30 students from the larger lecture section that met twice weekly. I did so with almost no preparation or oversight and I look back with astonishment that this practice was viewed at Purdue as acceptable. The only qualification needed was to convince the course instructor that I wanted to be a teaching assistant (TA). Even so, I enjoyed it immensely and can only hope my students learned something. This experience followed a summer spent as the Arts and Crafts Counselor at Ramapo Anchorage Camp, which served special needs children. It was at that camp that I realized my aspiration to be a clinical psychologist did not fit my temperament; after that experience, I set my sights on a doctorate in social psychology. By the end of my senior year, I was determined to become a social psychologist. I had no idea that that could mean anything

other than college teaching (and, even when I discovered this, I never seriously wavered from that goal).

During my first year as a Purdue graduate student, I was a TA for introductory psychology, which also involved teaching 1-hour recitation sections. This time, however, I was fortunate to receive formal pedagogical training. The course supervisor, Joe Rubenstein, required TAs to take both a course in the teaching of psychology and to meet with him regularly about our development. This practice is now, of course, common place, but it was fairly unique at the time. I still have the term paper on my teaching philosophy that I wrote for his course. One of my strongest memories of that experience is my peers advising me to discuss only my teaching successes in our group meetings and to not admit to failures. Although I did come to follow their advice, that perspective still puzzles me; it seems to me the best way to improve one's teaching is by seeking advice about handling difficult classroom situations. I later taught recitation sections of social psychology, but as a graduate student, I did not teach my own course. As with most doctoral programs at that time (and probably now as well), research experience was still considered the gold standard and most of my graduate career I was funded by a research assistantship. In short, when I began as an Assistant Professor, I was only somewhat (probably barely) prepared for the full-time classroom teaching.

As is true of many academics, my own teaching style was modeled after the many excellent instructors I had as an undergraduate. I have very clear memories of Elizabeth Capaldi's research methods class; her teaching style was a wonderful blend of clarity, passion for her subject, and humor. It was through her encouragement that I became involved in faculty research, first in her rat lab and later with Kay Deaux and Dick Heslin from the social psychology area. I knew I was in love with psychology when I found myself willing to pick up rats all seven days of the consecutive weeks it took to complete the experiment. I was even willing to continue after one of the rascals bit me!

Ultimately, I was drawn to college teaching by the love of the discipline and by the enormous flexibility that our profession enjoys. Ball State University offered me the opportunity to blend my love for teaching with the opportunity to continue my research program, rewarding and expecting excellence in both. I also have appreciated the many chances I have had to pursue interdisciplinary collaboration. In fact, one of the aspects of my current administrative role that I enjoy most is that, by its very nature, it is extremely interdisciplinary. I have gained an appreciation for other perspectives that I simply would not have been exposed to had I remained a faculty member.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

Because I teach at a university where both research and teaching are valued, I do not believe I had to sacrifice one in service of the other. Implicit in Ball State's teacher-scholar model is the freedom to focus more on one than the other at a given point in a professor's career. I also have been richly rewarded by my work with students on research projects, both theirs and my own. Similarly, much of my service to the discipline of psychology has been an extension of my teaching. My recent role as chair of the APA Task Force on Diversity Education Resources, for example, is aimed toward pointing psychology teachers toward information that will guide them as they infuse diversity into their courses.

Each course presents a unique teaching challenge and I believe the greatest obstacle a new faculty member faces is finding the portfolio of courses that best suits her or his style. I was surprised to learn that, at least early in my career, my research interest in the psychology of women did not translate into a passion for teaching that course. What I lacked then (but believe I have now) is an ability to appreciate that students come to that topic from different backgrounds, with different sets of beliefs, and that significant time in that course must be spent addressing those differences. I can now admit to being shocked that my persuasive powers were not enough to convince them that my perspective would help them understand women's roles in society! Conversely, I could remember struggling with statistics as an undergraduate and could translate those memories into teaching strategies that helped my own students past those roadblocks. I also could compare Jim Jaccard's excellent approach to teaching that subject with a professor whose approach did not "fit my learning style." I also believe that each faculty member needs to find the blend of courses that holds her or his interest—that balance between becoming comfortable, but not bored with, teaching the topic. For some teachers, that means devoting time to one or two preparations each year, for others that means teaching a variety of courses at different levels, from beginning undergraduate to advanced graduate. It is a lucky faculty member who joins a department where such flexibility is possible—and even rewarded.

The Balanced Life of a Teacher Turned Administrator

One belief that rests at the heart of my teaching philosophy is that each section of each course is unique and the teaching schedule, assignments, and classroom experience must be adjusted, to at least some extent, to take that uniqueness into account. Every teaching assistant I have ever had has been startled to realize how different the same lecture or activity can be in two different sections of the same course. I can remember being surprised myself. The second belief at the heart of my teaching philosophy is that students remember what they have internalized—what gets at the heart of their own experiences and interests. The trick is to find that sweet spot for each individual in the group that comprises your course. A third belief is that the best

teachers come to their students as individuals. Some of best memories in the classroom came from a shared, spontaneous event that allowed students to see me as a person, not just a professor. When *Star Wars IV* was re-released, for example, I shared with my students the experience of seeing that movie when it first came out. A student blurted out, “Wow, you’re old!”—much to the shock of her peers. I laughed until I cried. In another course, I happened to mention I was divorced. After class, a student came to my office and shared with me the students’ disbelief, saying “We see you as Mary Poppins!” Although it’s surprising that, in this day and age, someone’s divorced status would shock anyone, something changed in my classroom that day for the better; the distance between professor and student was shortened.

Many people see a sharp distinction between the roles of professor and administrator and one question I am often asked is whether I miss teaching. The answer is complex. I do occasionally teach a course, but find that doing so is a different experience compared to when I was a faculty member. It is extremely difficult to switch gears between administration and teaching. The demands of each role are quite different and many aspects of my administrative role can not be put off to prepare for teaching. Much of my job now, for example, is responding immediately to needs of students and faculty that can not wait. For this and other reasons, I personally find it nearly impossible to devote adequate time to the preparation and processing that goes hand-in-hand with teaching excellence. I also find it hard to be available for students when they need it; I am not in the psychology building for those informal interactions in the hall with either faculty or students, for example, and I can not always be available to provide extra help.

At the same time, the role of professor remains a strong part of my identity. I have not forgotten the classroom experience nor do I fail to understand (or recall) the pressures (or rewards) of that environment. Many of my administrative responsibilities are in service of the professor role. The university is a community of teachers whose ultimate purpose is the advancement of our students. My role as a facilitator of that advancement has taken a different form, but my beliefs about the importance of that goal have not changed. Nor are the qualities of a good administrator that different from the qualities of a good teacher; both must be good listeners, both must put students’ needs first and both must respond to individual needs and situations, often by using creative strategies accessed on the fly.

Career Advice

The best advice I can offer to new faculty is to find a mentor and, when the time is right, become a mentor. As I noted earlier, I owe an enormous debt to the many people who have shaped my career through their teaching, through the opportunities they made possible for me,

with the help and support they offered as I pursued those opportunities, and by their simply by allowing me a window through which I could watch them succeed. I still have mentors and call on them regularly for advice. It has often been said that we can not begin to know the impact our teaching has on our students, nor can we know how much our mentorship and support of others have shaped others' careers. I can only hope that I have in some way repaid those who mentored me by mentoring others.

My second piece of advice for new teachers is to not be afraid to fail and to not be afraid to share failures with others, as I was advised to do as a new teaching assistant. As a new teacher, failure carries risk, especially if an entire course fails. But, by not taking the risk at all, I think the chances of failing are, paradoxically, even greater. Take chances, then, but be careful to find those people who can help turn any missteps into successes. If you do not have such a person at your home department, seek one elsewhere.

I also highly recommend that you take advantage of the opportunities for faculty teaching development that are widely available on most college campuses today. Ask for funds to support travel to teaching-related conferences. Find that group of individuals who share your passion and keep in touch with them. At the appropriate time in your career, reach out to other new faculty and guide them. Do not sell short your wisdom, even in your early career. Think how much you learned your first year and share that knowledge with others.

Finally, as you advance in your career, look carefully for opportunities and test the waters. Although I was far from dissatisfied with my teaching career, I found administration to be welcome challenge for me. There are wonderful advantages of being a midcareer faculty member, not the least of which is being settled in the discipline and therefore free to choose what interests you for the next stage of your life. I encourage anyone with an interest to pursue administration, perhaps as a department chair or perhaps in another role. In a way, pursuing an administrative role is like a sabbatical wherein time usually devoted to teaching and scholarship is shifted to a completely different set of tasks and, for those with an interest, it can provide a refreshing new perspective on one's academic career.

I began in a part-time administrative internship, which gave me the chance to explore this new role without committing to a full-time administrative position. If you have such an interest in pursuing this option, approach your dean or provost. I think most universities offer such opportunities, although the process may be informal. When I did so, I found I had undiscovered talents and interests that could be applied to administrative service. Thus, I eventually made the decision to become a full-time administrator. I also know I would be happy to return to the

classroom and can not imagine taking an administrative position where that was not an option. Despite the claims of some, I did not become a different person when I became an administrator.

My specific career path at this writing remains uncertain, but regardless of whether I return to the classroom next year or stay on as an administrator, I will always be glad I took advantage of this opportunity. I have gained many skills, learned a great deal about the structure and function of our university, and had the privilege of working with faculty and administrators across my own campus and from other institutions. Should I return to the classroom, I believe these experiences will have changed the way I approach teaching. In particular, my courses are likely to be less discipline bound and more focused on the process of learning and on the application of the course goals than on content per se.

Final Thoughts

This is the second volume of autobiographies of exemplary psychology teachers and what is striking is the uniqueness of each contribution and perspective, which solidifies for me what I have always suspected: There is no one path to excellence in teaching. Each of us charts our own course, and that course is influenced by the individual students who comprise our classrooms and make every day both a challenge and a delight. Equally striking, however, is the number of authors who refer to the community of scholars that comprise the teaching of psychology. Some of them are active members of STP, some are active in other teaching-related conferences and activities, and some are connected to the author by an individual relationship. (Of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive.) The life of a faculty member and, yes, even of an administrator, is a wonderful life. What makes it wonderful is the continuous learning that is part and parcel to the academic life and the people with whom we share our journey.

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Epiphany in Schenley Park

James H. Korn

My father dropped out of high school to work in his parents' tailor shop. Later he became an industrial pattern maker, a highly skilled woodworking craft. My mother attended a technical school in Ukraine. They were pleased that I finished high school and went to college, but were puzzled when in my junior year at Miami (*the Miami in Ohio*) I decided to switch from accounting to psychology as a major. They knew what accounting was; you could get a good job. Psychology was a mystery to them, but things worked out pretty well for me and for my family.

I think my parents were pleased when I decided to attend graduate school at Carnegie Institute of Technology, which sounded like a school that could get me a job. Now that school is Carnegie-Mellon University (CMU), but in 1960 it was "Tech." At that time I was interested in what we called verbal learning. My undergraduate mentor, John Jahnke, said Tech had some good people in that area and I completed my master's thesis on immediate memory (now called short-term memory): Nonsense syllables were too complex. I studied consonants.

I took my first course in physiological psychology with Kenneth E. (Keck) Moyer (Korn & Gibbons, in press). This really was science. I loved working in the rat lab, not only with Moyer on psychoendocrinology, but also with Wayne Ludvigson on Spencian animal learning, and later with Leonard Jarrard on brain mechanisms in learning. We all published quite a few articles together, which led to my appointment to the CMU faculty in 1966.

But it was the 60s, man, and things were happening that had a great effect on my life. Before I tell that story, here are some basic facts of that academic life. My interests changed from animal research to education, and I was supported for a sabbatical year at Stanford where I worked on program evaluation with Lee Cronbach, who may have taught me more per minute of contact than any other teacher I had. However, I was denied tenure, so had to look for a different job.

I had been Associate Department Head and enjoyed administering the undergraduate program in psychology, so I applied mostly for positions as department chair. I was fortunate to get that position at Saint Louis University (SLU) where I moved in 1974. I was chair until 1979, then again from 1988–1997. I retired July 1, 2006.

Before leaving CMU I had a meeting with Herb Simon, later a Nobel laureate, who told me, "Jimmy [yes, the Great Man called me Jimmy], you will be much happier in St. Louis." He was right. I had the flexibility to change interests often, and in 30 years moved from program

evaluation to adult development, to research ethics, to history of psychology, and throughout that time maintained my commitment to teaching teachers. For several years I had an appointment in a creative American Studies Program and in the last 10 years was involved with our Center for Teaching Excellence. Outside of SLU, my primary service was to the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP), for which I served as President in 1988-89.

Early Development: Research Comes First

Most academics in my generation entered graduate school with no idea of becoming a teacher. We wanted to become professors, which meant having a career that included teaching but that was built on research. Almost no thought was given to preparing us to teach, even though we did that occasionally to fill in for our advisors. These first experiences typically were horrible (Korn, 1995).

I became a teacher at CMU because that was part of the job. My only preparation for teaching came from using my mentor, Keck Moyer, as a model. He was an excellent lecturer, charismatic and well organized, who often was applauded by a class of mostly drama students. I tried to copy my style after his, even to the extent of putting my notes on 4 by 6 cards like he did, and making projector slides from the same books that he used. It worked and I became a confident teacher, and I also received applause after one of my lectures.

Although I overcame my shyness to become a confident teacher, I do not think I was a particularly good teacher at the beginning of my career. I relied too much on lecturing and mastery of content, rather than active learning. I got very good student ratings and acquired a reputation that filled my classes. That took care of teaching, so I could get on with research and get promoted to Associate Professor.

Becoming a Teacher: Epiphany in Schenley Park

All that changed on April 7, 1968, the day my first son was born and two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. I had spent all night in the hospital with my wife. While we were focusing on the painful process of birth, the night shift came to the hospital in police vans and we heard sirens outside. One of the nurses said the National Guard was on the way. Then we went to the delivery room where Joe was born.

A few hours after that at 6 am I left the hospital and drove into Schenley Park to the place that overlooked the city of Pittsburgh. Smoke was rising behind the hospital that held my son. Occasionally out of the quiet came the sharp crack of a gunshot. We had given our son a world of violence, prejudice, and fear. Dr. King was dead and I was astonished by the fact that I was alive and had a son and by the awareness that my life would change. That change was from trying to build a reputation doing physiological research to a commitment to students' education.

For many in my generation it was the events of the 1960s and early 1970s that had the greatest impact on our lives: the assassinations, the images from Viet Nam, Selma, and Kent State. As individuals we reacted to these events in different ways. We became different as individuals and as a culture, and these events affected who we were as teachers, and how and what we taught.

In the summer of 1968 I spent a lot of time thinking about what to do with my academic life. Fortunately, there were a lot of opportunities; unfortunately, these led to my demise at CMU. Higher education was going through its own revolution with numerous experimental colleges springing up. At CMU we designed a new liberal arts curriculum with no grades. We did away with the introductory psychology course and replaced it with “development of the self” in which I taught small discussion classes with a broad range of readings outside of mainstream psychology. We met on the lawn, sat in circles, had students lead classes—radical stuff in those days. I designed a course on Psychoactive Drugs that was extremely popular, and led to my winning the University Teaching Award. The day after I won that award, a note appeared on my door: “the kiss of death.”

In spite of all the turmoil of that time, CMU was fixed on its mission to be a top 20 university. If you were not famous, you were gone. Because I was not the next Bill McKeachie, I was not granted tenure. I did gain some local notoriety after that tenure decision with a full-page article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* headlined: “You’re a good teacher. You’re fired!” That symbolized the fixing of my identity as a teacher.

Change and Reflection

In the 31 years that I taught at Saint Louis University, my approach to teaching has changed along with my other scholarly interests. I rely much more on discussion and other forms of active learning, even in large classes. I am convinced by the evidence that lecturing is not as effective as other methods for accomplishing the objectives I have for my courses (Bligh, 2000). There are a few really good teachers who have helped me learn how to use these methods. Barbara Nodine taught me how to use writing assignments, Jane Halonen taught me about using critical thinking activities, and I learned about managing small group discussions from Tom Kramer. I would have become a better teacher much earlier in my career if I had begun attending teaching conferences sooner. Even more than the tips and tricks, these conferences provided support for my commitment to teaching and stimulation for new ideas.

The most significant change in my teaching came relatively late. I resumed my course on the Teaching of Psychology in the 1990s and included an assignment that students write a teaching philosophy. This assignment was just an exercise for students until the day one student

asked to see my philosophy and I had to confess that I did not have one. So I wrote one and have rewritten it three times. It became the core of what teaching was about for me. My teaching philosophy includes some practical principles:

- First, do no harm.
- Be enthusiastic and get to know your students.
- Be organized.

Those principles are practical, but there is no soul to them. In the first version of my philosophy I wrote about my passion for teaching. I may have been writing to please some imaginary teacher because passion is not quite what I was feeling. As I reflected on this statement with the help of a colleague, I realized the heart of my teaching was “the excellence of desire.”

“This excellence of desire means wanting something with all your heart, and continually trying to find it. But what you want is unreachable so it is the wanting, the desire, that is excellent, not some outcome. It is about being and doing; about living the teaching life. It shows itself in teaching most often in the daily work we do, not only in those too rare peak experiences of glory in the classroom, and not in the prizes for excellence that some of us receive. I want to be a good teacher at the mundane level of class preparation, teaching methods, and relationships with students. I *want* this. *That* is the excellence of desire.” (Korn, 2002).

After I discovered the value of having my own teaching philosophy I came to appreciate the need for regular reflection on how those ideas were implemented in my teaching. Soon after the end of each semester I would sit quietly and reflect on what happened, remembering high and low points during the semester, thinking about how various students did on their exams and papers, and reviewing the data from my evaluations. Then I would write my self-evaluation, which was a personal statement, not the more carefully worded one I submitted to my department chair for the annual salary decision. In it I confessed to the sin of pride, expressed joy and disappointment, and revealed my ignorance, although I sometimes hid it from my students. I would promise to do better next time. This reflection continued beyond confession and emotion to discovering what the data showed me about the extent to which my philosophy was validated by what I did in the course. The discrepancies told me that something should change, either the theory (my philosophy) or the practice or both, and I worked with the rationale and design of the next edition of that course.

I often say that it is a wonderful thing to be a teacher, but it also is demanding, challenging hard work. The greatest rewards for me are in the students who show that they have learned something important and appreciate my effort in helping them do that. Even when

students did not appreciate my efforts, I could be rewarded by the realization that I had done something creative and that I did my best to make learning happen. That may have been the reward my father got from turning a piece of wood into a pattern for a machine part; no one saw the pattern, only the product.

I have had many disappointing incidents in teaching over my 40 years, but relatively few compared to the high points and the satisfaction of just doing my job. I have been a bit frustrated by the fact that I talk too much in class and I am disappointed that so few students would show up for my office hours. Large classes, technology, and distance learning frustrate me, not because they are inherently bad, but because they hinder closeness learning.

Advice to New Teachers

The selections in the previous volume of autobiographies contained a lot of good advice, and I trust that this volume will too, so at least read a sample of those. I apologize if I repeat some of what others have said. One recommendation that I saw often was that you become part of the community of psychology teachers by joining STP and attending teaching conferences. Not only will you learn about teaching, but you also will find acceptance and generosity. If you do not have the means to travel, then join the virtual community of teachers electronically. I bet that everyone who has written one of these autobiographies would respond to your e-mail.

Read the books and journals on teaching. My mentor used to say that if you want to learn how to do something there probably is a good book on the subject. He learned to slaughter hogs that way, and I found many good books on teaching. Teaching is a scholarly profession and good professionals master the literature in their field and keep up with that literature just as you should in your area of research or practice.

Write your philosophy of teaching (Korn, 2003) and use it. It should help you select the goals for your courses and your teaching techniques. At the end of each semester use your philosophy as the context in which you reflect on your performance.

Final Thoughts

As a heart patient, I would have preferred a less ominous sounding title to this section than the one the editors have provided, but I proceed. The selections in these two volumes provide a view of teaching experiences and thoughts across a broad spectrum of teachers' careers from those who are relatively new to those of us in retirement. For many of us the teaching life will continue well beyond our terms of formal employment. I know some retired psychology teachers who did shut the door and not look back, but most at least have academics as a hobby in retirement, and some are just as involved as ever. One of the great things about the teaching life

is that the choice is yours. For myself, I look forward to continuing to work with developing teachers (young and old) and to writing about teaching.

Another thing I note about these collections of autobiographies is that they represent the lives of hundreds of fine teachers who did not win national awards or get elected as President of STP. With all due respect to the other authors, most of these teachers may be just as deserving of these honors. We all belong to this larger community of teachers that provides support for the demands of our craft. Perhaps the greatest satisfaction of my career is the awareness that I am part of this larger community. What a wonderful thing it is to still be a teacher.

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Living, Learning, Teaching

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Hope College

As a developmental psychologist, I believe that it is very useful to plan carefully for each stage in the life course. However, as my own life journey demonstrates, careful plans are often trumped by external events in the form of obstacles or serendipitous opportunities. When my original career plans (to teach classical languages and study ancient manuscripts) hit a snag in 1973, I entered graduate school in psychology with no way of knowing how favorable the outcome would be. But that decision, coupled with wonderful support from my colleagues over the years, has resulted in a very satisfying career.

I received my PhD in development and aging from Washington University in St. Louis, and have been a faculty member at Hope College since 1977, reaching the rank of Professor in 1991. My primary teaching assignment includes courses in introductory psychology, developmental psychology, and gerontology. I've been active in community service throughout my career, primarily as a long-time advocate for senior citizens in West Michigan.

I am perhaps best known as a technology pioneer who has been using computer-assisted instruction in and out of the classroom since 1980. I have co-authored a dozen computerized study guides and an extensive multimedia resource for developmental psychology courses, and have published four award-winning instructional technology projects for introductory psychology: *PsychSim*, *PsychQuest*, *PsychInquiry*, and *PsychOnline*. My latest project, a co-authored multimedia classroom resource called *ActivePsych*, was published in August 2006.

I've also become identified as an enthusiastic advocate for good teaching at Hope College and at the national level, especially in terms of the appropriate use of technology in teaching. In 2005, I co-authored two reports for STP's Pedagogical Innovations Task Force (Goolkasian, Ludwig, & Froman, 2005; Ludwig, Daniel, Froman, & Mathie, 2005), and also co-authored a chapter in *Best Practices for Teaching Introduction to Psychology* (Ludwig & Perdue, 2005). In 2003, Hope College presented me with its Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the American Psychological Foundation named me the recipient of the 2005 Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award.

My Early Development as a Teacher

Formative Influences

Looking back on my childhood and adolescence from the perspective of middle age, it seems almost inevitable that I would pursue a career as an educator. I've always loved learning—exploring ideas, finding connections, gaining a deeper understanding of the world around me. By the time I reached my early teens, I had discovered that I could communicate what I had learned to others. I frequently tutored other students in math, languages, and history, and found it to be very rewarding.

I also had many role models within my family. Although my father and both grandfathers were Christian ministers, many other family members were educators. Two uncles and an aunt were university professors. Three of my sisters became teachers, and two of my brothers have recently retired after long careers as professors.

Plan A and Plan B

By the time I entered high school I was planning a career in post-secondary education, most likely as a professor at a Christian college or seminary. My experiences as a college student fostered a growing sense of my vocation as an educator. But my first love was languages, so I expected to pursue a PhD in Greek or Hebrew. External events in the early 1970s made that path less attractive to me, so I moved to plan B: psychology. The aspect of psychology that held the most interest for me was gerontology, in part because of my family circumstances. When I was born, my mother was 45 and my father was 51. My father retired at age 65 as I completed 8th grade, so I spent my high school years in the home of a retired couple. This experience gave me some insight into both the joys and the challenges of the retirement years, and later spurred my interest in pursuing a PhD in human development and aging.

Learning About Teaching

In high school and college I experienced a wide range of teaching styles and methods, and I noticed that some of those methods were more effective than others. Because I was already planning a career as an educator, I paid special attention to the techniques that seemed effective, and filed this information away for future use. Unfortunately, what I learned from my high school teachers was mainly in the form of negative examples, as I reacted against the methods and techniques that they employed.

I had a much better experience in my college courses. I admired many of my professors, particularly those who were knowledgeable about their subjects, were well organized and well prepared for each class, made an effort to build rapport with students, went beyond the readings to draw connections and make applications, and planned opportunities for hands-on learning.

Like most other graduate students in my era, I had no formal training in teaching methods or in classroom management. I learned the skills of teaching mainly by observation of others and

through reflection on my own teaching. During graduate school I had several research mentors, but no teaching mentors. My research mentors, especially Martha Storandt and Jack Botwinick, impressed upon me the importance of personal integrity in all my professional activities, and also the importance of balancing the various roles required of a professor.

Finding My Place

As I interviewed at several schools in 1977, I learned that university administrators of that era were not particularly interested in the teaching potential of faculty candidates. As one dean confided to me, “Good teachers are a dime a dozen. What we want is someone who can publish consistently and boost our national visibility.” Although I was focused on my research program at the time, I found this message a bit discouraging, because I believed that good teaching was important, and I expected that I would become an effective teacher.

My interview at Hope College conveyed a different impression: Hope was a place where research was encouraged and supported, but good teaching was also valued highly. When I arrived at Hope I discovered that my faculty colleagues took teaching very seriously, and I realized immediately that I could learn a lot from them. For example, Jane Dickie helped me understand the important role of class discussions, and showed me some effective techniques for nurturing small group discussions as well as full-class discussions. John Shaughnessy modeled techniques for pushing students to examine evidence and think critically about behavioral claims. Dave Myers encouraged me to add more visuals to my class presentations, and also encouraged my efforts to harness the power of computer technology in my teaching.

Hope College now has a formal Teaching Enhancement Workshop for all new faculty members. Unfortunately, it was not available when I arrived in 1977. However, each year Hope’s Pre-College Faculty Conference included an extensive session on teaching and learning. One especially influential session in the early 1980s featured the noted educator Parker Palmer, who helped me catch a broader vision of teaching as “creating a space” for learning (or more precisely, “creating a space where obedience to truth is practiced”).

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

Early Challenges

Although I believed that I had some natural abilities as a communicator, my first years of teaching did not go as smoothly as I had expected. I am basically a shy person, and I found that being “on stage” in front of students every day was quite stressful. I had been very comfortable in the role of a student, but it took some time before I became comfortable in the professor’s role. Because I had had no formal training as a teacher, I felt especially insecure about my teaching methods. I tried to improve my skills by reading books and articles on effective teaching.

Fortunately I was able to attend a number of workshops on teaching, including several National Institute for Teaching of Psychology (NITOP) conferences and a very useful Pew conference at Carleton College.

Early in my teaching career I also struggled with issues related to course organization and planning—particularly with the issue of how much content to cover in each class session. I also found it difficult to strike the right balance among lecture, discussion, and demonstration activities. I settled those issues to my satisfaction after about 10 years of teaching, but other issues involving the appropriate methods of evaluating student performance continued into my second decade of teaching.

Evaluation System

Even now I occasionally wonder whether I am doing a fair job of grading student papers and lab reports. But I no longer agonize over the choice of evaluation methods for each course because I have formulated an evaluation system that is keyed to the developmental status of my students as well as to the objectives of the course. In my first-year introduction to psychology course, I administer five exams consisting of multiple-choice questions to assess recognition familiarity with the major principles of psychology and research findings, and use lab reports to assess understanding of basic research methodology. In my developmental psychology course (a second-year course), I use four exams containing a combination of multiple-choice questions and essay questions to test comprehension of course content, and use journal entries to assess performance in an off-campus field placement. In my third-year seminar on adult development and aging, I use two essay exams combined with oral presentations and a literature review paper. Finally, in my senior seminar course there are no exams. Instead, students write integrative essays, make substantial oral presentations, and write a 30-page paper.

Continuing Challenges

Another continuing issue for me is maintaining an appropriate balance among teaching, research, and service (e.g., advising, committee work, and leadership roles in the community and in my academic discipline). I feel a definite tension between teaching and service. During advising week I have a great deal of difficulty keeping up with my classes, and committee work definitely cuts into my time for teaching preparation and grading.

At Hope there is perhaps less conflict between teaching and research than at some other institutions. Empirical research and other scholarly activity is definitely valued and rewarded at Hope, but much of my research has been done in the context of mentoring upper-level undergraduate students, so it really became an extension of my teaching rather than in competition with it. At Hope the psychology professors take turns teaching an advanced research

laboratory course that allows the professor to get teaching credit for doing research in collaboration with a team of students.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

Teaching Principles

Across the years, three general principles have guided my decisions about what to teach, how to teach, and how to interact with my students.

1. *Integrity.* I've tried hard to be honest and fair with my students, and to teach what I really believe to be true about human behavior.
2. *Humility.* I've tried to remind myself and my students that there is a great deal we don't know about human behavior, and that any one person's knowledge and insight is limited.
3. *Common Purpose.* I've tried to engage my students in the shared pursuit of knowledge and understanding to help them see that we are on the same team.

Teaching Style

The field of psychology has evolved over the decades that I've been teaching, and my teaching style has also evolved as I've learned more about psychology and more about teaching. I don't want to exaggerate the changes, but I believe that they have been significant. Here are four examples.

1. *A shift in the balance of lecture and discussion within each class session.* From the beginning of my career I have tried to include occasional class discussions, but over the years I've increased the frequency of these discussions. In a typical course I include several extended discussion periods on controversial topics, and I have added many more brief discussion sessions (perhaps 2 to 4 minutes) on the applications of the principles we are covering in that class period.
2. *A steady increase in my use of technology in the classroom.* During my first two decades of teaching I moved from relying on the chalkboard to a progression of media technology that included filmstrips, slides, overhead transparencies, 16 mm movies, videotapes, videodiscs, PowerPoint™ lecture outlines, CD-ROMs, and DVDs. I'm now moving to class sessions centered around digitally projected video clips and interactive animations programmed in Flash™.
3. *A steady increase in my use of technology in homework assignments.* In 1980 I wrote my first computer activity for student use, and as I became more heavily involved in developing instructional computer activities, I began to understand the power of computer

technology as an aid to instruction. I now frequently assign computer activities that simulate classic experiments or demonstrate complex principles in a self-paced interactive format.

4. *A shift from “covering material” to “problem-based learning” as the focus of each class session.* I’m still in the midst of this transition, but it has already had a major impact on my teaching and the way I see my role as an instructor.

Rewards and Frustrations

I’ve derived substantial rewards from my career as a psychology professor. Perhaps the greatest rewards come from my contact with students—seeing “the light come on” as they catch the excitement of studying human behavior, and then (in the case of our graduate-school bound students) mentoring them as they prepare for careers as professional psychologists.

I’ve also appreciated the opportunity to continue engaging new ideas about behavior, and discussing those ideas with my colleagues at Hope and at professional conferences. It’s difficult to imagine another career that would be as satisfying as the one I have.

But even the best job has times of disappointment and frustration. My greatest frustrations have involved *time pressure*—the constant deadlines for preparing lectures and exams and grading papers. I often feel that, given more time, I could have done more to prepare for a class session or could have spent more time giving feedback on student papers. I’ve also been frustrated and disappointed by individual *students who didn’t connect with the course material*. Fortunately, the new course management technology allows me to keep closer tabs on the progress of each student and to intervene sooner when a student’s performance begins to falter.

Still Learning and Growing

I spend a lot of time preparing for my courses and in reflecting on what I’ve learned from each course. An important part of this process is collecting student evaluations at midterm and at the end of the course. After almost 60 semesters of evaluations, I can predict how most students will respond to the course and to me as an instructor. But I always learn something new from each set of evaluations, and they always make me think about ways I could improve my teaching.

Because I teach the same rotation of courses year after year with similar methods of evaluating student learning, I am able to make comparisons across semesters in both student performance and student satisfaction. When I see major fluctuations on any of these dimensions, I know that it is time to take a close look at what happened that semester to try to identify the reason for the changes in these measures.

I often make notes to myself whenever something goes very well or very badly in a class session. The Moodle course management system <<http://moodle.org>> makes it easy to create a private instructor's journal in which I can store my thoughts about the course. Then, when I set up the next semester's course, these notes flow into that course's area for ready access as I am preparing for each class session.

I've also benefited from periodic peer observations of my teaching. Although it takes courage to invite a colleague into my class, I've gained valuable new insights both from senior faculty members and from my new colleagues fresh from graduate school.

I've tried hard to keep myself aware of trends in pedagogy, especially in terms of new uses of technology. Technology for teaching is a major area of interest for me, so I regularly attend conferences and read books and articles on the topic.

Advice for New Teachers

If there is anything I've learned from 30 years of teaching, it is that there is no magic recipe that will make someone a good teacher. There are many pathways to teaching effectiveness, and many ways to fail. I believe that new faculty members need to evaluate their own individual strengths and weaknesses as communicators, motivators, and classroom administrators, and then find their own unique path to success as an instructor.

However, I do believe that every professor, even those who are seasoned instructors, can find ways to improve. A good place to start would be to explore the many resources available online through STP's Web site <<http://teachpsych.org>>. I also recommend seeking advice from, and perhaps observing, instructors who have a passion for teaching (and they can be found in every college and university). I also believe that I have learned a lot from reflecting on my own teaching (see Ludwig, 2005), and with suitable humility I offer these suggestions:

- Effective teaching requires consistent effort, even on those days when it's hard to get motivated.
- Effective teaching requires planning and organization, coupled with enough flexibility to enable on-the-spot changes to capture the "teachable moment."
- Effective teachers convey enthusiasm and have good communication skills. Every professor could benefit from some time with a speech or drama coach.
- Effective teachers maintain high expectations. They set high standards for themselves and for their students, and hold everyone accountable.
- Effective teachers make appropriate uses of technology. 'Nuf said.
- Effective teachers never stop learning.

Final Thoughts

Across my decades as an academic, I've invested many thousands of hours in research and in teaching. My published work has brought promotion and the respect of my colleagues, but these benefits are small compared to the personal rewards I've derived from teaching.

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Striving for Excellence

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I am currently the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (Interim) at New Jersey City University. I am an associate professor in psychology and will teach full-time beginning Fall 2007. Since completing my doctoral work in psychology at Saint Louis University in May 1998, I have continued to teach on a part-time basis and work in administrative roles as a director of a teaching center, a director of an accelerated weekend-program, and as an assistant dean.

I had the opportunity to attend two exceptional higher educational institutions. For my undergraduate education, I attended and graduated from Washington University in Saint Louis where I majored in economics. I then received my Masters of Social Work from Saint Louis University where I continued my education and later earned my PhD in psychology.

My research interest is in examining classroom process. Specifically I want to better understand the dynamics that take place which result in engaging classroom experiences and how that can inform teaching methodology. One paper I published in collaboration with Dr. James Korn on this subject explored the role of diversity in a summer course that I taught. The paper described my initial fears and concerns as a novice teacher and how I partnered with my students to work collaboratively with them (Lynn, 1999). I remain baffled and teased by how one approach works in one situation and fails in another.

My Early Development as a Teacher

Although the graduate program that I attended did not have a formal teaching program, I was given an abundance of teaching opportunities beginning my second semester of graduate school because I entered the program with a master's degree. By the time I completed my doctoral program, I had taught 17 different subjects including research methods, statistics, developmental psychology, small groups, and learning theory. Class sizes varied from 3 to 250 students. The institutions varied in mission and size. I had the opportunity to teach at a small private institution, a medium size private institution, and later at a large state institution. I taught in day, evening, weekend, and summer programs that were diverse in student body. The terms ranged from 3-week accelerated programs to traditional 15-week semesters. By the time I graduated I knew where I would most likely succeed and be satisfied. I strongly urge all graduate

students not only to seek teaching opportunities but to try to teach at diverse institutions so they can discover the best fit for their talents and aspirations.

Another dimension to my early development as a teacher was scholarship. My mentor, Dr. James Korn, was aggressive in recruiting students to attend and participate in teaching conferences. As a result of his influence, I attended numerous conferences and presented and co-presented papers on topics such as small groups and teaching portfolios. My early engagement in the scholarship of teaching produced two important results. First, I was introduced to a network of outstanding teachers including Drs. Jane Halonen, Drew Appleby, Charles Brewer, and Wilbert McKeachie. All of these individuals truly radiated a love for teaching and took an interest in my teaching career. It was reinforcing to me that these master teachers were so approachable and supportive. The second aspect of conducting research on teaching was that I learned how to integrate research and teaching. No longer were they dichotomous, competing forces.

Although having the opportunities to teach and be involved in the scholarship of teaching helped shape me as a teacher, I also had the chance to take a teaching of psychology course with Dr. Korn. This course had not been offered in our program for a number of years, but due to Dr. Korn's efforts, the psychology department reintroduced this course. In this seminar-style course, Dr. Korn encouraged us to discuss the ups and downs we experienced as novice teachers. We read an array of material on topics such as student-centered discussions, ethics, grading, syllabi, lecturing, and teaching portfolios. By the end of the term, all students had completed a teaching portfolio. Furthermore, I began seeking classroom observation opportunities. Not only did I learn how important it is to be observed, but I was invited to observe faculty across diverse disciplines such as business, health sciences, and psychology. The most important thing I learned from observing faculty was that few were expert lecturers and that it was not unusual to see that what worked for one teacher failed for another. Through such observation I experienced the dynamic flow of the classroom.

Defining Myself as a Teacher

For me, obstacles are the reason we never attain excellence but merely strive for it. I'm always facing obstacles—unmotivated students, under-prepared students, overburdened students, self doubt, etc. In my experience, teaching is filled with obstacles, old and new. When I first began to reflect on what challenges I faced in teaching, I thought of a book entitled *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path*, written by a Buddhist author (Kornfield, 2001). The simple message of this book so effectively communicated in the title is that joy is followed by pain and vice versa. Such has been true for me in my teaching.

Have we not all experienced the joy of teaching when everything seems to come together or when students are so engaged that they don't want to leave when class is over? When it happens we leave inspired and eager for the next class. Unfortunately, we too often discover that we simply can't recreate such experience over and over again. We leave perplexed and disappointed. Accepting that the highs will not last and that troubles will surface has helped me to remain hopeful and motivated as a teacher. I have found that experience is the best teacher in guiding me during these times, especially if I take the time to stop and reflect on the particular class and then trust my judgment as to how to move forward. I used to quickly reference how-to books on teaching when I encountered problems in my teaching. Rarely was this strategy helpful because books often oversimplify the process of teaching and are too often devoid of the complexities of human interaction. Learning to accept the natural cycle of a course and trusting my own instincts and opinions has helped me grow as a teacher.

I wrote this section of this essay last because I feared being negative or discouraging. But what I realize is that in fact it is inspiring. I say so because I know for myself that, despite facing obstacles in my teaching, my commitment to my students and their education grows. I talked to numerous colleagues in preparation of this section to get a perspective outside of my own. What I discovered was that all of my colleagues openly admitted to struggling with a multitude of teaching-related issues, yet their commitment to teaching is still there. All of them agreed that they would never change careers. I believe the commitment to teaching that we have goes beyond enjoying the autonomous professorial lifestyle. I believe it has to do with an increasing sense of responsibility and commitment to our students as human beings. We experience the failures and struggles, yes, but we also experience the satisfaction of helping shape the minds and attitudes of our students. We have the opportunity to help open the world for those who are seeking a new way of being. I believe the joys we experience in the classroom help balance the inevitable negative experiences that we all have as teachers.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

My approach to teaching is guided by my teaching philosophy. I do not believe that one can be comfortable teaching without knowing what one believes, what one values, and what one wants to offer one's students. My teaching philosophy, at this time in my career, contains several components. First, I believe that each teacher has a talent and that no teacher can do everything well. I learned this lesson the hard way over numerous years of failure and frustration. During my graduate training, I was surrounded by excellent teachers. Many were outstanding lecturers with brilliant insights and an ability to craft each class into an art form. I tried hard to mimic them, believing that I could not be a good teacher until I, too, mastered this art. The harder I

worked at crafting the perfect lecture the less effective I became, no matter the class size or subject. The process began to change me in to a tense, judgmental, and impatient person who had no tolerance for the human element in the classroom. Despite the support of my mentors and some kind-hearted students, I just couldn't see what I had to bring to the classroom. Once I learned about different roles that teachers play, I had an "ah ha" moment. I realized that I was a facilitator of student learning and not a lecturer or expert. This insight revolutionized how I structured and delivered my classes. Each of us has a gift and a unique personality that shapes who we are as a teacher.

Closely related to my belief that each of us has a unique gift to offer our students is that I believe that one critical element to good teaching is being genuine. Roger's theory and practice of teaching described in his 1969 book *Freedom to Teach* outlines the importance of being genuine. I don't believe that we can impact other people without our being genuine. We may shape the mind to some degree, but not the life. I believe it is important to operationalize how this value gets played out for me. First, my years of experience as a teacher have provided me with ample feedback as to what I do well and what I don't do so well. I share this information with my students at the beginning of each semester. I let them know that I have terrible handwriting and that this could influence them because I will provide written feedback on their papers. My feedback is important because I give students the opportunity to revise their papers. I invite their help on how to best deal with issues such as this one. One semester my students came up with the idea to use large margins so I have plenty of space to write. On my part, I committed consciously to slowing down when writing. I tell my students that I am creative in constructing a student-centered learning environment and facilitating discussions but that they should not anticipate brilliant lectures. My students agree to do their best to be prepared for classroom discussions, and I agree to plan, to the best of my ability, engaging questions and exercises.

My teaching practices are rooted in my role as a facilitator. As a facilitator, I am not responsible to "feed" information to my students, nor am I responsible to entertain them. My role as a facilitator is to expose my students to rich sources of information, to create diverse learning opportunities, to provide feedback on homework, and to role model a love of learning. An important personal characteristic for me to work continually toward as a facilitator is to understand my students and examine the expectations and judgments that I have of them. I have struggled to adapt to the 21st century student. The students that I have now are not the same kind of students that I had 10 years ago. Unlike the past, I compete with cell phones and headphones. Most of my students attend school full time, work at least one full time job, and are responsible for a family. All have hurried lives and overcrowded schedules. Too many seem to be racing to

the finish line to get their degrees in order to secure a better future. Too often learning for learning's sake seems to be a luxury of the past.

In an effort to adapt to the realities of my students' lives, I've had to work to remain open and to not place my educational values on them. One way that I've adjusted to the changed classroom is that I've built in greater flexibility. For example, I have campus and virtual office hours throughout the week and use several forms of communication. Homework can be submitted through e-mail, hard copy, or fax. I allow students to do as many revisions of their assignments as they want and I assign diverse types of course requirements. Both give students an opportunity to do their best while balancing their life's demands. Students seem to relax once they understand these processes; more importantly, I believe my efforts to be flexible helps build trust and openness in my relationship with them.

Advice for New Teachers

I know that what is meaningful must be experienced directly. Reading the words of another has limited value. I offer my few tips in hopes that they will resonate with readers and help them along the way.

First, enjoy the process of teaching. If you become attached only to the outcomes of a particular class or course, you will lose some of the joy of teaching. You will cut yourself off from a very enriching, dynamic process that takes place in the classroom and through your communication and connection with your students. Second, free yourself to be you. I found a tremendous amount of freedom when I accepted my limitations and focused on my strengths. Third, don't overload your semester and expect to be effective in the classroom. You must decide if you want to devote the time required to be a good teacher and then protect your time like it is a precious treasure. Fourth, although we may find well-written books on teaching to be inspiring, you won't become a good teacher simply by reading them. Becoming a good teacher, like any other goal, requires time, patience, reflection, and experience. Expect things not to turn out as planned, despite your hard efforts, but expect magical moments to surface even when you did not plan for them.

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You Never Know For Whom You Toil...

Jim Matiya

Moraine Valley Community College

North Central College

I love to teach psychology. I did my first teaching at Carl Sandburg High School (CSHS), where I stayed for 34 years! I received my BS in psychology from Illinois State University, in Bloomington, IL, and an MA in family therapy from California State University at Los Angeles. In those 34 years, I developed the first psychology course ever taught at CSHS, followed by psychology II (a project-oriented course), which led to the development of an Advanced Placement (AP) psychology course. I have also taught at Lewis University and for the Illinois Virtual High School. Currently I am teaching at Moraine Valley Community College where I have taught intermittingly for 22 years. I am **also teaching at** North Central College in Naperville, IL.

In 2001, I was nominated for the prestigious Golden Apple Award, which is given annually to 10 teachers in the Chicagoland area for their teaching excellence. In 2003, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) named me the recipient of the Moffett Memorial Award. I was humbled by the letters of recommendation from students, parents, and fellow outstanding teachers such as David Myers, Martin Bolt, Bill Addison, Bob Stahl, Karen Huffman, and Phil Zimbardo.

In his APA presidential address, George Miller (1969) urged that we should give psychology away. The outstanding teachers who recommended me for the Moffett Award really understood what he meant. They taught me so much about psychology and life. They probably don't know just how much they have influenced me, which reminds me of a quote by Dr. David Viscott "You never know for whom you toil; who will reap the benefit of your work, who will grow in the nurturing of your giving or, who will respond to your being or having been. All you can do is commit yourself to a dream, work hard, and, act like someone who is the way you want to be." People such as Myers, Bolt, Addison, Stahl, Huffman, and Zimbardo have always given psychology away, to teachers such as me and in turn, to my students. That is why I appreciate them so much and try to emulate their efforts.

I've tried to share what I learned about the teaching of psychology in many ways. I have written or co-authored over 20 articles about psychology. I have been a consultant for three of

the four major high school psychology textbooks, and I have also written, edited, or consulted on 20 different high school and college textbooks. I am the author of five books: *Creating a Psychology Fair* (1998), *Advanced Placement Psychology Correlation Guide for the 16th* (2002) and *17th* (2005) editions of Gerrig and Zimbardo's

Psychology and Life, *Psychology* (2004), and *Advanced Psychology* (2004) for TeachingPoint.com. These books have archived many of my lesson plans, projects, PowerPoint™ presentations, and other supportive materials from teaching psychology and Advanced Psychology as well as from conferences and workshops I have conducted.

Of course, none of these accomplishments mean a thing without the enduring love, devotion, patience and understanding from my wife, Sue, and our children, Mike and Alissa. They understand my passion for the teaching of psychology. They tolerate my foolishness and giggling when I received hundreds of sponge brains from a friend, or when I requested and received Chiquita banana labels that say "Brain Fuel." They worry about our garage space when it becomes the workshop where I paint, glue, and assemble special distorting vision goggles for other teachers. Once, Sue did not see the goggles on the garage floor and drove over them! Friends of our children and neighbors would come over to our house just to try on the "weird" goggles I made in our garage.

My Early Development as a Teacher

Student teaching in Peoria was the only real preparation I had for my career as a teacher. My major criticism from my advisor was that I sat on a desktop while teaching. That was the worst thing I did?

I was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. So, in January 1972, in order to fulfill my military obligation for 24 months, I was assigned to teach psychology at Carl Sandburg High School and work as a custodian (janitor) during the summer. However, Sandburg High School did not have a psychology course, but it did offer a Family Living course in the Home Economics Department. I was given a room key, chalk, access to a ditto machine, and told to teach the course. Next door was a child care room and before long, my students were observing and taking notes about the little children in the program. Thirty years later, one of my students recalled "It was great! We were doing psychology and didn't even know it!" Later, I was transferred to the Social Studies Department to start a psychology course. Eventually I got a room-set of *Psychology: Its Principles and Application* (1974) textbooks authored by Roy Engle and Lou Snellgrove. This was nirvana!

My development as a teacher was strongly influenced by several teachers. I have never been completely satisfied with just reading the text and preparing for class, so, I turned to Roy

Engle and Lou Snellgrove asking their advice about different strategies to use in the classroom and about information in the text. That was the beginning of a 20-year friendship with these two men. In the mid 1970s they began a nation-wide survey about high school psychology, and they asked if I would help.

At that time, Bob Stahl was at the University of Florida and was writing some articles about high school psychology. I asked Bob to help us because he was a meticulous writer with a research background. In 1976, Bob, Lou, Roy and I gave a presentation at the American Psychological Association convention on the status of high school psychology based on the surveys we conducted. Several years later, Bob became President of the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) and was responsible for starting the Psychology Special Interest Group (SIG). After that, and for 20 years, Dale Kinney (Ralston High School, Omaha, Nebraska) and I were the co-chairs of the Psychology SIG group and published a newsletter with activities and suggestions for teachers. In 1993, we invited Lou Snellgrove to the NCSS preconference workshop in Nashville. To our surprise and delight, he gave everyone a 175-page document on building and using inexpensive psychological equipment! Lou was always willing to share his ideas with others.

Later, Bob and I would co-author several articles including one in which students wrote letters to psychologists cited in their textbooks (Matiya & Stahl, 1991). High school students wrote to over 100 prominent psychologists and asked them to identify the most important ideas in the discipline. The students received a large number of thoughtful letters, photographs, and reprints in return, allowing them a personal view of people and research in psychology.

Another special person who has shaped and influenced me as a teacher throughout all these psychology lessons and activities was Jonni Kincher, the author of *Psychology for Kids I (1990)* and *II (1995)*. Although she was not a mentor in any formal sense, she encouraged me to have my students do more hands-on activities. Her books emphasized the ideas that children understand that learning is fun, they need to learn and use the scientific method, and they need to think critically in order to evaluate any information they collect.

These four people, Roy Engle, Lou Snellgrove, Bob Stahl, and Jonni Kincher have played major roles in my development as a teacher of psychology. Their ideas have changed who I am and how I teach. They taught me to psychology give away.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

The path of a high school psychology teacher is filled with obstacles. One particular obstacle that I have faced has been my identity as psychology teacher. People have asked me “Isn’t psychology where you just play games?” and “Isn’t psychology just common sense?” You

know all we psychology teachers really want is a pat on the back by the principal who doesn't have the slightest idea what we do in class.

Another obstacle for me was the sheer shortage of psychology-related materials for use in the high school psychology classroom. When I started teaching high school psychology the only book that was available was Engle and Snellgrove text and its accompanying workbook. With the advent of the AP program, more publishers developed materials that could be used in high school, but until recently, they were never as sophisticated nor had as many ancillary supplements as college texts did.

One final obstacle I also faced was letting administrators, teachers, and students understand what we did in psychology. I decided to create a Psychology Fair to let other teachers and administrators know what psychology teachers teach in their classrooms. During it, students select a particular demonstration, experiment, or survey to serve as the central topic in a "mini lesson" that they present to another student. Students conduct these mini-lessons with students from other classes in the school and collect data on their demonstration, experiment, or survey. The Psychology Fair was successful because it helped other teachers and administrators (including the principal) to understand what psychology is and how we teach it. We even had evening sessions during the Psychology Fair so that parents and families could attend! One colleague complimented me by noting that, more psychology teachers have 'stolen' and used your ideas and materials than they've stolen from anyone else in the country.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

I have always thought of the interaction between a teacher and students as a dance. In a typical classroom of the past, we found the teacher led and the students followed, sort of like Lorenz and his ducklings. Today, this description is not always true. Nowadays, there seems to more of a give and take between teachers and their students. The teacher gives guidance and support to the students. Then, at some point in the lesson, the students take over and the teacher follows the students' initiatives.

"You never know for whom you toil;
Who will reap the benefit of your work,
Who will grow in the nurturing of your giving
Or, who will respond to your being or having been.
All you can do is commit yourself to a dream, work hard,
And, act like someone who is the way you want to be."

This quote by David Viscott, which I also noted at the outset of this essay, has guided and prepared me every time I walked in into a classroom. I can be prepared each day. I can create

meaningful learning situations for my students. I can make sure the activity is appropriate to the material being learned. I can take risks and prepare different activities every time I teach. I can always look for newer and better ways of encouraging learning is what I do all the time in order to be fresh and excited about the material.

I have tried several different approaches to my teaching, but I keep on returning to active learning—involving students with activities that teach more than just what is in the book. It involves implementing meaningful activities that generate data and careful analysis and interpretation of those results. Such activities are very useful in encouraging students to think critically about their work in my classes.

In the end, teachers need to change, adapt, and move forward with their lessons, never forgetting that they are still dealing with adolescents who are still in the process of growing and developing physically, socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively. Teachers need to learn to communicate clearly with their students and to a large extent, trust them as young adults.

Advice for New Teachers

New teachers should seek out other enthusiastic teachers for help and advice on curriculum development, lesson plans, and classroom strategies. One way is to join two organizations that are most helpful: the Psychology Special Interest Group (Psych-SIG) within NCSS, and APA's Teachers of Psychology in the Secondary Schools (TOPSS). Another excellent organization for teachers is to join is STP (APA Division 2). New teachers, as well as more experienced teachers, should also attend teaching conferences where they can learn the latest classroom techniques, the latest curriculum developments, and classroom strategies. These organizations and conferences not only provide teachers with a bountiful array of useful teaching resources, they also provide opportunities to meet like-minded teachers who are interested in honing their craft. Indeed, becoming active in professional organizations and conventions is a sure step toward healthy professional growth.

In addition, there are online opportunities to help teachers, such as electronic “bulletin boards” where one can ask for advice about lesson plans, activities, and book suggestions from several hundred high school and college teachers who understand what you are trying to do in your classroom! Three excellent electronic discussion lists are PSYCH-NEWS (LISTSERV@LISTSERV.UH.EDU), PsychTeach (listserv@list.kennesaw.edu), and TIPS (Teaching in the Psychological Sciences; <<http://acsun.frostburg.edu/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=tips>>) There is a tremendous wealth of information out there and many wonderful people who want to help young teachers get a solid start on their teaching.

Final Thoughts

Teaching psychology has always been very special to me. It is a field of study that integrates many different pieces of the puzzle that contribute to who and what we are as individuals. I am always looking for the best ways to communicate and express these ideas in psychology. I owe everything to the people who influenced me the most. They probably don't understand how much they influenced me and my teaching because none of us understand for whom we toil....

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Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn

Joseph A. Mayo
Gordon College

After completing liberal arts coursework at a two-year branch campus of Pennsylvania State University, I earned my bachelor's degree in the double major of psychology and political science at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduation in 1981, I was awarded the Arlen G. and Louise Stone Swiger Doctoral Fellowship as part of my acceptance into the doctoral program in educational psychology at West Virginia University. I completed my master's degree there in 1983 and doctorate in 1987.

For several years after receiving my master's degree, I was employed full time as an educational supervisor in a social services setting, while concurrently teaching undergraduate psychology courses on a part-time basis at a nearby four-year college in northwestern Pennsylvania. After leaving my job as educational supervisor, I held a one-year administrative faculty post at a private liberal-arts institution in South Carolina as I continued to teach adjunct at both four-year college and university settings.

I am presently professor of psychology at Gordon College, where I have served in a combination of administrative faculty and teaching positions since 1989. Gordon College is a two-year unit of the University System of Georgia with burgeoning baccalaureate-degree programs in early childhood education, nursing, and the liberal arts. In addition to teaching multiple sections of both introductory psychology and life-span developmental psychology each semester, I have opportunities to teach other psychology courses such as applied psychology, psychology of adjustment, and special topics in psychology (e.g., historical foundations of psychology).

My ongoing research on pedagogical applications has been published in various peer-reviewed journals, including *Teaching of Psychology*, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *Constructivism in the Human Sciences*, and the *Southeastern Journal of Psychology*. I also present at regional and national teaching conferences, serve as guest speaker for teaching workshops, and contribute to the *Psychology Teacher Network* (the quarterly newsletter published by the American Psychological Association's (APA) Education Directorate). Based on my ongoing commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning, I was chosen the recipient

of the 2003 Board of Regents' Research in Undergraduate Education Award for two-year and state colleges throughout the University System of Georgia. More recently, I was selected by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology to receive its 2005 Two-Year College Teaching Excellence Award. In April of 2005, I was appointed by the APA's Board of Educational Affairs to the Task Force for Strengthening the Teaching and Learning of Undergraduate Psychological Sciences, which is charged with bridging the gap between the *National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology* (APA, 1999) and the *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes* (APA, 2002).

My Early Development as a Teacher

During my freshman and sophomore years as an undergraduate, I remained a liberal arts major, although I was drawn to multiple history courses taught by the same professor, Dr. Eugene Miller. Dr. Miller took a broad conceptual approach to teaching history, linking events across time by exploring the social, political, economic, and personal significance of historical milestones from the dual perspective of the times in which they occurred and within the context of the contemporary world. In this way, Dr. Miller "brought history to life," de-emphasizing rote learning in favor of real-world situations, which pushed students in the direction of more meaningful application and synthesis of knowledge. Dr. Miller's efforts represented a concerted lesson in authentic teaching and learning that resonates loudly in my own instructional methodologies.

My first personal experiences with teaching at the college level came in my undergraduate junior year while I participated in a work-study program. Based on my earlier performance in his educational psychology class, my work-study supervisor, Dr. Donald Camplese, assigned me a measure of responsibility in the design and implementation of this same course. As my first teaching mentor, Dr. Camplese guided and encouraged me, but at the same time he allowed me the freedom to mine the breadth and depth of a "teaching assistantship" early in my academic preparation. He also involved me in his classroom-based research, culminating in my co-authorship of a methods and techniques article appearing in a 1982 issue of *Teaching of Psychology*. These formative intellectual experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, solidified my growing interest in becoming a college educator.

Another seminal influence on my subsequent career as a college teacher was Dr. John Baird, who taught me undergraduate life-span developmental psychology. As part of his course requirements, Dr. Baird assigned a Life Analysis project in which students analyzed their individual lives in theoretical terms over both its historical and hypothetical span. This project was the most inherently rewarding assignment that I had completed up to this point in my

undergraduate education. As a testament to the powerful impact of this assignment in shaping the future direction of my own instructional methodology, I have modified, extended, and empirically tested the pedagogical efficacy of the Life Analysis in teaching introductory life-span development for more than two decades.

My graduate training in educational psychology was slanted heavily toward learning and development with a quantitative emphasis. Under the capable tutelage of Dr. Richard Walls, my major professor in both the master's and doctoral programs, I had the opportunity to complete numerous courses and research projects that were invaluable in my preparation for teaching. In my mind, Dr. Walls remains the consummate model of the teacher-scholar, exceeding lofty research expectations at his university while maintaining a genuine passion and enthusiasm for classroom teaching. By example, he taught me how to balance the competing demands placed on college educators, without sacrificing total dedication to classroom success in the process.

Although I had decided as far back as my junior year of college that I wanted to attend graduate school, even after completing my graduate preparation I remained uncertain about the precise level of college teaching to which I aspired. In searching for my first full-time college teaching job, I interviewed at two-year, four-year, and university institutions. Despite attractive job offers elsewhere, I accepted a tenure-track position at a junior college. Why? Despite the fact that my parents stressed the value of education, neither of them had the opportunity to attend college. As a first-generation college student with limited financial resources, my initial exposure to higher education came at a two-year college environment. With caring and accessible professors and generally small class sizes, my educational experiences there rated among the very best in my college years. This lasting favorable impression motivated me to accept a junior-college faculty position where I hoped to make positive contributions to future generations of college students with personal backgrounds similar to my own.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

Particularly relevant to the open-access junior college environment where I have worked over the past 18 years, the biggest challenge in undergraduate teaching continues to be formulating an approach to pedagogy that accommodates for the wide range of aptitudes, interests, and commitment to learning evidenced among my students. In addressing this concern, I have reached a delicate balance between seemingly dichotomous viewpoints. On the one hand, I take nothing for granted when it comes to the entry-level skills of my students. Even when my students have completed introductory psychology as a prerequisite to taking a more advanced psychology class, on important concepts I do my best to avoid saying: "As you already know from introductory psychology ...". Instead, I try to flesh out from them what they know and what

they don't, and then take the time necessary to fill in their knowledge gaps. On the other hand, I hold my students to realistically high performance standards, encouraging them to succeed and offering my guidance to those who are willing to seize the opportunity. I emphasize from the first day of class onward that they must assume *personal responsibility* for their academic success, even though I am always available to assist those who expend the effort to succeed. As I explain to them, I hope that they will learn in my classes because of something I do, but it is more important that they learn because of something *they* do.

For a decade beginning in the late 1980s, my work schedule combined administrative and teaching responsibilities in the sequential capacities of assistant dean at a four-year institution followed by division chair and then interim dean of the faculty at my present junior college. Aspiring to teaching excellence in the face of significant administrative demands on my time made it difficult for me to accomplish everything I wanted to in my classes. Consequently, in the late 1990s I made the then-difficult decision to relinquish all of my administrative duties in favor of moving back into the classroom on a full-time basis. I have never regretted this decision.

Although the emphasis at my junior college is on teaching five classes per semester and engaging in various types of institutional service and outreach efforts, I have still carved out considerable time in recent years to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The primary aim of my research is to examine empirically the instructional efficacy of authentic teaching applications in the context of my own classes. Rather than approach my research activities as an added and unnecessary professional burden, I have embraced the perspective that they stimulate my intellectual curiosity and creative energies, enhance my pedagogical effectiveness, and allow my students to ultimately benefit from exposure to instructional strategies that have undergone rigorous testing. I have come to view my heavy teaching load as a plus in that it provides me with plentiful opportunities to investigate new teaching and learning techniques systematically with a large and generally receptive student audience.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

At the heart of my teaching philosophy lies the belief that students hold the potential to be “architects of knowledge” in real-world contexts. This view is consistent with a constructivist educational perspective that stresses the co-active importance of self-discovery and life experiences throughout the learning process. From a cognitively and socially centered constructivist stance, learners actively and interactively formulate changes in their understanding by integrating new knowledge with knowledge already present in long-term memory.

As my teaching career has unfolded, I find that I am increasingly willing to afford students opportunities to go beyond the conceptual applications that I offer in class. I routinely

push my students to search for personally relevant illustrations of psychological principles being applied in their own lives and in the lives of others. For instance, I recommend that while they are taking notes, they should write down the everyday life examples that I provide in class, discover the psychological principles underlying each example, and leave a blank space in their notes next to each topic to include one or more examples of their own creation later. I explain to my students that if they cannot think of examples on their own, they are merely memorizing information in place of understanding the practical applications and implications of important concepts.

Although I have always believed that my course grades should reflect behaviorally stated student competencies instead of glorified indications of rote learning, I have moved progressively closer in recent years to the comprehensive use of authentic assessment in my classes. Authentic assessment is direct and performance-based, requiring students to demonstrate proficiency by actually *doing* something in contexts that replicate the priorities and challenges faced in daily life. Teaching and learning are integrated in the practice of authentic assessment (Mueller, 2003). At the same time that students learn to encounter real-life problems and teachers facilitate this process of authentic task involvement, the insights and solutions offered by students gauge their abilities to learn on a deeper and more applied conceptual level. Each rooted firmly in the constructivist pedagogical tradition, among the authentic teaching and learning applications that I have successfully implemented in my classes are journal writing and life-story narration (e.g., Mayo, 2003), case-based instruction (e.g., Mayo, 2004b), analogical reasoning (e.g., Mayo, 2001), concept mapping (e.g., Mayo, 2005), dialogue and role playing (e.g., Mayo, 2002), peer critique (e.g., Mayo, 2006), and the repertory grid technique (e.g., Mayo, 2004a) as grounded in Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory.

Advice for New Teachers

Unfortunately, there is no cookbook formula for becoming a successful teacher. Every teacher is different in personality and instructional style, and every teaching environment holds its own special advantages and challenges. Nonetheless, drawing from my own reflective classroom experiences over the past 25 years, I will offer several pragmatic suggestions toward pursuing excellence.

Avoid Procrastination

Use mental imagery to battle procrastination. One image that I have conjured up many times involves the thought of chilly water in an outdoor pool at the start of swim season. There are two ways to approach the dilemma of how to enter the water. You can submerge your big toe and then agonizingly proceed to your feet, ankles, shins, knees, thighs, and if you're really brave,

your upper torso. Or, you can simply jump into the pool head first, and after a short while spent adjusting to the chilly conditions, the water will start to feel warmer. This latter image captures the sequence of events that we likely encounter when we “jump right into” tackling a challenging teaching task and soon realize that it wasn’t so daunting after all.

As we often suggest to our students, we can also break down large jobs into a series of smaller, more manageable ones. For example, if we have 50 research papers to grade over a 5-day period (say, Wednesday through Sunday), we could consider grading an average of 10 a day instead of cramming all of our grading into one marathon session over the weekend.

We can also avoid procrastination to the extent that we are action oriented. We can actually *do* something, not just *think about doing* it. For example, in an ongoing journal, we might record every instance of a teaching-related task that we have completed successfully. Our journal record will then serve as verifiable and self-motivating evidence that we are doers. At the same time, this record of accomplishments can also double as an invaluable source of information in composing self-evaluations as part of our annual, promotion, tenure, or post-tenure performance appraisals.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

Too many teachers (especially those at the start of their careers) obsess over the details of classroom life. “Was anyone sleeping during class?” “Did everyone catch the drift of today’s lecture or class activity?” We should accept the facts that (a) we can’t control *everything* that goes on in our classes; (b) the only person we *can* control is ourselves; and (c) we can’t please *everyone*. The best we can hope for with our students is that the majority of them are self-motivated, enjoy our classes, and comprehend course content.

Learn From Our Students

Realize that in the process of teaching, learning is a two-way street. Yes, our students will ideally learn much from us; however, listen closely to our students. We can learn a great deal from them if we are receptive to the possibilities, which include adopting a fresh outlook on the same old material, gleaning an intriguing idea for a new class assignment, or gaining a novel insight into a pre-existing dilemma.

Revel in the Unexpected

We should look for unexpected developments that lift our classes beyond what we had originally planned. As examples, the unexpected might manifest itself in an unusually fruitful class discussion or a thought-provoking personal anecdote offered by a student at a critical juncture in class.

Seize the Moment

We should not dwell too long on the past—what happened in yesterday’s classes is old news. Similarly, we shouldn’t live too far into the future—we can easily get caught up in the trap of thinking that the ultimate classroom successes are out *there* somewhere, dangling elusively yet intoxicatingly just within reach. Rather, we should learn to seize the moment: We will always hold the power *right now* to create our teaching successes for ourselves.

Challenge Ourselves

As a classroom teacher, we shouldn’t become a creature of comfort, tradition, or habit. Instead, we should push ourselves toward something new and different in our teaching. We shouldn’t be afraid to take some risks. After all, the real risk is gravitating in the direction of stifling inertia in our teaching.

Learn from Successful Role Models

Our role models should do more than inspire us. We should strive to uncover what exactly our mentors did (and how they did it) that translates into classroom successes. We should pose probing questions to our mentors and ask them to critique our classes, and observe theirs. Following in our mentors’ footsteps we learn to adapt their strategies for success in our own classes.

Expand Our Knowledge Base

We should never stop learning. We should continue to take college courses, attend teaching conferences and continuing education workshops, and read everything on instructional content and methodology on which we can get our hands. We should research our classroom practices, and learn from and share the results with our colleagues as our unique contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Final Thoughts

Teaching is profession filled with both triumphs and tribulations. If we aspire to teach as an avocation more so than as a job, we should never lose sight of the many intrinsically rewarding aspects of our work. We should commit to discover the “natural highs” in our work that we need to get and stay motivated as a teacher. When work serves as its own reward, it isn’t that hard to derive ongoing intrinsic motivation that holds the likely potential to translate into a personally enriching and successful teaching career.

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Nothing More Than a University Professor Engaged in Teaching, Research, and Service: Nor Less

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My official title is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Davis. In 1970 I earned my BA in psychology from Occidental College, a small liberal arts institution in Los Angeles. I did my graduate work in the social psychology program at Harvard University, earning my MA and PhD there in 1973 and 1975, respectively. I taught at the University of Arkansas for 2 years before becoming an assistant professor at my current university in 1976. Hence, I have now taught at UCD for over 30 years. I have been fortunate to earn numerous awards for both research and teaching. Among the research awards are the William James Book Award and the George A. Miller Outstanding Article Award both from the Society for General Psychology (Division 1 of the American Psychological Association), the Theoretical Innovation Prize from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (APA Division 8), the Rudolf Arnheim Award for Outstanding Achievement in Psychology and the Arts from the Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts (APA Division 10), the Sir Francis Galton Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Study of Creativity from the International Association of Empirical Aesthetics, and the Award for Excellence in Research from the Mensa Education and Research Foundation. Teaching honors include the Magnar Ronning Award for Teaching Excellence of the Associated Students at the University of California, Davis, the Distinguished Teaching Award of the Academic Senate of the University of California, Davis Division, the UC Davis Prize for Teaching and Scholarly Achievement of the UC Davis Foundation, and the Robert S. Daniel Award for Four Year College/University Teaching from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. I have also engaged in many other activities associated with my teaching career. For example, I have delivered talks on teaching before diverse audiences, both intramural and extramural, and have published on the subject in various venues, including publications directed at students.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I did not receive any special instruction for teaching in graduate school. Harvard faculty members are far more interested in research than teaching. In fact, at present not a single Harvard professor belongs to the Society for the Teaching of Psychology! Consequently, the program had

no formal course devoted to instruction. Except for serving as a teaching assistant in some courses and some guest lectures, I did nothing to prepare myself for a significant responsibility of my current occupation. In addition, I did not have any mentors who helped me toward my teaching career. Mentoring at graduate school was again strongly directed toward research. Except for watching my own teachers teach, and trying to glean what I could from those implicit demonstrations, teaching instruction was minimal.

Even worse, I had somewhat less training than most graduate students. I entered Harvard with two fellowships that paid tuition and living expenses for four full years: a National Science Foundation Fellowship designed to support promising scientists and a Danforth Foundation Fellowship designed to support promising teachers. The former I used my first two years, the latter my last two years. As an unfortunate consequence of this ample support was that I had no need to earn money as a teaching assistant. Indeed, it was not until the end of my graduate training that I was even allowed to assume any responsibilities besides full-time study. That meant that I missed out on a lot of the implicit instructional training that most students experience in graduate school.

If I lacked any formal training and had no teaching mentors, then how did I manage to teach myself to become a competent teacher? I cannot address this issue without first discussing the factors that led me to the decision to become a university teacher. I believe that the critical developmental factor was that I was the first born in my family—and with three younger siblings. Very early in my life I acquired many opportunities to assume the role often occupied by the eldest: the proxy parent, the teacher, the mentor. Later on, after I became interested in science, I began to expand my circle of “students” beyond the immediate family. I would enthrall various neighborhood kids with scientific demonstrations—the most popular being chemistry experiments in which solutions changed color, liquids fizzed over, and bottles exploded. Later still, when I started taking chemistry in high school, I began to fantasize about teaching the same subject at the same level. In fact, I originally entered college with a major in chemistry and with the aspiration of getting a secondary-level teaching credential. Through a number of significant encounters—all mediated by my teachers—I ended up as a psychology major who wanted to become a professor at a liberal arts college.

Once I had made the decision to become a teacher I began to observe my teachers more carefully. What did my favorite instructors do to earn my admiration? What did my least preferred teachers do to receive my condemnation? Of course, mere observation was not sufficient to answer these questions. In the absence of formal training or mentoring, nothing can substitute for direct experience in the classroom. Once I began teaching full time, I began to

learn the teaching ins and outs or dos and don'ts by the clumsy but simple process of trial and error. It is for this reason that the quality of my teaching has gradually improved over the years. I certainly did not start out as an excellent instructor. It was an expertise that had to be cultivated over decades of teaching. That learning process continues to this day.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

Because I have maintained a highly productive research program in which I have averaged around 10 publications per year, establishing myself as an excellent instructor was not easy. To some extent teaching and research responsibilities constitute a “zero-sum game,” which is especially the case at a research university like UC Davis where the expectations are explicitly “publish or perish.” As noted earlier, my original aspiration was to become a professor at a liberal arts institution where the expectations were “teach or topple.” This was merely an extension of teaching ambitions going back to high school. It was not until graduate school that I chanced upon a set of empirical and theoretical problems that could inspire a career of scientific research. As a result, the opportunities afforded by a research university began to look more attractive, and the bulk of my job applications were aimed at such institutions. This shift in career goal had a direct repercussion on my teaching aspirations. Because I had to publish lots of articles in the best journals in order to secure tenure, my growth as a teacher was very slow. That is not to say that I was a bad or mediocre instructor. Even at a major research university a young faculty member has to establish teaching competence! Rather, it was simply the case that there were no strong incentives to put as much effort in teaching as I was doing in research.

Accordingly, only after I was promoted to associate professor could I begin to invest more time in improving my teaching performance. And that self-improvement effort accelerated even more after I was promoted to full professor. Nevertheless, these promotions were not the sole factors contributing to a shift in emphasis. More crucial was a change in how I perceived my career goals. No longer was the object to become an excellent teacher or an excellent researcher. On the contrary, my aim had expanded to a much more inclusive end—to become an excellent university *professor*. That shift meant that my responsibilities had to expand even more. In addition to teaching and research I had to broaden my service activities at all levels, whether the department, college, university, profession, or community. In short, the goal was to pursue a truly balanced academic life. This choice may seem to aggravate the supposed zero-sum game: Time allotted to service must detract from time assigned to either teaching or research. Yet this conflict only holds if one loses sight of the fact that a university professor must be accomplished in all three areas. Even the weakest link must be strong.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

Under this heading I should address five distinct questions: (a) how my approach to teaching has changed over the course of my academic career?; (b) what are the rewards and frustrations of teaching?; (c) how my teaching is evaluated?; (d) how I go about improving my teaching?; and (e) what is my philosophy of teaching?

1. How has my approach to teaching changed over the course of my academic career? As mentioned earlier, one of the main changes is the linkage of teaching with research and service. I have learned to see all three activities as essential parts of one enterprise—that of being a well-rounded university professor. Nevertheless, it is critical to specify that this linkage is more than a simple matter of making sure that one spends comparable amounts of time on each activity. Teaching, research, and service should be integrated as much as possible. The greater is the degree of that integration, the more the three responsibilities become mutually reinforcing rather than competitive. For instance, I have involved more than 300 students in my research, providing them with first-hand experience with the process of creating new knowledge. At the same time, many of these students have made indispensable contributions to some of my best work. Likewise, many of my service activities have positive consequences for both teaching and research. Consider the inconvenient chore of providing reviews for submitted manuscripts and grant proposals. During the course of my career I have averaged more than 16 evaluations per year. Besides fulfilling a professional obligation, I believe that these assessments enhance both my research and my teaching. By staying at the leading edge of research in my field I am ensuring that I remain up-to-date as both teacher and researcher.

2. What do I find are the rewards and frustrations of teaching? For me, teaching's greatest reward is to see students get excited about new ideas. This may take the form of questions during lectures that show a spark of curiosity or wonder, comments in discussions that display unexpected insights, or passages in essay exams or term papers that reveal an unusual enthusiasm for the material. So my greatest frustration is when I experience none of these things—when a student just asks “will we have to know this on the exam?” or doses off in discussion sections or regurgitates back knowledge only half-digested. So much of my effort as a teacher is devoted to increasing the rewards and decreasing the frustrations. Consequently, I have tried out all kinds of instructional techniques to make the course material more interesting and engaging. To illustrate one of my distinctive tactics, I have accumulated an extensive wardrobe of T-shirts to go with each one of my lectures. To stimulate curiosity, the connection is seldom immediately obvious, so that students are obliged to listen carefully until the rationale for the specifically selected apparel is finally revealed. Thus, in my lecture on British evolutionists in

the History of Psychology it is not until I begin the biography of Charles Darwin that they realize why I'm wearing a shirt carrying the visage of Abraham Lincoln (in sunglasses, no less).

3. How do I evaluate my teaching? Any answer must begin with student evaluations. Fortunately, the department where I work has created an extremely detailed questionnaire by which students assess my teaching—assessments that cannot be ignored. Then there are other forms of useful information, such as the students' performance on tests, assignments, and discussion as well as the questions they raise in class or during office hours. Although these kinds of feedback are most instructive for immediate improvements in teaching performance, another variety of feedback is far more valuable for telling me that I have really hit the mark—the messages from former students who, many years later, express gratitude for your teaching efforts. A bona fide example from my personal file is the airmail letter from Israel that read “I was resting on my tractor trying to think: Who have been the most influential people in my 17 years of school? Which figures in my academic career have remained so vivid? All I could think of is Simonton.” Mementos like this more than makes up for the dozens of students who never took advantage of what I was trying to offer. They document that my teaching has become a lasting part of my students' lives.

4. How do I go about improving my teaching? Well, I try out everything. I am constantly testing new techniques and technologies, new ways of organizing the material or making a particular point. Some of these innovations I come up with on my own whereas others I acquire from external sources, such as the journal *The Teaching of Psychology*. Occasionally, I live to regret the implementation of a novel instructional approach, but most of the time the result is some increment, however small, to my teaching effectiveness. I believe that there are more hits than misses largely because the mere act of introducing a new method serves to revitalize my treatment of the material. It is much like the famed Hawthorne Effect in industrial psychology where a workplace intervention has a positive effect just because there was an intervention in the first place.

5. What is my philosophy of teaching? Although this question is frequently asked, I have often wondered about the rationale for raising such an issue. Scientists are seldom asked about their “philosophy of research”—or even about their philosophy of science. Those who are most engaged in doing top-flight science are least likely interested in philosophizing about their activities, whereas those who are most involved in such abstract contemplations are less disposed to conduct scientific research. A similar disjunction occurs in the area of service. Departmental chairs and college deans are seldom expected to report their “philosophy of service,” and I doubt that most would be able to provide a decent answer if it were posed to them. Those who could

provide elaborate intellectualizations are probably spending too little time on the nuts and bolts of their administrative responsibilities. Besides, what answer can surpass a very simple one: To do the best job possible? No matter what activity I am involved in—whether teaching, research, or service—I always ask myself “Why not the best?” To be sure, teaching will impose constraints on research, research will place restrictions on service, and service will necessitate some compromises in teaching. So the university professor is required to optimize all three contributions simultaneously rather than piecemeal. Hence, the real criterion should be: How can I maximize my contributions as a professor of psychology at a research university? If that counts as a teaching philosophy, then I have one. If not, then I do not.

Advice for New Teachers

Would I have any advice for someone who wanted to become an excellent teacher? Part of the answer has already been touched upon in previous sections. Be willing to experiment and remain open to new possibilities. Learn from the experiences and recommendations of other teachers, such as printed in various publications, including the two volumes of *The Teaching of Psychology in Autobiography*. Yet at the same time remain aware that what works for others may not work for you, and visa-versa. Moreover, what might be effective in one course may be ineffective in another. In fact, what worked for you when you are young may not work when you are older, and thus the optimal teaching tactics must constantly evolve during the course of your career. Most importantly, what works for one kind of student or institution may not work for another. In particular, the opportunities and challenges are contingent on whether the instructor is teaching at a high school, a community college, a liberal arts college, or a research university. Each educational environment represents a unique niche into which each teacher must discern the optimal route to instructional improvement.

Final Thoughts

Apropos of the comment that closed the last section, I should observe that most of the teachers invited to contribute to this autobiographical series are employed at institutions where the priority is placed squarely on teaching rather than research. No doubt only a small percentage of authors besides me can list more than 300 scientific publications on their curriculum vitae. And I am certainly among the few chapter authors who have received more awards as a scientist than as an instructor. Therefore, I would like to direct my last remarks specifically to potential readers who are affiliated with institutions where research is emphasized far more than teaching.

Whether you are a graduate student or a professor in such a program, you may feel lots of pressure to publish as much as you can in top-tier journals. This pressure can then push you to minimize the effort you devote to your students, especially the undergraduates majoring in

psychology. Nonetheless, I hope my personal story proves that excellent teaching is not incompatible with outstanding research. It is possible to be invited to write one of these chapters and still receive awards for scientific contributions. Nor am I an oddity. Since 1987 my university has bestowed an annual \$30,000 award to that faculty member who combines outstanding undergraduate instruction with an internationally recognized program of original research. So far, two of the recipients are faculty in UCD's Department of Psychology!

Besides, given what I said earlier, you should do the best you can to balance the divergent responsibilities of your position. You are in the process of becoming, or already have become, a professor. That means that you are neither a researcher nor a teacher, but both—and much, much more. Accordingly, if you short-change your teaching, you become less of a *university* professor.

On Becoming a Teacher of Psychology

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Every interesting story begins with unremarkable details. Unremarkable, that is, until you know the end of story, at which point its first minute suddenly makes sense. The story of how I came to teach psychology is no different.

I was born and raised in Santa Clara, California, as the only child of Slavenka Kirigin, who emigrated from Croatia, and George Slavich, whose parents emigrated from Croatia. My parents owned and operated a hardware store at the time, so I basically grew up living every boy's dream. I mixed paint, cut glass, threaded pipe, and handled lumber. When those tasks were done, I stood and quietly observed my mother and father work hard to translate hardware sales into a better life.

These early experiences set the stage for what I thought would be a career in business. Like any good story, though, plot twists ensued. Stanford University turned out not to have an undergraduate business major, and my interest in economics—which I imagined as the next best thing—diminished while I was enrolled in an economics course. During that same quarter a friend persuaded me to take introductory psychology, and it was ultimately thanks to a series of captivating lectures by John Gabrieli that I realized I adored the social component of business, not its fiscal underpinning.

The immigrant spirit rarely leaves interesting opportunities unexamined, and it was in this vein that I aimed to experience all that Stanford had to offer. I began going to meetings of the personality study area, which Albert Bandura, Laura Carstensen, Ian Gotlib, James Gross, Leonard Horowitz, and Jeanne Tsai regularly attended, and I served as a teaching assistant for a handful of professors, including John Flavell, Lee Ross, Claude Steele, and Phil Zimbardo. It was these individuals who instilled in me a passion to learn and teach psychology, and it was with their encouragement that I founded the Stanford Undergraduate Psychology Conference, a forum where undergraduate students from around the world meet annually to share their research and excitement for psychology.

The next 5 years were equally exciting. I left Stanford University in 2001 and went to the University of Oregon to work with Scott Monroe, a devoted mentor and brilliant clinical scientist. It was with Monroe that I learned to think deeply about psychology and under his

guidance that I was named Graduate Teaching Fellow of the Year by readers of the *Oregon Daily Emerald*. By this point, I had taught or co-taught 19 courses, founded the Western Psychological Association Student Council, and helped found the Society of Clinical Psychology's Section on Graduate Student and Early Career Psychologists. For these contributions, I received the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) McKeachie Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award in 2005 and an STP Instructional Resource Award in 2006. Later that year I received my PhD from the University of Oregon and subsequently moved to Boston, where I am currently a clinical psychology intern at McLean Hospital and a clinical fellow in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I became prepared to teach psychology as I believe all teachers do—through exposure to a complex mix of formal and informal lessons that pervade the early childhood, college, and post-college years. For some of us, the formal lessons were most formidable; for others, the informal lessons mattered most. When I reflect on my core values as a teacher, the formal lessons that I learned from my mentors were certainly influential, but no more so than my upbringing.

Growing up “selling nuts and bolts,” as my father used to call it, was never a glamorous job, but it did pay the bills, as well as afford me with numerous opportunities to learn from my parents. One thing I learned from them is that in order to immigrate to anywhere, you have to be flexible. You have to believe that you can learn a new language, acquire new skills, and, in essence, cultivate your mental faculties through practice. In other words, to be a successful immigrant, you have to believe that intellectual traits are malleable, because if they were not, there would be no way to adapt to the many challenges that accompany moving to a new country.

I never had a theoretical framework into which I could put these ideas, and then one day I read Carol Dweck's (2006) *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. According to Dweck, people have either a fixed mindset or a growth mindset in relation to their various abilities, and it is the latter of these two perspectives that regards abilities, particularly intelligence, as changeable over time. Talents, from the growth mindset perspective, can be developed through hard work, and challenges are characterized as opportunities to learn rather than as barriers to success. This point has far-reaching consequences because mindsets guide behavior. Whereas individuals with a fixed mindset avoid challenges and decrease their effort after setbacks (because they believe that abilities are innate), those with a growth mindset develop strategies

that enhance learning and future success (because they believe that abilities can be developed with practice, and that continued effort is the key to success).

The benefits of having a growth mindset as a teacher are numerous, and these were conveyed to me by Phil Zimbardo, who jumpstarted my teaching career by asking me to serve as an assistant for his introductory psychology course. It was uncommon for undergraduate students to teach at Stanford University, but Zimbardo felt it was never too early to begin, so I ended up teaching my first introductory psychology section while a senior. The experience could well have been daunting, but Zimbardo instead made it empowering, as he described teachers as people who are never perfect, but who instead improve over time. Master teachers, he has argued, are not characterized by an innate gift to give the perfect lecture, but rather by a drive to always “make it better next time” (Zimbardo, 2005). This strategy of continual improvement through hard work is the key to having a growth mindset.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

The challenge associated with becoming better over time, of course, is that it takes a lot of time. Or, at least that is what seems to be the case when professional duties are regarded as separate entities. I remember encountering this challenge during my first few years of teaching. Of primary concern was the feeling that I never had enough time (e.g., to create new classroom demonstrations, incorporate new findings into existing PowerPoint™ presentations, or develop new course modules). As time passed, the demands made on me increased while my free time decreased, and the result was a seemingly insolvable problem: How could I continue to improve as a teacher when so many different duties were requiring so much time?

I experienced this challenge for a number of years and then one day I stumbled upon what I now think is a reasonable solution. That day, which I remember clearly, occurred when a student in one of my psychopathology classes asked me to describe exactly how depression develops. I knew that stress and vulnerability combine to produce depression, but I was unable to attain a more specific answer from the literature. It turns out that surprisingly little was known at the time about how these factors interact, so I spoke with my advisor, and we subsequently conducted a study to examine the roles that life stress and cognitive vulnerability play in the onset of the disorder. What began as a great question from a student quickly translated into an empirical study, and the findings from that study were then integrated into my teaching curriculum. The result was a reciprocal, synergistic relationship between my teaching and research.

Research ideas surfacing from the psychopathology course is one example of how a synergistic relationship between teaching and research has improved my performance and

efficiency in both domains. Other examples, though, were just as productive. For example, as a college student in the Silicon Valley during the “dotcom era,” I was deeply influenced by the Internet boom. One of my college buddies made \$40 million selling his textbook comparison algorithm to Yahoo!, and his friend developed a well-known website: www.google.com. Given that I was passionate about both psychology and technology at the time, I began to research technological devices that possess a persuasive intent, and three years later I translated this area of study into a course titled *Persuasive Computing: Using Technology to Change Attitudes and Behaviors*. The course taught students how to identify, critically analyze, and design persuasive technologies that change attitudes and behaviors for pro-social purposes, and it turned out to be a big hit among psychology, computer science, and business students alike. In retrospect, this popularity makes sense, insofar as courses born from novel research are inherently cutting edge in nature.

A take-away message from this integrative approach to teaching and research is that in order to maximize efficiency and increase teaching quality, one must continually make thematic connections between one’s various professional domains. Classrooms should be idea labs filled with “what ifs” that develop into honor theses, research projects, and advancements in clinical work (if relevant). Insights from clinical work and research may then become the basis for new lectures, courses, and service projects. This fluid interchange among activities increasingly enhanced my performance in each domain over time, and the result has been a coherent program of teaching, research, mentorship, and clinical work that now constitutes my professional identity as a clinical scientist.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

There is a tendency inside us, a self-serving bias perhaps, that propagates the notion that most past career decisions were largely planned well in advance, but I think that the actual number of such events is overestimated. With respect to my career, I often wonder what I would be doing now if Stanford would have had an undergraduate business major; or, if that economics class had been more interesting; or, if my friend had never persuaded me to take introductory psychology. Where, exactly, would I be now?

My answers to these questions suggest that although premeditated decisions were critical to my professional development, I cannot underestimate the extent to which fortuitous events influenced my career. The most influential of these events entailed having John Gabrieli as my instructor for introductory psychology. Gabrieli was charismatic, and his class was like a dinner buffet on a cruise ship; everywhere you looked there was another delicious tidbit of information that he had prepared precisely to our liking. His lectures were never bland or boring, and they

never seemed old or out of date. Every topic he discussed in class was a topic about which he was passionate, and his treatment of these topics made his love for psychology apparent. Put simply, Gabrieli made psychology come alive, and he did it in a way that made you want to take up learning as a career.

Teachers are spokespeople for their field of study, and their passion—or lack thereof—can make a difference. I learned this lesson during my freshman year in college when I could very well have become an economics major, if only the professor would have been passionate about economics. He was not, though, and from that experience I realized that boring teachers alienate students not only from learning about a specific topic area, but even worse, they run the risk of alienating students from learning in general. Passionate teachers have the opposite effect: They transform something fundamental inside of their students in order to foster a passion for continued learning.

The notion that teaching can be transformational is what rests at the heart of my personal philosophy of teaching, and I have referred to this approach to teaching as *transformational teaching* (Slavich, 2005). Transformational teaching goes beyond passive lecturing; it also goes beyond active learning. In transformational teaching, teachers are conceptualized as change agents who develop classroom activities that enhance the retention of core concepts by guiding students toward personal changes that are related to those concepts. These activities, called “self-change projects,” are deployed under the mentorship of an instructor, and they span a variety of course topics, including: concentration and memory, dating and relationships, fears and phobias, lifespan and development, strengths and virtues, hope, prejudice, shyness, time perspective, and heroism. The specific instructions for each project differ, but each begins with a classroom lecture and ends with an experiential activity. The fear and phobias self-change project, for example, asks students to first learn about fears and phobias in class, and to then apply some basic cognitive behavior therapy strategies to monitor their feelings privately and to explore how they could be challenged.

Transformational teaching in this sense makes psychology come alive. It takes a course’s core concepts out of the classroom and puts them into students’ lives. It is active and it promotes the elaboration of a lesson’s take-home message. It also personalizes the lessons so that they become more memorable, and thus more likely to be recalled on exams and throughout the lifespan. At the very least, transformational teaching should get non-psychology majors engaged in the course and its content; and at best, it underscores the relevance that psychology has to students’ lives, turns non-psychology majors into psychology majors, makes students passionate

about learning, and produces lifelong changes in how people view themselves and their ability to control how they think and behave.

If one thing has changed over the course of my relatively short career, it is that I now use more transformational teaching strategies than ever before. Students regularly tell me that they enjoy applying psychological principles to their lives whenever possible, because doing so apparently helps them understand how empirical studies, which sometimes appear esoteric and irrelevant, are actually often quite interesting and applicable to our daily lives. I could not agree more.

In retrospect, I would say that I have also become both more rigid and more flexible over the course of my short career. I am more rigid about conveying my expectations for how students should regard my course. Students' attention, input, and feedback are critical to the success of the class, and I want them to know this information up front. I also want them to know that my course will not be their typical college course. I believe that all students are capable of great things, and that with the right mindset—a growth mindset—they can accomplish virtually anything. I always convey this message on the first day of class because the effects of others' expectations on personal performance have been well documented (Bandura, 1992, 1997). High expectations produce better performances; low expectations do the opposite.

At the same time, I believe that I have become more flexible over time. I know that many factors influence students' classroom performance (some of which students cannot control), and my policies now take many of these factors into consideration. Students can select from among multiple grading options, any exam answer can be resubmitted for a second review, and early and late exams can be approved, with appropriate notification and justification.

My most rewarding moments come, of course, when all of the aforementioned strategies produce tangible gains. These gains include increased interest in the course; better understanding and retention of core concepts; increased likelihood of wanting to pursue an honors thesis or a major in psychology; and an increased interest in learning so that they may have a better, more fulfilling life. I measure students' performance and attitudes along these and other lines before and after each course, and this assessment element may be the most valuable addition I ever made to my classes. Feedback is critical to becoming a better teacher, and the more seriously one takes it, the better one gets.

Advice for New Teachers

It is easy to dispense sweeping advice about teaching, but I am hesitant to provide such advice, first because I do not pretend to know everything there is to know about teaching and second because advice often requires extrapolation. Instead of advice, then, I would like to

summarize the four main points that I have taken away from my own journey. First, synergize your professional tasks and work toward having each inform the others. Second, be passionate or be gone, because boring lectures leave unrealized an unknown amount of student potential. Third, avoid implicitly promoting stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which assumes that abilities are fixed and yoked to demographic categories (like sex, race, age). Instead, work to establish a collective classroom growth mindset in which students believe they can become more intelligent through hard work. And fourth, be transformational, because there is so much more to teaching than merely conveying information.

Final Thoughts

In sum, I am not surprised that I ultimately chose to teach, but I can say this only now, in retrospect and at the end of my story, when its beginning finally makes sense. For me, it all began with my parents who taught me that knowledge is the only way to escape oppressive regimes and lifestyles. Forever selling 39 cent nuts and bolts would be one such lifestyle, and like most parents, mine wanted something better for me. They did not necessarily want me to teach, but they did want me to learn, and the more I learned, the better.

Through learning I realized that teaching is a wonderful profession, and with it comes a host of rights, responsibilities, and privileges. Teachers, for example, have the right to speak the empirical truth as they understand it to be, and they also have the responsibility to transmit this truth to others. Perhaps most importantly, though, teachers have the privilege to hold in their hands the potion that produces personal and collective betterment, and at least for me, I cannot imagine a more wonderful potion to possess.

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I Am Part of All That I Have Met
(Tennyson's "Ulysses")

Jeanne M. Stahl
Morris Brown College

I graduated with a BA in sociology from Indiana University in 1971, and received my MA and PhD degrees in physiological psychology from Georgia State University in 1972 and 1974, respectively. In 1975, after completing postdoctoral training at Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center, I accepted my first and only teaching position at Morris Brown College, one of the six colleges that make up the Atlanta University Center (AUC), the largest consortium of historically black colleges in the world. I was hired as an assistant professor of education and psychology and am now professor of psychology.

The highlights of my career include developing and chairing the Department of Psychology at Morris Brown College, designing and acquiring funding to support several research and research mentoring programs, and being associated with highly creative and prolific faculty and students. Our research mentoring programs have produced an extraordinary number of African American students who have presented and published research and who have earned advanced degrees in psychology and related fields. For these efforts, and with a lot of help from my friends (many have papers in this volume), I became a Fellow of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) in 1990 and received STP's Robert S. Daniel Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2001.

My Early Development as a Teacher

I developed gradually from student to researcher to teacher while learning from expert mentors along the way, and am now a combination of all who have taught me and those whom I have taught. This metamorphosis is the beauty of our profession. We research, learn, and share what we learn with our students and other teachers. On my wall for most of my career, and now the title of this paper, is the line from Tennyson's "Ulysses" that reflects my life: "I am part of all that I have met" (Thrilling & Bloom, 1973).

I decided to attend the university only after becoming the widow of Airman Bernard Stahl in 1965. The death of my childhood sweetheart left me devastated and directionless until I decided to apply to Indiana University. I thought that this experience would redefine my life for the next four years, but I received a disturbing letter stating that I had not been accepted, which

left me wondering why and what would become of me. Upon investigation, I discovered that I had been on a non-college track in high school. Courses in art, sewing, and piano, taken to prepare me for my anticipated role of wife and mother, were not sufficient for the university. For several weeks, this failure, among my other losses, was disheartening. However, a second letter soon arrived with a probationary acceptance to Indiana University. To this day, I thank the person who gave me the second chance to begin the rest of my life anew.

Those first college courses in sociology and psychology opened my eyes to a whole new world of learning that was much broader and more diverse than I had ever imagined. Although I majored in sociology, I took several laboratory courses in experimental psychology and found that I thoroughly loved them. At the same time, I became discouraged that much of what I was learning in sociology was based on naturalistic observation and correlation. I was also naïve enough to think that all of the variables that influence behavior could be controlled in the psychology laboratory. My attempt at doing a sociology experiment in a psychology laboratory involved requiring pigeons to peck a key in order to open a window to see other pigeons. This work resulted in my first publication with my lab partner, Robert O'Brien, and Professor Peter Hanford (Stahl, O'Brien, & Hanford, 1973). And, while I was learning about animal operant conditioning in the laboratory, psychologist Joseph Zimmerman was teaching me about applying those concepts to behavior modification in many settings. I still use hands-on active learning and behavior modification techniques when teaching students in the classroom and in the laboratory.

My early development as a student and future teacher was more complicated than I could have anticipated. I had to change considerably during my undergraduate years before developing the confidence necessary to consider graduate school. As an undergraduate, I was extremely shy and was earning just Bs and Cs. When I discovered that I needed at least a B average to go to graduate school, I wasn't sure that I could do it. Sociology professors Carl Wagoner and Priscilla Crawford sensed my insecurities and boosted my self-confidence tremendously as they taught me to accomplish intellectual tasks that turned me into a successful life long learner. Most importantly, they showed me a respect that I had never before experienced. I attempt to emulate these two grand teachers by paying attention to what each student brings to the classroom, encouraging them to set high standards for themselves, and teaching them how to reach their goals. I try my best never to underestimate any shy student.

It wasn't until months after receiving my PhD that I decided to teach. In graduate school, I was learning to become a research psychologist. I had no formal education for teaching. However, I now realize that the informal education I received from those who mentored me, including my dissertation advisor Paul Ellen and doctoral students (especially William C. Aitken,

Jr.), gave me an excellent grounding. In graduate school, Bill methodically taught me every laboratory procedure from stereotaxic surgery to operant conditioning. I still attempt to replicate his focused attention to detail, his demonstrations, and his modeling techniques when I prepare students for work in the animal laboratory.

Paul was always challenging students with new ways of thinking about research. He used a type of Socratic Method, which often drove us nuts, but he always seemed to direct us to the solution. He showed a genuine respect for my research ideas and in addition to my dissertation research, he allowed me to carry out my own experiments. It was also a great ego-booster that he allowed me to take first authorship on all of our publications together. He gave me the courage to become a researcher.

Before taking my first faculty position, I signed on for a post doctoral position and gained so much more than research experience. My mentor, psychologist Al Pieper, taught me how to prepare continuation grant applications. These experiences gave me the courage to write my own infrastructure grant proposal the summer before I began my first teaching position. Dean Willie F. Payne, at Morris Brown College, called and invited me to write the proposal to fund the research courses and laboratories he wanted me to develop in order to start an undergraduate psychology program at his college. This opportunity was perfect for me. I would become a teacher, would have my own psychology laboratories, and students who would love research.

My early development as a teacher may be atypical: I lost my husband, went to college to keep myself occupied, was invited to teach at Morris Brown College, and found that it suited me. However, there are many new teachers in analogous situations: Graduate students plan on a career in research or private practice and, without any preparation for teaching, become college professors. Perhaps young teachers reading this essay, who also developed into their role by “serendipity” (Beins, 2005), who just “...drifted into it,” (McKeachie, 2005), or crashed into it like I did, will gain some degree of encouragement from my story.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

My dream was to set up psychology laboratories where students would learn the joy of research, a dream that required computerized operant conditioning chambers, animal mazes, and equipment for human experiments. However, at Morris Brown College, all I was given was an empty room and as the only experimental psychologist in an education department, I had no research colleagues. At this time, I read the motto for Atlanta University (Bacote, 1969): “I will find a way or I will make one.” Those words have stayed with me until they now represent me.

I started writing research, mentoring, and infrastructure grant proposals until, at one point, I had too many funded projects to handle alone. That is when I started inviting faculty,

graduate students, and post doctoral students to share in the research. This additional supervision made it possible to involve students from other AUC colleges. Eventually, the laboratory became a reality and I had the research mentoring program about which I had dreamed.

In order to make this dream a reality, I needed help from colleagues and at the AUC consortium many cooperative discipline-related ventures existed. However, Morris Brown College did not yet have a psychology department. So, I had to make it a point to meet people and to ask them for help. My first local psychology colleagues were Stephen Levine and Margaret Weber-Levine. Steve and Marge helped me set up the equipment in my first laboratories, and we worked together on a proposal that funded a center-wide research mentoring program that Marge still directs (National Institute of Mental Health Career Opportunities in Research). In addition, Isabella Finkelstein invited me to participate in a center-wide Minority Access to Research Careers program funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Both Marge and Isabella provided the funds for honors students from their programs to participate in research in the Morris Brown College psychology laboratories.

In the late 1970s, I was the first psychologist in the AUC to receive a research grant through Joe Johnson, who directed the AUC-Minority Biomedical Research Support Program (MBRS). Prior to this grant, MBRS had not funded psychologists. This grant was just the beginning of a long series of biomedical research grants involving collaboration with faculty at all AUC undergraduate colleges, Georgia State University, Emory University, and the University of Georgia. By recruiting additional research faculty, I was able to expand our research mentoring efforts to include research on achievement (with Henrie Turner Treadwell), funded by the National Institute of Education; research on recovery from brain injuries, funded by the National Institute on Mental Health; animal drug abuse research and social behavioral neuroscience research (with Fernando González), funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Science Foundation Center for Behavioral Neuroscience (CBN); and human factors research funded by the Army Research Office and directed by Fernando González. Clearly, faculty at small colleges can compete successfully for research funds to do the research they love and to provide a wonderful environment for undergraduate research mentoring (See also Stahl, 2005).

My list of colleagues outside of Atlanta grew tremendously when I joined the Society for Teaching of Psychology, which gave me access to a variety of philosophies about teaching and techniques that I could use in the classroom and laboratories. My exposure to state-of-the-art teaching practices was further enhanced when I traveled to Joe Palladino's 1988 Mid-America Conference for Teachers of Psychology. I still attend several teaching conferences a year.

The grants and programs in which I participated represent a lot of hard work, exceptional assistance from colleagues, and the development of life-long friendships. Finding the time to write grant proposals is difficult for faculty at small colleges because they have heavy teaching loads. However, once I started to receive funding, I no longer experienced conflicts between research and teaching because I was teaching research. It was that simple. For most of my career, I have spent approximately 50 percent of my time teaching in the classroom and laboratories and the other 50 percent writing grant proposals, doing research, writing for publication, and mentoring students. Although there were times that I had three or four teaching and research grants simultaneously and felt a bit overwhelmed, I did not hesitate to ask for help from colleagues. Thus, I experienced neither the extremely high teaching loads nor the financial trials and tribulations that faculty often experience at small colleges.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

My teaching philosophy and style are a combined function of my personality and values and enhanced by my educational background and techniques I have learned from mentors over the years. I have changed tremendously over time and the grades of my students have improved likewise. I first noticed the change in student performance when a department chairperson asked each faculty member to turn in grade distributions for classes, but not because we had grade inflation. To the contrary, due to the college's mission to allow nearly anyone to try college level work, we needed to monitor grades to make sure we were pacing students appropriately in order to modify our sequencing of courses, and to provide tutorial assistance when necessary. However, I was surprised when I went back several years and looked at my grades. I found that the longer I had been teaching, the fewer Ds I had in my grade book. Puzzling over these few Ds, it occurred to me that I was so determined to see these students learn the material and succeed that I had unconsciously developed a philosophy that "If you can earn a D, you can work a little harder and earn a C." I constantly monitored students and changed my approach to my classes as we moved along. While attempting to keep up the pace and cover the material preplanned for the course, I began class each day with some knowledge of where I had lost a few students along the way and tried different approaches to bring them up to speed. This strategy is easier, and perhaps more necessary, in research courses than in survey courses because every new research topic is related closely to what went before and some topics become incomprehensible for students who fall behind.

My intense desire to see my students succeed required that I learn many new approaches for the classroom. I had a rough beginning in my first classes. At Indiana University and Georgia State University, I was strongly influenced by several radical behaviorists (remember them?). As

a student, I learned about “The Keller Plan,” (Keller, 1968) and Holland and Skinner’s programmed instruction (Holland & Skinner, 1961). We were testing the Keller Plan at Georgia State University and I attempted programmed instruction before the higher level programming languages were available. Both of these approaches were time consuming to develop and quite frustrating. My strong behaviorist background stays with me today; however, I found that I preferred one-on-one contact with students in the classroom and laboratory.

When I first began teaching, I truly believed that if I did my part in the classroom and paced students appropriately through the material, they would all learn it. I totally overlooked other important variables such as motivation and prior knowledge. I was at a liberal-admissions college trying to teach students who barely graduated from high school in the same classroom with valedictorians and salutatorians. At first, it was a challenge just to develop classroom presentations and activities that would be understood by the weakest student without losing the interest of the very well prepared student (and visa versa). It took a few years of trial and error learning, and tricks I learned from others, but I believe I now have a talent for tuning in to what each student brings to the class, designing creative ways to fill in some gaps with the weaker students while providing activities that allow well-prepared students to experience psychology at a higher level. No class is the same; unpredictable situations happen daily. I have to be ready for them. I now realize that each semester, a few students, especially those who have weak academic backgrounds and those who work full time (or both), merely want to pass the course. However I believe that each student can improve on their past performance and I still don’t give up on those D students.

My personal learning curve for improving both my teaching and research has been long and drawn out and doesn’t seem to be leveling off yet. It is a continuing process. My research is not as good as Paul Ellen’s and my teaching is not as good as Bill Aitken’s. Just as I have never been able to control all of those variables in the laboratory (those rats are smarter than you think!), I still am a bit shy about giving speeches and I am not the smoothest lecturer on campus. That doesn’t matter so much anymore! Long ago, I stopped measuring my achievements relative to others’ achievements. Now, all that matters are the achievements of my students—and they are doing well. My rewards are the smile on a student’s face when he says “Thanks for helping me pass your class!” or the welcomed telephone call from a former student who says “Graduate school is soooooooooo hard and I am soooooooooo glad you made us learn the APA format!” That is how I now know that what I am doing is working for them.

Advice for New Teachers

After reading these essays, you undoubtedly have found that each teacher is quite unique, providing you with a few new ways for approaching a career in teaching. I believe that there are certain ideas that, if applied during the early years of teaching, will not only help you find your own uniqueness, but will accelerate your development so that you are less stressed and can enjoy the teacher more than you might otherwise. Here are a few of these ideas.

- What is your passion? Figure that out, integrate it into your teaching, and you have the main ingredient for a fulfilling career.
- Identify the type of institution that will offer you the environment you need to thrive. Many institutions have broadened their view of scholarship to include teaching (Boyer, 1990).
- Follow Charles Brewer's (2002) Ten Commandments of Teaching, especially: "Be patient with your students and yourself."
- Use the resources available to you and share with others when you find a particular method to be successful. Check resources in this volume and the STP's Web site <<http://www.teachpsych.org>>. Read both the journal *Teaching of Psychology* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (for education news, due dates for grant proposals, conferences, etc.)
- Be approachable to students and make sure they know that you are available to help them.
- Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. Although teachers love to give advice, they will also take a class for you, give a test for you, or give you one of their tests, in a pinch. Just ask. We like to help. That is why we are teachers.

Final Thoughts

Relax, be yourself, and enjoy the process. Attend teaching conferences and workshops for support and new ideas, and walk up and introduce yourself to others. Many of us, who have contributed to this volume, will be there waiting for you.

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College Teaching: My First Few Years

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I began my undergraduate experience at Ricks College, a private junior college in Idaho, where I was attracted to the field of psychology after visiting a friend's introductory psychology class. The topic that day was problem solving and the teacher presented the often used candle problem. Because I enjoy solving these types of problems, it sparked an interest in me to take the class. However, my first psychology course did not begin well—I failed my first psychology exam. Nevertheless, I persevered and earned an associate's degree in psychology. I completed my Bachelor's degree in Psychology at Brigham Young University (BYU), graduating magna cum laude. I fully anticipated attending medical school, but it was not to be. Thus, I returned to BYU to enter a general master's program in psychology, after which I completed my PhD in psychobiology at The Ohio State University (OSU). My doctoral studies focused on areas of the brain involved in the cardiovascular responses to fear and anxiety in rats. It was during my time as a graduate student at OSU that I began teaching introductory psychology.

After earning my PhD, I continued my training at OSU for another year as a post-doctoral researcher in Dr. Janice Kiecolt-Glaser's laboratory where I directed a large study on the relationship between marital stress and wound healing (ouch!). Since that time, I have been at Eastern Illinois University (EIU), where I recently earned tenure and the rank of Associate Professor. At EIU, I regularly teach introductory psychology, psychology of learning, and biological psychology. I have received several teaching awards including the College of Sciences Teaching Excellence Award (2005), Excellence in the Use of Technology Award (2004), the Psychology Department's W. P. McGown Outstanding Faculty Award (2004), EIU Achievement and Contribution Awards for Teaching (2004, 2003, 2001), the Distinguished Honors Faculty Award (2002), Psi Chi Chapter Faculty of the Year Award (2002), and the Society for Teaching of Psychology Early Career Teaching Award (2006).

My Early Development as a Teacher

I did not have any formal training for college-level teaching before teaching my first introductory psychology course. Being at a large research institution, my adviser was more concerned about my research productivity than encouraging my development as a teacher. However, during the middle of my undergraduate education, I spent two years as a church

missionary, which gave me many opportunities to teach in a variety of circumstances. It was during this experience that I learned the importance of adapting material to my audience, how to ask good questions, and how to resolve the concerns of those I was teaching. These concerns were often related to questioning the source and veracity of what I was teaching. I feel these experiences continue to influence my teaching today, as I enjoy providing the historical context for the things I'm teaching.

At OSU, graduate students teach nearly every section of introductory psychology. Each teaching assistant received a textbook and a common syllabus, which usually included nearly every chapter in the textbook for the 10-week course. In conversations with other graduate students, I would try to learn what others were doing in their classes to teach particular topics. We also had access to a faculty development office that was available to provide valuable feedback on our teaching skills. On at least one occasion, I had their office videotape my lecture so I could reflect (painfully) on my teaching.

I did not have a particular mentor in my teaching, but from the time I arrived at EIU, I felt like I have had strong support from my colleagues in the Psychology Department. In addition, I had a few memorable teachers from my own undergraduate and graduate courses who served as models for excellent teaching. From early on in my teaching career, my goal has been to be like them. I don't wish to copy their teaching, but I hope that when my former students reflect on the best teachers of their undergraduate days, they consider me to be one of them.

To further my teaching abilities, I frequently attend conferences and workshops on teaching. I love attending them because I get to meet other people who are excited about teaching-and I get to copy freely their ideas. When considering a new teaching technique or activity, I try to visualize myself implementing it to see if it fits my style. Of course, the adoption of new teaching methods ultimately depends on how well it goes in class, in terms of my own comfort as well as the reaction of my students.

I became a university professor because I did not get into medical school. When I was forced to reconsider my options, I realized I felt more comfortable around psychology graduate students than I was among pre-med majors. I also realized that the flexible work schedule of a university teacher would allow me to spend more time with my family. I am so thankful that I did not end up in medical school. Having always enjoyed school, I feel comfortable in an academic setting. A sign hanging in my office says, "Blessed are they who go to college and never get out, for they shall be called Professors."

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

I am still not the type of teacher I want to be. I am always looking for new ways to improve my teaching. For example, I continue to implement more active learning exercises in place of standard lecturing. I figure that if I make the class enjoyable for me, it will likely be enjoyable for my students. I have to be excited about what I am teaching because my level of enthusiasm is clearly visible to my students. Fortunately, I get to teach about the most exciting topics on the planet.

In trying to deal with covering a large amount of material, which I was forced to do as a graduate student, I resolved to sacrifice breadth for depth. I have accepted the fact that I cannot teach it all. I would rather focus on the main ideas and enhance my students' critical thinking skills than spoon feed them all the facts.

I have always enjoyed my time in the classroom. Of course, it helps being at an institution whose mission matches my values. I feel that time devoted to teaching reduces my time for research but I do not feel bad about that, because I love teaching and my institution highly values it. However, I must acknowledge that I have also learned ways to improve my teaching through some of my research and service opportunities. For example, I serve on a university technology committee that allows me to hear about and provide input on new technology initiatives on campus that I can incorporate into my teaching. In my research, I recently conducted a study on the use of classroom response systems (clickers) to facilitate student participation and increase accuracy of student feedback. Based on these findings, I plan to extend their use to other settings as well.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

My teaching philosophy is based on a quote by Plutarch, "The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." I know that much of what I teach will soon be forgotten, except maybe being conditioned to salivate to the "YMCA" song. Thus, I focus on getting students to question and think critically about not only psychology, but their world. Secondly, because psychology is such an applicable field of study, I relate as much as I can to their past, present, and future lives. My role is to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, and my students' role is to take the responsibility for their learning. If they are willing to work, they will succeed.

The single most important change in my teaching has been in the use of technology. I consider myself an early adopter of new technology, which requires first, an effort to keep up with the changes in technology, and secondly, the wisdom to know how or when to use it. In the "old days," I was writing on the chalkboard or overhead transparencies. Today, I use PowerPoint™ and classroom response systems. In fact, some of my current research on classroom response systems has further strengthened my commitment to use them. These system

increase student participation and the accuracy of student feedback, and students enjoy using them. I wonder what technology will bring next.

When I first started teaching, the fact that students were actually writing down something that was coming out of my mouth bewildered me. It was important to them, and, suddenly, I felt important. Now, the most rewarding aspects of teaching are seeing my students' faces light up with understanding and seeing them really "get it". I also treasure the rarer occasions where a student will say that I have had an impact on an important life decision. Being in a position where I can influence decisions with life-long consequences is humbling.

However, teaching is challenging for me. One of my frustrations is when students are not motivated sufficiently to do well in their courses. I realize that I can only help them if they are willing to help themselves. I try to convey that I genuinely care about their success, and that I am on their side. Early in the semester, I announce that students who are not doing well after having taken the first or second exam should come talk to me and discuss ways to improve their performance before it's too late. I know they are willing to help themselves if they make the effort to come see me. In my online courses, I e-mail students who have missed a quiz or two to encourage them not to fall behind. Often students are facing challenges with which I can help them.

After nearly every lecture, I take time to reflect on how well it went and what I would change. Then I change it. If I wait until I am preparing for the same lecture the next semester, I usually forget what I wanted to change. I have also found ways to collect anonymous feedback from students about my teaching techniques. Around mid-terms, I ask students to write down what they like about the class, the textbook, my jokes, or anything else on which they wish to comment. Often, I find that things are going well, which is reinforcing, but it also gives me the opportunity to provide some rationale for why I have purposely chosen to do certain things in my class. It gives me time to introduce some of my teaching philosophies, and inherently my personal values, which are not stated explicitly on the syllabus. I feel that sharing my teaching philosophy with my students helps them to understand the challenges that teachers face and how I have chosen to deal with them.

Aside from constantly trying to think of ways to improve my teaching, I attend several conferences every year that promote the teaching of psychology or the use of new technology in education. I also attend workshops on our campus sponsored by our faculty development office. Finally, I read *Teaching of Psychology* and am a member of the PsychTeacher electronic discussion list.

Advice for New Teachers

I don't feel old enough to provide deep thoughts of wisdom to new teachers, but in my limited experience I have learned a few things that may be helpful. The first is don't try to implement every possible teaching technique that you learn all at one time. Doing so will make you feel overwhelmed and inadequate. Different teaching techniques suit different students and different instructors. I have had teachers who taught in very different ways, but what made them excellent in my mind was first, their genuine interest in my learning, and second, their mastery of the subject. Thus, in some way, you must convey to your students that you care about their learning and that you know what you're talking about.

Next, teach in a manner that is consistent with your own values and beliefs. In other words, be genuine. Academic freedom allows you to provide commentary on what you're teaching and this can be a model for students to reflect on what they are learning. In addition, it helps students see that you are a real person with your own thoughts and not just a transmitter of information. Being 'real' is also evidenced when you share your own life stories to help relate the content to everyday life.

Finally, never become too comfortable with your teaching; otherwise, you will find teaching boring and so will your students. Periodically take time to evaluate yourself and look for ways to improve. Students are also a good source of this information if you're willing to be humbled.

Final Thoughts

If this time is just the beginning of my teaching career, I am really looking forward to the next 30 years. With how much my teaching has changed already, I can hardly fathom what I may be doing between now and then. However, I expect one unchanging aspect will be my love for teaching psychology.

Teaching Psychology Can Be Magical

Mark W. Vernoy
Palomar College

Several years ago, I presented an invited address at the annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association in its *Last Lecture Series* (Vernoy, 1999). The title I chose for that address was *Teaching Psychology Can Be Magical*. I have chosen that same title for this chapter because I still believe it to be true both for me and for my students. Most of my life has been spent as a psychology professor, and at some point every semester, I realize that my students, by some magical means, have taken the information I have imparted and transformed it into their own knowledge. I continue to be awed by the process.

You might say that my life as a professor began years before graduate school in Downey, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. What I remember most about growing up in Downey is wandering through orange groves, watching my father coach high school football, actually playing football when I was older, going 2 for 4 while losing to Mexico in the final game of the Senior Little League Baseball World Series, experiencing the joy of learning mathematics, and getting to know my wife, Judy.

Fortunately for my career in psychology, I injured my knee during a high school football game and subsequently failed the physical for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where I had intended to continue my football career and major in mathematics or engineering. Instead, I enrolled as a freshman at Occidental College (Oxy) in Los Angeles and changed my major from mathematics to psychology. It was as an undergraduate at Oxy that my psychology career began, with the presentation of my first paper at the Western Psychological Association Convention (Franklin & Vernoy, 1970), the publication of my first research article in *Teaching of Psychology Newsletter* (Vernoy & Cole, 1971), and my membership in Psi Chi. In 1971, I received my AB with honors in psychology from Oxy.

Four years later, I received my PhD in psychology from the University of California, Irvine (UCI). My graduate years were funded by a Public Health Service fellowship and a University of California grant, and I gained professional experience as a research assistant, a teaching assistant for the year-long experimental psychology sequence, and a bona fide teacher with my own class in sensation and perception. In 1975, I was awarded a postdoctoral research associateship at the Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory in Groton, Connecticut.

Most of my predoctoral and postdoctoral research related to visual perception and human factors. I worked mostly with divers at the Sub Base and I investigated unintended acceleration in automobiles as a visiting professor at UCI.

In 1976 I began teaching Introduction to Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Research Methods in Psychology, and Statistics at Palomar College. From 1987 to 1989, I was a visiting associate professor of psychology at UCI, teaching Experimental Psychology and Computers in Psychology. I have published research articles and presented numerous papers on human factors, visual perception, and the teaching of psychology. I am the co-author of two college textbooks: *Psychology in Action* (Huffman & Vernoy, 2003) and *Behavioral Statistics in Action* (Vernoy & Kyle, 2002).

At Palomar College, I am currently a professor of psychology and the Dean of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division. I have also served as the Chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department and the President of the Faculty Senate.

My teaching and research efforts have resulted in several awards. In 1986 I was the recipient of a *Master Teacher Award* from the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) at the University of Texas, Austin. In 1996 I received the Palomar College Research Award, and in 1997 the NISOD Excellence Award for contributions to teaching and learning. In 1998 I received both the Association of Community College Trustees Pacific Region Faculty Member Award and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Teaching Excellence Award for Community/Junior College Teachers of Psychology. I was elected a Fellow of the American Psychological Association in 2000.

My Early Development as a Teacher

My PhD program at UCI offered no formal instruction on teaching, but I did have a mentor there who was an excellent teacher, and fortunately I had a chance to learn much about teaching before entering graduate school from my father. He was an extremely successful high school football coach. While growing up, I had observed him for literally hundreds of hours teaching his players and preparing for games. The four things I learned from observing him were to (a) prepare (know what you are doing), (b) try new things, (c) steal teaching ideas from others, and (d) care about students. Another experience that helped develop my teaching skills occurred during my undergraduate years when I was a water safety instructor for a Red Cross-approved swimming program at the local high school pool. The Red Cross training taught me how to organize my lectures and demonstrations and how to feel comfortable in front of a class, even though the class consisted mostly of frightened 5- to 12-year-olds. This job was also the first time that I experienced the magical feeling that occurs for both the teacher and the student when

the student actually learns something that they did not know before, in this case how to float or swim across the pool. Although I had never taught adults, I was comfortable talking to groups of people by the time I got to graduate school. At the beginning of my second year in graduate school, I became a teaching assistant (TA) for my mentor, Dr. Myron (Mike) Braunstein, who taught experimental psychology. I attended all his lectures and taught one of the labs. From observing Mike teach, it was clear that he spent countless hours looking for examples and organizing his class, and that he expected only the best from his students and TAs. As a TA in the experimental psychology laboratories, I applied what I had learned about the importance of careful preparation. I also learned to appreciate the importance of a sense of humor and not to fear student questions. Clearly, observing my father and my mentor, as well as serving as water safety instructor, contributed to my development as a college-level teacher.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

It seems as though I was always a relatively good teacher. My swim students and their parents liked me, and I got very good evaluations as a TA. During my last two years as a graduate student, my department asked me to develop and teach a course on sensation and perception. I received positive teaching evaluations, so I believe the course turned out to be a good one. My experience with this course taught me that I had a knack for making difficult concepts comprehensible and how to be accessible to my students. I also learned that demonstrations, class discussion, humor, and magic can make a class much more interesting for my students and for me.

That one magical moment, the moment I decided to focus mainly on teaching rather than on research, came during my postdoctoral work at the Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory. I enjoyed the research, but one day one of my colleagues asked me to give a guest lecture in one of his classes that he taught at a local college. I gave the lecture, had a great time with the students, and decided that night that I really wanted to teach for the rest of my life. I have never regretted the decision to become a teacher because it turned out to be the second best decision I ever made. (The decision to marry my wife, Judy, was the best decision that I ever made.)

The Examined Life of a Teacher

I think that the most significant change in my teaching over the years has been to be more concerned about teaching key concepts in depth while not attempting to be as encyclopedic in my lectures. I learned that my students *can* read and I *can* teach a class without lecturing on each of the chapters in a book or all the topics within a chapter. I now try to give my students more of

a feel for what it is like to be a research psychologist or a statistician rather than just lecturing to them about psychology or statistics.

There are several obstacles I have encountered in becoming a good teacher, the major obstacle being time. It takes a lot of time to become a good teacher. It takes time to conduct good research. It takes time to be a good faculty member. It takes time to be a good administrator. It takes time to be a good husband. It takes time to be a good father. It takes time to be a good citizen. Often, it seems like there are just not enough hours in the day to be good at all the important things in life.

In graduate school, the major obstacle to good teaching was conducting research. I became a graduate student to get a research degree and in my attempt to conduct exemplary research, I had to devote a lot of time to the process. During my graduate years, time spent on teaching always seemed like time stolen from my research. When I became a faculty member at Palomar College, I was expected to teach 15 units each semester and was evaluated solely on my teaching, so time spent on research seemed like time stolen from teaching. I quickly realized that if I wanted to become a really good teacher, I would have to teach and prepare during the school week and do my writing and research on weekends and during summer and holiday breaks. I still worked 12-hour days, but I made sure that I found 4 or 5 hours for my family every day. As in any occupation, you just have to develop good time management skills, be innovative and creative, and have a sense of humor or you will go crazy. (Or more formally “nuts,” as we say when covering the clinical psychology chapter in the introductory course.)

My philosophy of teaching is to enjoy myself and make my classes educational and enjoyable for my students. For me teaching is truly a magical experience. I have fun teaching. I continually try new ways to get concepts across to my students. I do not let small failures, like a bad lecture or a failed demonstration, get me down. I live for that magical moment in my students where the light bulb goes on or grows brighter in their heads. I really *do* wake up nearly every morning and say to myself, "Mark, you are one of the luckiest people in the world. You have a great family, a great dog, you drive a 1965 Corvair Corsa, and you get to teach two-way analysis of variance today." I love to teach. It is a lot of work, but I would never consider doing anything else. (Well, I am now a Dean, but I continue to teach my Statistics class at 7:00 a.m.) I really do get to do something that I love doing, and at the end of the semester my students have learned a lot and many have actually began to love (or at least hate less?) statistics.

Final Thoughts and Advice for New Teachers

There is nothing I can tell you that will guarantee that you will become a good, let alone, a great teacher. All I know is that I am a much better teacher today than I was when I walked into

my first class at UCI, and I believe that I get better every year. So, if you want to be a successful teacher, my advice to you is to: (a) get into the best graduate program you can; (b) learn as much about psychology as you can; (c) find a mentor who believes that it is his or her job to be a good teacher; (d) search out good teaching models and steal ideas from them; (e) continue to try new things; (f) learn from your failures but do not be deterred by them; (g) join the Society for the Teaching of Psychology; (h) subscribe to and read *Teaching of Psychology*; (i) join electronic discussion lists for teachers; (j) go to psychology teaching conferences; (k) go to psychology research conferences; (l) understand that no one ever goes into teaching psychology to make a lot of money; (m) remember that in order to be great at anything, you really have to love doing it, so strive to make your classes fun for both your students and yourself; (n) and finally, to be a great teacher, you need to practice teaching, over and over and over again. Teaching psychology really has been magical for me and many of my colleagues and my students, and it can be magical for you, too.

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A Fortuitous Life Path

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My life has followed a quirky pattern in that virtually all my biggest disappointments have worked out for the better in the long run. So it was with my entry into a career in teaching. It was 1972 and I was wrapping up my undergraduate education at Bradley University. I was excited about moving on to a PhD program, which seemed like a simple matter. I had a stellar GPA, inexplicably high GRE scores, and a journal article accepted for publication. The wrinkle was that I was so utterly naïve and overconfident, I only applied to *two* blue-chip (top 15) PhD programs—both of which sent me polite rejections. I was totally crushed. I hasten to add that this monumental stupidity was purely my own fault as I had not bothered to seek any advising from the department about getting into graduate school.

Humbled and devastated, I obtained a last-minute admission into Bradley's Master's program. That fall, two weeks into my graduate training, the local community college (Illinois Central College) called the Psychology Department to see if it had a graduate student who could take over two sections of introductory psychology from a professor who had moved into administration. For some unknown reason, the department chair recommended me. So, with one weekend to prepare, I took over two classes that were already under way. Much to my surprise, I found teaching absolutely exhilarating, and I have never looked back. By summer, at the age of 22, I had finished my Master's degree and secured a tenure-track position at LincolnLand Community College. That's how I unexpectedly migrated into the Illinois Community College system, where I would stay for almost 20 years. In the space of 15 months, I had gone from devastation to exhilaration—and the difference was teaching.

After two years at LincolnLand, I moved to the College of DuPage, an exceptional community college in the suburbs of Chicago. This move allowed me to enroll in the doctoral program at UIC—the University of Illinois, Chicago (while teaching full-time at DuPage), where I earned my PhD in social psychology in 1981. While at DuPage, I became interested in the challenge of how to build a better textbook. I published a volume on the psychology of adjustment in 1983 and an introductory text in 1989 (Weiten, 1983, 1989). I subsequently moved to Santa Clara University, where I greatly enjoyed teaching during most of the 1990s. Since

2002, I have taught at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where, among other things, I teach a graduate course on the teaching of psychology.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to receive distinguished teaching awards from the College of DuPage and Division Two of the American Psychological Association (APA), and an outstanding young graduate award from Bradley University. In 1991, I helped chair the APA National Conference on Enhancing the Quality of Undergraduate Education in Psychology, and in 1996—1997, I served as President of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP; Division Two of the APA). Perhaps my greatest career thrill occurred in 2005, when STP named its award for teaching excellence in two-year colleges in my honor.

My Early Development as a Teacher

Given that I had barely begun my Master's program when I was thrust into teaching, I obviously had no preparation whatsoever prior to my first teaching assignment. In retrospect, I should have been terrified, and it should have been a disaster. But it went surprisingly well. Looking back, I am sure that my teaching was far from exemplary, but I was good for a laugh-a-minute while covering copious amounts of material with unbridled enthusiasm. I would continue to rely on the combination of enthusiasm, humor, and a knack for assimilating lots of content throughout my early years of teaching. During these early years, I was not an outstanding *teacher*, but no one complained because from day one I was a pretty talented *lecturer*, and most people do not appreciate the difference.

In graduate school, I had very little mentoring relating to teaching, per se. That said, I had a number of mentors, such as Rick Stalling and Claire Etaugh at Bradley, and Harry Upshaw, Shari Diamond, Roger Dominowski, and Lee Wilkinson at UIC, who clearly conveyed to me that teaching is an important responsibility, that students merit one's respect and support, and that high expectations for students are crucial to fostering learning. These were valuable lessons.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

My gradual evolution as a teacher unfolded in an interesting cultural milieu, as community colleges were just emerging as a significant force in American higher education. Almost 500 community colleges were founded across the nation in the 1960s. They were new and they were determined to be different. There was palpable excitement among faculty and administrators who saw an unprecedented opportunity to craft more student-centered models of undergraduate education. Quality teaching was what it was all about—research was barely an afterthought. Innovative approaches to instruction were welcome, interdisciplinary collaboration was nurtured, and active learning became the Holy Grail. Located in an affluent and growing

area, the College of DuPage succeeded in attracting many outstanding, creative teachers who were inspirational role models and fertile sources of ideas.

Although it was an exciting time, there were, of course, obstacles and difficulties. In addition to the challenges found at any college, we had to deal with remarkable diversity in student ability and preparation, and with the fact that most of our students had real lives—lives saturated with stress from their responsibilities as parents and full-time employees. While at DuPage, I taught a Psychology of Adjustment course in which I required students to keep a stress diary for a week. These diaries were very eye-opening and served to make me a lot less cynical about student “excuses” for work undone.

I adapted to my students’ stress-saturated lives reasonably quickly. I learned to be very flexible about deadlines, missed assignments, sleep-prone students and so forth, without compromising my academic standards. I learned to give students second and third chances—sometimes it paid off, sometimes it didn’t. But if they failed, I knew it was because they couldn’t or wouldn’t do the work, and not because I rigidly enforced arbitrary deadlines.

The students’ enormous diversity in academic ability proved to be a more daunting challenge, one that I still struggle with today. Over the years I have probably tried to cope with this diversity in an endless variety of ways. Most of these strategies have involved coming up with ways for students to acquire the skills and knowledge they need and a multiplicity of ways to assess their learning. My other response to the diversity issue has been a conscious commitment not to let my standards erode or my expectations diminish. Over the years, I have had colleagues who, lamenting the problems of their less talented students, have acknowledged that they have lowered their expectations for students. I have worked very hard at not giving in to those feelings. I am convinced that if we have low expectations for our students, these expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Beginning my career in a community college environment meant that I did not have to struggle with the tension between research and teaching that creates difficult dilemmas for so many faculty at research-driven universities. I conducted a modest amount of research on a variety of topics, such as jury functioning (Weiten, 1980), attribution theory (Weiten & Upshaw, 1982), educational measurement (Weiten, 1984), and the nature of stress (Weiten, 1988), but there was no pressure to do so. Recognizing that it was not realistic to try to mount a systematic research program in a community college, I cast about for other professional challenges and seized upon the idea of writing a textbook. I was extremely unhappy with the textbook choices available for my Psychology of Adjustment course. So, I set out to write my own. I did not anticipate it, but the process of writing a textbook had an enormous impact on my evolution as a

teacher. Working on the text forced me to go back to square one and think about (a) what I wanted to accomplish in the Adjustment course, (b) what other teachers wanted to accomplish in the course, (c) what students hoped to get out of the course, and (d) how to best realize and balance these diverse goals. I found myself mulling over matters of content, pedagogy, and assessment like never before in ways that surely contributed to my maturation as a teacher.

The other development in the 1980s that contributed to my defining myself as a teacher was that I started attending teaching-related conferences, most notably the Mid-America Conference for Teachers of Psychology (MACTOP), founded by Joe Palladino at the University of Southern Indiana. MACTOP quickly became a magnet for savvy, creative psychology teachers from the eastern half of the United States and a model for similar conferences around the country. I learned a great deal at these conferences from both the formal presentations and the informal dialogues that lasted late into the night. The personal relationships forged at these conferences led me to become much more actively involved in STP, where I met many talented teachers whose inordinate dedication to their craft humbled and inspired me.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

Although I have taught a variety of courses over the years, there are certain threads of consistency among them that represent the core of my teaching philosophy. Chief among them are the following general principles.

Focus on Skills More Than Content

It is easy to fall into the trap of obsessing about how many facts and theories one can cover in a course. But today's "facts" may be out-of-date before students make it to graduation and they will forget most of them anyhow. In my estimation it is far more important to design course experiences that are likely to enhance students' skills. In particular, I try to help students develop their critical thinking skills, their information-gathering skills, their research design skills, and their writing skills.

Emphasize Applications to Students' Lives

We are fortunate to teach in a discipline that has an enormous amount of relevance to people's everyday lives. It is foolish not to take full advantage of this wonderful asset. I constantly try to demonstrate how psychology's principles, theories, and findings relate to students' everyday experiences. Applications make abstract principles come alive.

Connect Psychology to Contemporary Sociopolitical Issues

The science of psychology is also germane to an endless array of hotly debated sociopolitical issues. Venturing into this territory can be a risky business, but I think it is worth it. I consciously try to highlight the connections between psychological research and

controversial issues in the news. What I hope to show is that many of these controversies center on empirical questions about behavior. Ultimately, I hope to convince students that being sophisticated about psychology will make them more sophisticated citizens.

Take Assessment Seriously

I have known professors who put a huge effort into their teaching, but treat assessment as a trivial afterthought. Their philosophy, I think, is that teaching and learning are far more important than grades. The problem with this approach is that sloppy, ineffective assessment undermines students' motivation, which ultimately undermines learning. Assessments of students' achievement need to be crafted with just as much thought and care as teaching activities.

Use Diverse Approaches to Assessment

The last time I checked the classified ads for job opportunities, none of the employers were looking for superior test-taking ability, yet our assessment methods tend to place an inordinate emphasis on this skill. I think students are better served by diverse assessment methods that reward speaking, writing, and information-gathering skills. In my classes, I try to incorporate a variety of papers, presentations, and projects that measure student achievement in different ways.

Try to Have Fun

Learning and fun are not incompatible. I try to approach class meetings as opportunities to have some fun. I strive to be humorous and I strongly encourage students to add their humor to the affair. As long as they are not offensive or hurtful, wisecracks are welcomed with open arms. The pursuit of fun may appear to be a frivolous classroom goal, but I am convinced that a little fun can enhance students' motivation.

How has my approach to teaching changed over the course of my career? Looking back, I can discern two intertwined trends that I think are pretty common among veteran teachers. First, as the years have piled up, I have steadily reduced my reliance on lecture. Second, I have gradually overcome my compulsion to cover as much content as possible. I eventually realized that it makes more sense to use class time to engage and excite students. Today, I am much more selective about what I cover and I strive for depth more than breadth.

Evaluating teaching efficacy is a complicated, daunting challenge and I won't pretend that I have an elegant solution. We all have a vested interest in what we do and objectivity is hard to come by. I think that student ratings of instructional efforts can provide useful feedback, and I pay attention to them, but students are too kind. Their ratings seem to bunch up near the top of the range for all but the bottom 10-20% of faculty, allowing the vast majority of us to retain

extremely favorable, although perhaps delusional, beliefs about our teaching effectiveness. In an effort to make student feedback more valuable, I beg students for written comments in addition to ratings. In the final analysis, I rely on my highly subjective impressions, gleaned from students' performance in the course, their attendance, enthusiasm, and erudition in class, their comments outside of class, and their success in subsequent educational endeavors.

One thing I love about teaching is that there is always room for improvement. Fortunately, my textbook writing forces me to update myself constantly on research findings and to think incessantly about better ways to explain important concepts and principles. I read the journal, *Teaching of Psychology* faithfully, as well as the teaching features and columns in the *APA Monitor* and the *APS Observer*. I eagerly gobble up new books on teaching, such as those recently published by Forsyth (2003), Goss Lucas and Bernstein (2005), and Buskist and Davis (2006). I attend the teaching-related sessions sponsored by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology at the annual meetings of APA and APS, and I rely heavily on the Society's marvelous Web site. I also attend psychology teaching conferences as often as possible. I hasten to note, I am amazed at the bountiful wealth of opportunities for professional development that are available to psychology teachers today. The teaching materials and programs available to us today utterly dwarf what was available when I began teaching in the early 1970s.

Advice for New Teachers

It is not like there is one "right" way to teach. In my Teaching of Psychology course, I constantly emphasize to my graduate students that they should tailor their teaching strategies to their personal strengths, their knowledge, and their interests. That said, I can offer some general thoughts that might prove helpful for novice teachers.

1. *Preparation is critical.* Effective teaching requires extensive preparation; you can't wing it. Novice teachers tend to assume that entertaining lectures are the key to quality teaching. But quality teaching depends far more on careful planning and compulsive attention to detail.

2. *Examples rule.* A key part of this preparation involves thinking up concrete examples to illustrate abstract concepts and principles. Real-life examples make abstract concepts come alive and greatly enhance students' understanding of these concepts. You can't count on being able to dream up these examples on the fly as you cover material. Novice teachers need to compile mental libraries of concrete examples of concepts such as placebo effects, sensory adaptation, conditioned responses, stimulus generalization, source-monitoring errors, and so forth.

3. *Enthusiasm is a huge plus.* Not everyone is capable of delivering compelling, scintillating lectures. But everyone should be capable of walking into class meetings with genuine enthusiasm. Students register this enthusiasm, which usually is contagious. And if you

are enthusiastic, students tend to be pretty forgiving if you stumble in a lecture or flounder in a demonstration. Enthusiasm can compensate for a lot of rough edges when one is new to teaching.

4. *Don't be afraid to admit it if you do not know the answer to a question.* New teachers seem to live in morbid fear of student questions they can't answer. Many seem to assume that they should fake answers to these questions until they gradually develop the omniscience to answer everything. Unfortunately, that omniscience is not really attainable. Even those of us who write the textbooks are routinely confronted by questions we can't answer. It is better to admit that you don't have an answer than to transmit misinformation. And your display of humility will humanize you in the students' eyes.

5. *Try to run a casual, relaxed classroom.* This strategy may not work for everyone, as I think it has to fit with one's personality, but I strive to nurture a very "laid back" classroom atmosphere in which students are free to come and go as they please, deadlines are generally open to negotiation, and there are very few rules. Although there is an inescapable power disparity between teachers and their students, I try to make as little use of it as possible. I don't have a well-thought out rationale for this strategy, as much as it is just my natural style. I don't know if this casual style should get the credit, but I have taught for 34 years without a single memorable confrontation with a student.

6. *Have realistic expectations about students' motivation and performance.* I have already noted that it is important not to let your expectations and standards slide as the years go by. But it is also important to start with reasonable expectations. New teachers are often surprised when their students do not find synaptic transmission and signal detection theory as exciting as they do. And new professors often forget that they wouldn't have become professors unless they were elite students. It is not reasonable for new faculty to expect unselected undergraduates to be as bright and motivated as they were when they were students.

Final Thoughts

Looking back on a career that continues to be an immense source of fulfillment, I find myself echoing the thoughts of Albert Bandura (1982), who once wrote a compelling article on how chance events can have a powerful impact on the course of people's lives. It is strange to contemplate that my life probably would have evolved in an entirely different direction if that professor at Illinois Central College had not decided to accept an administrative position in the fall of 1972. I will always be profoundly grateful for that fortuitous event, which sent me careening along a fortuitous life path.

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Changing Course: A Teacher in Transition

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I have taught psychology and Advanced Placement (AP) psychology at Viewmont High School in Bountiful, Utah since 1992. My educational background didn't exactly prepare me for this assignment. I earned a BS in Political Science with a minor in psychology at the University of Utah. Although I remember wanting to be a teacher in the second grade, I really hadn't pursued this early ambition until I decided to teach during my senior year in college. After receiving my degree, I entered a graduate program in education and began preparing for my future as a teacher. At that time, I envisioned teaching students to differentiate the branches of government and to remember the order of the presidents, not how a neuron fires! However, after I had been teaching for a few years, the opportunity arose for me to teach psychology. Because I had loved my psychology courses as an undergraduate, I jumped at the chance. It was a fortunate personal change for me because teaching psychology has afforded me experiences and allowed me to develop professional relationships that I never would have had otherwise.

Since my start in psychology education, I have been privileged to serve on the AP Psychology Test Development Committee and as a Table Leader and Reader at the AP Psychology exam annual readings. I currently serve as Chair of the National Standards for the Teaching of Introductory Psychology Committee for the American Psychological Association (APA), and I have served as member-at-large for the Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS). In 1998, I was part of a small group of teachers who organized Utah Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (UTOPSS), and I have been the Program Director for the annual UTOPSS Fall Institute since then.

Along with the UTOPSS Fall Institute, I have had the opportunity to present at numerous teaching conferences and workshops across the country. Most recently I presented at the Hawaii International Advanced Placement Summer Institute and the "Taking Off: Best Practices in Teaching Psychology Conference: Critical Thinking" in Atlanta.

I have also written a number of articles and other teaching materials geared for use by psychology educators. For example, I recently finished writing the latest *AP Psychology Teacher's Guide*, and I edited and co-authored a set of teaching materials entitled *A.P. Psychology Theme Materials: Special Focus on the Brain, the Nervous System, and Behavior* for

the College Board. In addition, my background with the APA's National Standards provided me with the opportunity to tie the Standards to the content of a high school psychology textbook in the Teachers Edition of *Thinking About Psychology* (Blair-Broeker & Ernst, 2003).

I have been honored to be recognized for my work. In 2005, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) awarded me the Moffet Memorial Teaching Excellence Award. That same year APA presented me with a Presidential Citation.

My Early Development as a Teacher

My development as a psychology teacher may be backwards compared to other teachers of psychology. Traditionally, psychologists pursue teaching as a secondary goal. For me, becoming a teacher was my primary goal and psychology was second. My earliest memory of wanting to teach comes from the second grade when my elementary school principal asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. My answer was a fitting tribute to my mother, who was a wonderful teacher. However, as a high school student I developed an interest in history, philosophy and the law. Although thoughts of teaching lingered, I decided to pursue pre-law at the University of Utah.

As a senior in college, I enjoyed my major courses, but I wasn't happy with the plan I had for my professional life. At the heart of my dissatisfaction was a desire to make a difference. I really wanted to affect others in a positive way. I felt at the time that a career in law would not have allowed me to have the kind of lasting influence I wanted to have on others' lives. After many months of serious soul-searching, I went to speak with an academic advisor in the Education Department.

The first thing the advisor handed me, after I stated my ambition to teach, was a pay scale. What an introduction to the field! Undeterred, though, I filled out the application to graduate school and declared my intention to earn an advanced degree in education with a specialty in "Teaching and Learning Strategies." I remember asking a respected professor for a recommendation letter in support of my application. He looked at me with sadness and said, "What a waste."

Still undeterred, I was happy to be accepted into the graduate education program at the University of Utah. I felt at home in the Education Department and believed my career change was a positive one. The program was designed to allow students to take basic education classes, such as classroom management and educational theory, while earning a teaching certificate and graduate degree. We moved through the classes as a cohort with two professors as our guides. After the first semester, we began observing junior and senior high classrooms in preparation for our student teaching experience.

My student teaching experience was invaluable to my early development as a teacher, particularly because I was fortunate to be assigned to a superb master teacher, Carolee Coleman. She was a veteran instructor who had taught at both the elementary and secondary levels. She was enthusiastic, warm, and loved students and teaching. Carolee believed that students learned best when actively engaged in creative and thought-provoking activities. Her teaching philosophy reflected my own developing beliefs. I watched and crafted my teaching style after hers. I remember hoping to be like Carolee, with such enthusiasm and joy for her work after teaching as many years as she had.

The thought of doing my student teaching petrified me. Even with careful preparation and numerous classes on theory and management, nothing adequately prepares one for the classroom except being there. My greatest fear was to run out of material in front of 35 thirteen-year-olds! My fear fortunately led to some good habits. My early teaching strategy was to be over-prepared, and I spent a great deal of time developing classroom activities and assignments based on active learning. Although I made many mistakes as a new teacher, I learned the importance of collaborating with other educators and being able to adapt to a constantly changing environment.

Shortly after completing my student teaching, one of my education professors asked me if I had an analogy for teaching. The first thought that came to mind was a juggler. Each ball tossed high in the air represented a different aspect of the teacher's role: one for developing classroom activities and lectures, one for classroom management, another for grading and paperwork, one for communication with parents, another for school committee assignments, and yet another for school-wide duties and demands of the administration, district, and community. The teacher, like the juggler, has to keep all of these competing demands balanced and aloft to succeed. Although I think my analogy captured the basic complexity of teaching, I think it may be too simplistic. It is not the juggler who is the focus of the act, but those for whom we are juggling. What I left out of my analogy was the basic reason I entered teaching in the first place: the students. As I've gained more experience, I've redefined myself as a teacher in relation to how I view the learners in my class.

Working at Defining Myself as a Teacher

One of the greatest obstacles I have faced as a psychology teacher has been my own lack of knowledge about the field of psychology. There was (and still is) so much for me to learn. With a background in politics and history, my knowledge of psychology was very limited. During my first year of teaching psychology I was always only one small step ahead of my students. More often than I would like to admit, I was writing lecture notes the class before I was

to give them and struggling with the pronunciation of terms. I felt that I was learning the science of psychology right along with the students in my classroom.

Some of the best advice I received during the early years came from my principal. He suggested that I contact a fellow psychology teacher for help. This teacher provided me with activities, support, and friendship. From this initial contact, a spirit of collaboration has shaped my professional life.

Early in my teaching career, I had the great fortune of attending a National Science Foundation Psychology Institute, directed by Ludy T. Benjamin, at Texas A & M University. The impact of this experience on my teaching was invaluable. This experience meant more to me in my day-to-day teaching than my Master's degree. Beyond strengthening my understanding of psychology, the Institute created links with my fellow psychology educators. As participants, we left the Institute with a network of colleagues across all educational levels, ready to help each other with invaluable advice.

At the conclusion of the Institute, Dr. Benjamin challenged us to “do something” upon returning home to improve psychology education in our state. I took his plea to heart. In 1998, a small group of teachers met to organize UTOPSS, a grass-roots organization with the goals of promoting the scientific nature of psychology courses, increasing communication among high school teachers, assisting teachers with their professional development, and developing partnerships with psychology teachers at all educational levels in Utah. Each year teachers anticipate the annual UTOPSS Fall Institute, which provides academic resources and a chance to network with others. We also have established a state-wide electronic discussion list providing teachers with lines of communication to one another. It has been an extremely rewarding part of my teaching career to watch this organization grow and have a positive impact on teachers in our state.

The Examined Life of a Teacher

Part of my philosophy of teaching stems from my early days as a student teacher and part of it is based on the experiences and lessons I've learned over my years of interacting with students and juggling the many responsibilities of a high school teacher. I believe that students learn best when they are active participants in the learning process. I believe students need to be challenged to think about and to question their understanding of the world. Students need to be provided with opportunities to be exposed to concepts and allowed to consider the relevance of what they are learning to the context of their own lives. I am fortunate that teaching psychology provides the perfect content that allows students this type of self-discovery.

This view of learning helps to define my role as a teacher. I believe it is my responsibility to create an atmosphere where active learning can happen. Considering the different learning styles of my students and the academic demands of the content area that I teach, I believe my role is to research, create, and present methods that facilitate an active learning atmosphere to accommodate all styles of learning. In any given class I may use a variety of methods and activities such as demonstrations, discussions, simulations, writing exercises, interactive lectures, in-depth reading of articles, debates, group presentations, video clips, or experiments.

I believe the use of these types of activities increases student involvement and interest in the topic, as well as their intrinsic motivation to succeed. I also believe that students need to see the link between the activities they do in class and the content of their textbook. I believe a demonstration shouldn't be done just for its own sake. Students need to see the relevance of the activity and how it ties to the goals of the course and their lives beyond the classroom.

I would like my students to develop an appreciation for the science of psychology. For many of my students my course will be their only exposure to this discipline. I hope that by learning more about psychology they will become critical thinkers and better consumers of information. I attempt to instill a curiosity in my students about the world around them and encourage them to be life-long learners. I try to teach them practical skills, for example, to become better writers and communicators. I believe these are skills that will most benefit them throughout life. I hope that my students feel successful in my class, and at the end of the school year I hope they consider their hard work worth the effort.

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching for me is watching my students "turn on" to a concept I am teaching and sensing that their enthusiasm and curiosity about psychology has grown as a result. I love the feeling when I know that students are totally engaged in what is happening in class and they leave my class feeling that it has been a valuable experience.

I also believe that an important element of a well-functioning classroom is that well-established expectations exist for both teacher and students. Students need to know what they can expect in terms of homework assignments, participation, exams, grading, and discipline. I believe that students also need to know what to expect of me. I believe students need timely feedback on assignments, tests, and other course work. In addition, I want them to feel the enthusiasm I have for what I teach. I want them to know that I am prepared and organized and that each time they come to my class, I have something valuable planned for them.

I believe that students learn best in an atmosphere of respect. I try to be a positive role model for my students. Because I want them to be life-long learners, I want them to see that I am learning alongside them as well. I readily admit when I don't know an answer to a question,

which creates a wonderful opportunity for us to learn together. I don't see myself so much as an "expert" but as a guide to stimulate their learning.

This perspective has evolved over time. As a new teacher, I saw myself as the primary source of all knowledge! As I reflect on my early years, I sometimes wonder if the control one has as the "sage on the stage" gives a teacher security. Over time, I've learned the importance of allowing others to share the stage. Although this risk can still be hard for me sometimes, the result has been increased learning for both the students and me.

My classroom is an evolving place. My teaching style and methods have changed over time with experience and feedback. Every year my students complete anonymous surveys about their experiences. I have learned to have a tough skin and to consider their suggestions with the ultimate goal of improving their educational experience. Assessment, whether it comes from my students or my principal, isn't something to be feared, but a chance to continue to grow. Based on the wise advice of my students and others I have continued to change and improve how I teach.

I like to stretch my abilities by continually learning new things and by keeping involved professionally. I enjoy attending workshops, conferences, institutes, and conventions both locally and across the country. I have learned so much from watching master teachers present at these events. I've also enjoyed my work as a Table Leader and Reader at the AP Psychology exam readings each summer and feel it is a wonderful opportunity to interact with fellow teachers and to learn something new. I always come away from the experience feeling energized. In addition, I appreciate my membership both in TOPSS and in STP. The materials they provide, such as lesson plans and journal articles, are invaluable and help me to continue my professional development.

Advice for New Teachers

As a new teacher, don't be afraid to ask for help. As a high school teacher, find out who else is teaching psychology in your building, district, or nearby. Consider organizing an after-school meeting of teachers to share ideas and concerns about teaching. Break out of your isolation and join the community of psychology teachers across the country by subscribing to available electronic discussion lists, such as PsychNews and AP Central. (To join PsychNews, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.UH.EDU and in the body of the message place the following: SUBSCRIBE PSYCH-NEWS (Your Name); to join AP Central go to <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Controller.jspf> and click on "AP Community.") And don't forget the valuable resources you may have in your own building. If you are weak in teaching biology or statistics, contact teachers in those areas and don't be afraid to ask them

questions about those areas in which you have limited knowledge. Find the time and the means to communicate with others. It is well worth the effort.

Join professional organizations such as TOPSS and STP and take advantage of the resources they have to offer both in print and online. Attend all available teaching workshops and conferences that your schedule and finances will allow.

Create classroom activities based on active learning. Get students involved in their own learning and you'll see them turn on to the concepts you are teaching.

Most importantly, don't forget why you went into teaching in the first place. Enjoy the challenge of being an educator and focus on the positive impact you can have on those you teach.

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