

## *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.

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Bernard C. Beins  
Caroline Burke  
Bill Buskist  
Vinny Hevern  
John Williams  
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