STP News
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To receive email notifications when OnlineFirst articles are available: Follow the instructions on the Top online access page.

STP is now accepting dues for STP membership in 2022.

New members who join on the STP website will receive immediate access to members-only materials, including online access to Teaching of Psychology (ToP) through December 31, 2022.

If you are a current STP member, click here for instructions on how to renew for 2022.

STP Members: Save Printing/Mailing Costs! Read Teaching of Psychology Online

Visit the View Profile page (requires login) and select "No" for the "Receive Print Journal" option (near the bottom of the page). You will still have online access to the current issue and back issues of the journal.

STP Members: Please vote for Bylaws Revisions

STP’s Executive Committee approved bylaws revisions for submission to the membership of STP for final approval. STP members may visit here to review the bylaws revisions.

STP members may cast a vote until 11:59pm Eastern on March 9, 2022.

The following documents are provided for those who are interested in reviewing the current Bylaws and the current Policies and Procedures Manual.

- Proposed Revisions to the Bylaws (STP Members may cast a vote by March 9, 2022; requires login)
- Current STP Bylaws (Amended January 10, 2021)
- 2021 Policies and Procedures Manual (Referenced in the comments for the proposed revisions)
- Questions about the bylaws may be addressed to the STP Executive Director at stp@teachpsych.org.

STP News Co-Editors: Stephanie Afful & Tom Pusateri Send inquiries or news items to stp@teachpsych.org
February: Let’s Celebrate Black History Month!
February 5, 2022

"Won't it be wonderful when Black history and Native American history and Jewish history and all of US history is taught from one book. Just US history. I am trying to work myself out of a job by being so active extolling the virtues of African Americans." Maya Angelou (cited in Muir, 2012)

Often discussions of the history of Blacks in the United States (US) have focused on the destructive harms committed by privileged Whites against Africans forcibly brought to this country and enslaved. It is an essential history to learn, as is learning about the far-reaching legacies left behind from the eras of enslavement and racist eugenic ideas of human hierarchies to today with the ongoing fight for social justice. Certainly, the American Psychological Association (APA) has been grappling with this history and has begun the processes of apology, reconciliation, and reparative justice. STP also has been wrestling with its own history and legacies, issuing the Statement on Addressing Systemic Racism and Inequity in STP and looking at structural processes affecting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Moreover, STP is working actively to increase diversity related resources, blog posts, publications, conference offerings, and more. Important work but is there anything else we should be reflecting on during Black History Month? The answer is “Yes!”

What is often omitted from Black history discussions are the legacies of resilience, accomplishments/triumphs, inspired communities, rich cultural tapestries, and soaring spirits of African-Americans, who not only survived but also thrived under systems of exclusion. I think it is this history that forms the basis for celebrating Black History Month, which sets the stage for greater inclusion throughout the year.

I’m sure that many of you are like me, and when psychology was first introduced to you, you were taught about the “fathers of psychology”—a bunch of White men. Gradually, over the years, I was introduced to women pioneers in the field, who previously had been written out of history. However, I still was not exposed to the breadth of Black pioneering psychologists, who have shaped our discipline. There is an amazing history for us to explore, learn, and celebrate. So, for this Black History Month, I want to recognize the work of a few of these Black pioneer psychologists and call on everyone to learn more.

Many psychology textbooks today include the story of Kenneth Clark and Mamie Phipps Clark. Kenneth Clark became the first African-American President of APA and both are remembered for their pivotal work before and during the Civil Rights Movement. Most notably, they are recognized for their groundbreaking Doll Study research, which paved the way for their expert testimony before the Supreme Court in 1954 with Brown vs. Board of Education, ending mandated segregation of schools.

However, how many of us have learned about Inez Beverly Prosser, PhD, “the first Black women to earn a doctorate in psychology”? Her dissertation, “The Non-Academic Development of Negro Children in Mixed and Segregated Schools,” helped form the basis for early arguments against school segregation and was also cited in that 1954 Supreme Court case. Of course, I should also mention Ruth Winifred Howard, PhD, “the first African-American women to earn a doctorate in psychology,” who worked with troubled girls as well as students with special needs. As to who really was “the first,” it appears to depend on whom you read and your definition of what should count as a psychology doctoral degree at the time.

Of course, we know that desegregation did not simply end segregation. Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD, in her book, Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria And Other Conversations About Race, wrote, “Our public schools are more segregated today than they were in 1980, as measured by the percentage of all Black students who are attending schools that are 90-100% non-White” (2017; Prologue). Dr. Tatum’s examination of the effects of racism on Black children’s identities in school and problems with the educational system earned her the 2014 APA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Psychology.

Some other early educational leaders:

Francis Cecil Sumner, PhD, is often referred to as the “Father of Black Psychology.” He was the first African-American to earn a doctorate in psychology. He helped found the Psychology Department at Howard University and served as a teacher and mentor to individuals such as the Clarks.

Albert Sidney Beckham, PhD, is often cited as the first Black school psychologist. He also worked to found the first psychology laboratory at Howard University. His research examined a range of topics such as artistic and musical abilities in Black children, IQ testing, the role of the environment in juvenile delinquency, and racial attitudes of Black adolescents.
George Canady, PhD. was the first psychologist to study bias in IQ tests by examining the role and effect of the test administrator on the IQ results for non-White children.

Robert Lee Williams, II, PhD, challenged the idea that IQ test results were equitable and is remembered as the creator of the Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity. He demonstrated that differences in IQ often cited by eugenicists to falsely claim White superiority failed to address differences in the environment and culture.

Joseph White, PhD, wrote and advocated for the creation of Black Psychology. He argued that the application of White psychology defined as normal created the illusion of an inferior Black Psychology. In his writing he focused on a strength-based approach and description of Black psychology and culture. He is one of the founders of the Association of Black Psychologists. As such, he also has been described as the “Father of Black Psychology.”

Of course, there are too many individuals to celebrate in this short column! I do want to mention two others as their work and legacies are remarkable beyond the university and are just personal favorites of mine.

Carolyn Robertson Payton, EdD, was the first psychologist, first female, and first African-American Director of the US Peace Corps. A pioneer in the field of multi-cultural psychology, Payton (1984) asked, “Who must do the hard things?” (p. 391). She stressed that psychology has an important role to play in understanding and addressing social issues. As an educator, leader, mentor, scholar, and policymaker, Payton confronted issues of social inequality and justice exemplifying her belief that psychology is not just about research but also direct action to improve the lives of others.

Olivia Hooker, PhD was originally rejected by the Navy but challenged the Navy’s decision and won. Nevertheless, she decided not to join the Navy and went on to become the first African-American woman to enter the U.S. Coast Guard and served towards the end of and after WWII. Later, Dr. Hooker became a school psychologist. It also is important to highlight that she was a survivor of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre.

Of course, I could write about so many other Black psychologists who have shaped our discipline and our understanding of psychology. But more importantly, how can we help our students learn this history and include Black psychology into our work today?

One of the projects that I do with my History of Psychology class is something I call the “Lost in History” project. I give them a basic instruction: “You will be responsible for creating a one-page infographic highlighting the works of an early psychologist who has been lost in history due to their status within a marginalized group.” I also tell them that they cannot select a person who is already presented in their textbook. I provide them some basic resources such as APA’s I Am Psyched and Ethnicity, Race, and Cultural Affairs Portfolio (ERCA) Featured Psychologists. I have these students provide each other feedback about their work with opportunities for revision. Then (during non-COVID times), we place these infographics around the department as a way to celebrate these psychologists’ accomplishments through the entire year.

In my Introduction to Psychology class, I open the class by highlighting the work of a range of psychologists with various intersectional identities. I want my students to see individuals who look and identify similar to themselves—individuals who have gone on to amazing careers in psychology and related fields. A quick look at recent Black APA Presidents includes Jessica Henderson Daniel, PhD., first Black woman President of the Association, Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD, Jennifer F. Kelly, PhD, and current APA President Frank Worrell, PhD. You can read about Dr. Worrell and then explore links to previous Presidents on the governance webpage. You will find brief biographies but also links to videos and publications. In addition, I like to have my students look online for research and publications by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) psychologists, neuroscientists, etc. related to the various topics we cover in class. I want them to not only learn about the research and accomplishments but also to see their own possible futures.

As we progress through Black History Month, let us work with our students to highlight the work of Black Psychologists and other leaders, celebrating their lives and accomplishments. If you learn about a BIPOC scholar that got “lost in history” or someone who everyone should know about today, share what you have learned on the STP Facebook page, via Twitter, or other social media. Let us all learn and celebrate together.

For more information about Black History Month, see:

- ASALH’s Origins of Black History Month
- Black History Month
- Franklin, J. (2022, February 1). Here’s the story behind Black History Month — and why it’s celebrated in February. PBS.

References


Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Legacy and Call to Action

January 17, 2022, STP President Linda Woolf

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education, and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today (January 17) we celebrate and honor the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is a day of remembrance but also a day of action. In 1994, Congress passed legislation designating the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday as a Day of Service—"a day on, not a day off." Around the country, individuals are engaged in endeavors designed to improve the lives of others, build communities, break down barriers, and spread the message of Dr. King. It is a day of kindness grounded in a message of social justice.

In 1967, Dr. King addressed the American Psychological Association (APA) at the annual convention. If you have not read his speech or if you have not read it recently, please take a moment to read and reflect: The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement. Although the language used today may be different, the concerns and challenges raised by Dr. King are just as real and profound as over a half-century ago—protest, political division, voting, war, discrimination, unemployment, vast disparities built into the structures of society, and daily injustices directed against individuals based on the color of their skin. As stated by Dr. King, "It is my deep conviction that justice is indivisible, that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” The work and vision of Dr. King is unfinished.

In his address to convention, Dr. King spoke about a common psychological concept—maladjustment. However, he argued against “adjustment” to what long has been defined as “normal”—a historically-defined “normal,” which includes not only deeply rooted prejudice and discrimination within society but also cultural, structural, and systemic barriers oppressing Black individuals and communities in the United States. As noted by Dr. King, "discrimination explains a great deal, but not everything."

Today, we recognize that many of our beliefs and social structures were created with the idea of White European ancestry and culture as “normal” and all others defined as “different” and in need of adjustment, assimilation, or civilization. We recognize many of these biases remain within our society, as to what is defined as “normal” and hence “correct” based on ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, language, immigration status, physical and mental abilities, and so many other expressions of humanity. Within psychology, simply the term “abnormal psychology” carries with it a host of beliefs and attributions about individuals who experience “disorder.” Should we resist change to our beliefs and our actions simply because we have adjusted to ideas of what is “normal” or more often, “We have always done it this way”? Dr. King spoke to those of us in psychology:

I am sure that we will recognize that there are some things in our society, some things in our world, to which we should never be adjusted. There are some things concerning which we must always be maladjusted if we are to be people of good will. We must never adjust ourselves to racial discrimination and racial segregation. We must never adjust ourselves to religious bigotry. We must never adjust ourselves to economic conditions that take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. We must never adjust ourselves to the madness of militarism, and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.

This past October, APA passed two historic resolutions, which not only apologized for its role in past and ongoing racism against Peoples of Color (PoC) but also set forth a call for action and a plan to address the continuing harms caused by the discipline and practice of psychology against PoC. I wrote about these Resolutions in a column entitled, “APA Passes Historic Apology To People of Color.” Take a look at this column. You will find additional information about these Resolutions, teaching, and resources from Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) and from APA.

Certainly, as teachers, we are intimately aware of our call to service, and we daily engage in productive action through teaching, research, scholarship, and advocacy. Our work is important. Nonetheless, as I wrote, "I encourage us all to work to "decolonize" our courses, syllabi, research, etc. to make our classes and our disciplinary understanding more inclusive. Within our departments or collegial groups, we can have conversations about what we can do to learn from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts related to the teaching of psychology and how to translate that information into our respective courses.” As noted, this column includes links to resources that you can explore related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of both STP and APA. Take some time to explore these teaching materials.

Today on MLK day, I urge us all again to reflect on not just what we teach but also how we teach so as to meet the needs of students, particularly Black, Indigenous, Pacific-Islander-Asian, Latinx, and other students of color. I encourage us to work within our neighborhoods to reduce educational barriers and create more inclusive and welcoming learning environments for all within our diverse student communities. Certainly, change is never easy and there will be those who challenge efforts to be more inclusive in our courses and teaching. However, in the words of Dr. King, "The time is always right to do what is right.”
Candidates for STP Offices

Amy Fineburg, Chair of STP’s Elections and Appointments Committee, is pleased to announce the candidates for STP offices:

President-Elect (to serve as President in 2024)
Chris Koch, Ph.D.
Loretta N. McGregor, Ph.D.

Vice President for Grants and Awards
Kyle Conlon, Ph.D.
Morton Ann Gernsbacher, Ph.D.

Division 2 Representative to APA Council
David S. Kreiner, Ph.D.
Richard L. Miller, Ph.D.
Jodie B. Ullman, Ph.D.

We will publish a Special Issue of STP News in March that will contain statements from each candidate. All STP members will be eligible to vote for President-Elect and for Vice President for Grants and Awards; instructions for casting votes will be distributed to STP members after the Special Issue is published.

APA members of Division 2 will receive a separate ballot for Division 2 Representative to APA Council directly from APA. Expect an email invitation to vote in that election later this year.

Current STP Service Opportunities

Get Involved in STP! Please consider applying for the following positions and please encourage your colleagues to apply as well. Consistent with our Mission Statement and the Statement on Addressing Systemic Racism and Inequity in STP, we encourage applications from colleagues who are from underrepresented groups and have diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Current Service Opportunities in STP (Deadline):
- Members, Annual Conference on Teaching (ACT) Steering Committee (Deadline, February 28, 2022)
- Associate Editor, Best Practices in Teaching and Learning (Deadline, March 31, 2022)

Service Opportunities in APA (STP serves as APA Division 2)
- Full list of Current Career Opportunities at APA
- Call for Nominations: APA Boards and Committees (Deadline: January 31, 2022)
- Learn how to nominate yourself or a colleague for a position in APA leadership.
- Full list of APA Boards and Committees

STP News Special Issue: ACT 2021

We have created a STP News Special Issue that includes screen captures from the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference on Teaching. The issue also celebrates those who have received STP awards in 2021 and recognizes those STP leaders whose terms of service ended in 2021.

Those who have already registered for ACT 2021 Virtual will continue to have access to recordings of the synchronous sessions and to on-demand presentations and posters until October 1, 2022.

STP members who have not yet registered may do so here to view the content from ACT 2021 Virtual.

If you are not a member and would like to gain access, join STP first before attempting to register for the conference.

STP Retains Two Seats on APA Council

The results of the 2021 APA Apportionment Ballot have been tallied and approved. STP (APA Division 2) will retain two seats on the APA Council of Representatives. Our current representatives are Maureen McCarthy and Jodie Ullman. The STP Executive Committee thanks those APA members who submitted votes for Division 2.

News from APA

APA 2022: August 4-6, Minneapolis, MN

Planning for APA 2022 is already in full swing. We know many have missed the energy and connections that happen when we meet face to face, and we are excited to bring the community back together for an extraordinary in-person experience in Minneapolis.

We also know that having a virtual convention provided unique opportunities for many people — and we are exploring ways to provide quality virtual experiences again in 2022.

Registration will open in April. In the meantime, sign up for our email alerts to stay up to date.
Webinar: Essential Science Conversations


Raymond D. Fowler Award

APA is accepting nominations for the 2022 Raymond D. Fowler Award. This award recognizes the outstanding contributions of an APA member who has had a significant and enduring impact on the organization and has dedicated themselves to advancing APA's mission. APA members and/or APA member or constituent groups (i.e., APA boards, committees, divisions, state/provincial psychological associations) are welcome to submit nominations. Deadline: March 31, 2022.

Technology, Mind, and Society 2021: On Demand

It’s not too late to register! Hear from some of the biggest voices shaping conversations on human-technology interaction. Recordings are available until May 5, 2022.

Call for Papers: Mind-Body Connection

The editors of Translational Issues in Psychological Science (TPS) seek submissions for a special issue on “The Mind-Brain-Body Connection.” The purpose of this special issue is to present cutting-edge research examining bidirectional and mechanistic relationships between mental and physical health, with the goal of deepening our understanding of the intersection between psychology and biology. The deadline for submissions is May 2, 2022. For more information, visit here.

TPS is co-sponsored by APA and the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students.

APA’s Advocacy for Education

Click on the following links to learn about APA’s advocacy initiatives for pre-K to 12 education, higher education, and workforce development. To learn about APA’s other advocacy initiatives, click here.

DIVERSITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

International Twitter Poster Contest Recipient

Lyra Stein, STP’s Chair for the International Twitter Poster Contest Committee, is pleased to announce the recipient of this year’s poster award is Tessa Benson-Greenwald for the poster, “Harry Potter and the Magic of Statistics.” Congratulations!

To view this and other submissions, search online for #stp21poster

Australian Handbook on Careers

Despite psychology being one of the most popular undergraduate programs, students often report not knowing how training in psychology relates to careers. With chapters written by experts across Australia, The Australian Handbook for Careers in Psychology (edited by Tony Manchin, Tanya Machin, Carla Jeffries, and Nancey Hoare) explores just some of the many ways that students can apply their training in psychological science across a variety of careers and sectors.

A number of additional resources and interviews with psychology graduates are included and are hosted on YouTube.

Conference on Positive Youth Development

The 1st Conference on Positive Youth Development in a Cross-National Perspective will be held online by the Department of Psychosocial Science at the University of Bergen on April 23-24, 2022. The theme of the conference is “Bridging Research & Practice Cross-Nationally: A PYD Approach to Social Justice.” The conference will be free of charge. The official language of the conference is English.

Reference


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GRANTS & AWARDS

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STP Awards/Grants Deadlines

The chart above lists the upcoming deadlines for STP's Awards and Grants programs with links for more information. Please consider applying for the programs for which you qualify and encourage your colleagues to do so. All applicants must be STP members; to join STP, visit here.

Division 1 Call for Awards

The Society for General Psychology (APA Division 1) offers several awards for colleagues at all career stages. The deadline for all awards is February 15, 2022. Visit the link above for more information about each award.

APA/APF Funding/Award Programs

Visit here for funding and award programs from APA and the American Psychological Foundation (APF). Visit here for scholarships and grants for graduate students. To view current deadlines and to apply online, visit here.

High School Psychology Outreach Grants

$25,000 to support regional teaching networks that facilitate networking and professional development opportunities for high school psychology teachers.

Deadline: March 1, 2022

Esther Katz Rosen Precollege Psychology Grant Program

Up to $15,000 to improve the quality of education in psychological science and its application in secondary schools for high ability students.

Deadline: March 1, 2022

Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Awards

This TOPSS award recognizes outstanding teachers in psychology in secondary schools.

Deadline: March 15, 2022

TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students

Students are invited to write an essay of up to 1,500 words that addresses psychology’s role in addressing societal systemic problems. Up to three students will receive $300 scholarships for their winning essays.

Deadline: March 31, 2022

Mary Whiton Calkins Grant

$3,750 to encourage research that fits into the broad category of general psychology with a particular interest in research that combines multiple subfields within the discipline or addresses overarching themes. Applicants must be a member APA Division 1 who teaches psychology at a primarily undergraduate serving institution.

Deadline: May 31, 2022

Suinn Minority Achievement Program Award

Awarded to departments of psychology who have demonstrated excellence in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of ethnic minority students. Nominations are submitted by student(s) within the particular psychology graduate department and/or program.

Deadline: June 1, 2022

CIRP Outstanding Dissertation Award

The committee sponsors an award for the most outstanding psychology dissertation on international and global communities.

Deadline: June 3, 2022

APF/COGDOP Graduate Research Scholarships

Award 21 general scholarships (from $2,000 to $5,000) for graduate students in psychology from COGDOP member departments.

Deadline: June 30, 2022.

Sharon S. Brehm Undergraduate Psychology Scholarships

Recognize outstanding psychology undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need. Seven $5,000 scholarships are available for the Spring 2023 semester.

Deadline: July 1, 2022

High School Psychology Outreach Grants

$25,000 to support regional teaching networks that facilitate networking and professional development opportunities for high school psychology teachers.

Deadlines are July 1 and November 1 each year.

Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award

Recognizes a significant career of contributions of a psychologist who has a proven track record as an exceptional teacher of psychology. The awardee receives a plaque, a $2,000 award and an all-expense paid round trip to the APA Annual Convention (max of $1,000), where the award is presented. Awardees are also invited to give a special address.

Deadline: December 1, 2022.

NSF STEM Scholarships

NSF’s S-STEM program provides scholarships and support to low-income STEM majors (including psychological science) who show promise in STEM disciplines to receive a post-secondary degree. Deadline: February 22, 2022
The GSTA Corner

Q&A with 2022 GSTA Leadership

Submitted by: William Ridgway (Chair) and Madeline Bruce (Associate Chair)

During these first few months of this new year, the GSTA Corner will be featuring brief interviews with all six members of our committee. This month, we are featuring this year’s Chair and Associate Chair.

Type of doctoral program, year, & expected graduation:

William: I am a fourth-year doctoral student in the Psychological and Brain Sciences PhD program at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and on track to graduate in Summer 2023.

Mads: I am a fourth-year doctoral candidate in the Clinical Psychology PhD program at Saint Louis University on track to graduate in the Summer of 2023.

Classes you have taught and/or been a GTA for (undergraduate or graduate):

William: I have been the instructor of record for Introduction to Psychology. Since Fall 2022, I have been the instructor of record for Forensic Psychology.

Mads: I have been the instructor of record for Abnormal Psychology and a GTA for General, Clinical and Abnormal, Pediatric, and Trauma Psychology.

Experiences you have been able to participate in because of being a part of GSTA:

William: Since joining the GSTA, I have been able to actively provide graduate students with essential resources and best practices for teaching. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from extraordinary individuals.

Mads: While still relatively new, I’ve been provided tremendous opportunities to develop supportive relationships with fellow graduate students. We’ve been able to provide resources and support for the next generation of teachers, and there’s only more to come!

Benefits of GSTA on your professional development and future as an academic:

William: My experiences with GSTA have allowed me to become more involved in discussing important issues in academia. For example, last year, I thoroughly enjoyed being on a panel with Dr. Molly Metz and other GSTA committee members for a symposium addressing how to approach tough topics in the classroom.

Mads: There is a collaborative climate that helps us share perspectives and scholarship of teaching and learning with each other. There is also a supportive group that helps students find their personal style.

Impact of GSTA on you personally:

William: I constantly find myself exposed to a myriad of perspectives which have allowed me to grow as an individual, allowing me to become a more effective colleague and instructor. There are so many ways in which a subject can be approached, so having individuals you can discuss various ideas with is essential. The process and feedback allow for an additional level of confidence in how you choose to approach any topic.

Mads: It’s been very meaningful to meet fellow graduate students with a passion for teaching and learning. There are times when graduate school can feel heavy on other roles psychologists take on, and to have a space where discussions of teaching can flourish is really great.

Advice (teaching and/or research tips) for other graduate students:

William: My advice to any instructor would be to acknowledge the role you play – or could play – in the academic journey of your students. Additionally, when you do not know the answer to a question, never hesitate to admit it.

Mads: My advice is likely influenced on becoming an instructor during Fall 2020 (i.e., right in the middle of the pandemic) and my clinical side: take time to foster relationships. The best learning comes from collaboration and support. Students’ time in your classroom could be quite meaningful if they knew they could try, maybe not get it, then try again, knowing their teacher was there.

Follow GSTA on Twitter (@gradsteachpsych) and Facebook (groups/theGSTA), join the GSTA Listserv, check out our Blog and past entries for the GSTA Corner, or write to us at gsta@teachpsych.org. Learn more here.
Dear Syllabus Reader,

Getting students to read the syllabus is a difficulty many instructors face. And, while we as instructors know about all the important things a syllabus can hold, it can be daunting for students to face reading a 5-page (or even longer) document full of formal language and policies...especially if they aren’t even sure what a syllabus is for. Here are some ideas on helping get students informed, interested, and engaged in reading the course syllabus:

Make it interesting:

Provide students with a visually appealing syllabus! Just adding visual interest to an otherwise rather boring document means that students are more likely to check it out. You can start out simple by using a variety of document templates (like newsletters in Word or Publisher). Or take it to the next level by creating an infographic version using Canva or Piktochart. I (Ciara) love creating a “visual” version of my syllabus that allows me to be creative in displaying information to students using graphs and clip art to get the major points across. I then include links to more detailed policies and/or a plain-text syllabus, introductory videos, useful resources, etc.

Make it engaging:

If design isn’t your strong suit, you can also get students to read the syllabus by incorporating engagement with the syllabus in your class. You can lead activities in class to get students to learn what’s in the syllabus. For example, syllabus speed-dating is an activity that gets students talking with one another and diving into the syllabus to answer questions about the class. A syllabus scavenger hunt activity similarly asks students to find specific information within the syllabus in order to complete it.

If you don’t have class time to devote to getting students engaged in reading the syllabus, I have found that creating assignments related to the syllabus is useful. A syllabus quiz is an effective way to make sure students are at least aware of the most important information contained within it. In many Learning Management Systems (e.g., Moodle, Canvas) a teacher can restrict access to other course materials until a student earns a specific score on a syllabus quiz, demonstrating their understanding of important policies and what information is within the syllabus. If that’s not your style, the syllabus can also be used as an introductory or practice assignment, particularly in a class that uses new tech or repetitive weekly assignments. For example, in a class where students are asked to annotate readings each week, the first week’s assignment could be to annotate the syllabus. This serves as both a way for the student to become familiar with the task they will be doing throughout the term as well as a way to ensure that the syllabus is carefully read. Similarly, if the students write weekly journals or reflections, the first week’s assignment could focus on the syllabus.

Make it informative:

One thing I have noticed over time is that syllabi, and syllabi-language, are passed down from instructor to instructor within an institution. This is a great time-saver, but it also means that sometimes the language and structure of syllabi is formal and does not serve today’s students. We have to remember that most of our students are first-generation and from more diverse backgrounds than the students of the faculty who came before us. By changing up the language used in syllabus, it may make the information contained in it easier to read and understand, thus making students more likely to read it!

One idea to help you make your syllabus more informative is to use guided questions as headings for information. For example, instead of the formal terms related to attendance or late policies you can use questions like “Do I have to go to class?” or “Can I turn things in late” to make it very clear where students should find the answers to those questions. Similarly, you can translate the formal academic language in describing policies, assignments, etc. by adopting a “conversational tone” that not only demonstrates the care and warmth of you, the instructor, but also makes it easier to understand the information within it. Some policies are carefully written by others for inclusion into syllabi across campus, definitely include them as written, but it may also be appropriate to provide your own explanation of what is meant by that policy or provide examples. Have a plagiarism policy? Accompany that policy with a list of what plagiarism looks like in your class so it’s clear what you as the instructor see as plagiarism so students can see how it applies to your assignments (this is particularly important in cases of group work, or students working together on non-group work assignments which can vary a lot from instructor to instructor).

Another idea to help make your syllabus informative, is to provide the “formal” longer syllabus but to also give a short 1-page syllabus synopsis/cheat-sheet that highlights the most important/relevant information. This is particularly great if you want to
give students something tangible in class that first day, without printing off your super long syllabus. Even better, include page numbers of where more information can be found. This synopsis could include information like your email/office hours, major due dates, study suggestions, course materials, attendance/late policies (in plain language with reference to the page of the complete policy), and whatever else you think is super vital for students to know. You could even come up with a “blank” version for students to complete as part of the earlier mentioned “syllabus scavenger hunt” activity for students to complete during class and have as a cheat sheet throughout the semester!

There are a lot of ways to encourage students to read the syllabus and part of that rests in making sure students understand the purpose of the syllabus in your class and the information that it holds. Syllabi serve a different purpose to different instructors and if we want our students to know what it is for us, we have to tell them.

**RESOURCES**

**Teaching of Psychology Idea Exchange**

Welcome to the Teaching of Psychology idea eXchange (ToPIX)! A product of APA Division 2: The Society for the Teaching of Psychology

Navigation Tips: To return to this page at any time, click the top of the page. To navigate by content, use the “Navigator” on the right, grab the double dotted rows at the bottom of that section to expand or shrink the area.

How to learn about new ToPIX content || How to add content to ToPIX

Angela Kelling, Elisa Geiss, and Manda Williamson are continuing to update the STP ToPIX page to have more recent content and fill in gaps. Please visit the page for teaching ideas and keep an eye out for calls for particular materials on the STP Facebook page.

**Resources from APA**

**Learn How to Get Published**

This series was created to teach students about the publishing, editorial, and peer review processes with step-by-step advice. Here are links to Part One (The Publishing Process), Part Two (The Editorial Board), and Part Three (Peer Review).

Your STP Early Career Psychologists Committee

Courtney Gosnell, Ph.D.
Albee Mendoza, Ph.D.
Janet Peters, Ph.D.
Ciara Kidder, Ph.D.
Christina Shane-Simpson, M.S.W., Ph.D.

**Ask an ECP!**

For our monthly column, we want to research and answer questions that mean the most to you. If you have a question, chances are you are not the only one! Fill out this simple form and your question may be featured in an upcoming column.

**For regular updates on ECP activities:**

Follow us on Twitter (@STP_ECP) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/stp.ecp)
Email us at: stp-ecp@teachpsych.org
Visit our STP website: http://teachpsych.org/ecp

**Psychology’s Integrative Themes: Videos**

Garth Neufeld created an video series to help students **better understand Psychology’s Integrative Themes**, which came out of the SLO recommendations for Intro Psych from APA's Introductory Psychology Initiative. The videos can now be accessed, for free, by students and instructors: just go to this Macmillan website and sign up/log in to gain free access.

There are 8 videos in total:
1. **Introduction to Psychology's Integrative Themes** (can be accessed without logging in)
2. Psychological science relies on empirical evidence and adapts as new data develop.
3. Psychology explains general principles that govern behavior while recognizing individual differences.
4. Psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors influence behavior and mental processes.
5. Psychology values diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion in the pursuit of a more just society.
6. Our perceptions and biases filter our experiences of the world through an imperfect personal lens.
7. Applying psychological principles can change our lives, organizations, and communities in positive ways.
8. Ethical principles guide psychology research and practice.
PROGRAMMING

Regional Psychology Conferences

Please see dates and deadlines below related to regional conference programming in 2022. As you are able, we encourage you to support and attend STP teaching programming at regional conferences! If you have questions about STP regional conference programming, please email Garth Neufeld at regional-conference@teachpsych.org.

Eastern Psychological Association (EPA)
March 3-5, 2022, New York, NY

Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA)
March 23-26, 2022, Hilton Head Island, SC

Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA)
April 7-9, 2022, Salt Lake City, UT

Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)
April 8-10, 2022, Baton Rouge, LA

Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA)
April 21-23, 2022, Chicago, IL

Western Psychological Association (WPA)
April 27-May 1, 2022, Portland, OR

New England Psychological Association (NEPA)
2022 Dates and Location TBA

Psychology ONE 2022

Join us at Psychology ONE 2022 at Duke University from June 23-24 to learn and share with us!

For 10 years, Psychology ONE has been connecting instructors dedicated to the highest standards of teaching excellence and harnessing the potential of the introductory psychology course. By developing a community that shares ideas and resources, the Psychology ONE conference provides an excellent opportunity to meet and learn with fellow instructors from high schools, 2-year, and 4-year schools.

Submit a proposal (Deadline: February 28):

Registration is $165, or $135 for STP members, and includes meals, materials, and parking at Duke.

2022 Winter Roundtable

The theme of the 2022 Winter Roundtable at Teachers College, Columbia University, is Collective Action & Liberatory Practices in Psychology and Education. In consideration of the health and safety of our Roundtable community, the 2022 conference will be held virtually Feb 24-26, 2021. To register, please click here. This year we are also offering close to 30 CE (APA, CTLE, NBCC, NYS Psychologist, and NYS LMHC) presentations.

SETOP 2022

We invite you to join us at our Virtual SETOP Conference this February 18-19, 2022. We are very pleased to announce that our program includes two outstanding keynote speakers, Psychologist and Author, Beverly Daniel Tatum and Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Kennesaw State University, Roxanne Donovan. They join some other wonderful invited speakers and, we hope, you!

TIP Northwest 2022

The annual conference for Teaching Introductory Psychology (TIP) Northwest will take place on April 15, 2022. As we return to an in-person event, our theme will be “The Gift of Introductory Psychology.” We are also accepting proposals for our “Voices” sessions, which can include teaching demonstrations, best practices, or other teaching topics relevant to Introductory Psychology (Due March 1). Priority will be given to demonstrations that align with our conference theme.

Teaching Conferences

STP’s 2021 Annual Conference on Teaching
On-demand through October 1, 2022, Virtual

SPSP Teaching Personality and Social Psychology Preconference
February 16, 2022, Virtual

Southeastern Teaching of Psychology Conference
February 18-19, 2022, Virtual

Roundtable Conference in Psychology and Education
February 24-26, 2022, Virtual

TIP Northwest 2022
April 15, 2022, Seattle, WA

Psychology ONE 2022
June 23-24, 2022, Durham, NC