

## **Toolkit for Developing a Local or Regional Teaching Conference**

Do you want to start a local or regional teaching conference in your area? Kudos to you! This conference “toolkit” will help you get started. The toolkit includes:

- General Suggestions for Developing the Conference
- Suggested Timeline
- Sample Formats for 1- and 2-Day Conferences
- Sample Call for Proposals
- Sample Evaluation Form
- Guidelines for Creating a Poster Award
- Contact Information

### **General Suggestions for Developing the Conference**

*Note: These suggestions are adapted from a document originally created by Bill Hill and Lynn Lamanac at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Kennesaw State University.*

#### Planning Committee

- If you don't want to do everything yourself, your first step is to put together a conference planning committee. We recommend having no more than 3-4 members.
- If you have a conference coordinator at your institution, you may want to ask that person to assume some of the responsibility.

#### Goals of the Conference

- Before you plan anything else, you should determine the goals of the conference. Who is your target audience? What do you want them to gain from their participation? A conference for high school teachers of psychology might be different than one designed for teachers from 2- and 4-year institutions. If you want to attract a diverse audience, make sure that your program is diverse (i.e., includes topic and sessions that appeal to all kinds of teachers)

#### Format

- You'll need to decide if you want to attract a local or regional audience. If you have participants coming from long distances, be sure to consider driving times when creating the program. Also keep in mind that participants may expect you to provide hotel suggestions, driving directions, etc.
- One-day programs might be ideal for local or small regional conferences. The program might include one keynote address, a few concurrent sessions, and a poster session. Many conferences also have roundtables or participant idea exchanges. If the conference is small (i.e., less than 50 participants), it may be better to have general sessions instead of concurrent ones. Otherwise, you may have one or more concurrent sessions that are poorly attended. See the sample 1-day program at the end of this document.
- Many regional teaching conferences have 2-day programs. One popular option is a Friday-Saturday conference, starting around 10 a.m. on Friday and ending around noon on Saturday. This allows most participants to attend without missing too many classes. A

good program might include one or two keynote addresses, a few concurrent sessions, and a poster session (which works well when combined with a social hour). Sample 2-day programs appear at the end of this document.

- If you decide to use a 2-day format, participants may need to (or want to) stay in the area overnight. You may want to reserve a block of rooms at a hotel or at least provide suggestions for overnight accommodations. It would also be nice to include driving directions and information about the area for folks traveling from another area.
- If you have a poster session, try to avoid having it at the very end of the conference. Participants who don't have a poster may be tempted to leave early. To maximize attendance, you might also want to combine the poster session with a social hour.

### Location

- You might consider holding the conference at your institution. If you have excellent conference facilities and support, this can work very well. However, you should carefully consider travel options for getting to your locale. If your institution is relatively isolated, you may want to consider a hotel in a more metropolitan area.
- Holding the conference at a hotel has some advantages. First, it's very convenient for participants who have to stay overnight. Plus, a hotel might provide a better ambiance than a campus location. It also gives participants from the host institution a chance to "get away." The down side to a hotel is the likely increase in costs for food, equipment rental, and space usage fees. If you decide to use a hotel, try to find someone experienced in negotiating with a hotel to assist you. If no one is available, keep the following in mind during your negotiations:
  - ✓ Hotels want your business. You are doing them a favor and should take advantage of this and ask for perks (e.g., complimentary rooms, fruit baskets for keynote speakers).
  - ✓ Try to get the food costs locked in at the time you sign the contract. Food costs can rise substantially over the planning period.
  - ✓ If you expect that participants will need to (or want to) stay overnight, you should reserve a block of rooms. The hotel will probably make you financially responsible for this block of rooms, so be conservative. Hotels are unlikely to reduce the number of rooms in your block but are often willing to increase it. Be aware that the hotel may sell out of rooms so check often to see if you need to increase the number of rooms in your block.
  - ✓ Explore the possibility that the hotel will allow you to supply your own technology (e.g., computers, projectors). Equipment rental is often *very* expensive, so you will want to bring as much of your own equipment as possible.
  - ✓ Be attentive to high as well as hidden costs in hotel contracts. Some examples: equipment rental fees, including charges for a power bar and extension cord; set up and catering service charges (catering service charges can be up to 20% of the food costs); additional fees for a bartender or cashier; and Internet access fees (which may be *very* high).
  - ✓ If you are from a state institution, check to see if you are exempt from taxes.
  - ✓ *Carefully* read the penalty clauses associated with failing to meet room block commitments and cancellation!

### Conference Dates

- When selecting conference dates carefully consider the following factors: potential conflicts with other professional meetings that your audience may attend, holidays and religious observances (e.g., Christian and Jewish holy days), and typical campus break periods (e.g., Spring Break). You should also avoid the beginning and ending weeks of a typical semester.

### Keynote Speakers

- The best programs will include one or more keynote speakers. If possible, try to recruit keynote speakers are well-known (e.g., authors of introductory psychology textbooks, leaders in the Society for the Teaching of Psychology). Publishers are often willing to cover the travel expenses of their authors so be sure to ask them.
- STP plans to start a program in which they pay “master teachers” to speak at regional teaching conference. Be sure to ask about this!
- It is not normative for keynote speakers to receive honoraria for speaking at regional teaching conference. However, they may expect you to cover their travel and lodging expenses.

### Grants

- Master Teacher Speaker program for smaller conferences. The first year will be a pilot year with a maximum of five "Master Teacher" speakers funded at a rate of a maximum of \$1000 per speaker to present. This money will provide transportation and lodging for the speaker and the conference would be expected to fund their registration. A working group consisting of Bill Buskist, Beth Schwartz, Ken Keith and Ann Ewing will determine the details of the program including the criteria and a process for selection of both speakers and conferences for presentation.
- Promoting Partnerships: STP Partnerships Small Grant Program. The Society for The Teaching of Psychology (Division 2 of APA) is pleased to announce a program of small grants to provide support to develop partnerships across teaching institutions. The goal of the program is to promote communication and collaboration between psychology teachers from different institutions. The grant program is open to members of the Society for the Teaching Psychology who teach Psychology at 4-year colleges and universities, 2-year colleges, or high schools. Grant funds can be used to defray the costs associated with meetings involving representatives from different institutions (e.g., travel, food), as well as for other collaborative projects (e.g., research collaborations). We have total of \$3000 to award (<http://teachpsych.org/members/grants/smallgrants.php>).

### Budget

- Conference budget preparation should take into account both income and expenses, with a goal of breaking even.
  - ✓ Likely Expenses
    - Printings costs (take into account printing a Call for Proposals, Program Brochure, and final onsite conference materials). Of course, you could save money by doing an electronic Call for Programs and Program Brochure.
    - Purchase costs of mailing lists. You can eliminate this cost if you create your own mailing list. See the section on Marketing for more information.
    - Bulk mailing costs. Again, you could save money by emailing everything.

- Speaker costs (travel expenses, hotel accommodations, honorariums).
- Supplies (conference folders and packet materials like pens and pads of paper, mailing labels if you print them yourself, stickers for bulk mail folded material, name tag holders, etc.).
- Hotel costs (meeting space, food, equipment, etc.).
- ✓ Likely Revenues
  - Grants from foundations or professional organizations. The APA Education Directorate (<http://www.apa.org/ed/index.aspx>) has a block grant for teaching conferences. STP (<http://teachpsych.org/index.php>) may also have money available. It doesn't hurt to ask!
  - Supporting funds from publishers. As noted above, publishers are often willing to cover the travel expenses of their authors. They may also be willing to sponsor an event in return for some type of recognition.
  - Soliciting and charging vendors (e.g., publishers, software companies) to exhibit at the conference.
  - Participant registration fees.

### Marketing

- ✓ Identify your target audiences and how to contact them. Contact strategies include: Existing mailing lists from professional organizations (see Ted Bosack and <http://teachpsych.org/conferences/conferences.php>). Be sure to request only those states for the region you are targeting. Some professional organizations may require a copy of the program before releasing the mailing labels, so be prepared.
- ✓ Developing your own mailing list by identifying regional institutions. A particularly useful resource for this is the annual *Higher Education Directory* published by Higher Education Publications, Inc. Another good resource is John Krantz's list of psychology departments worldwide (<http://psych.hanover.edu/krantz/other.html>).
- ✓ Obtaining the list of participants from other conferences.
- ✓ Advertising the conference on targeted online discussion lists (e.g., PsychTeacher, TIPS, TOPSS, and PTATCC).
- ✓ Advertising in professional journal or magazines. Some professional publications list conferences at no charge.
- ✓ Advertising in STP mailings and publications.

### Call for Programs

- The call should clearly indicate the type of proposals you are soliciting (i.e., concurrent sessions, poster session, and participant idea exchanges.)
- Clearly state the format and length for submission descriptions and abstracts.
- Request a 3-5 sentence description of the session that can be used in the conference packet to help participants select sessions.
- Include an informational cover sheet that requires the detailed information you will need for the program and planning purposes (presenter names, institutional affiliation, submission title, equipment requests, etc.). Getting this information after accepting a proposal can be a hassle.
- You may want to address items you will not provide (e.g., computers and other types of presentation equipment, Internet access).

- Mail the call such that it reaches potential submitters at least 90-120 days prior to the stated deadline for submissions.

### Proposal Review

- We recommend that all members of the planning committee review the proposals.
- When rejecting a proposal, it is important to write a brief rationale for the decision. Also, consider the possibility of recommending a shift from a concurrent session to a poster presentation where appropriate.

### Final Program and Advertising

- Programming session times.
  - ✓ When designing the final schedule, try to arrange sessions so that there is a variety of choices at each concurrent session period. As much as possible, avoid scheduling two sessions at the same time that address the same topic.
  - ✓ You need to advertise again now that you have a program so that you can attract participants beyond your presenters. Important elements of a final conference brochure include:
    - Final conference program.
    - Travel information to the conference site.
    - Registration information and form. Consider giving reduced registration fees to select groups such as students, high school teachers, and adjunct faculty. The registration form should also address any special accommodation requests for individuals who require assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act for participation in this conference. Finally, be sure to include space for special meal or dietary requests.
    - Hotel information. Be sure to include the room rate, deadline for making reservations, and phone number.
    - Continue to make the option of a poster presentation available, with a new deadline. This brochure may reach someone who missed the first call.

### Finalizing space and equipment

- Within about 90 days before the conference, contact the conference site coordinator (campus or hotel) and go over the conference arrangements and catering.

### Conference packet and materials

- It can be a time consuming process to produce, copy, and collate the packet and materials. Some items you need to prepare or consider including are:
  - List of participants
  - List of supporting and/or exhibiting publishers or other vendors
  - Final schedule with locations
  - Session descriptions
  - Evaluation form
  - List of posters to be presented
  - Name tags and holders (bring at least 20 blanks)
  - Receipts for participant registration fee
  - Statement of participation (often needed for high school teachers)

## **Timeline**

### **11-12 Months before the Conference**

- Form a planning committee.
- Determine topic and conference name.
- Determine location, dates and format of conference.
- Book hotel or campus conference space.
- Develop budget.
- Obtain funding to cover preliminary costs.
- Develop a logo (optional).

### **10-11 Months before the Conference**

- Develop a marketing strategy.
- Recruit invited speakers.

### **9-10 Months before the Conference**

- Create and distribute Call for Proposals (unless all sessions are invited).

### **7-8 Months before the Conference**

- Review proposals and notify submitters of acceptances/rejections.

### **5-6 Months before the Conference**

- Finalize the program and advertise the conference.
- Contact hotel (or campus conference space coordinator) to finalize arrangements.

### **1-2 Months before the Conference**

- Monitor registration numbers so that necessary adjustments can be made.
- Create materials for conference packet.

### **1-2 Weeks before the Conference**

- Double check all onsite arrangements. Confirm final head count.
- Stuff the conference packets.

Note: If you have less than 12 months to plan, you could probably still put together a local or small regional conference.

**One-Day Conference Format:  
Model from Mid-Atlantic Teachers of Psychology Conference (MATOP)**

**Friday**

8:30-9:10	Continental Breakfast
9:15-10:15	Concurrent Sessions (3 sessions)
10:25-11:25	Concurrent Sessions (3 sessions)
11:45-1:30	Lunch and Keynote Address
1:45-2:45	Concurrent Sessions (3 sessions)
3:00-4:00	Participant Idea Exchanges/Roundtables

**Two-Day Conference Format:  
Model from Best Practices in Teaching Psychology Conference**

**Friday**

8:30-10:30	Early-Bird Workshops/Sessions (3-4 sessions)
10:30-10:45	Registration
10:45-11:00	Welcome Comments
11:00-12:00	Keynote Invited Address
12:00- 12:45	Lunch
1:00- 2:00	Concurrent Sessions (4 sessions)
2:15- 3:15	Concurrent Sessions (4 sessions)
3:15- 3:45	Break
3:45- 4:45	Concurrent Sessions (4 sessions)
5:30- 6:30	Poster Session and Social Hour
6:30- 7:30	Dinner
7:30- 8:30	Evening Invited Address

**Saturday**

7:15 - 8:15	Continental Address
8:15- 9:15	Concurrent Sessions (4 sessions)
9:30-10:30	Concurrent Sessions (4 sessions)
10:30-11:00	Check out of Hotel
11:00- 12:00	General Session
12:00	A Snack to Go

**Two-Day Conference Format:  
Model from Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP)**

**Friday**

9:00-5:00	Registration and Packet Pick-Up
9:00-5:00	Publisher Displays
9:30-9:45	Opening Remarks
9:45-10:45	Invited Address
11:15-12:10	Concurrent Sessions (2 sessions)

12:15- 1:30 Lunch  
1:30- 2:30 Concurrent Sessions (2 sessions)  
2:45-3:45 Concurrent Sessions (2 sessions)  
4:00-5:00 Poster Session  
4:00-5:30 Social Hour

**Saturday**

8:00- 9:00 Breakfast  
9:00-12:00 Publisher Displays  
9:15-10:15 Panel Discussion  
10:30-11:30 Invited Address  
11:45-1:15 Lunch and General Session

## Call for Proposals: Model from Best Practices Best Practices in Teaching Psychology Conference

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP, Division 2 of APA) is excited to announce the 10<sup>th</sup> conference in the popular "Best Practices in Teaching Psychology" series, which started in 2002. The 2011 conference will focus on teaching and learning in Introductory Psychology, which represents a return to a topic of the Best Practice conference nearly a decade ago. Symposia with team presentations (at least two presenters) are especially encouraged. Modeled after the format of the previous conferences, the conference will include keynote speakers, concurrent symposia and workshops, and a poster session.

In 2011, our three keynote speakers will be Erika Rosenberg, *Bringing the Science of Lie To Me to Introductory Psychology*; Scott Lilienfeld, *But Psychology Isn't Really a Science, Is It? Dispelling Introductory Students' Skepticism of the Scientific Study of Human Nature*; and Susan Nolan, *It's Never Too Early: Introducing Statistical Concepts in Introduction to Psychology*.

We are seeking innovative proposals that address issues relevant to teaching and learning in Introductory Psychology. Possible topics include (but are not limited to) motivating students in large-section courses, assessment of course goals, teaching to majors and nonmajors, textbook selection, cross-cultural issues, pedagogical innovations, integrating technology, and evidence-based practices in introductory psychology.

Instructions and a cover sheet can be found at [teachpsych.org](http://teachpsych.org). Submissions must be received by midnight on June 1, 2011. Proposals should be submitted by e-mail as a Word or RTF attachment to Janie Wilson, STP Director of Programming, at [jhwilson@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:jhwilson@georgiasouthern.edu). **Please refer to the "Best Practices" in the subject line.** Members of the Program Committee are David Daniel, Regan A. R. Gurung, and Betsy Morgan.

***Please note! At this year's BP conference, STP will be offering a writing workshop to help you move toward conducting and publishing the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Applications will be available on the STP website by April 1, 2011***

## **Call for Proposals: Model from Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP)**

The Department of Psychology at James Madison University will host the next Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP) on Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25, 2011. The conference will be held at the historic Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, Virginia. All participants are invited to submit proposals for the concurrent sessions or poster session. Proposals received by March 1, 2011 will be considered for the program. Submissions must be related to the teaching of psychology, including but not limited to teaching techniques, demonstrations or activities for teaching a particular topic or course, effective uses of technology, assessment strategies, etc. We are particularly interested in proposals that describe innovative practices and include some type of empirical assessment of their effectiveness.

### **Concurrent Sessions**

The conference will include a few 60-minute concurrent sessions. The format of these sessions will vary. They may be individual or group presentations, panel discussions, or “hands-on” workshops. Because ETOP is a relatively small conference (averaging 75 participants), topics for concurrent sessions should not be too narrow. For example, a session on “Teaching Developmental Psychology in the General Psychology Course” would have wider appeal than a session on “Teaching Development Psychology.”

Proposals for concurrent sessions should be submitted as email attachments to lawrennk@jmu.edu. Proposals should include: (a) the title of the presentation; (b) author names, institutions, and email addresses; (c) a summary of no more than 350 words; and (d) a short abstract not to exceed 100 words. If your proposal is accepted, the short abstract will appear in the packet of information distributed to all conference participants.

### **Poster Session**

A 90-minute poster session is scheduled for Friday afternoon. Proposals should be submitted as email attachments to lawrennk@jmu.edu. Proposals should include: (a) the title of the poster; (b) author names, institutions, and email addresses; and (c) a summary of no more than 350 words. If your submission is accepted for the poster session, you will be sent detailed instructions for preparing your poster.

## Resource Persons

The following list includes people who have experience coordinating conferences and are willing to answer your questions.

Doug Bernstein  
University of South Florida  
Coordinator, National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology  
Founder, APS Teaching Institute  
[douglas.bernstein@comcast.net](mailto:douglas.bernstein@comcast.net)

Ted Bosack  
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STP Executive Director  
Coordinator, Northeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology  
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Steve Charlton  
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Diane Finley  
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## Websites of Existing Teaching Conferences

### ***The Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (ETOP)***

June 24-25, 2011

Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, VA

Web site: <http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/undergraduate/etop.html>

### ***Southern California Psychology Teaching Conference***

August 12, 2011

San Diego Mesa College, 7250 Mesa College Drive, San Diego, CA

Contact: Dina Miyoshi <mailto:dmiyoshi@sdccd.edu>

### ***1st Biennial Atlantic Coast Teaching of Psychology Conference (ACToP)***

September 23-24, 2011

Ocean Place Resort & Spa, Long Branch, NJ.

Web site: <http://www.monmouth.edu/ACT/default.asp>

### ***13th Annual Mid-Atlantic Teachers of Psychology Conference (MATOP)***

October 21, 2011

The Prince George's Community College, Largo, MD

Contact: Diane Finley at <mailto:dfinley@pgcc.edu>

### ***Dick Gorman Mountain States Conference on the Teaching of Psychology***

October 22-23, 2011

Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO

Web site: <http://mountaintop.fortlewis.edu>

Contact: Diane Finley at [mailto:keetch\\_l@fortlewis.edu](mailto:keetch_l@fortlewis.edu)

### ***Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (NECToP)***

October 29, 2011

Fairfield University

Fairfield, CT

This conference typically takes place on the Friday before the New England Psychological Association Convention.

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

Contact: [chakala@wnec.edu](mailto:chakala@wnec.edu)

### ***National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NIToP)***

34th Annual Conference

January 3-6, 2012

The TradeWinds Island Grand Hotel

St. Petersburg Beach, FL

Web site: <http://nitop.org>

Future Dates: This conference is typically held immediately after the New Year's holiday in St. Petersburg Beach, FL.

***STP Best Practices Conference: Teaching Introduction to Psychology***

October 14-15, 2011

Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter Hotel

Atlanta, GA

Web site: <http://www.teachpsych.org/conferences/bp/index.php>