

Results of the 2007 STP Membership Survey: Executive Summary

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Prepared for the STP Executive Committee Meeting

August 2007

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP), Division 2 of The American Psychological Association (APA), produces and supports a variety of educational resources and services for secondary and post-secondary educators. The mission of the Society is to advance an understanding of the discipline by promoting excellence in teaching psychology (Hill, Davis, Noble, Ziegler, & McKinney, 2002). The STP Executive Committee accomplishes this goal by developing and maintaining resources and services that enhance the effectiveness of psychology teachers and, as a result, facilitate student learning. Further, the Society endeavors to monitor whether or not these resources meet the needs of Society members who teach psychology on a regular schedule.

Previously developed resources include the *Teaching of Psychology* journal; the Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTPR) supporting a web page, sample syllabi, internet sources, department consulting services, and other resources; the STP Newsletter; a moderated listserv; grants and awards programs; and a comprehensive program at the annual APA meeting that includes lectures, symposia, poster sessions, panel discussions, and business and social activities. In an effort to assess the efficacy of these resources, the Executive Committee convened the Membership Task Force to develop and distribute a Membership Survey to STP members, and to gather and interpret the results. The purpose of the 2007 Membership Survey was to ask the membership about the effectiveness of the currently available resources developed by STP.

Method

Participants

The Membership Task Force sent a survey to the entire membership of the STP including psychology teachers in high schools, colleges, and universities across the nation and internationally (approximately 3,280 members). Approximately 25% of members (N = 818; SurveyMonkey = 751; USPS = 67) responded. Respondents ranged from 23 to 85 years of age (M = 47, SD = 12.16). The majority of respondents (70%) had terminal degrees, 70% served as post-secondary faculty in higher education, and more than half (57.5%) were in comprehensive universities or 4-year liberal arts colleges. About half of the sample (53%) was part of the STP membership between 1 and 10 years. About 15% of respondents were retired or anticipating retirement in the near future. Approximately 55% of respondents were female.

Materials

The Membership Task Force revised the 2002 Membership Survey to assess familiarity, perceived value, and frequency of use of current resources and services provided by STP. The main categories of survey items included the *Teaching of Psychology* journal (ToP), STP programs at the APA meeting, the OTRP, Internet Resources, and Member Benefits. (See Tables 1 to 5 for a complete list of items in each category.) Respondents were asked whether they were

familiar with each item (NF = Not Familiar) and to provide a rating of each resource or service (1 = not valuable, 2 = somewhat valuable, 3 = very valuable). Next, they were asked how frequently they used each resource or service (1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often).

We provided respondents the opportunity to suggest how STP might expand and improve its services, with designated sections for university faculty members and high school teachers, retirees and members contemplating retirement, and graduate students.

In the final section, we collected demographic information such as age, sex, ethnicity, degree, position, affiliations, and years of teaching. Space at the end of the survey allowed respondents to submit any comments they wished to share.

Procedure

The electronic and paper versions of the survey for 2007 were derived from the 2002 STP Membership Survey. The task force presented the electronic version using the SurveyMonkey format. The extended membership of TOPEC field-tested the electronic survey in January and February 2007. Letters inviting all members to complete the electronic version were emailed to members during the week of February 19, 2007 with a due date of March 31. The paper copy of the survey was sent via USPS to non-email users during the week of February 26, 2007 and was due April 10, 2007.

The data from the electronic survey were collected over 6 weeks electronically with SurveyMonkey, and the paper version was tallied manually. Quantitative data were coded and analyzed; a qualitative analysis was used to categorize and report the gist of comments sections. For the value ratings presented in Tables 1 through 5, the NF category was eliminated to produce ratings only for those who were familiar with the resource they rated.

Percentages were calculated for value ratings and frequency of use for each of the categories related to ToP (Table 1), the STP program at APA (Table 2), OTRP (Table 3), Internet Resources (Table 4), Member Benefits (Table 5), and STP Activities and Non-Internet Resources (Table 6). Kendall's Tau analyses were computed to examine the relationships between length of membership, the perceived value of resources and services, and the frequency of use for those resources. We used a between-subjects ANOVA to compare mean ratings of the value and frequency of resource usage by STP members with master and doctorate degrees.

Results

Teaching of Psychology was by far the most highly valued and frequently used resource that STP offers to its members (see Table 1). Sixty-three percent (63%) of members rated the overall value of the journal as Very Valuable and 36% rated it as Somewhat Valuable. The Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology received a Very Valuable rating from an average of 60% of the members in the categories of web page, project syllabus, and teaching resources, with an additional 38% of members rating these categories Somewhat Valuable (see Table 3). The Member Benefits section showed that about 95% of respondents reported the Newsletter as Somewhat or Very Valuable; about 90% of respondents use it. These resources appear to be the foundation upon which the membership depends for inspiration and guidance.

Unfortunately, several programs, services, and resources were noteworthy in the lack of familiarity and frequency of use that members reported. The Mentoring Service is one with which about 62% of members were unfamiliar (N = 458/737), and about 90% never used (see

Table 3). Members reported that they were unfamiliar with the Graduate Student Teaching Association (61%, $N = 501/717$) and 89% of all respondents reported never having used it, although about 33% of all respondents answered items in section II.C. for graduate students. While 60% of members were unfamiliar with the business meeting at APA ($N = 414/688$), 40% of knowledgeable respondents characterized them as Not Valuable, and 70% of all respondents reported never attending one (see Table 2). About 54% of members were unfamiliar with e-books ($N = 390/726$), and 66% never used them (see Table 4). Finally, about 40% of members reported being unfamiliar with the small grants program ($N = 312/722$) and reduced registration ($N = 299/719$), but 86% and 68% never used them, respectively (see Table 5).

Teaching of Psychology Journal

Almost 100% of respondents reported an overall evaluation of the ToP journal as Very Valuable or Somewhat Valuable, and read it often. As shown in Table 1, computers in teaching and topical articles are the two most often read sections of the journal. News tips and the annual annotated bibliography receive the least attention from readers.

Comparing individuals with a master degree versus a doctorate, members with a doctorate perceived the faculty forum to have greater value ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .58$) than those with a master's degree ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .63$), ($F(1, 633) = 6.12$, $p = .014$). Conversely, news tips received a higher rating by those individuals with a master degree ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .52$) than by those with a doctorate ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .61$) ($F(1, 554) = 6.34$, $p = .012$).

The opportunity for open-ended comments produced 125 responses that included complements and praise from 45% of these writers. About 20% indicated that they were new members, and were learning about the journal as they completed the survey. Approximately 10% asked for suggestions for using the journal. One person suggested that the table of contents for each journal appear on the STP home page as soon as it is available.

STP Programs at the Annual American Psychological Association Meeting

Invited addresses, symposia, poster sessions, panel discussions, the STP President's address, and sessions with teaching activity demonstrations received the highest ratings with 90% of ratings in the Very Valuable or Somewhat Valuable categories, as shown in Table 2. Poster sessions were attended most often; business meetings were least well attended. It is important to note, however, that less than 50% of respondents indicated that they are familiar with the STP programs at the annual APA meeting; an average of 390 of 690 respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the 10 program items.

Kendall's Tau analyses were computed to examine the relationships between length of membership, the perceived value of resources and services, and the frequency of use for those resources. We found a significant relationship between membership length and the *perceptions of value* for the following APA sessions:

- Invited address $\tau(637) = .250$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Poster sessions $\tau(638) = .225$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Business meeting $\tau(633) = .307$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Conversation hours $\tau(632) = .242$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Social hour $\tau(636) = .254$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Teaching awards presentation $\tau(634) = .262$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- STP President's address $\tau(635) = .267$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Sessions with teaching activity $\tau(633) = .215$, $p = .000$ (2-tailed).

Further, membership length was associated with the *frequency of attendance* at APA sessions:

- Invited addresses τ (394) = .297, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Symposia τ (392) = .213, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Poster sessions τ (387) = .207, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Business meetings τ (384) = .302, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Conversation hours τ (380) = .202, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Social hour τ (384) = .255, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- Teaching awards presentation τ (383) = .252, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);
- STP President's address τ (381) = .269, $p = .000$ (2-tailed);

Respondents with a master degree reported that symposia, panel discussions, conversation hours, and sessions with teaching activity demonstrations have a greater value than did those with a doctorate.

- Symposia – master degree ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .47$) versus doctorate ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .52$) ($F(1, 321) = 5.57$, $p = .019$).
- Panel discussions – master degree ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .49$) versus doctorate ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .58$) ($F(1, 313) = 10.96$, $p = .001$).
- Conversation hours – master degree ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .66$) versus doctorate ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .59$) ($F(1, 250) = 6.61$, $p = .011$).
- Sessions with teaching activities demonstrations – master degree ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .43$) versus doctorate ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .56$) ($F(1, 311) = 5.15$, $p = .024$).

Responses in the open-ended comments following the APA section were largely critical of APA. Expressed concerns indicated that 75% of these commenters do not attend the convention because of cost, membership with APS or STP alone, and/or a lack of enjoyment or benefit from the large conference forum. It might be useful to ask about patterns of session attendance at the APS conference on the next Membership Survey.

Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology

Approximately 95% of respondents indicated that the resources and services available through the Office of the Teaching Resources in Psychology are Somewhat or Very Valuable (see Table 3), with the exception of the mentoring service. The mentoring service is one with which about 62% of members were unfamiliar ($N = 458/737$), and about 90% never used (see Table 3). Seventy percent (70%) of members familiar with the service rated it Somewhat (51%) or Very Valuable (19%).

Those members with a master degree placed a higher value on the mentoring service and internet resource list for teachers of psychology than did those with a doctorate. Mean rating of the mentoring service showed that master degree respondents reported significantly more value ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .65$) for the service than did respondents with a doctorate degree ($M = 2.83$, $SD = .68$) ($F(1, 265) = 8.37$, $p = .004$). Mean ratings of the internet resource list for teachers of psychology showed that respondents with a master degree ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .515$) valued the resource significantly more than did members with a doctorate ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .596$) ($F(1, 461) = 6.05$, $p = .014$).

Responses in the open-ended comments section were diverse. Although a small percentage of respondents have ever used the departmental consulting services, several respondents indicated interest in using them in the future. Comments indicated that the mentoring service may have staffing or communication difficulties as volunteers wishing to

become mentors did not hear from OTRP and mentees wishing support reported modest outcomes. Several commenters suggested that the syllabi “are getting old,” and need expanding or “upgrading.”

Internet Resources

The Internet Resources are highly valued and used moderately, as shown in Table 4. Respondents reported using the Home Page, PsychTeacher Discussion List, and ToPNews Online most frequently, and about 93% reported that they are Somewhat or Very Valuable. About 90% of people found ToPNEWS Online Somewhat or Very Valuable; about 70% of respondents use it. The least frequently used resources are the graduate student teaching association website and e-books, having been developed relatively recently. Members reported that they were unfamiliar with the Graduate Student Teaching Association website (61%, N = 501/717) and 89% reported never having used it. About 50% of respondents were unfamiliar with the availability of e-books, with 65% reporting never having used them.

Responses to the open-ended comments suggested that new members were excited to learn about these resources. Respondents reported difficulties in getting information from the GSTA and establishing contact with people associated with GSTA. It may be necessary to institute a response team to deal effectively with busy schedules and changing membership.

Member Benefits

As shown in Table 5, the STP Newsletter is Somewhat or Very Valuable to 95% of members; about 90% of respondents use it. The reported frequency of use of the membership directory was modest. About 40% of members reported being unfamiliar with the small grants program (N = 312/722) and reduced registration (N = 299/719), but 86% and 68% never used them, respectively. The number of responses in the open-ended comments section was limited, but they suggest a general lack of awareness of these benefits, and strategies for accessing them.

STP Activities and Non-Internet Resources

The STP Activities and Non-Internet Resources appear to be utilized modestly, as shown in Table 6. Although the majority of respondents reported being Somewhat Aware of these resources, responses to the open-ended comments section suggest that interested people simply are not taking the necessary steps to successfully become engaged. The Kendall's Tau analysis showed that membership length was associated with awareness of excellence in teaching awards $\tau(698) = .227, p = .000$ (2-tailed) and awareness of opportunities to serve on STP committees and become involved with STP activities $\tau(696) = .216, p = .000$ (2-tailed). Possibly the Society could improve involvement and utilization of services by establishing a team of members interested in providing the time necessary to respond to those who are interested, but inexperienced. New, interested members require a great deal more attention than established members do, particularly if we are to be successful in establishing a younger membership.

Discussion

Approximately 25% of the membership provided information concerning their familiarity with STP services, the value they place on these services, and the frequency with which they use them. Consistent with the previous STP Membership Survey in 2002, the results of the 2007 survey verified that the *Teaching of Psychology* journal, the Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology, and the STP Newsletter are the most highly valued and consistently used resources

provided by STP. Further, about 50% of respondents were unaware of many STP sponsored activities at the APA, internet resources, and other member benefits.

Kendall's Tau analyses pointed out some interesting relationships. Membership length seems to be correlated positively with perceptions of the value of the invited address, poster sessions, business meeting, conversation hours, social hour, teaching awards presentation, STP President's address, and sessions with teaching activity. Further, membership length is associated with the frequency of attendance at the invited addresses, symposia, poster sessions, business meetings, conversation hours, social hour, teaching awareness presentation, STP President's address, and sessions with teaching activity. Finally, membership length is associated with awareness of excellence in teaching awards and awareness of opportunities to serve on STP committees and become involved with STP activities.

The results verify that nearly half of the STP resources are recognized, frequently used, and highly valued by many the members, particularly the *Teaching of Psychology* journal, the Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology, and the Newsletter. Results from the open-ended comments sections suggest that members who might benefit the most from these services and resources, those in the early years of their teaching careers and new members are less likely to know about or utilize available resources. The Executive Committee might use these data best as a pre-assessment for a systematic effort to improve members' knowledge and utilization of STP resources and services. In addition to the continued endeavors to update and develop additional resources, the Executive Committee can benefit from prioritizing a coordinated effort to market STP resources.

A consultant might be useful in developing a marketing plan that employs several strategies during a yearlong campaign, followed by another assessment focusing on the first section of the survey. The EC might consider several marketing strategies if it prefers to forgo a marketing consultant. Common marketing strategies include the following:

- Develop a brief mission statement that regularly appears with the Society name such as, "Striving for Educational Excellence."
- Send emails to members with links to the home page and other key electronic services.
- Send excerpts or samples of resources to members with links to those sites.
- Modify the home page so that STP comes up in the first page of search engine alternatives when a user types in various combinations of key words.
- Ask TOPEC members for other strategies that they believe influenced their use of offered resources and services.

A person or team of people needs to be available to respond to those who are interested in learning more about STP resources and services, and to those wishing to participate actively in STP. The Society could benefit from having a team available to respond, particularly to new members, when the EC issues invitations to participate or seeks assistance in providing services.

Table 1. Percentage of Value and Frequency in *Teaching of Psychology* Journal Items

	Value				Frequency of Use			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
a. Topical Articles	764	.5	38	61.5	786	4.2	38.9	56.9
b. Faculty Forum	711	5.8	48.5	45.7	782	10.2	47.7	42.1
c. Methods & Techniques section	758	1.2	30.7	68.1	785	16.5	55.7	27.8
d. Computers in Teaching	721	13.3	55.2	31.5	776	5.4	33.6	61
e. Generalist's Corner	679	11.8	61.1	27.1	779	16.7	57.8	25.4
f. News Tips	636	12	62	26	770	22.1	51.3	26.6
g. Annual Annotated Bibliography	631	22.2	51	27	775	40	44	16
h. Division 2 information	693	13.9	59	27.1	775	19.6	52.9	27.5
i. Overall evaluation of <i>Teaching of Psychology</i>	756	.5	36.1	63.4				

Note. The “Not familiar with item” category was removed to produce valid percentages.

Table 2. Percentage of Value and Frequency in STP Programs at the Annual American Psychological Association Meeting

	Value				Attendance			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
a. Invited Addresses	348	2.5	42	55.5	430	40.7	32.6	26.7
b. Symposia	351	.9	45.9	53.2	427	38.2	35.1	26.7
c. Poster Sessions	350	6.6	47.7	45.7	422	39.1	28.7	67.8
d. Panel Discussions	342	4.7	53.8	41.5	419	42.5	34.8	22.7
e. Business Meeting	245	40.4	49	10.6	417	71.7	18.5	9.8
f. Conversation Hours	274	15	60.6	24.4	413	57.9	31.7	10.4
g. Social Hour	288	15.6	53	31.6	420	56	28.3	15.7
h. Teaching Awards Presentation	303	17.8	52.8	29.4	417	57.6	26.6	15.8
i. STP President's Address	324	7.7	53.1	39.2	415	48.9	27.2	23.9
j. Sessions with Teaching Activity Demonstrations	340	3.8	25.6	70.6	416	43.8	26.7	29.6

Note. The “Not familiar with item” category was removed to produce valid percentages.

Table 3. Percentages of Value and Frequency in Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP) Items

	Value				Frequency of Use			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
a. OTRP Web Page	576	2.4	41.8	55.7	721	21.5	55.5	23
b. Project Syllabus	594	5.4	36.9	57.7	721	27.2	54.5	18.3
c. OTRP Teaching Resources	603	1.8	32.3	65.8	719	21	54	25

Table 3, continued

	Value				Frequency of Use			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
d. <i>Teaching of Psychology</i> Database & Index	494	4.5	51.2	44.3	710	43.8	45.5	10.7
e. Internet Resource List for Teachers of Psychology	494	4.5	45.1	50.4	707	43.7	44	12.3
f. Mentoring Service	279	29.7	51.3	19	708	91.4	8.2	.4
g. Have you ever used the Department Consulting Service?					754	Yes - 6	No - 94	
h. If you have used the Department Consulting Service in the past, would you consider using it again?					121	Yes - 43	No - 57	

Note. The “Not familiar with item” category was removed to produce valid percentages.

Table 4. Percentages of Value and Frequency in Internet Resources

	Value				Frequency of Use			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
a. STP Home Page	567	1.9	55.6	42.5	727	19.7	61.3	19
b. PsychTeacher Discussion List	447	8.9	43	48.1	710	45.1	24.1	30.8
c. ToPNEWS Online (monthly electronic newsletter)	542	9.4	53.7	36.9	708	29.8	39.3	30.9
d. E-books	336	16.1	53.2	30.7	706	65.6	27.9	6.5
e. Graduate Student Teaching Association Website	216	29.6	42.6	27.8	689	89	8.6	2.5

Note. The “Not familiar with item” category was removed to produce valid percentages.

Table 5. Percentages of Value and Frequency in Member Benefits

	Value				Frequency of Use			
	N	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N	Never	Occasionally	Often
a. STP Newsletter	675	5.6	55.4	39	721	11.1	43.8	45.1
b. Membership Directory	527	26.8	56.5	16.7	714	59.9	36.7	3.4
c. Small Grants Program	410	16.1	50.2	33.7	713	86.3	11.2	2.5
d. Reduced registration at select conferences	420	11.7	36.4	51.9	705	68.5	24	7.5

Note. The “Not familiar with item” category was removed to produce valid percentages.

Table 6. Percentages of Value and Frequency in STP Activities and Non-Internet Resources

	Awareness			
	N	Unaware	Somewhat aware	Very aware
a. OTRP Instructional Resource Awards	722	40.3	40.3	19.4
b. Excellence in Teaching Awards	725	11	52.1	36.8
c. Opportunities to serve on STP committees and become involved with STP activities	723	29.9	51.7	18.4

