RESOURCES TO SUPPORT BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING

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BACKGROUND

As research in the area of effective teaching methodology is continuously developing, an abundance of materials have become available for enhancing graduate education in psychology. Moreover, given the current focus upon the assessment of student learning outcomes and competencies, greater emphasis has been placed upon best practices in the teaching of school psychology and the techniques faculty members can use to enhance their instructional practices.

RESOURCES

The following resources are intended to support faculty in their instructional practices and are available within the public domain.

- *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).* Originally developed by the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), the SoTL mission includes (a) original research, (b) integration of knowledge, (c) application of knowledge, (d) the scholarship of pedagogy, and (e) the scholarship of teaching in psychology. The SoTL involves systematic study, along with the dissemination and review of such work, through presentations, teaching demonstrations and publications. Topics covered in the past have included methods to promote learner autonomy and disciplinary supports. The website and resources for SoTL can be found at http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/resLinks/bibl.shtml.
A committee of 64 scholars from several countries founded the International Society of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) with conferences around the world. ISSOTL serves as a platform where research in the area of teaching and learning is disseminated, cross-disciplinary conversations are held, and collaborations are developed among scholars. More information on ISSOTL, as well as a comprehensive tutorial on SoTL, can be found at http://www.issotl.org/history.html.

**American Psychological Association Division 2: The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP).** The mission of the STP is to promote excellence in the teaching and learning of psychology. STP’s Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP) acts as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of resources and services that support teachers of psychology. ORTP provides advice and guidelines for preparing a syllabus as well as a host of other resources, such as articles that provide classroom tips regarding how to promote student learning and articles surrounding subject-specific lecture topics. The Teaching of Psychology Idea Exchange (ToPIX) offers faculty the opportunity to browse and to share ideas for courses, including a host of resources such as demonstrations, activities, lecture topics, handouts, videos, assessment of learning goals, pedagogy, books, films, podcasts, and access to a teaching of psychology database. More information on STP can be found at http://www.teachpsych.org/.

- *Psych Teacher Listserv.* PsychTeacher, operated by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, Division 2 of the American Psychological Association, is a moderated Listserv for professors of psychology at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Examples of topics discussed include: ideas for teaching a specific course, discussion of general instructional issues that are relevant for a variety of courses, discussion of issues that are not directly related to teaching (advising students on career options), and specific requests for assistance in teaching. To join, log on to http://list.kennesaw.edu/archives/psychteacher.html.

- *Project Syllabus.* The Society for Teaching of Psychology’s Office of Teaching Resources also provides a Web-based service entitled Project Syllabus. Peer-reviewed syllabi by other faculty who serve as volunteers on the “Project Syllabus Team” are available for a variety of subject areas. Particular emphasis is placed upon diversity, graduate courses, online courses, and hybrid courses. The Project Syllabus Team ranks syllabi in the areas of organization and content and tone, to create “best practices” for each topic area. Moreover, tips and guidelines are available for preparing a syllabus. Additional information regarding Project Syllabus can be found at http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php.

- **Preparing Future Faculty Program.** The Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program is a national movement to change the manner in which aspiring faculty members are prepared to teach. PFF provides doctoral students with the opportunity to observe and to experience faculty responsibilities at a variety of academic institutions. (Preparing Future Faculty, n.d.). PFF contains multiple publications that guide aspiring faculty to becoming exceptional teachers of psychology. Preparing Future Faculty. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.preparing-faculty.org/.
• The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. As an independent policy and research center, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching supports transformations in American education through increased connections between teaching practice, evidence of student learning, communicating the use of this evidence, and structuring opportunities to develop knowledge. This organization is currently examining how technology and social networking can enhance learning. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/about-us/about-carnegie.

• Center for Research on Teaching and Learning (CRLT). The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) was founded in 1962 at the University of Michigan and was the first teaching center in the United States. By partnering with University of Michigan faculty, graduate students, and administrators, CRLT advocates for a university culture that recognizes teaching, respects and supports individual differences among students, and values the creation of learning environments where diverse students have the opportunity to learn and excel (The Regents of the University of Michigan, 2010). The center’s website offers tips on using technology effectively to enhance teaching, as well as resources related to multicultural teaching and social justice in higher education. Further information regarding CRLT can be found on their website at http://www.crlt.umich.edu/index.php.

• Adjunct Nation. Adjunct Nation is a website dedicated to supporting faculty by providing links for nontenured positions, textbooks, syllabus preparation, Listservs, grants, and professional development books. Further information on Adjunct Nation can be found at www.adjunctnation.com.

• The National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP). NITOP is an annual convention where professionals around the country gather to discuss current issues and research in the area of teaching of psychology. The convention features invited and award addresses, cross-cutting symposia, hot topic talks, workshops, and poster sessions. More information can be found at http://www.nitop.org/index.html. Please note that regional conferences on the teaching of psychology, such as the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology, are similarly available.

• Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP). TSP is an organization committed to innovation and excellence in graduate training for specialist and doctoral level school psychologists. TSP achieves this goal by examining current trends in graduate training, providing professional growth and development, promoting communication with field based supervisors, and supporting legislative efforts that promote excellence in training. TSP also hosts a Listserv related to professional training issues in school psychology and holds an annual meeting wherein all members are invited to exchange ideas and learn more about advances in the field. More information can be found at www.trainersofschoolpsychologists.org.

• Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP). CDSPP is an organization of North American doctoral programs in school psychology dedicated to providing a mechanism for dissemination of information, exchange of views, collection of data, facilitation of communication, and formulation of policies. CDSPP is also dedicated to providing consultative resources, maintaining active liaisons, and promoting the representation of school psychology
programs in functions of APA and other organizations which are relevant to doctoral education in school psychology. More information can be found at https://sites.google.com/site/cdspphome/.

Finally, many individual universities offer resources and training opportunities on campus. Please see your local university for more information regarding available teaching resources and training opportunities.