

# **APS Teaching Fund Awards Inaugural Set of Grants**

December 01, 2006

The first round of grants from the APS Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science has been awarded to a diverse set of projects aimed at strengthening the teaching enterprise in psychology in the United States and abroad. The six inaugural projects range in focus from local to global, and from providing basic resources to psychology educators abroad to helping launch new regional teaching conferences in the United States. Several projects are centered around the Internet and technology. Some focus on innovations in teaching; others help meet basic needs. Collectively, they represent a major step in the advancement of pedagogy in the field of psychological science.

Details on the projects are provided below.

In 2004, APS received an endowment pledge of \$1 million from the David and Carol Myers Foundation, which led to the establishment of the APS Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science. The Teaching Fund committee, initially led by Douglas Bernstein, University of South Florida (who continues on the committee) and currently chaired by Robert Hendersen, Grand Valley State University, proposed among other things a program of small developmental grants (maximum \$5,000) for launching new projects that enhance teaching in psychology. The APS Board of Directors approved the program, along with an annual convention lecture series — the “APS David Myers Lecture on Teaching Psychology,” and a public affairs graduate internship at APS.

According to Hendersen, “The APS Fund Committee was impressed by the quality, ingenuity, and range of the proposals it received. A lot of creative energy is being applied to enhancing the teaching of psychology.”

In addition to Hendersen and Bernstein, other committee members are: Ludy T. Benjamin, Jr., Texas A&M University; Charles Blair-Broeker, Cedar Falls High School; Jane S. Halonen, University of West Florida; Virginia Andreoli Mathie, Psi Chi; and Patricia Puccio, College of DuPage.

“We’re looking forward to seeing the results of these exciting first awards, and to many more new projects as the program continues,” said APS Executive Director Alan Kraut.

The grant program is operating on a twice-yearly cycle, with deadlines of February 1 and August 1 for proposals. For further information, please visit the APS web site:  
[www.psychologicalscience.org/teaching](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/teaching).

**APS Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science**

**Small Grants Program Awards**

### **Providing Social Psychology for Social Studies Teachers**

Hunter Gehlbach, Harvard University

An online project to bring knowledge from social psychology into social studies education.

### **Oklahoma Network for the Teaching of Psychology (ONTOP)**

Shelia Kennison , Oklahoma State University

A new statewide forum on teaching psychology.

### **Upgrading Knowledge and Teaching Effectiveness of Psychology Teachers in Cambodia**

Cindy Lahar, York County Community College

A project to provide resources for the only psychology department in Cambodia

### **Personality Pedagogy: A Wiki for the Teaching of Personality Psychology**

Marianne Miserandino, Arcadia University

A new website for teachers of personality psychology.

### **Great Plains Conference on the Teaching of Psychology (C-TOP)**

Amy Schweinle, University of South Dakota

A new regional conference.

### **Learning About Psychology in Iran**

Warren Thorngate, Carleton University

A new website to increase access to Iranian psychology

### **In Their Own Words....**

The six grant recipients share their thoughts on their projects and what it means to receive support from the APS Teaching Fund.

### **Resources for Psychology Teachers in Cambodia**

Psychology teachers in Cambodia want to do so much more for their students and they want to learn more. But, they have minimal resources for teaching and essentially no resources for upgrading their understanding of psychology.

I first read about the APS Teaching Fund sitting in the psychology department at the Royal University of Phnom Penh with my latest copy of the *Observer*. The department consists of a room with a large table, three desks, some bookshelves with old books, and two computers.

I thought about how much I could do there with an APS grant. I could increase the department's computing resources from two computers to three with less than \$1,000. And Internet access costs \$50 per month. Compare that to the monthly salary of a teacher at the university (\$40), and it is clear a little bit of money can go a long way!

Now that I've received the grant, I also keep thinking about how to most effectively spend the money. Although they have a computer printer, they never have paper. So I'm going to save a bit to buy them 10 or 20 reams of paper. A ream of paper costs about \$3 and there is rarely extra money for basic office supplies.

Needless to say, they are thrilled to hear they will be receiving new texts, and have been sending me emails to tell me what areas they want to learn more about. When I leave for Cambodia later in December, I will truly be a Santa Claus this year. —*Cindy Lahar, York County Community College*

### **ONTOP of Teaching**

Without the grant, we would not be able to carry out such an ambitious project as the Oklahoma Network for the Teaching of Psychology (ONTOP). In 2007, we will be able to hold the first such state-wide conference. Now we are busy finding additional sponsors and planning for the event. Thanks, APS! —*Shelia Kennison, Oklahoma State University*

### **Applying Social Psychology in Social Studies**

As a former high school social studies teacher and a current teacher of high school social studies teachers, I got to thinking about how useful some of the ideas from social psychology would be for social studies teachers. To give two quick examples, imagine how useful a lesson on "in-groups and out-groups" would be for a social studies class that was learning about Rwandan genocide. Alternatively, imagine how useful some of the research on influence and persuasion might be in getting students to do their homework.

Unfortunately, social studies teachers almost never get exposure to social psychology in their training. I will use the funding to create a website where teachers will be able to share lessons that incorporate social psychology into their teaching in some way. Eventually some lessons will be videotaped so that teachers will actually be able to see some of the lessons or activities in action. —*Hunter Gehlbach, Harvard University*

### **Personality Pedagogy**

The grant lets me try a project — "Personality Pedagogy: A Wiki for the Teaching of Personality Psychology" — that I wouldn't have been able to accomplish with the limited funds available at a small liberal arts teaching college. The call [for proposals] gave me the chance to think "out of the box" and to think "big." Now that my site is up and running, it's turning out to have international impact; I find this

very exciting and beyond what I imagined when I applied. The site, <http://personalitypedagogy.arcadia.edu/pmwiki/pmwiki.php>, has been visited by people in over 102 different countries (in 38 languages) and from all 50 States and the District of Columbia. I've had over 7000 visitors, about 75 percent of whom are new visitors. —*Marianne Miserandino, Arcadia University*

### **A Lasting Network**

The APS Teaching Fund offered the opportunity to connect with fellow psychology instructors in the area. Because the University of South Dakota is located in a small town, with a rural feel, I often feel isolated from other psychologists. After careful research to apply for the APS grant, I realized how many psychology programs were located within a comfortable driving distance from us. This was the perfect chance to bring us all together to identify one another, share resources, ideas and support. Our goal is to create a lasting network among high school, college and university psychology instructors through a regional teaching conference, web site and listserv. So far, many area instructors have responded enthusiastically about the chance to identify and take advantage of the wealth of resources all around us — resources we might not otherwise have known about. —*Amy Schweinle, University of South Dakota*

### **Learning About Psychology Education in Iran**

In the past 13 years I have visited Iran 16 times, each time learning a little more about some of the fascinating psychological research generated by our colleagues there. Sadly, almost none of it is known in the West. It should be. The Teaching Fund award kindly offered by APS will allow me to develop a web site for showcasing Iranian psychology research and researchers, and for promoting communication between psychology students and professors in Iran and the West true to the spirit of a dialog among civilizations. —*Warren Thorngate, Carleton University*