

Poster Presentations

Help! We're being repressed! Presenting the controversy on psychological repression into the classroom

Brooke Bennett-Day

The existence of repression as described by Freud is often debated within the field of psychology, as supported by the inability of an APA Working Group (1998) to present a unified paper on the topic. Thus, presenting this topic in the classroom at anything beyond a cursory level requires careful thought. A good first step is to focus on the perceptions that students have, as classroom data suggests that many first-year students may think of repression as a political or social issue instead of a psychological one. Other students, even at the upper-level, may fail to include key ideas relating to the concept. This can lead to controversy within the classroom if students are essentially making arguments based on different definitions of the term. Classroom data suggests that students with a clear definition of psychological repression do lean toward a belief in its existence (5.36 on a 7-point scale), although there is variation (range, 3-7). A related consideration involves the extent to which a professor shares his or her beliefs about the controversy with students. The need to include research-based knowledge while still remaining respectful and inclusive of student perspectives will be addressed.

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Teaching evolutionary concepts impacts identity and prospective science involvement: an experimental manipulation

David Biek & Whitney Elmore

Evolutionary theory is an important and prominent set of concepts in contemporary biology and psychology curricula. Science teachers often experience frustration and dismay when faced with students' resistance to learning these important concepts. In this presentation, we describe an interdisciplinary collaboration to discover best practices, or at least a better way, to teach evolutionary concepts to our students. We are particularly interested in diminishing the emotional and attitudinal responses that so often derail teaching and learning about evolution.

Participants (N=192) from ten college classrooms read a short science article on the behavioral consequences of the evolutionary pressures of the narrowing birth canal in human predecessors. Half of the participants read the article as originally published, while the other half read the article with all instances of the word "evolution" changed to "developed"; in addition, accompanying photos of primates were removed. Results of an ANCOVA (GPA as a covariate) show a significant three-way interaction among condition, gender, and college major. For natural science majors, women showed declines in identification with science and projected future involvement with science, relative to men, when presented with the original article. For social science majors, however, the presence of evolutionary primes led to an increase in science identification and future science involvement. Results are discussed in terms of their relevance to identity processes, gender, and occupational choice.

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Discussing white privilege with a class of predominantly white students

Maria-Carla Chiarella

Johnson and Lollar (2002) report that exposure to cultural diversity has a positive impact on cultural awareness. Attending workshops appears to enhance students' understanding of interracial relations (McCauley, Wright, & Harris, 2000). Similarly, participating in service-learning, a form of experiential education, has a significant positive impact on promoting racial understanding (HERI, 2000).

McIntosh (1988) defines white privilege as the social, economic, political, and cultural advantages accorded to whites in American society. The concept of white privilege was presented to students attending a small Midwestern liberal arts college, who were taking the course Multi Cultural Psychology. Enrolled students were required to complete fifteen hours of service learning at sites serving ethnically diverse populations and were offered extra credit to assist with and/or attend the White Privilege Conference.

It was predicted that students would be more accepting of the concept of white privilege after participating in service-learning and attending the White Privilege Conference. Fifty-eight students completed a thirty-one item questionnaire assessing students' understanding of white privilege. The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Females appeared to be more accepting of the concept of white privilege than males.

Hard science and soft heads: Critical and creative thinking in the context of first-year group research projects.

Jacquelyn Cranney & Sue Morris

One of the aims of a special course for first-year psychology majors is to introduce them to the psychological science (cf. 'folk psychology') way of thinking, by having them engage in a range of research-related activities. Students are first participants in an experimental study, which they then write up as a research report, in scaffolded stages. In subsequent lecture and practical sessions, they undertake a number of exercises, including operationalising variables (e.g., 'love'), designing hypothetical studies (thus discovering the advantages and disadvantages of quasi-experimental and experimental designs), and criticising 'bogus' research articles. Simultaneously, in small groups they are given a limited set of topics from which they develop research questions, leading to specific hypotheses, which they then test. This is their first experience in designing their own study to test a hypothesis, which includes operationalising variables, developing materials, gathering and summarising data--a fascinating process to watch and to facilitate. The collaborative learning environment is essential at this transition stage, with the final step being the group oral presentation of their study. Student evaluations, as well as some pre-to post-test data, suggest that this introduction to psychological science is an intense but rewarding experience.

An integrative approach to educating about drugs in the media

Christina Dodd

The poster is designed to provide an overview of an approach to educate and engage undergraduates about drug and alcohol issues. The format was used with two sections of an upper-class Drug and Alcohol Issues course consisting of approximately 40 students at a Southeastern University. An additional topic added to the syllabus, Drugs in the Media, required students to integrate the course material and form an opinion on the topic. Students were required to watch a film in class and choose a film or television show to view outside of class. Students then wrote papers on how drugs should be portrayed in the media using the two media sources as support. There was a class discussion the week the papers were due using relevant journal and newspaper articles to discuss drugs' portrayal in the media. The class discussion and papers required students to integrate previous material about drug subcultures and history. Students responded positively to this assignment and the students provided unique perspectives in the papers. This format provides a means for students to analyze the material and decide their view of drugs in the media in a contemporary approach.

**A forensic psychology exercise:
Role playing and the insanity defense**

Michael E. Fass

This proposal presents a forensic psychology role playing exercise that could be used in several psychology courses (i.e.: Introduction to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Forensic Psychology). This exercise was developed to enhance student interest and stimulate classroom discussion on the issue of the insanity defense and related psychological topics such as competency and culpability. Five varied roles are acted out by student volunteers. The roles were created to initiate discussion focusing on culpability and age, culpability and intelligence, culpability and physiology, and culpability and mental disorder. In addition, this proposal provides suggestions for background assistance relating to forensic psychology and the insanity defense including a discussion of the myths of the insanity defense. Evaluation data indicate that students enjoyed this exercise and believed it improved their understanding of the insanity defense and related issues.

The effectiveness of guest lecturers with disabilities in the classroom

Afshin Gharib & William Phillips

Can a guest lecturer with a disability (for example visual impairment or dyslexia) provide students with a more emotional connection to course material (for example material on sensation and perception or on reading processes)? Often, instructors prefer to bring into class a guest lecturer who can provide an "experiential" perspective on a particular topic. The assumption is that the personal experience brought into the classroom makes the material resonate more with students and that students would have a preference for material being taught from an experiential

perspective. The question we asked in the present study was whether a guest lecture from an “experiential” expert with a disability (e.g. a guest suffering from cone-rod dystrophy lecturing on vision, or a dyslexic lecturing on the psychology of reading) would be more effective than the course instructor in capturing students attention and conveying information in an Introduction to Psychology class. Students in two sections of Introduction to Psychology (N = 25 in each section) listened to guest lecturers with disabilities lecturing an a topic related to their disability, one in the area of Sensation and Perception (the guest lecturer is vision impaired) and one in the area of Language Development (the guest lecturer is dyslexic). The Guest lecturers lectured on the same topic in both sections, however, each lecturer used their own experiences to highlight the topics they cover in one section but not the other (counterbalanced between sections), providing students in one section with experiential testimony. Following each of the 4 lectures (two experiential, two non-experiential) students rated the lecture on several dimensions including overall quality, level of engagement, and performance. In addition, students in both sections were tested on the same test items from the lecture material to ascertain degree of learning, and given identical “pop” quizzes two weeks after the exam to measure retention. It was hypothesized that students would find the experiential lectures from lecturers talking about their disabilities more engaging, learn more from them, and retain the material for longer. We found that students in fact preferred the course instructor to the guests, regardless of whether the guests included a discussion of their own disability in their lectures. Performance on the exam questions and the pop quiz items were not different between “experiential” and “non-experiential” lectures, suggesting that guest lecturers who discuss their own disabilities in lecture are not more effective in conveying material and students are not more likely to retain material delivered by “experiential” guests.



Analogical scaffolding of sensitive topics

Keith R. Happaney

This poster presentation will concern several sensitive topics and teaching approaches I have found to be relatively effective in discussing them. I currently teach courses in *Introductory Psychology*, *Child Psychology*, *Social and Emotional Development*, and I will be teaching *Evolutionary Psychology* next term. I have designed these two latter courses for the Psychology Department at my school. One topic I discuss in several of my classes, and which is central to an evolutionarily based understanding of sex differences, is parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972). Parental investment theory has considerable heuristic utility in explaining greater female investment in the young as well as differential sex-based mating strategies. It has appeared to me in recent years (as well as to several of my colleagues) that students have become much more willing to accept sex differences in the areas just mentioned, yet usually simultaneously maintain a relatively constraint free view of human behavior and development. Thus, from a pedagogical perspective, it is crucial that acceptance of phenomena such as sex differences of the type just mentioned be based on a logical assessment of evidence, as opposed to personal experience and/or stereotype, with attendant oversimplification and overgeneralization. One approach I use in discussing greater investment in the young among females is to make the analogy between flipping a coin which continuously and reliably comes up heads and the likelihood of only finding cultures where females are dominant with regard to the provisioning of

care to the young. I begin this by simply discussing the flipping of coins. I ask the students how improbable it would be to have a given coin come up heads on two occasions. I then ask this same question with regard to flipping the coin five times, then ten times, etc. Together, we come to the understanding that a random account of the mechanics of the coin flip becomes increasingly inadequate, with the accumulation of more and more “heads.” Indeed, my students always understand that factors of a more systematic nature are likely influencing the data (e.g., a two headed coin). It is only at this point that I begin the discussion of parental investment in stating that there has never been a culture where, on average, men are more involved in the care of children than are women. I have found this approach to be effective in directing students to think in terms of likelihoods, which is essential in scientifically based evidence assessment. I apply similar techniques regarding other issues which will be discussed in the poster as well (e.g., the concept of race, the topic of biological and experiential influences on intelligence). I teach at a school where the majority of the student body consists of under-represented ethnic minorities and have found that given adequate preparation and scaffolding, discussions are more likely to promote openness in students to alternative viewpoints from those they are more familiar with.

A starting point: Gauging campus climate in order to better educate about LGBTQ issues

Helen C. Harton & Tyler Bilyeu

To better understand issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students on campus and how those issues are perceived by nonLGBTQ students, we surveyed students’ attitudes toward LGBT and Q people, knowledge about LGBTQ issues, and experiences on campus. 410 heterosexual students (randomly selected) and 32 LGBTQ students (recruited from campus organizations) completed these measures. Heterosexuals who had been in college longer, those who had friends who were LGBTQ, and those with more accurate knowledge had more positive attitudes. LGBTQ students perceived the campus climate as more negative than heterosexual students, with 71% saying that the university was not doing enough to protect LGBTQ students. Ninety-one percent of LGBTQ students said that climate would improve if faculty, staff, and administrators at the university were more involved, knowledgeable, and considerate of LGBTQ issues and students in the classroom. Specific suggestions for supporting LGBTQ students in class and improving heterosexual students’ attitudes toward them are discussed.

Don't Touch it or You'll Go Blind: Discussing Children's Sexuality

Barbara A. Hunter

We deny the sexuality of our children in this culture and avoid discussing sexuality with them. I use two activities to address children's sexuality. In the first activity students must role play a difficult situation between parent and child such as, their fifteen-year old daughter has just told them she is pregnant, their son has just told them he is gay, or their three-year old is playing with themselves in public. In the second activity, they must write and illustrate a book

aimed at six- to eight-year-olds that explains some aspect of sexuality such as sexual orientation, or good touch/bad touch, or where babies come from. Both activities are followed by discussions of effective ways to handle situations related to children and sexuality. Students receive no course credit for these endeavors, yet they engage in them with great enthusiasm. I have been very impressed by the level of sophistication I have seen in my students when they really stop and think about what would be best for their child. Student responses to this activity will be presented.



Using peer education to teach about privilege and prejudice

Kristen J. Klaaren and Scott B. London

Learning about prejudice and privilege often evokes negative emotional responses among students. It can be deeply disturbing to learn about unrecognized or unacknowledged inequalities and to learn that the world is not just. Similarly, feelings of guilt and shame often emerge as students realize that their racial or gender group may be privileged relative to others. Peer education can be an effective yet nonthreatening method of teaching about these topics.

This research presents data concerning student opinions of a peer education-based model for learning about gender and race inequalities in an interdisciplinary travel course in South Africa. South African student peer educators and American student travelers rated peer education as a highly effective means of promoting cross-cultural understanding ($M = 6.65$ on a 7-point scale with high numbers indicating positive responses) and teaching about discrimination and privilege ($M = 6.15$). Additional results from both groups ($N = 26$) suggest that students perceive their peers as helpful resources for learning about race and gender issues. Both quantitative and qualitative measures indicate that students enjoyed learning from their peers and formed valued friendships in the process of learning about their own culture as well as another culture.



Using a hybrid model to increase students' comfort level and openness to learning about research design and research methods

Paige Krabill & Andrea Miller

Often times there appears to be a disconnect between what is learned in the classroom and application in student driven research. Students approach classes in research design and research methods with high levels of anxiety. For students utilizing online learning platforms, this anxiety can increase exponentially. The Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design is utilized to create ideas for a hybrid model to successfully facilitate the transfer of knowledge from the online classroom setting to the face to face setting and finally to the applied setting. Instead of teaching research design with a single methodology of teacher driven examples and expecting students to complete the course and be able to perform research on their own, numerous components are added to increase context and reduce anxiety. Components include online instruction with specific applied examples, experiential learning, and face to face lab

activities to build awareness and practice utilizing the research techniques in learner driven mock studies. The combination of conceptual and experiential work combined facilitated by the use of technology will ideally make for learners who are prepared to embark upon their own journey toward completion of a research study as the end product.

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Students as agents of change: Teaching social norms and environmental responsibility

Eva Kung Lawrence

Learning about the connection between human behavior and environmental problems can lead to feelings of helplessness and denial, especially when students are asked to consider their own environmental impact. Moreover, students often do not realize how their choices may encourage environmentally friendly or unfriendly behaviors in others. Class activities can address these issues by having students engage in fun, interactive assignments. Students ($n = 19$) enrolled in an Environmental Psychology course read research articles about social norms and littering. They then spent a class littering on campus, sometimes in a blatant and rude manner and other times appearing careless. In some cases a student confederate picked up the litter or confronted the litterer. Students observed how people responded in these different situations and followed up with interviews. The students next helped create a debriefing statement that was shared with the college community. Students had to carefully consider how to word the statement using research on creating normative messages that improve environmental behaviors. All the students agreed or strongly agreed that the activity was both enjoyable and educational. The majority (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that the activity encouraged them to be more mindful of how their environmental behaviors impact others.

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Controversial topics as classroom tools: How the use of controversy in science can be used to teach values in the field of psychology

Gabriela A. Martorell

The American Psychological Association's task force on undergraduate major learning goals and outcomes lists "values in psychology" as one of the critical components of an undergraduate degree in psychology. For this learning goal, students are expected to be able to demonstrate the ability to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline. The goal also includes specific suggested learning outcomes. In this poster, I will argue that controversial topics can be used as tools to help meet the goals and learning outcomes consistent with values in psychology. I will focus most closely on ethical considerations and how a discussion of the value of research must incorporate ethics for both pragmatic and philosophical reasons. Three specific topics in psychology will be presented as models for this process; including (a) evolutionary psychology as a field; (b) Harry Harlow's work on attachment with rhesus monkeys; and (c) John Money's twins experiment and the implications this research had on the understanding of gender.

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Teaching the psychology of victims and victimization

Dani.McKinney

An exercise on labels used to describe victims was conducted in a Psychology of Incarceration course. Seventeen participants made a list of terms used to refer to victims of violence or aggression, and a list of labels used to refer to aggressors that cause harm to others. In addition, a list of punishments for aggressors was compiled. Participants then filled out a worksheet asking them to reflect on an event in which they were victimized, and asked them to self-label their emotions and actions after the event. Only 3 out of 17 identified with the labels associated with “victim” that had previously been agreed upon. Participants then completed a second worksheet asking them to reflect on an event in which they caused harm to others, and asked them to self-label their emotions and actions after the event. Only 4 out of 17 identified with labels given to “aggressors.” Disparity between labels given to others and self-labeling is discussed, as well as disparity between suggested punishments for others and punishments they felt they should receive. This exercise could be used in both Forensic Psychology courses, as well as Intro to Psychology courses covering a chapter on bias and stereotyping.

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Teaching the Rorschach backwards, forwards, and upside down: Creative ideas to engage students in the learning process

Andrea Miller

The Rorschach is a projective assessment tool that typically requires extensive study. Students often enter the classroom with anxiety and some trepidation about mastering this instrument. Over the course of a semester, students were exposed to traditional lecture format learning, group activities, additional optional take home assignments, lab, wiki instruction, and non-typical in-class assignments. The non-typical, in-class assignments included using tangible food items to help illustrate specific concepts as well as working backwards to build a Rorschach card and response from scratch and have it fall in line with a case conceptualization. Students worked together to learn specific portions of the model and then apply them in the traditional manner as well as to build responses from the ground up to aid in understanding the concepts from all directions. The class discussions were conducted as a team effort in which students and instructor were working together to master the material. This technique appeared to enhance student motivation, reduced learning anxiety, and promoted intragroup cooperation. An openness and positivity toward answering student queries helped students to become comfortable with their questions and speculations and appeared to reduce anxiety as did discussion of real world applicability of the instrument. Strategies for applying innovative ideas for other learning topics will be discussed as well as some of the hands-on activities displayed.

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Classroom techniques for overcoming students’ pseudoscientific beliefs

Richard L. Miller

There are those who claim that teaching is primarily a matter of communicating information to students. My assumption in this poster is that students' heads are *not* empty when they walk into class. Rather, they already have acquired knowledge, developed beliefs, and perhaps become entrenched in attitudes about the material to-be-learned. These entrenched beliefs may be inconsistent or incompatible with what the teacher hopes to teach.

Belief in paranormal phenomenon is an area where students' "knowledge" is often incompatible with scientific understanding. However, previous research has indicated that despite our best efforts, many students will persist in these beliefs even after taking a full semester course in the scientific method, or after taking a course in critical thinking, or even after taking a course that specifically debunks superstitious beliefs.

Filling a mind may be easier than changing a mind. To change a mind, social psychological techniques can be useful. I will present three techniques that can set the stage for attitude change in students, counter-attitudinal advocacy, hypocrisy induction, and belief perseverance. These techniques have been shown to be adaptable to the classroom in research studies conducted by myself and my colleagues at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Evolutionary psychology in the bible belt

Meg Milligan

Ten years ago students walked out of general psychology when I mentioned evolution or evolutionary psychology, because they refused to listen to anything other than creationism. Ten years later I teach evolutionary psychology as a course, as well as use this perspective in every course I teach (developmental, social, counseling, health, personality). Students stay and participate. I've changed and my students have changed. The first evolutionary psychology class session requires students to write their answer to "What is evolutionary psychology?" Then I present an overview with power points and humor, derived from David Buss' teaching suggestions (SPSP, Memphis, 2007). I set an informal, interactive tone for the class, and emphasize empirical support, exploring ideas and exchanging viewpoints within an atmosphere of mutual respect among adults. I use David Buss' textbook, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (3rd Ed.). Students write a reflective paper modeled after Chris Randall's, Kennesaw State University, who graciously shared his syllabus before I taught my first evolutionary psychology class. Lastly, students join a Creationism, Evolution, or Seeding group, which culminates in group presentations in class. This presentation includes the course I teach, my experience, and student feedback.

Using articles from *American Psychologist* to promote critical reading and analysis of current controversies in psychology.

Tom Pusateri

The *American Psychologist*, flagship journal of the American Psychological Association, often publishes Special Issues or Special Sections that contain a series of articles on controversial topics, and some articles generate Comments that provide additional perspectives on the issues.

Examples of recent topics include the pros and cons of using high-stakes testing for employment and graduate school admissions decisions, legal recognition of same-sex unions, the ethics of asking research participants about abuse, and the ethics and validity of a recent study that partially replicated Milgram's obedience research.

This poster will provide suggestions for using these articles to develop classroom assignments (e.g., discussions, debates, and papers) that encourage students to demonstrate critical reading skills and perspective taking. For example, instructors may assign students to summarize the position from one article in the series, to compare that position to alternative positions, to articulate and defend their own positions using the articles as their source material, or to relate varying positions to the APA's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2003). The poster will include a handout with references for several topics and suggested questions for discussions and papers.

Just what *DID* the doctor order?

Dan Segrist

Students in Psychopathology courses often have strong—sometimes ill-informed—views regarding medication and its role in treating psychological disorders. The purpose of this poster is two-fold. First, I describe an assignment targeting information and opinions about psychotropic medication. Students select the name of a psychotropic medication from a fishbowl. Their task is to find information for that drug: target symptoms, dose, contraindications/precautions, side effects, and response latency. In addition to this factual information, students respond to the following prompt:

In your opinion what is the role of medication in the treatment of mental illness? Do you think people are reluctant to take medication for emotional difficulties or are they fairly willing to do so? Why do you think so? As a counselor what would be important to consider in approaching the topic of medication with a client?

Second, I report data collected this past semester in an undergraduate Psychopathology course using a modified version of Lazraotou et al. (2007) questionnaire about attitudes toward psychotropic medication (e.g., Psychotropic medications should only be used as a last resort; People take psychotropic medications because they're a quick fix.) and opinions on the role of medication with specific disorders.

Teaching about racial microaggression

Andrea Zevenbergen & Alesia Harris

Racial microaggressions are “commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory racial slights” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). Racism in the United States is difficult for undergraduate students to discuss for many reasons, including concern about offending others, and a desire not

to “speak for” a particular racial group. I facilitate discussions of racial microaggression in my Introduction to Counseling course using several strategies.

First, I have students read an article titled, “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life” (Sue et al., 2007). The students are asked to write a 1-page response to the article. Next, three questions frame a class discussion: “Why are issues of racism difficult to talk about?”, “Is racial microaggression inevitable?”, and “What can be done to reduce microaggression?” The first question helps to decrease students’ anxiety about discussing issues of racism in the classroom.

This poster will provide the results of qualitative data analyses on students’ ($n = 21$) written responses to the article. Students’ ($N = 30$) learning was also assessed by an examination essay question assessing understanding of microaggression. Eighty-three percent of the students provided responses that demonstrated good understanding of the construct; 13% revealed partial understanding.