

This special issue of Psychology, Learning and Teaching includes a selection of papers presented at the 5th Vancouver International Conference on the Teaching of Psychology in Vancouver, Canada, held July, 23 to 25, 2015. Included are three reviews, two articles, five reports, and the complete conference abstracts.

In the first review paper, Koger and Scott discuss the contribution that the behavioural sciences could make in promoting environmental sustainability. Strategies are suggested to introduce and develop knowledge of sustainability issues in the curriculum. The importance of computational thinking is addressed by Anderson. By using steps traditionally used in computer science, students can be taught to enhance their problem solving and research skills. The psychology classroom also provides an opportunity to address mental illness stigma with students. Maranzan reviews recent work on stigma reduction with a particular emphasis on contact theory and provides recommendations for exploring issues of stigma in a classroom setting. An intervention to improve study skills in an introductory psychology course was designed by Cathey, Visio, Whisenhunt, Hudson, and Shoptaugh. In this study, students watched a film about study habits, and their comprehension was measured using either “think-pair-share” or self-reflect clicker questions. Although findings showed that reflective questions were more effective, the exercise did not have an effect on subsequent exam performance. Shane-Simpson, Che, and Brooks investigated the usefulness of editing Wikipedia as an exercise in helping students to work collaboratively and develop information literacy. Findings showed improvements in search strategies for journal articles as well as improvements for some students in their consolidation of the course knowledge. A report on service learning in psychology by Bringle, Ruiz, Brown, and Reeb demonstrates benefits for student learning. This paper discusses how service learning can be incorporated into the curriculum and a model is proposed based on the intersection of the APA’s learning goals with academic, civic, and personal domains. A novel and fun way to teach conditioning and learning to undergraduates is discussed in the report by McConnell. Through visits to a local dog shelter, undergraduates were provided with an opportunity to help train dogs using the principles they learned in class. Howell-Carter, Nieman-Gonder, Pellegrino, Catapano, and Hutzler reported on a system developed to improve student’s career planning in a Psychology program that concentrates on I/O. Integrating the APA’s (2013) recommendations for a systematic approach to career development and advisement, Model Advisement Procedure (MAP) was developed to enable students to explore careers, make use of resources, reflect, and evaluate their career goals. The authors evaluate the success of the MAP system. With the similar aim of encouraging student reflection and demonstrating the application of personality traits to supporting learning and achievement, Mcilroy, Todd, Palmer-Conn, and Poole created a learning activity booklet linked to a validated measure of the five-factor model of personality. Findings showed that students were able to identify their unique strengths and challenges. The final paper by Burns, Stephenson, and Bellamy in this special edition reports on the value of the Socratic Method, and demonstrates how asking meaningful questions, learning to listen and appreciate silence, learning can be a transformational experience.

The complete abstracts from the proceedings are also included in this issue. These abstracts are divided into oral presentations, posters, and Participant Idea Exchanges. The conference had 231 attendees and included 74 oral presentations and workshops, 22 posters, and 11 Participant Idea Exchanges. Participants from 25 countries attended the conference. The conference was hosted by Douglas College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and Langara College. This conference marks the fifth of a series of biennial conferences that first started in 2007 and are always offered in downtown Vancouver, a cosmopolitan city nestled between mountains and ocean. This provides the perfect backdrop and forum for participants to share teaching and research ideas, and foster relationships with other national and international colleagues. The conference is designed for university, college and high school instructors of psychology and other disciplines who share an interest in the exploration of new ideas, cultural differences in teaching environments, and enhancing their teaching skills. The conference includes both research and discussion of topics such as classroom demonstrations, new teaching methods, technology in teaching, curriculum issues, policy development, the development of critical thinking and psychological literacy, and issues of assessment.

This year’s conference included four keynote speakers and an invited speaker. Doug Bernstein, University of South Florida, opened the conference with his engaging talk “Bye-Bye Intro” where he proposed a new way of introducing psychology to undergraduates that focuses on overcoming misconceptions about psychology. John Mitterer, Professor at

Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada gave a talk entitled “Getting Past the WEIRD Ones: Portraying ‘other’ people to psychology undergraduates”. Dr. Mitterer discussed attention to diversity and how experience shapes our assumptions. Susan A. Nolan, Professor at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, presented a stimulating talk entitled “Beyond the Academy: Sharing psychological science in a global context” where she offered a variety of ways that psychologists can share psychological science with the public. Michael Eysenck, Professor Emeritus at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Professorial Fellow at University of Roehampton, London, England closed the conference with his talk entitled “Cognitive Neuroscience: Over-hyped or the real deal?” where he addressed the limitations of Neuroscience and its applicability to cognitive psychology. Dana Castro (Invited Speaker) and Jean Le Rohelec, Ecole de Psychologues Praticiens, Paris, France, presented a talk, “Why are Conveying Information, Benevolence towards Students and Mastery of Course Content Fundamental Skills in the Teaching of Psychology?”

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