Kelly Campbell TSSA Winter 2011

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Name of conference attended: Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Teaching Preconference

Dates: January 27, 2011

Teaching Skill(s) Studied: The SPSP Teaching Preconference attendees and presenters included faculty members from a variety of universities who study topics related to social psychology. Presentations covered a variety of topics including teaching to address APA (American Psychological Association) learning outcomes, academic entitlement across institutions, using data analyses in the classroom, incorporating field experiments into the learning experience, managing undergraduate research assistants, incorporating book reviews into the assignments, and forming student clubs in class. There were also nine roundtable discussions in the afternoon. I was only able to attend one (given the setup) and so I attended a session about “Using the Implicit Association Test to Teach About Implicit Racial Bias” because it pertained to the class I teach at CSUSB on Race and Racism (SSCI 316). Unfortunately, the session I was most looking forward to, about publishing in the area of teaching, was canceled because the presenter’s flight was delayed due to weather.

Impact on Current Teaching: One of the most valuable sessions pertained to managing undergraduate research assistants. I currently have a team of 10 volunteer assistants (undergraduate and graduate) working with me on various projects. I had previously not conceptualized my research team as a classroom. Since attending this conference, I have begun to implement various meetings, activities, and training sessions with my research team to help enhance their skills. For example, next week I will be holding a session about data collection and analysis using survey monkey and Qualtrics online systems. In this session, I will teach my assistants how to download data from these online systems, import Excel documents into SPSS, insert variable names, delete cases with missing data, recode variables, and compute variables in SPSS.

Another important session pertained to managing discussions in large lecture classes. My Race and Racism class at CSUSB typically has an enrollment of 280 students. This session was managed informally so that audience members could contribute information about their own experiences. One of the audience members shared that she teaches a class of 600 students! She discussed some of her methods of encouraging discussion in a class of this size. One strategy was to take photos of groups of students (with their permission) and learn the names of students who speak up in class. She studies the photos to memorize names for the students who participate in discussions. Although I did not adopt her method of taking photos, I decided to learn students’ names the last time I taught Race and Racism (in Winter 2011). Amazingly, I learned approximately 75 of my students’ names. I could see they were pleasantly surprised when they realized I had remembered their name and they were also more likely to participate in discussions. Note: my method involved asking students who raised their hands for their name and the reciting each student’s name in my head after class.

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