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TEPS Report

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National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology

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I would like to thank the TEPS Committee and Dr. Hicks for allowing me to attend the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP), it was an incredibly helpful conference and I will be bringing many things back to my classroom to use this year and in the future. I attended multiple sessions a day for the four day conference which were impactful and helpful. Here a few of the most significant sessions that I believe will directly impact my students:

1) The Demo-Demo session: This session was a series of four example lessons that were taught as if the conference attendees were members of the presenter's class. While all four of the lessons were interesting, the one I believe I will use in my class would be a lesson called the Cartoon Network Simulator. This was a manipulative neuron activity in which students are able to create a neural network on a computer and change the neural network's actions to simulate how the neurons in the brain work. I will definitely use this in my AP Psychology class as understanding the behavior of neurons and neural networks tends to be very difficult for students. This computer simulation will make it easier for students and allow for more technology use in the classroom.

2) The keynote address by Michael Gazzaniga: Michael Gazzaniga is one of the foremost scholars in the study of split brain patients. In fact, I show a video in AP Psychology about his research and one of his patients from 20 years ago. Dr. Gazzaniga spoke about the idea of the conscious instinct and the evolution of brain development.   His speech helped me better understand how to communicate the historical ideas of evolutionary psychology to my students and helped me understand the current research that is occurring. I will actually adjust some of what I teach on evolutionary psychology based on his new findings and will include many of the items he discussed in future classes.

3) Backward Approach to Effective Teaching: This session was led by Erin Hardin, a professor of Psychology at the University of Tennessee. Her session focused on the ideas of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe and Understanding by Design. I found this session particularly effective and important because I have been to other conferences, sponsored by the district, on UBD that were run by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, but none of those conferences had material focused on psychology. So while I have tried to implement UBD ideas in some of my classes I have always struggled to apply it to my AP Psychology classes. This session gave me specific ideas that I will bring back to my AP class and implement.

Again, I would like to that the committee and Dr. Hicks for allowing me to attend the conference. These three sessions are just examples of some of the items I will bring back to my classes. The conference was four packed days of sessions and I can honestly say I took something valuable away from every session I was in.

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