

Application Details

Manage Application: Undergraduate Educator Award - 2018

Award Cycle: 2018

**Internal Submission
Deadline:** Friday, February 2, 2018

Application Title: Stanzione

Application ID: 002121

Nominator's First Name: Audrey

Nominator's Last Name: Duarte

Nominator's Title: Associate Professor

**Nominator's Primary
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Nominee's First Name: Christopher

Nominee's Last Name: Stanzione

Nominee's Title: Lecturer

Primary Organization(s): Psychology

Nominee's Email Address: christopher.stanzione@gatech.edu

January 25th 2018

Dear CETL Awards Selection Committee,

It is my distinct pleasure to nominate Dr. Christopher Stanzione for the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award. Dr. Stanzione has been a full-time Academic Professional Instructor in the School of Psychology since the Fall of 2014 . Dr. Stanzione was hired to fulfill some of our teaching needs in the school, particularly for a few high demand courses for which we often had difficulty covering with our existing faculty. These courses include Introductory Psychology, Human Development, and Personality Psychology. These courses, especially Introductory Psychology, are essential core courses of our undergraduate program and also taken by students across the institute. The only major requirement of this position is to teach a few courses during the academic year. I state this to make it clear that what Dr. Stanzione contributes to the School of Psychology goes above and beyond what he was hired to do. I will elaborate upon all of these duties below but I feel it is important to make it clear at the outset that Dr. Stanzione not only teaches excellently but he also mentors students, conducts research, and leads outreach efforts for the school, purely on his own initiative. There is no question that he is an exemplary citizen at Georgia Tech. He is simply an irreplaceable member of our faculty and I'm proud to call him my colleague.

You will find letters of recommendation enclosed in this packet from our school chair, Dr. Frank Durso, and the previous Associate Chair of Undergraduate Education, Dr. Jenny Singleton. As of January 2018, I have taken over for Dr. Singleton who has accepted a new role in the institute. Both have elaborated upon Dr. Stanzione's teaching excellence with many specific examples and so I will focus on his other contributions to the school, college, and institute. This new Associate Chair job is very demanding. It's an exhaustive list of curriculum planning and development, student advising, meeting with undergraduate advisors, K-12 outreach, etc. Dr. Stanzione must have sensed me starting to internally combust when the semester started. He set up a meeting with me to fill me in on the various tasks that he currently handles and to ask me how he could help me. Basically, he wanted to know how could he do more to help the school achieve our education and outreach goals. This was so amazing to hear and I am already taking Chris up on his offer to assist me in these efforts. Dr. Stanzione is exactly the kind of person we want teaching in the classroom. He is an energetic, clear, consistent, and well-respected teacher. You can see this from the student testimonials and evaluations included in this nomination package. Dr. Stanzione is also an excellent representative for our outreach efforts. He's knowledgeable, personable, and his enthusiasm is infectious. The College of Sciences hosts numerous events throughout the year for recently admitted undergraduates and their families as well as for high school students. These are hugely important opportunities for us to show off our exciting undergraduate curriculum and research opportunities available within the school, especially as we have been trying to grow our major over the past few years. Dr. Stanzione

frequently volunteers to give presentations about our program at these events, on weekends no less, and recruit current students to present research posters. As I mentioned above, this is in no way a requirement of his job. He just enjoys doing this outreach. Clearly, his educational outreach extends beyond the classroom. He genuinely loves psychology, loves our program, and loves working with current and prospective students.

I also want to mention the research that Dr. Stanzione conducts with current undergraduate students. He is not required to conduct research in his position. He is just passionate about research and mentoring undergraduate students. Dr. Stanzione's research in language development in deaf and hard-of-hearing children is incredibly interesting and an area that is not hugely-represented in the department. Dr. Stanzione routinely conducts such studies in collaboration with current psychology majors, giving students the opportunity to present and publish research. Dr. Stanzione is not only teaching students about developmental psychology research in the classroom, but also allowing them to apply that knowledge to studies in real life while receiving recognition and bolstering their CVs.

Finally, I want to make clear how passionate Dr. Stanzione is not only about the School of Psychology but also about Georgia Tech. For example, he is avid fan of our athletics programs, which adds another point of connection with the students. He was recently nominated by one of his students to be a "guest coach" at an away football game. I didn't even know that this opportunity existed but it was no surprise to me that Dr. Stanzione would be chosen for such an honor. He has an amazing ability to connect with students in a way that they both respect him as an instructor and also feel that they can relate to him as a person with shared interests. Georgia Tech has been working diligently over the last few years on increasing our excellence in teaching to the same level as that of our research. I believe that Dr. Stanzione is a shining example of someone working every day to help us achieve this goal and can think of no one more deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Audrey Duarte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Audrey Duarte, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Associate Chair of Undergraduate Education
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Nomination of Dr. Christopher Stanzione for the 2018 Undergraduate Educator Award

Table of Contents

Letter of Nomination from Dr. Audrey Duarte, Associate School Chair.....1

Table of Contents.....3

Candidate’s Reflection on Teaching.....4

Letters of Support from Students.....7

Beyond the Classroom: Research with Undergraduates.....10

Scholarship for Teaching & Learning.....11

CIOS Scores & Student Comments.....13

Teaching Reflection

“If we want to grow as teachers -- we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives -- risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract.” – *Parker J. Palmer, The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*

As an Educational Psychologist, one of my jobs is to study how individuals learn and retain knowledge, especially in classrooms. Not only do these areas include the obvious, like the learning process, but also extend to emotional, social, and cognitive outcomes for all students. However, it is not enough to solely study an area of psychology to become a good teacher. Teaching goes beyond methodology and involves creating real connections with students. One of my goals for each student is to become an informed consumer of knowledge. As an Instructor, it is my job to apply critical thinking techniques within my lectures and assignments. However, becoming an informed consumer of knowledge is not confined to the context of academic topics. I am also teaching students to be good people; celebrating those from different backgrounds or who have different views than our own, and this requires us to think critically, too. In the sections below, I discuss several contexts in which I help students become informed consumers of knowledge.

Teaching Excellence. I aim to create a learning community that is both comfortable and challenging. During our first few class meetings, I try to establish a connection with my students – a task that requires some creativity in my large General Psychology courses with, on average, 115 students. On the first day of class, I introduce myself and share some personal details that hope to lessen the anxiety about the course and lay the foundation for a positive student-professor relationship. For example, I might mention that I am fluent in sign language or tell them about my recent backpacking trips to Iceland or Southeast Asia. I will call upon the students to have them tell me something about themselves to let them know that I am interested in getting to know them as well.

Once the semester is underway, I have certain rituals that I follow to prepare for class. As I prepare a lecture, I anticipate student interactions and potential questions that they might ask. In addition, I prepare alternative methods for delivering material if the class finds a topic difficult. Directly before class begins I check-in with myself to make sure I am content and excited about our interaction. Sometimes I even do a happy dance in my office to pump myself up. Once I arrive to class, I make sure I am truly in the moment – managing the flow and energy of the room.

In my classes, I use various teaching techniques to address the wide range of student learners. For example, in my Developmental Psychology course, I use a series of active learning techniques such as: in-class texting polls so that less verbal students can participate, in-class “check-in” activities during which students can converse with a partner about previously discussed content, and organized discussions and debates so that students can talk about their passion about the topic in a supportive and constructive space. I also require students to read contemporary empirical research in light of traditional theories. In addition to these techniques, I use a series of examples in which students can apply the new content to a real-life scenario. For example, after discussing descriptive research strategies in my General Psychology course, I have the students conduct an in-class content analysis of violent behavior in cartoons by coming up with a coding scheme and achieving reliable results with a partner. Lastly, in my Personality Theory course, I provide several examples of recent research, which uses the specific theoretical approach previously discussed in lecture. After examining the recent research and comparing/contrasting with the original theory, students complete several personality

inventories and compare their outcomes to the averages of published results. More broadly, I use a variety of technology such as videos, Prezi, and online-collaborative centers where we can meet and discuss topics virtually.

Diversity & Georgia Tech Citizenship. I am grateful in having the opportunity to teach a very diverse student population varying in ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and more. I pride myself in being a mentor to underrepresented groups and adapting my teaching style to meet all students' needs. During the Fall 2016 semester, Institute Diversity featured me in the *Faces of Inclusive Excellence*. This publication recognizes individuals who are committed to advancing a culture of academic and inclusive excellence at Georgia Tech. Further, I am an Executive Board member for the LGBTQIA Employee Resource Group. This group serves as a place for all LGBTQIA employees at Georgia Tech to come together and give back to the community, develop professionally, and socialize. I have also participated in the Safe Space Training program at Georgia Tech organized by the LGBTQIA Resource Center. Having the Safe Space Training certificate posted outside of my office door lets students know that my office is a safe space for all individuals.

Beyond the Classroom. It is important for me to serve students both inside and outside the classroom to effectively reach my goal of training students to be informed consumers of knowledge. I extend my time and service to students in the following ways. First, I am a liaison for the College of Science and represent the School of Psychology at several different campus events. For example, I attend weekly meetings as part of the *It's All About Science & Math* program, where newly admitted high school students and their parents visit Georgia Tech and are considering Psychology as a major. In a similar vein, I represent Psychology at EXPLORE! weekend during the spring semesters.

Second, I am engaged in research with students at all different levels – from designing studies, collecting data, and attending and presenting at psychological conferences. For example, I have mentored several undergraduate students who have conducted (or are currently conducting) their independent research projects. One of the undergraduate students that I mentored conducted a study that examined participant misresponse on the Big Five Personality Inventory. The results of this project were presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association in March, 2017 (see page 10). I have also conducted research with undergraduate and graduate students to examine the complex relationships between empathy and Machiavellianism, extraversion and narcissism, and psychopathy. I believe that it is important for students to engage in the research process for several reasons, but especially in becoming an informed consumer of knowledge. What better way to appreciate psychology as a science than conducting your own study?

Lastly, I enjoy meeting with students around campus for lunch and/or coffee. Sometimes we talk about psychology, other academic interests, or personal issues. Regardless of the topic, these meetings foster the connectedness between two people from different backgrounds, and helps us both grow. It also tells students that I am accessible both in and out of the classroom.

Scholarship for Teaching & Learning. Beyond my interests in teaching and pedagogy, I am also engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning. I attend at least one teaching-oriented conference per year (e.g., National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology, Best Practices, and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology). Further, since joining the Psychology faculty in the Fall of 2014, I've conducted several teaching-to-research projects. These projects allow me to apply current research findings from Teaching journals directly in my classes, and conduct my own studies to improve

pedagogy. Below are three examples of projects I have conducted and presented at conferences: 1) The Misconceptions Essay, 2) The Wikipedia Project, and 3) The STAR Activity.

I required students in my General Psychology course to write a misconceptions essay. In this essay, students are asked to identify their personal misconception about psychology, provide the accurate concept with empirical evidence, and discuss the importance of this new knowledge. Following this, students provided examples on how they would share this knowledge with someone who has not taken the course. I am pleased to say that in collaboration with a current undergraduate student, we analyzed the student misconception essays and contributed to research in the area of conceptual change.

To foster critical thinking, I had my General Psychology class fact-check Wikipedia pages for accuracy. This project comes from a larger initiative led by the Association for Psychological Science called the *APS Wikipedia Initiative*. More than 3,300 psychological scientists and their students have joined this initiative: <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/aps-wikipedia-initiative>. This assignment came in four parts: First, students had to pick a topic that was relevant to an Introductory Psychology course, (e.g. The Bystander Effect). Second, students had to check four facts within the Wikipedia article. Wikipedia can be very light on citations, or perhaps provide the wrong source. Students had to quote the fact from Wikipedia, explain what it means, report if the fact was accurate per the students' research on the topic, reference a better source (if necessary), and explain why the new source is trustworthy. Third, while fact checking, students might find that information is missing from the Wikipedia entry. In this step, students were to rewrite the outline of the Wikipedia page. Lastly, students submitted an edited entry (1000-1500 words) of new/edited content. They were encouraged to update the existing Wikipedia page, but were not required.

Lastly, a former graduate student and I conducted an in-class activity aimed at helping students learn about the feelings of rejection experienced by sexual minorities, and to provide a supportive environment to undergo possible conceptual change by unfreezing previous held beliefs and freezing new beliefs about rejection. We then had students reflect on the experience by asking two anonymous questions: 1) did you learn anything new about the coming-out process, and 2) did this activity relate to an experience in your own life that might parallel the coming out process (e.g., racial identity)? An overwhelming majority of the students answered "yes" to both questions, suggesting this activity was much more salient than perhaps reading about discrimination and stereotypes in a textbook. We presented this activity at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology preconference at the Society of Personality and Social Psychology annual conference (January, 2017).

In closing, my work as an educator is never complete. There is always a new method to deliver content, debates about whether laptops should be permitted in class, and stronger, more authentic ways to connect with students. I try to stay on top of the literature and these debates, and am always trying to self-reflect. I believe that being your authentic, true self is what gets people to gravitate to you. If I do not evolve, my students might not either. That said, teaching is a two-way street, so ending with this quote seems fitting.

"Mentoring is a mutuality that requires more than meeting the right teacher: the teacher must meet the right student." – *Parker J. Palmer, The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*

Christopher M. Stanzione, Ph.D.

Selected Thank-You notes via Email:

Student 1: I am e-mailing you because I feel like you deserve to know how good of a teacher you are. At Tech, this seems very hard to come by, especially after freshmen year. This was my second class with you, I took intro to psych back in spring of 2015 with [] and it's funny because [] and I are from the same high school, hadn't talked in almost a year since I was away 8 months on a co-op, and then a year and a half after taking intro to psych with you we both walked in on the first day of class and realized we both took the same psych class again. I would call it a coincidence but due to the fact we both chose this class solely on the fact that you were the professor, it seemed less of a coincidence and more because I feel you have a strong appeal towards the students you have taught. I was not surprised during the first class when you asked how many students have had you previously and almost half the class raised their hands. Many are not engineers or CS majors like myself, yet this class appealed to all of us very strongly and me especially.

My favorite paper by far was the DeYoung paper about neuroscience. This paper along with many of our discussions really kept me, a very engineering, factual based student, related and able to respect psychology as a science. Your attention on how correlations, effect size, and many types of validity are so imperative when researching really made me see that psychology has a TON more to it than I ever thought. At first I was not too excited about the very long research papers but once you had us do this last extra credit assignment from papers that did not describe their research methods, did not go in depth about their findings, and did not describe the facts behind their theories, it really made me appreciate the papers we read over the semester and made the Psychology Today papers rather bland.

One thing that stood out to me when I first heard your lectures was your enthusiasm, and engagement. One of your most underrated talents that stood out to me since freshmen year is your completely neutral way of speaking. It amazes me and I am honestly very jealous of this skill you have acquired. No matter the subject or audience to whom you are speaking, you speak with a language that is completely neutral to I feel anyone's race, religion, or sexual orientation. I grew up in rural Georgia and had never known anyone who can speak so eloquently to any group of people and not offend a single person. In psych class we have talked about some topics that I would think could offend some people, but whenever we cover anything I think could offend someone, you are able to iterate it in a way that is both factual yet non-offensive. It still blows my mind. After working in the corporate world for a very large company during my 8-month co-op, even before taking your class this semester, I would think about how useful that skill would be. Working alongside so many people who I had never met really made me think about how nice it would be to be able to talk to anyone in that manner without fear of offending them for it is impossible to know that many people's views. Thank you again for another great semester, I have learned a lot more than just psychology from your class and I very much appreciate the effort you put into your students. I do feel like you genuinely care and provide the best environment you can in your class for those students to succeed. I look forward to taking more psychology classes when I get back from my second work rotation.

Student 2: I know I briefly expressed thanks after the exam today but I just wanted to thank you one more time for an amazing year. I had no experience in Psychology beforehand and I truly feel that I am coming out of the class with a lot of knowledge. You made the class fun and interactive which kept me interested in the subject all year long. I truly enjoyed coming to lecture and am proud to say I did not miss a single one. I came from a high school where I really fostered relationships with all my teachers, and unfortunately I have noticed (due to just the sheer numbers) that is not as easy in college. In other words, it means a lot when you know multiple students' names and are not afraid to ask about things non related to class. You helped me build upon my writing skills this year, and I cannot thank you enough for that. Your passion for the course material, and appropriate humor around the class was

a real treat for us as students. Georgia Tech is lucky to have you, and I wish you all the best. If you ever need a student's opinion on something please never hesitate to ask.

Student 3: Having never been exposed to Psychology before, it was a bit of an adjustment from the subjects I was used to, but I really found the material fascinating and enjoyed the course quite a bit. There are quite a few ways that humans behave and react that I could not believe and would never have guessed at first, such as findings from the Asch line experiment, or the results of the obedience study done by Milgram. I find your teaching style very engaging, and your expectation that students participate in learning is one that should be shared by all instructors, because it certainly promotes learning when students are expected not only to take notes but answer thought provoking questions that reinforce the learning of abstract concepts. I also wanted to thank you for your time as a professor and making an effort to be personal with your students, which most professors do not attempt to do in a lecture hall environment. You are the only professor I had this semester who knows my name, and that really means a lot to me, especially coming from such a large class.

Submitted Letters of Recommendation:

Student 4: At an institution where there is a heavy importance placed on achieving greatness and accomplishing goals, Professor Stanzione was successful at inspiring students like myself to just take a step back and understand why humans make decisions the way we do and in turn helped us become more self-aware individuals. He created an environment that was more than just a place to learn the basics of Intro Psychology; although it was very large classroom, students were kept thoroughly engaged through tools such as interesting class discussions, snippets of humor embedded in a lesson, or pop culture references that students could relate to. It was obvious to anyone that Dr. Stanzione truly cared about his students' educations and was passionate when it came to educating us. Regardless of the reason a student was taking his class, Dr. Stanzione quickly became a professor that many would look forward to learning from as he was quite effective at what he did. Dr. Stanzione also provided students with ways to go beyond what was required for the class. He created assignments that allowed us to express our personal views, provided interesting articles and papers to expand our knowledge, and made himself available if we ever wanted to have a discussion or needed additional assistance. I truly appreciate everything he did for me, and can undoubtedly say that he was the most inspiring professor I have had in my collegiate career. - Pranav Manem (pmanem3@gatech.edu)

Student 5: A problem many students have is staying engaged in class, this is not an issue in Dr. Stanzione's classes because he is able to keep everyone listening and interested in the material he is presenting. He genuinely loves this material and it shows during class. He presents it in such a way that people pay attention and wish to learn more. He expands on topics and then has students openly give feedback about what they think or how it matters. Students are never bored during his lectures. He is easily accessible by students and will respond to emails very quickly. He is willing to work with anyone and will put in effort to help students understand Psychology. I personally reached out to him a couple times and he is nothing but professional and caring. He has had a great impact on my life. - Ashley Hanna (ahanna30@gatech.edu)

Student 6: I am a second year Stamps President's Scholar in the College of Computing. I am pursuing a minor in leadership studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology. It is with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Christopher Stanzione to be the next recipient of the Georgia Tech CETL Undergraduate Educators Award.

My first day of school was overwhelming; I had just left a crowded computer science lecture, and I found myself questioning if I would be able to succeed in the academically competitive environment that exists at Tech. As soon as I walked in Dr. Stanzione's lecture, something was different. My apprehensions began to vanish as Dr. Stanzione called the class to attention and immediately attempted to connect with each and every student in his lecture hall. Although I had never been drawn to psychology before, Dr. Stanzione's enthusiasm and passion led me to continue in the course, a decision I am so very happy that I made.

Psychology 1101 soon became the high point of my mornings and I looked forward to learning more from Dr. Stanzione. His genuine interest in his students' success differentiated him from my other professors. By the second week of class Dr. Stanzione was able to call on every student by name and facilitate meaningful conversations, instead of simply presenting complicated material to a faceless crowd. A class of novice psychologists began debating psychological philosophies with the confidence of graduate students, a tangible effect of his teaching style. Additionally, Dr. Stanzione utilized cutting edge educational software and resources to assist in our learning process instead of relying on antiquated textbooks for homework assignments.

Just a few weeks into the semester, I was offered the opportunity to attend an education conference hosted at Georgia State University, contingent on me finding a faculty member to lead the group of student attendees. Dr. Stanzione came to mind instantly, and he eagerly accepted the responsibility. In addition to attending the conference with us, he provided the attending students with a unique perspective, incorporating his personal and professional life. The conference was a huge success and we all walked away from it with a greater appreciation for education, psychology, technology, and the diversity of the city of Atlanta.

Throughout all my experiences, Dr. Stanzione has radiated enthusiasm, passion, intelligence, sensitivity, and joy in everything he does. From making a point to connect every student in his lecture hall to leading a group of eager students into the foreign world of professional conferences, Dr. Stanzione is constantly looking to improve every situation and leave the students around him inspired to pose their own questions. He is an exceptional candidate for the Georgia Tech CETL Undergraduate Educators Award and I am honored to recommend him. - Andre Hijaouy (ahijaouy@gatech.edu)

Participant Misresponse and the Big-Five Factor Inventory.

Emma Browning & Christopher Stanzione

School of Psychology, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta GA

Introduction

In personality questionnaires, reverse-scored items are necessary to maintain reliability and validity of the construct, and they are worded to reflect the opposite of the construct being measured. However, studies have found that administering questionnaires with reverse-scored items leads to a decrease in reliability and increase in multidimensionality of previously one-dimensional constructs. This may be caused by *misresponse* - seemingly contradictory responses among items assessing the same construct, particularly with reversed-scored items (Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012; Zhang, Noor, & Savalei, 2016). Misresponses defy the concept of reliability and thus need to be minimized. Further, *no* research has been done into the misresponse affecting the validity and reliability of personality inventories. This study investigates participant misresponse in a widely used and studied personality scale: the Big Five Factor Inventory.

Method

One hundred and sixty-one undergraduate college students participated in this study by completing the Big Five Inventory, a 44-item questionnaire that measures five traits: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (and is scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 5). In order to identify participant misresponse, we first excluded scores that were within 1.5 standard deviations (SD) of the mean for each trait, ensuring the scores we are examining outside 1.5 SD of the mean are extreme enough to make predictions for the reverse-scored items' responses. To determine the actual number of misresponses, we calculated the number of responses for each reversed-scored item that matched the average score, when it should have been the opposite. For example, if the average score on a trait is 4.8, an inputted "4" or "5" on a reverse question would count as a misresponse.

Results

The means and standard deviations of our sample are as follows: openness, $M = 3.71$, $SD = .65$, conscientiousness, $M = 3.97$, $SD = .64$, extraversion $M = 3.32$, $SD = .87$, agreeableness, $M = 3.77$, $SD = .72$, neuroticism, $M = 3.08$, $SD = .79$. Based on our criteria for identifying misresponses, our findings indicate a higher percentage of misresponse among openness to experience and agreeableness (33.3% and 23.8%, respectively), a smaller percentage for conscientiousness (8.3%), and an insignificant amount among extraversion and neuroticism (both with 1.4%).

Discussion

Our results complement the findings from Viswesvaran & Ones' (2000) study, where they found that extraversion and neuroticism consistently have the highest reliability across scales and within test-retest studies, and openness to experience and agreeableness have the lowest. Extraversion and neuroticism may both have very high social desirability aspects, so they are the most easily responded to and maintain the lowest levels of misresponse (i.e. desiring high levels of extroversion and low levels of neuroticism). Nonetheless, the high levels of misresponse in openness to experience and agreeableness are particularly concerning; however, the results of this study do confirm the trends of this meta-analysis cited above. Future research may look into the reasons for these misresponses - perhaps an interview-based explanation of participants' misresponses to see if it is the interpretation of the questions that causes this phenomenon, and whether participant misresponse truly disrupts the validity of questionnaires.

Identifying Undergraduates' Misconceptions in General Psychology

Christopher M. Stanzione, Braden G. Hocker, & Meghan J. Babcock
School of Psychology, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

It is well documented that undergraduate students begin introductory psychology courses with a number of misconceptions about the field of psychology. Previous research has identified the frequency of specific psychological misconceptions by administering true/false or forced-choice self-report surveys (Gardner & Brown, 2013; Hughes, Lyddy, & Kaplan, 2013; Taylor & Kowalski, 2012). Although the results of these surveys provide researchers with information about the frequency of misconceptions, they do not foster conceptual change of these misconceptions. Research within the area of cognitive psychology suggests that in order to foster conceptual change, individuals need to restructure their currently held inaccurate beliefs (Hughes et al., 2015). The present study describes a course assignment that required students to identify and change commonly held misconceptions.

Method

A total of 620 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology courses participated in this project. A total of 59% of the sample identified as men and 41% identified as women. See Figures 1 and 2 for frequencies of student status and the top five declared majors, respectively.

Students wrote a misconceptions essay where they were asked to:

1. Identify a specific misconception that they held
2. Provide the accurate concept with empirical support
3. Describe how they would inform another individual about this concept

Essays were turned in for course credit, however, students did have the choice to not participate and receive a zero for this assignment. Essays were coded for *general* misconceptions using

15 *broad* subfields of psychology (see Table 1). Further, essays were coded for *specific* misconceptions. For example, language development was a specific misconception within the broad subfield of Development, and dreaming within the broad area of Consciousness.

Table 1

1. Consciousness*	9. Cognition & Intelligence
2. Development*	10. Social Psychology
3. Gender/Sexuality*	11. Health Psychology
4. Learning*	12. Personality
5. Motivation & Emotion*	13. Psychological Disorders
6. Brain and Behavior	14. Sensation & Perception
7. Memory	15. Therapies
8. Psychological Science	

* Top Five Misconceptions

Results

Within the 15 broad subfields of psychology, the top five most commonly held misconceptions involved the areas of Consciousness, Development, Gender/Sexuality, Learning, and Motivation & Emotion (see Table 2). We discuss the top three subfields below:

Approximately 20.4% of students had misconceptions about Consciousness, more specifically, the role of sleep and dreams. Many essays highlighted the importance of REM sleep for the consolidation of memories and NREM sleep to fatigue. Development accounted for 10.8% of the misconceptions, with language development, cognitive development, and the nature vs. nurture debate as popular specific misconceptions. Students underestimated the role of the environment across many fields of development.

Furthermore, the Gender/Sexuality subfield included 8.5% of misconceptions. Many students were surprised to learn that sexual orientation exists along a spectrum, while expressing a better understanding of people of who identify as transgender.

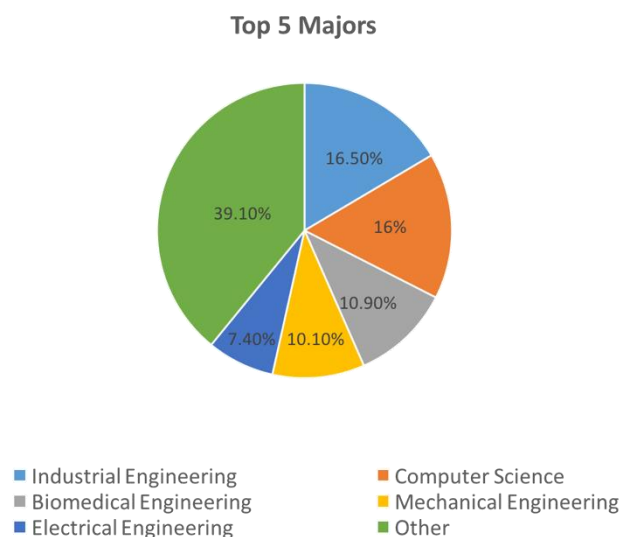
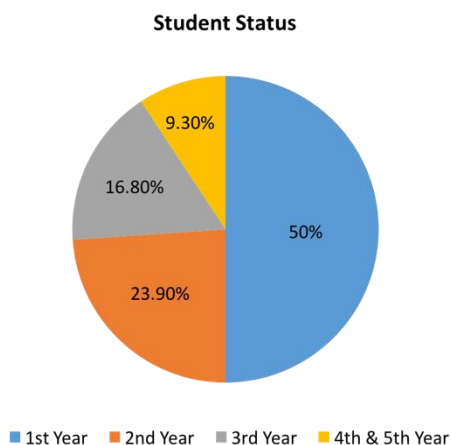
Discussion

The results of this study are twofold: First, the Misconceptions Essay is a quick assignment that instructors can use in any academic area. Instructors can identify class-wide problem areas and foster

conceptual change by requiring students to think “beyond the assignment”. More specifically, students read recent empirical research and explain the results in language that is easily understood to someone outside of psychology. Second, we provide data from a large sample of students’ misconceptions in general psychology. Instructors should consider developing assignments around these five subfields, which can help students identify misconceptions and begin the process of conceptual change.

Table 2

Consciousness (20.4%)	Development (10.8%)	Gender & Sexuality (8.5%)	Learning (8.4%)	Motivation & Emotion (8.4%)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Role of Sleep Dreams (Theories of Dreaming) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Language Development Cognitive Development Nature vs. Nurture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Orientation (LGBTQIA) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conditioning Negative & Positive Reinforcement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lie Detectors/Polygraphs Money as a Motivator



Selected CIOS scores for PSYC 1101 (Averages across 3 sections; 190 students)

	Overall Score: (5 = Exceptional, 1 = Poor)
Course: Amount learned	4.6
Course: Assignments facilitated learning	4.6
Course: Overall effectiveness	4.8
Instructor: Clarity	4.9
Instructor: Communicated how to succeed	4.9
Instructor: Respect for students	4.9
Instructor: Enthusiasm	4.9
Instructor: Stimulates interest	4.8
Instructor: Availability	4.7
Instructor: Feedback helpfulness	4.6
Instructor: Overall effectiveness	4.9

Selected CIOS comments

- **Dr. Stanzione is a great professor who knows how to teach. I loved how much he made us participate and how he created a safe environment for us all to discuss and ask questions.**
- Great class atmosphere! You made the class be legitimately interesting. And not like the "wow this is surprisingly tolerable!" kind of interesting, but legitimately something I was happy to learn about. I really liked how open you were to answering students' questions. It definitely provoked personal interest and thought on the subjects.
- **Dr. Stanzione rocks! Because of this class I decided to do psych research! He's awesome and makes me excited to learn about psych! I also really like that he takes the time to really think about how to be a good teacher. He walks around the class, and asks us questions during lecture to make sure people are engaged. He also encouraged feedback which was awesome!**
- The professor was very knowledgeable about the subject matter, and was very passionate about his students and the course. Definitely one of my favorite professors I've had at Tech so far.
- **Dr. Stanzione made the class fun, which I believe was critical in my enjoyment of the course. Out of my four semesters at Tech, he's the teacher that has tried the most to create a fun, exciting atmosphere in the classroom. I wish more teachers at Tech shared his enthusiasm for teaching.**

Letter of Support: Dr. Frank Durso, Chair of the School of Psychology

Dear Selection Committee:

I am happy to be able to support the nomination of Chris Stanzione for the Undergraduate Educator Award. Chris is remarkable in the classroom, with individual students, as a role model for other instructors, and a selfless contributor to the service responsibilities that come with being an award winning educator.

I will begin with CIOS report of Dr. Stanzione's 24 courses taught from 2014 to 2017. I found it remarkable that the mean instructor effectiveness ratings of each of Dr. Stanzione's classes was never lower than a 4.7 and often reached a 5.0. These were usually rather large classes, sometimes over 200. I also know from speaking with my Associate Chair of Education and Training that transfer students routinely attribute their desire to become a psychology major to Dr. Stanzione. Dr. Stanzione has talked to me about some of his techniques; several of which I plan to steal. For example, he has a "misconception exercise" he uses in his intro class strikes me as something that could scale up even to graduate classes. I've been teaching undergraduates for over 40 years, and I still learn from super-educators like Chris.

Dr. Stanzione does quite a bit for the School beyond his exceptional classroom instruction. I have also interacted extensively with Dr. Stanzione outside of class since I became interim chair. He is responsible for scheduling classes and assigning instructors and teaching assistants to the positions. It is Dr. Stanzione who does the heavy lifting, coordinating faculty desires with reality, giving the right student the right assignment, and so on. This work alone strikes me as arduous and time consuming. Add the 8 classes a year he teaches, and Dr. Stanzione is clearly the most indispensable person involved with undergraduate education that we have in the School of Psychology.

Dr. Stanzione's outside of class activities also includes a research with individual students. The fact that he was a keynote speaker at the Georgia Psychology Society speaks to the quality of his work and the interest it generates. I note some 10 plus presentations since he has joined us at Tech.

In short, Dr. Stanzione is a true asset to our School and to Georgia Tech. He is an exceptional instructor who carries his enthusiasm to the students he lectures and the students he mentors outside of class and the students he works with doing research. We are indeed lucky to have Dr. Stanzione. From what I understand of the Undergraduate Educator Award, it was made for Chris. He compares successfully against the remarkable undergrad educators we have at Tech.

Sincerely,

Francis T. Durso

Professor and Interim Chair

Letter of Support: Dr. Jenny Singleton, Asst. Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution

January 25, 2018

Dear Members of the CETL Awards Committee,

It is my pleasure to provide a letter of support for my outstanding colleague, **Dr. Christopher Stanzione**, for the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award. I have had the opportunity to work closely with him in my role as Associate Chair for the past several years (I recently stepped down). I have observed his teaching on two occasions, as well as attended his Keynote Address at a recent Georgia Psychological Society conference. Dr. Stanzione brings his outstanding citizenship and leadership to our School by doing most of the course planning and scheduling, Friday recruitment lunches for prospective students, and mentoring of our graduate student instructors.

Several years ago, when I first observed Dr. Stanzione teaching Introduction to Psychology, just two weeks into the semester, he had clearly established that “rigor and respect” climate that we all seek to achieve. He holds high expectations for students and promotes a “together we’ll all get there!” collaborative spirit. Students in his class were quick to chime in when he posed questions. His use of humor is very effective—truly an ideal learning environment.

I recently completed a “DOTE” of Dr. Stanzione, and I wanted to include here my reflections from this second observation of his teaching:

It is rare that I give such high teaching effectiveness ratings in my DOTE observations, but Chris Stanzione deserves them. He is truly excellent on all the dimensions queried. This is the second time I have observed him and it was just as great as the first time. To see so many students engaged in his lecture (not surfing around on their computers) was very impressive.

This particular Intro Psych lecture was about personality theory. Chris was masterful. Moving all around throughout the very large lecture hall (some 90 + students), asking students questions and getting them to share quite personal perspectives (about their personalities) demonstrated that he has created a safe place for learning and growing, despite the large crowd. I also was impressed how often he connects lecture points to previous material; for example, he would ask students why a particular research method would be appropriate for investigating personality traits. It was such an excellent example of “spiraling” the instruction. A student would answer, then he validated and expanded on it more, strengthening the connection of previous material to the current topic.

Other ways that Chris builds a connection with his students are humor, learning the names of many students, and using real world examples that are very relevant to their late-adolescent worlds. There were many times that students burst out laughing. He makes learning fun!

The lecture slides were very clear and appropriate for the topic. I saw students diligently taking notes and staying engaged. He also utilized a pair-share activity and had students complete a hands-on activity by completing a personality inventory to illustrate the “Big 5” personality traits.

In closing, I want to emphasize how much we in the School of Psychology value Dr. Christopher Stanzione’s instructional excellence and his above-and-beyond contribution to our program! We are fortunate that so many of our majors (and future majors!) pass through his classes. The impression he makes on our students (and prospective students) is significant, and in some cases, even profound. I have lost count of the number of

students who have come to see me as the Psychology advisor, asking to transfer into Psychology; virtually every student said that taking Dr. Stanzione's course made them realize how much they love the topic and inspired them to change majors! I call him our "major magnet"!

Chris Stanzione is a role model and our Georgia Tech community is lucky to have such a gifted educator on board. I cannot think of a more deserving individual for this honor!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jenny L. Singleton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jenny L. Singleton, Ph.D.

Professor

Asst. Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution

Email: jenny.singleton@psych.gatech.edu

Letter of Support: Emma Browning, Undergraduate Student

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to highly recommend Dr. Christopher Stanzione for the 2017-18 GT-CETL Undergraduate Educator Award. I am a graduating senior, and my experience working with Dr. Stanzione has been a high point of my experience here at Georgia Tech. Even as an International Affairs major, Dr. Stanzione has allowed me to delve into my interest in psychology in ways I had not thought possible - besides taking his Personality Theory and Human Development courses, I have also had the privilege in serving as an undergraduate research assistant in his Individual Differences and Personality Science lab.

The classes I have taken with Dr. Stanzione have ranged from a mid-sized classroom size to a large lecture hall with more than a hundred students, yet in any situation he is able to tailor the class to the students, listening to their needs and ensuring understanding on all parts. By the end of the large lecture class, he knew nearly every student's name and tried to get to know something about each and every one of us, pushing everyone to contribute to class discussions and share their thoughts. I know that had an impact on my confidence as a first-year still trying to understand the college experience and still rather anxious about big scary college professors, and I imagine it had a similar effect on many other students. His classes were far different from the other classes I have taken for my psychology certificate - instead of following the traditional textbook and lecturing, he really made even a huge lecture class seem more like a seminar. Instead of reading a textbook, we studied current research in the field, spending half of our classes discussing implications and possibilities instead of passively taking in stale information. Through these discussions, Dr. Stanzione's passion for teaching really shone as he integrated students' comments into covering the required materials - often, the class felt more like a conversation than a lecture, a far better way to engage students with the material.

Dr. Stanzione offered to all of us Personality Theory students the chance to become a research assistant in his most recent project on narcissism and personality judgment - no matter our major, no matter our year, we all had the opportunity to get this valuable experience. Often at Tech, far too few professors accept inexperienced students or ones from outside their speciality, but Dr. Stanzione saw our potential. I spent a summer working in his lab, where he ensured that all of us met our personal learning objectives by conducting our own independent research within the scope of the study. That focus on individual student development and research is quite unique for Georgia Tech, and it didn't even stop once I was no longer a lab assistant. Dr. Stanzione kept in touch with me for the next year, keeping up with my current academic and professional progress and lending his help and advice as much as possible. He also highly encouraged me to develop that individual research I had done in his lab, which ultimately led us presenting my research at the Southeast Psychological Association's annual conference. I hadn't imagined that as a second year student, I would be able to work in a lab, let alone conduct and present my own research to a professional organization. Thanks to Dr. Stanzione's commitment to each student's success and his unconventional teaching and mentoring strategies, I have developed academically, personally, and professionally, and I hope that his extraordinary talent and passion will be recognized by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Thank you,

Emma Browning
Sam Nunn School of International Affairs Class of 2018

Letter of Support: James Westbrooks, Undergraduate Student

To whom it may concern,

My name is James Westbrooks and I am third year Mechanical Engineering student here at the Georgia Institute of Technology. I fully believe Dr. Christopher Stanzione is deserving of the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award, and I hope this letter serves as a testament to his passion for education, care for his students, and understanding as an instructor which I have experienced firsthand.

Coming into my first semester at Georgia Tech as a Mechanical Engineering student I was ecstatic for the opportunity to get my hands on some machinery and start building things. I wanted to explore the Invention Studio, develop 3D CAD skills, and take on the most challenging Mathematics and Physics courses. I could hardly wait until the day that I would finally craft my ideal first semester schedule, and before I knew it I found myself sitting in Clough scanning BuzzPort for my classes. My dream quickly became a nightmare when the reality of Freshman registration set in. I was not able to enroll in any of my desired classes that day, but amongst the chaos I got into a PSYC 1101 class because I was told it would have to be taken eventually. My disappointment in my schedule was evident in my demeanor and that carried over into my first day at Georgia Tech in the Fall of 2015.

My first class of my college career was PSYC 1101 with Dr. Stanzione. Psychology, the class that had nothing to do with my major, was something I was by no-means excited for. By the end of that fifty-minute period that day, I left with a totally changed attitude.

In my past few years at Tech, I have had only a select few professors rival the care and commitment Dr. Stanzione has. His teaching style is inviting and always interactive. He is constantly moving throughout the room creating his own examples for topics discussed in class and he never fears a question. His use of appropriate humor in the class makes the lecture hall feel warm, and his ingenuity in the use of several mediums of lecture style (videos, PowerPoints, surveys, group discussions, etc.) is something to be marveled at and should be adopted in every class here at Tech. In addition to his successful teaching style Dr. Stanzione also brings forth real world experience in the field of Psychology and it translate excellently to the classroom. He is always ready to make connections between his research and topics we learn in class which makes the material much easier to understand. The man knows his stuff and it his greatest joy to show others why Psychology is so incredible. He constantly challenges students to expand their learning of Psychology through means outside of the classroom, and perhaps in the most interesting way of requiring students to participate in Psychology studies done by graduate students here on campus. When I took his course, Dr. Stanzione also walked me step by step through a Psychology research paper and taught me the subtleties of formatting that can turn a “good” research paper into a “great” one. Because of personal interactions like this, I stand a better writer today.

Perhaps more important anything, and something rare on college campuses, Dr. Stanzione went out of his way to know students personally. In a lecture hall of one hundred people it means the world to a student when the professor calls on them by their first name. Dr. Stanzione is the only professor I have had who could do that. Simple conversations with him after class helped him learn specific things about me which he would always ask about after the fact.

PSYC 1101 was the most impactful class I have had at Tech thus far strictly because of Dr. Stanzione. Regardless of your major Dr. Stanzione presents every student with something that captures their interest. His understanding and genuine friendship expressed towards students makes him a first class professor at this school. He is more than deserving of this award, and I truly believe Georgia Tech is the renowned Institution it is because of people like Dr. Christopher Stanzione.

Best Regards,
James Michael Westbrooks

Letter of Support: John Mitchell, Undergraduate Student

1/25/2018

To Whom It May Concern:

As my time at Georgia Tech draws to a close, I am granted the gift of hindsight to look back upon the incredible experiences I have shared, the friends I have met, and the wealth of knowledge that I have acquired both in and out of the classroom. With this hindsight, I am able truly appreciate the great lengths others have gone to allow me to be in the position that I am today. The one person who immediately comes to mind for me is Dr. Stanzione. As my professor in two classes plus my research advisor this past year, Dr. Stanzione has gone above and beyond, not just in expanding my psychology knowledge, but also in letting me grow as a student and person.

What struck me most about Dr. Stanzione's classes were how he taught the class, not as lecturing to a group, but by fostering a learning environment with us as individuals. Throughout the semester, in both classes that I took with him, he would always find time to engage with each of us before, during, and after class to ask us how we were doing with the material. He encouraged us to approach the material not as immutable truths, but as methodical scientists with critical eyes and curious minds. This was especially evident in his homework assignments, which challenged us to read current papers on topics that were presented in class and critique them. This approach of his especially touched base with me when I worked with him through undergraduate research. Last year, I approached him to ask his advice about doing research somewhere in the School of Psychology, to which he very quickly suggested that I do research with him. He has been so helpful in being my guide throughout the entire research process, from initiating the project, presenting it to the IRB, getting our data, and turning that data into a paper and poster presentation. I would have never dreamed at the beginning of my undergraduate career that I could have accomplished this much doing research, and I can definitely state that Dr. Stanzione has been the one to make that a reality.

In conclusion, I cannot overstate how deserving Dr. Stanzione is for an award like this. His passion for students, his individualistic approach to the curriculum, and his contributions to the school are evident not just in my testimony, but in the hearts and minds of all his students. He has made an incalculable contribution to my life, and I cannot thank him enough.

Sincerely,



John Mitchell