

BNCP

Summer 2015



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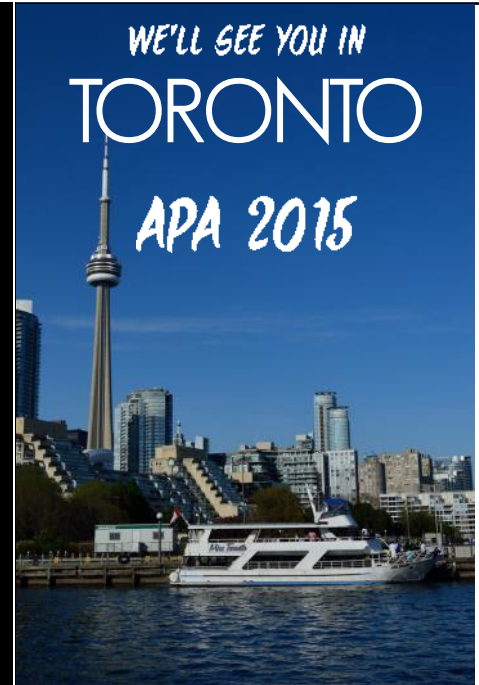
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Cover Image: *Fragment of a bowl with a frieze of bulls in relief*, ca. 3300–2900 B.C. Southern Mesopotamia. Open Access for Scholarly Content license, www.metmuseum.org.

The cover for this issue was inspired by the recent discussion of bovine intelligence on the Division 6 listserv. This [5000 year old bowl fragment](#) highlights our ancient relationship with these amazing animals.

Thank you to our contributors!

Have an idea for the newsletter?

Letters and comments welcome.

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Six Reasons to Support the Division 6 Name Change

David Washburn
President, APA Division 6

As announced in the previous Division 6 Newsletter, your Executive Committee is recommending a name change, from “Division of Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology” to the “Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology.” There are many reasons why I believe this change is important—indeed, critical—for our division, and why I’m asking for your support. Here are six reasons:

1. We need the change: In the last Newsletter, I described the crisis that our division faces. Although we have many loyal members who have made profound contributions to our discipline and our organization, Division 6 is rapidly dying. Our membership is declining and aging—already, the vast majority of our members are in or nearing retirement, and many are already enjoying the well-earned reward of lifetime-member status, in which APA dues payments are no longer required (although voluntary contributions to support the division are still welcome!). Few early career behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists are joining our division, or APA more broadly. In recent years, your Executive Committee has worked very strategically, diligently, and creatively to address these issues, but without much impact. For whatever reasons (and there may be many), increasing numbers of behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists identify professionally and affiliate with organizations other than APA and Division 6. A name change alone will not correct this trend, but I believe that it is a necessary and essential next step.

2. The new name describes who we are: In considering what name to recommend to D6 members, your Executive Committee considered many options. Although our division is relatively small, its members reflect a wide range of backgrounds, research interests, and professional identities. More radical name changes were certainly considered. However, each of us identified with “behavioral neuroscience and comparative psychology” sufficiently to join Division 6 in the first place, and it seems clear that no name better captures who we are than the union of those two specializations. The Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology is the ideal name for who we are, and links us to the long and proud history of



Division 6.

3. The new name makes clear what we are for: We all know what it means to be a division. D6 is one of the parts of the APA. I am a member of the APA and also of those parts of the association most closely identified with my specialty areas. But “division” also implies separation, differences, disunity and fractionation. *That* is not who we are, or what we are about! We are scientists with diverse interests, bound together by our commonalities. We are in fact a scholarly society (a group with a common purpose, interest, or activity) that is *for*—in favor and support of—behavioral neuroscience and comparative psychology. This is what we say in our organization’s mission statement. It should be what we say in our name. And any scientist who is for behavioral neuroscience and comparative psychology should see our society as a professional “home”—whether or not they want to join the APA.

4. Other divisions have reported growth following similar name changes: According to our current membership rules, a properly trained scholar can already affiliate with Division 6 without joining APA. But why *would* they? Although a person who has decided, for whatever reason, not to pay APA dues at this time could choose instead just to affiliate with D6, it seems more likely that they would in-

vest their limited time and professional-association funds into an organization called the Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology. And this is exactly what I've heard from officers of the other divisions that have adopted "Society..." names, as more than 60% of the current APA divisions—including the Society for General Psychology (D1), Society for the Teaching of Psychology (D2), Society for Personality and Social Psychology (D8), Society of Clinical Psychology (D12), Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (D14), Society for the History of Psychology (D26), Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (D36)—have done. It is my understanding that divisions that have adopted "Society..." names have experienced growth in membership (particularly affiliates who are not APA members) and resources. Behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists who are flocking to other organizations will also join our society if our name is something with which they can identify.

5. We will remain APA Division 6 whether or not "division" is part of our name: These divisions that have adopted "Society..." names still participate fully in APA governance, advocacy, and other activities. The same will be true of D6. The proposed name change is not a defection, an effort that undermines the APA, or a way to discourage behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists from joining APA. Indeed, the Division Services Office within APA is quite supportive of these name changes. Becoming the Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology will allow us to continue our role in the valuable services provided by APA, while con-

currently enjoying the benefits of an organization that attracts members both within and beyond the APA.

6. As our Society grows, so will the benefits of membership: If D6 members endorse the name change, the issue will go to the APA for approval. This should not be a controversial decision at all. Subsequently, our rebranded division will engage in an aggressive marketing and recruiting campaign to attract new members, including any behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists who have chosen not to join APA at this time. Your Executive Committee will also continue to consider ways of expanding the perks of membership, including options for division programming in association with other professional meetings. Many APA divisions with "Society..." names hold annual or biannual spring conferences so that their members can enjoy division programming that augments the APA convention—typically at greatly reduced costs relative to APA's fall meeting. I am confident that as our numbers grow, so will our impact and value—and viability—for the future of behavioral neuroscience and comparative psychology.

Your support for the name change is needed. Look for the electronic ballot to be distributed in the next few weeks. Please contact dwashburn@gsu.edu if you have questions or concerns about this proposal. Hope to see you in Toronto!

David Washburn
President, APA Division 6



Member Announcements



APA Presidential Election

Antonio E. Puente, fellow of Division 6 (and former student of Don Dewsbury), is running for the position of APA President-elect. Of the 5 candidates running this year, he obtained the largest number of nominations. He is Professor of Psychology at UNC Wilmington (www.antonioepuente.com) and works in the area of neuropsychology.

"APA's long and rich history of the science of psychology and the emergence of biological and neuroscientific concepts to explain behavior are critical to a vibrant future of psychology. It has been, I believe, over half a century since a Division 6 member has been president of the organization. It seems logical that with the resurgence of a bio/neuro perspective to address questions for psychology, that such a perspective should equally be reflected in APA's leadership."

Consider voting for a fellow Division 6 member in this year's APA's president election.

-Antonio E. Puente

Editor's note: The division does not officially endorse any specific candidate. Any and all candidates are welcome to express how they might serve the needs of our division.

History of Psychology Textbook Available

Harry Whitaker, Fellow, Division 6, announces the availability of an open-access, history of psychology textbook, *Approaches to a History of Western Psychology*, at the following, relatively permanent URL:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/64743226/ApproachesHisWestPsych-current.pdf>

This is a work-in-progress; critical comments are most welcome, compliments are accepted.

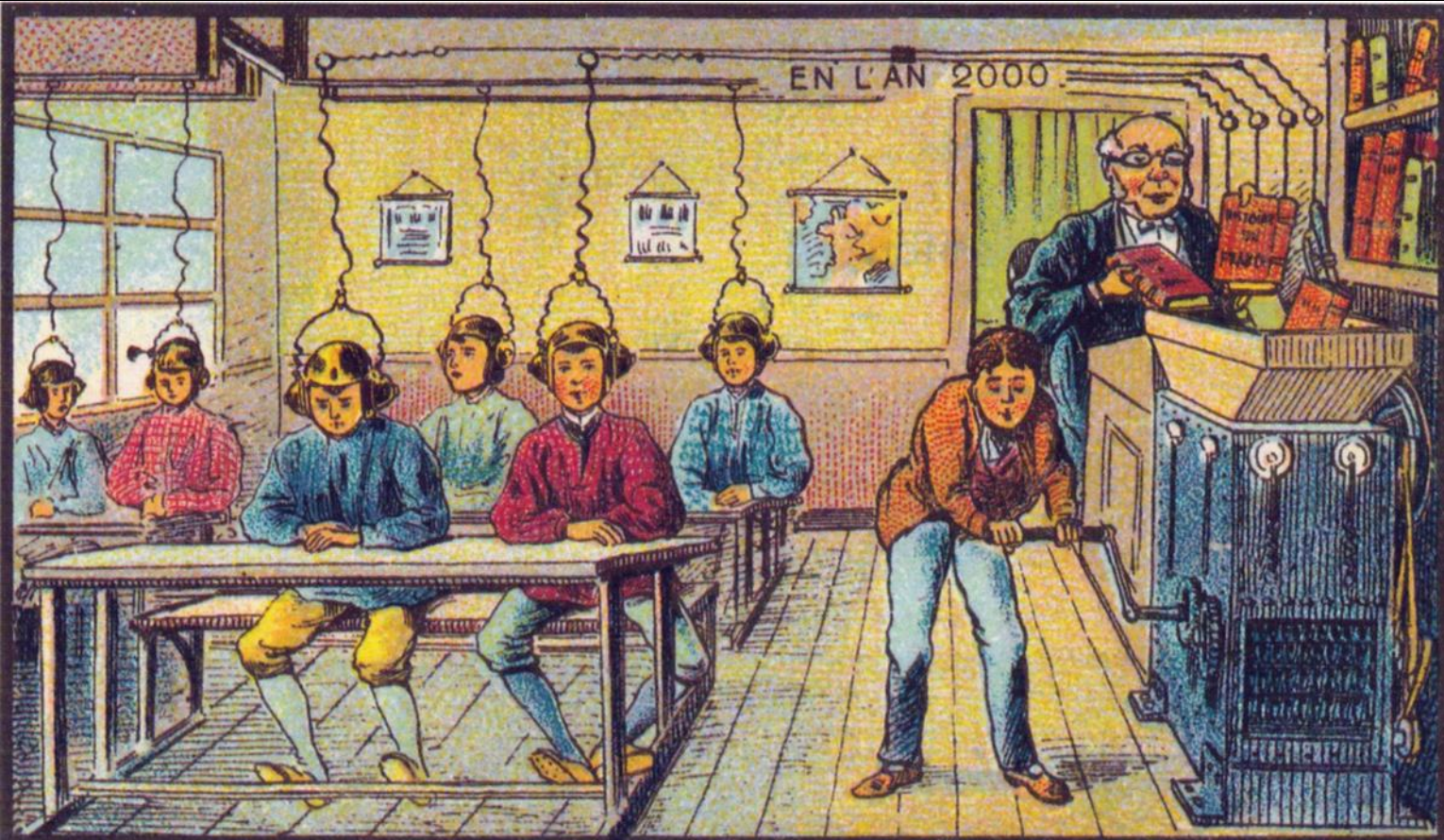
APPROACHES TO A HISTORY OF WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY



Authors, 3rd Edition: Nicoletta Fraire, Casey Pernaski, Emily DePetro, Samantha Wagner, Cecilia Brown, and Harry Whitaker.

In-text Illustrations by Deana Deck [cover illustration of David Hartley by Roger Marcotte]
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The Association for Psychological Science has launched the APS Wikipedia Initiative, which serves as a portal to improve psychology content on Wikipedia. Here are some ideas on how this portal can work for you.



Wikipedia in the Classroom

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Image by Jean Marc Cote (if 1901) or Villemard (if 1910) [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons {PD-US}

Wikipedia, the online collaborative encyclopedia, has been scorned by academics since its inception, or, at best, is regarded as only useful for reasons unrelated to scholarly research (e.g., to settle an argument on how many seasons the Brady Bunch ran, as a reminder for when Oregon became an official US state, etc.). A major reservation many of us have about Wikipedia is that it is an unacceptable citation source for the type of writing we assign to our students, and for our own writing. Fair enough. But it is a major information hub and will likely remain so for a long time.

A couple of items worth considering:

- Wikipedia is staffed by thousands of volunteers who carefully monitor entries. Just try posting to a heavily trafficked Wikipedia item. You will soon find yourself instantly peer reviewed by an amateur maven, scholarly expert, and, guaranteed, a Wikipedia style and content expert who polices everything from semi-colons to proper encyclopedic tone.
- Editing is also crowd-sourced. Individuals can create accounts and revise and update content. This is done in a way that publicizes the identity of the individuals doing the revising, and, when revisions have been made, others who edit a given Wikipedia entry are notified.

Another mechanism for improving and updating Wikipedia content is for organizations to create a portal that centralizes and organizes a given content area, such as psychology. To this end, the Association for Psychological Science launched the APS Wikipedia Initiative. Here, pages can be initiated and updated on the main Wikipedia page and they are also pulled together within the portal for easy access. In addition, professors can register their course with the initiative and use the portal to organize Wikipedia writing assignments.

I recently implemented a Wikipedia writing assignment for

my undergraduate comparative psychology course. Students were required to select either a species and behavior of interest (e.g., dolphin communication) or a general behavioral phenomenon (e.g., altruism) and either create a new Wikipedia site (if one did not already exist), or add content that was previously not covered in an existing site. I soon discovered endless opportunities for comparative psychology students, and I imagine the same holds for behavioral neuroscience entries as well. Every one to two weeks the class ($n=15$ students) spent an hour in a computer laboratory so that I could provide simple tutorials on using the portal, hold topic development sessions, demonstrate and practice editing functions in Wikipedia, peer critiquing, and final assignment submission. In-class time for this assignment totaled about 6 hours interspersed over a 10-week quarter (4 credit course). I learned that much of this work could also be done out of class; though some in-class work, especially as students get started on the assignment, is advised.

So what benefits are there to assigning Wikipedia writing and editing in the classroom? First, the assignment was very well-received by most of the students. They expressed sincere pride and concern about their work, primarily because it ends up in such a public domain. The students appreciated that their writing would not end up in a professor's drawer or trashcan at the end of the term. The project also involves a lot of collaboration and discussion among students as they learn to navigate Wikipedia editing and writing, and decide on topics. Also, an important skill that our students need to develop is the ability to communicate complex information to a general audience, and to do so via online media. Overall, as the course instructor I thoroughly enjoyed the assignment.

On the downside, if one does not wish to devote class time to teaching students how to use the portal and about editing basics of Wikipedia this assignment would not be a wise choice (though, in the end I found the process to work quite smoothly, with minimal need for troubleshooting and

no need for technical support). Also, although the students are the authors of the work, playing a supervisory role for Wikipedia writing may make some instructors uncomfortable. As the term wound down and new and revised Wikipedia content about comparative psychology hit the internet, I felt a twinge of anxiety and a sense of responsibility for what my students wrote. Of course, anyone with internet access can pick up where I left off and give the students continued feedback on their work.

If anyone is interested in using a Wikipedia assignment for their course I would be happy to share any further thoughts or resources. Also, if you have used Wikipedia in the classroom for your own course please consider sharing your thoughts with me or perhaps over the Division 6 listserv.

Mark Krause, PhD



YOUR DIVISION 6 BYLAWS AMENDMENT BALLOT

will arrive soon. Please vote ☒ **YES** on the proposed change:

Current bylaws, Article I, section 1 ***"The name of this organization shall be the Division of Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology."***

Proposed bylaws, Article I, section 1 ***"The name of this organization shall be the Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology."***

Rationale (see President's Column for more details): *We will be Division 6 of the American Psychological Association, whether or not this is specified in our name. The proposed new name identifies our organization as a society of scholars, bound together by common interests, methods, and activities. It emphasizes what we are for, rather than the ways we are divided. The proposed name allows us to continue to participate fully in APA's governance and activities, while providing new opportunities for recruitment and outreach consistent with the mission of our society. It is a name that will clearly serve as a professional home to behavioral neuroscientists and comparative psychologists, whether or not those scholars also choose to join the American Psychological Association.*

Obituaries

We would like to take a moment to honor the contributions of those who have recently passed.

[George Collier \(1921-April 18, 2015\)](#)

[John A. King \(1921-September 21, 2014\)](#)

Nicholas Mackintosh (1935- February 8, 2015)

[Peter Marler \(1928-July 5, 2014\)](#)

Karl Pribram (1919 - January 19, 2015)

Nestor A Schmajuk (1948 - February 16, 2015)

Richard F. Thompson (1930 - Sep 16, 2014)

Ronald G. Weisman (1937 – January 27, 2015)

Thank you for your lifelong dedication to science!

Anything About Nothing



Congratulations!



You've finished yet another issue of *The Behavioral Neuroscientist and Comparative Psychologist*.

I hope this issue will inspire you to share your passions with us – Your submissions help make the newsletter much more interesting! Watch for specific calls for submissions on the Division 6 Listserv, or you can submit your ideas to the editor at any time, alan.daniel@glenville.edu.

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