

**BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE TEACHING OF  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE**

**PROGRAM 2020**

MONDAY, 13 JULY, 2020

Student evaluations of teaching do not measure teaching effectiveness, but encourage poor teaching and contribute to grade inflation

Wolfgang Stroebe

Abstract: I argue that the widespread use of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) in personnel decisions encourage poor teaching and is a major cause of grade inflation. Students like and need to get good grades and faculty members like and need to get good SETs. Therefore, SETs empower students to shape faculty behavior. This power may often be used to reward leniently grading instructors who require little work, and to punish tough grading instructors who require great time investment. After presenting evidence that SETs do not measure teaching effectiveness, I will review research that shows that students (a) reward teachers, who grade leniently with positive SETs (b) students reward easy courses with positive SETs, (c) students choose courses that promise good grades and (d) instructors want (need) good SETs. Processes are discussed by which student preferences influence faculty behavior and evidence on grade inflation will be presented.

Biosketch: Wolfgang Stroebe is professor emeritus of Utrecht University and visiting professor at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. He has published widely on social and health psychology. He is Fellow of the Society of Social and Personality Psychology, the Society of Experimental Social Psychology and the British Psychological Society. He is also a member of the German National Academy of Science. His work has been honored with numerous awards, such as the Tajfel lifetime achievement award of the European Association of Social Psychology (EASP), the EASP Codol Award for contributions to European Social Psychology, the lifetime achievement award of the German Psychological Association and an honorary doctorate from the University of Louvain (Belgium).

TUESDAY, 14 JULY, 2020

Trigger Warnings and Beyond: Input from Theory and Data

Matthew Kimble

Trigger warnings are statements that warn students, particularly those with a history of mental health problems, about the fact that the instructor will be presenting potentially disturbing material. These warnings are most commonly employed in higher education in the United States. Recommendations for providing trigger warnings have generated significant debate among academics, students, and administrators, but there is as yet very little evidence from empirical studies as to how students actually, and typically, respond to potentially triggering material. This talk will focus on relevant theory and emerging data that can guide our understanding of what those responses are likely to be. I will suggest that psychological scientists should be at the

forefront of efforts to determine whether trigger warnings might attenuate or exacerbate potentially negative student responses. I will argue that future research could and should address questions such as: (1) What percentage of students are actually triggered by typical course material? (2) Do trigger warnings lead students to avoid learning about warned material? (3) Does the nature and extent of a trigger warning have an impact on students' emotional responses? Having evidence-based answers to such questions should help to inform a debate that has become highly politicized and ideological in North America. It should also help bring perspective to discussions of a number of other student-protection policies, including providing "safe spaces" and limiting free speech on campus.

**Biosketch:** Matthew Kimble is Professor and Chair of Psychology at Middlebury College, Vermont, USA, where he teaches courses in introductory psychology, psychological disorders, psychological trauma, and happiness. He received his doctorate at Boston University and completed his postdoctoral training in psychological trauma at the National Center for PTSD located at the VA Boston Healthcare Center. His primary research interests focus on how PTSD effects attentional processes and expectancies in trauma survivors using EEG and eye tracking technologies. Recently, his work has turned to bias and stigma associated with PTSD as well as research relevant to the topic of trigger warnings. Professor Kimble is an author or co-author of over 30 peer reviewed articles and has received grants in support of his research from the National Institute of Mental Health, Veterans Administration Merit Review Grants, and the Vermont Genetics Network.

WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY, 2020

Desirably Difficult: The [Counterintuitive] Science of Successful Learning

Veronica Yan

**Abstract:** We all have an enormous capacity to learn, but—despite being engaged in learning throughout our lives—decades of cognitive research have shown that our intuitions are oftentimes exactly wrong, leading learners and instructors alike to choose suboptimal learning strategies over more effective and efficient ones. Despite the temptation to make learning feel easy, research has proven that durable and flexible learning results when it is more effortful. The strategies that enhance learning—through engaging learners in more effortful and elaborative processes—are referred to as “desirable difficulties.” They range from how one distributes out their study time to the activities they engage during that study time. We will cover what these strategies are, why they promote deeper learning, how they may be incorporated into classroom instruction, and future directions in research.

**Biosketch:** Dr. Veronica X. Yan is an assistant professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Bridging social, cognitive, and educational psychology fields, Dr. Yan's research explores how we can empower people to become motivated and effectively self-regulated learners. Dr. Yan is presently focused on examining the mechanisms underlying 'desirably difficult' strategies and the motivational mindsets that encourage learners to not just study harder, but to study smarter. Her own educational background has spanned three

continents, with schooling in Hong Kong, undergraduate studies in England, and postgraduate studies in America.

THURSDAY, 16 JULY, 2020

The cultural context of mindset-inspired education transformation

Dr. Chi Yue Chiu

Abstract: Researchers have debated the extent to which growth mindset school practices can enhance student motivation, performance and well-being in schools. In this presentation, I will present evidence for the beneficial effects of growth mindset practices in Hong Kong kindergartens, grade schools and middle schools, highlighting the positive effects of growth mindset on students' academic performance, learning motivation, intellectual openness and well-being. I will also review the contextual and cultural factors that need to be considered in the design of growth mindset practices in Chinese contexts. These factors include the heavy emphasis on peer competition and public examination performance in schools, as well as the cultural tendency to attribute students' learning problems to systemic (vs. personal) factors in vertical collectivist social systems. I will present a theoretical framework of culture and mindset-inspired education to guide future research on cross-cultural applications of mindset theory in education transformation at all levels, including in higher education.

Biosketch: Dr. C.Y. Chiu is Dean of Social Science, Choh-Ming Li Professor of Psychology, and Co-Director of the University Services Center for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He received his PhD from Columbia University. He was previously Associate Dean of Social Sciences and Head of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong, and Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois. In 2008, he was appointed by Nanyang Technological University as Director of Research and PhD Studies, Director of the Cultural Science Institute and Research Director of the Asian Consumer Insight. Prof. Chiu's research covers the social psychology of education, culture and psychological processes, human motivation and intergroup dynamics, and he has made major research achievements in these areas. After joining the Chinese University of Hong Kong, he established the Center for Positive Social Science. With sponsorships from the Hong Kong Jockey Club and Bei Shan Tang, he started to promote systematic, innovative and science-informed positive education in the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

FRIDAY, 17, JULY, 2020

PARTICIPANTS POSTERS AND INVITED PRESENTATIONS  
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED