



Division 20

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Teaching Tips:

Recruiting for our Future

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One of the best assets to graduate teaching is having bright, motivated students. We need to make active efforts to continue recruiting good students. A few months from now, you will receive an email asking you to update the handbook entitled, "Guide to Graduate Study in the Psychology of Adult Development and Aging" (located at <http://apadiv20.php.ufl.edu/guide01.htm>). Please do not ignore this request. All of our departments will be strengthened by a strong research field widely represented across regional and national boundaries. Although Developmental Psychology is a main area of research, often this term is used to refer to the study of childhood - not adulthood. The journal *Developmental Psychology* is predominantly filled with articles about infants and children. Articles on topics of midlife and aging are located in *Psychology of Aging*, a situation that suits many of us yet may leave some students questioning why studies of aging are not always found in the APA journal of developmental psychology. Course textbooks for Developmental Psychology often focus on infancy and childhood, and those on life-span developmental psychology often focus on adulthood and aging. The course offering "Developmental Psychology," then, is not one where adulthood and aging are covered in depth. Many of the best known researchers in Division 20 are not in psychology departments, or are psychologists who are not in the Developmental area of their department. What can we do to enhance the recruitment of future researchers and clinicians with expertise in adulthood and aging?

Ensure that a course on lifespan development is offered at your institution each year.

Professors go on sabbatical. Some are released from teaching duties as a result of administrative responsibilities. Some are slated for statistical courses or other non-developmental subjects. For whatever reason, your college/university may not routinely offer a course in life-span development or gerontology. We need these courses. In addition to teaching the students about the life stage that represents their future (and about topics that will help them to understand mom and dad a little better), students need to envision developmental processes as a continuous trajectory from cradle to grave. By exposing large numbers of students to the field, we have a better chance of capturing the interest of students who may ultimately select a career working with older adults.

Pool your Resources

If you cannot afford to advertise your program on its own but have other similar programs nearby, consider pooling your resources to advertise opportunities to study life-span development in your region/area/state. Talk to your colleagues about writing a training grant that capitalizes on the strengths of life-span development at your institution or a combined training program that links several universities together.

Get the word out at other Conferences

When you are presenting your work at other conferences (such as the annual meetings of the Society of Social and Personality Psychology [SPSP] or the American Psychosomatic Society [APS]) make sure to include on a power point slide or in a corner of your poster that this work also falls into the area of Developmental Psychology: Adulthood and Aging. Although this aspect might seem blatantly obvious to you, it may not be for the students following your work – particularly if they are reading your work that is published in Social or Health Psychology journals.

Update our Handbook and get the word out!

As stated above, we will soon be updating the Division 20's Guide to Graduate Study in the Psychology of Adult Development and Aging." For people who teach courses in Developmental Psychology, Life-span Psychology, or Gerontology, add the link to our Guide to your syllabus, or at least mention the existence of our Guide during one of your lectures. Getting this information to your students will help them learn about the opportunities available in the field. We need to be more proactive to ensure that our future will be strong, so that when the majority of us reach old age, the research area will continue to thrive and help us add life to our years.