

EDITORIAL

There are so many I want to thank: Inviting the neuroscience classroom into Hollywood*

Eric P. Wiertelak

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience Program, Macalester College, Saint Paul, MN 55105.

Almost fourteen years ago, I contributed an article to the *Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education* titled “And the winner is: inviting Hollywood into the neuroscience classroom.” Over the years I’ve gotten some very nice comments about the article (thanks!), and continued to develop my lists of clips and full-length films for use in neuroscience courses. However, every so often a great contribution to the list is made—and so I must publicly thank Luc Besson, Morgan Freeman, and of course, Scarlett Johansson for the 2014 film, *Lucy*. This film is a treasure trove of material for teaching not only about neuroscience, but scientific literacy, experimental method, and the very nature of the professoriate, all delivered in an action-packed thrill ride of a movie. Frame for frame, it ranks alongside such films as *Lorenzo’s Oil*, *Awakenings* (Thank you so much, Oliver Sacks, for everything.), *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *Citizen Kane* for use in teaching neuroscience, albeit each is of value for very different reasons. Simply watching just the first five minutes of *Lucy* will demonstrate the film’s utility in providing teaching moments; I recommend all to take a look at just how far—in some venues—we’ve come in promoting public awareness of the workings of the nervous system. We simply must do better.

As the number of students enrolled in undergraduate neuroscience majors, minors, and concentrations continues to increase each year, it is wonderful that we—the *JUNE/FUN* community—are allowed to be a part of shaping such a moment in academia. Even more wonderful are the potential societal contributions our students may make in the coming years. The neuroscience curricula we develop at our institutions must not only enable our students to move into their adult and working lives better equipped to handle the problems that life will place in their way—but to share this important information. In a world where video can be pushed to us as we walk down a street—not to mention via more traditional rentals, theatres, and as part of in-flight entertainment on long domestic or international flights, the public’s access to movies such as *Lucy* approaches ubiquity. As we train the neuroscientists of tomorrow today, to squander such an opportunity to encourage—to demand—better communication of our science by our students should be unthinkable. On behalf of all the *JUNE* editors, I thank all the authors who have contributed to this issue, and every issue that has come before it, as they have already come forward to help us all avoid such a possibility.

In this first issue of 2015, we have two reviews contributed by Harvey (Petrides’ *Neuroanatomy of Language Regions of the Human Brain*) and Karikari

(Chudler’s award-winning website, *Neuroscience for Kids*), and eight laboratory experiences and instruction technique articles that cut across the entire neuroscience curriculum. Abu-Odeh et al. discuss the outcomes achieved through active learning in a neuroethics course; while Chu et al. detail their use of the Allen Brain Atlas and Neuromorpho to develop a number of exercises for teaching undergraduates in the laboratory. Esteban and Holloway provide details on using host behavior mediation by infectious agents to foster students’ scientific thinking skills in a variety of courses. Holstein et al. discuss how teaching writing within introductory laboratory course can provide gains in student content knowledge.

In the classroom, Martin-Morris et al. explore the how undergraduate courses in neuropharmacology can also encourage dual-enrollment high school students to learn more about neuroscience. Salomon et al. take us into the classroom to examine how incorporating philosophy, history and other content into neuroscience instruction can encourage undergraduates who might otherwise avoid neuroscience coursework to enroll. In the laboratory, Weller et al. provide some key technical improvements to enhance the crayfish slow-flexor preparation, and Wolfe and Ali provide details on a laboratory exercise that uses dark adaptation to teach students perceptual neuroscience. Finally, Prichard gives us a discussion of what changes in the medical school admission test might mean for undergraduate neuroscience programs.

As the cold winds of winter give way to spring, the wealth of materials, approaches and exercises in this new issue of *JUNE* reminds us that once again, we all have a chance to open the intellectual windows and let in some fresh air. Breathe deep. I know that I am not Morgan Freeman, but—imagine a world where the value of that deep breathing, that purposeful oxygenation, contained in the approximate 20% of total blood flow that rushes to the brain with each beat of the heart has been better enlisted by each of us in helping even one of our students make just 10% of a difference in the understanding of neuroscience by their family and friends. Now breathe again. Imagine a world in which we have helped all of our students make that 10% difference in the understanding of neuroscience by their family and friends. I am 100% sure that well more than 50% of us would love that to happen.

REFERENCES

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*Or, how Luc Besson, Morgan Freeman and the film industry could use just 10% more of their potential

Address correspondence to: Dr. Eric Wiertelak, Department of Psychology, 1600 Grand Avenue, Macalester College, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Email: wiertelak@macalester.edu