

Title: Tik, Tok, Teach: Meeting the Students Where they Are
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Abstract

Since the beginning of the pandemic, more and more of our students turned to TikTok for entertainment, community, and even learning. During this time, TikTok started transitioning from a purely entertainment social media app to a broader platform, particularly promoting potentially educational content. Unfortunately, a lot of such content is very accessible to young people but not particularly accurate and sometimes, even harmful. While it is more of the norm for faculty to “not do TikTok” (or even Instagram, which is trying to catch up to TikTok now), it is a missed opportunity to be where our students are, and to learn firsthand what they care about, what they see, what they believe, and why. Recently, TikTok is revamping itself into a search engine competing with Google, and we should not ignore this development. There is a lot of information (and misinformation) shared there, and a lot of opportunity for psychology educators to connect with the students, correct misconceptions, and introduce psychological science concepts in an engaging way. As a TikTok “psychology lady” with over a million followers, let me show you how!

Bio

Dr. Inna Kanevsky has been a professor of psychology at San Diego Mesa College since 2005. She was born in the Soviet Ukraine, and came to the U.S. in 1994 as a refugee from newly independent Ukraine. Originally a math teacher, she earned an M. S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from CSU LA and her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from UCSD. Teaching is her passion, and during the pandemic, while the classrooms were closed, she created a popular TikTok channel @dr_inna. It began as a way to make short content videos for her online classes, but became a go-to resource for debunking psychology related misinformation and fact checking. She is known for always “bringing her receipts” by providing research sources relevant to her posts, which is why she is often contacted by various news media sources to discuss social media psychology-related content. She now spends a lot of time and effort advocating for free Ukraine.