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We've chosen 10 amazing teachers to participate in the NCSEteach Teacher Ambassador Program Workshop for Evolution at Georgia Southern University in July. This is the second workshop conducted through our Teacher Ambassador Program (TAP), and the first focused exclusively on evolution.

TAP is a two-phase program designed to identify teachers who are already doing great work teaching the science of evolution and climate change in places where these topics may be socially controversial, and empower them to serve as ambassadors to reach teachers who may be less confident, less prepared, or less comfortable teaching these subjects.

This group of 10 teachers will meet in July to discuss curriculum and strategies for their roles as ambassadors. They will then field test lessons developed at this workshop in their classrooms over the coming year and then present professional development workshops in their districts next summer.

This blog post is not about TAP, however. It's about this amazing group of science teachers who represent middle and high schools around the country, from Worton, Maryland, to Beaverton, Oregon. Let me introduce you to them in alphabetical order and say a few words about each.

Lyle Carbutt joins us from the Sargent School District in Monte Vista, Colorado where he teaches both science and math. He's been teaching at the high school level since 2014 after spending seven years as an adjunct professor of biology and earth sciences at Adams State University. Lyle is committed to teaching students how scientific theory works to discover truth about the natural world. One interesting fact to know about Lyle: he completed a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Joe Evans teaches AP biology, biology, forensic science, and physics at Kent County High School in Worton, Maryland. Joe is very effective at incorporating interactive activities and videos into his teaching. He has also presented numerous professional development workshops through the [National Science Teachers Association](#) [5] and the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#) [6], and was a finalist for the [Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching](#) [7] in 2017.

Tom Freeman hails from Anaheim, California where he teaches AP biology and college-prep biology at Esperanza High School. He is a reader for the AP biology exam, and is very involved with the [National Association of Biology Teachers](#) [8] (NABT). He is the current Director of the NABT Outstanding Biology Teacher of America program for California. He has participated in and led professional development programs across the country including Alabama, Georgia, Texas, California, and Hawaii.

Turtle Haste teaches middle school science at Desert Ridge Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was chosen by the [National Association of Geoscience Teachers](#) [9] as New Mexico's Outstanding Earth Science Teacher in 2017. She is also a NASA Endeavor Fellow, [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) [10] (NOAA) Planet Steward, and a [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#) [11] Certified Teacher, among many accolades. Turtle is particularly adept at incorporating concepts of evolution into her teaching about earth history and the fossil record. Turtle has travelled the world in her pursuit of becoming a better teacher through the NOAA Teacher at Sea and the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program.

Jamie Kay is a middle school teacher at Hutchinson STEM Magnet Middle School in La Mirada, California. Jamie has only been teaching for a few years but already demonstrates a knack for connecting her students to the natural world. She has her students focus on multiple perspectives to help them see the value of a scientific view. Jamie has a background in anthropology and paleontology and just finished her Masters of Science degree in science education at Cal State Long Beach.

John Mead is the Eugene McDermott Master Teacher at St. Marks School in Dallas, Texas. John is primarily a middle school teacher but also teaches high school biology and was recently named NABT's 2018 Outstanding Biology Teacher in Texas. John is also very involved with informal science education. He was the lead instructor for the i2 Camp in Dallas and has led students on the Pecos Wilderness Trip for 26 of the past 28 years. He is an educational board member for the American Association for Physical Anthropologists and a member of the board for the Southeast Evolutionary Perspectives Society. He has a lifelong interest and passion in studying and teaching about human origins and evolution which has provided him the opportunity to work with Lee Berger, Jane Goodall, and Richard and Louise Leakey.

Dean Mohlman is our second Texas teacher. He teaches biology at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin where he is also a football coach and was a dorm parent for seven years. Dean leads fossil expeditions to Terlingua, Texas, each summer, and has also taught in England. Dean comes to TAP having traveled an extremely valuable path in his life and teaching. He identified as an evangelical Christian while in College and taught theology as well as biology. He became a champion for the teaching

of evolution over the course of his career and has been instrumental in the fight for quality science standards in Texas by testifying to the Texas State Board of Education. Watch Dean [in action](#) [12].

Milan Neeley is a biology teacher at the Paul Robeson High School for Human Services in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Milan has a unique talent to engage with her students and make them comfortable asking questions. This may be due to her experiences teaching science and English to international students in the U.S. and China. Fluent in Spanish and Chinese, Milan has also worked with programs at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian National Zoo.

Coleen Swihart currently teaches biology at Aloha High School in Beaverton, Oregon, but has taught a wide range of environmental and life science courses at both middle school and high school levels. She was the NABT Teacher of the Year in 2001, and has since rendered her expertise as a mentor, curriculum developer, workshop presenter, and assessment specialist. Coleen is very good at providing hands-on experiences for her students and is always looking for new experiential learning opportunities for her students, and for herself.

Blake Touchet teaches biology and environmental science at North Vermillion High School in Maurice, Louisiana. He is also a Teacher Leader Advisor for the Louisiana Department of Education, and a [Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science](#) [13] Teacher Corps Member. Blake is also a CPR instructor for the American Heart Association and a licensed Emergency Medical Responder.

We're excited to work with this impressive group teachers in July and beyond. Stay tuned as we'll be highlighting these teachers and their work, along with the work of the eight ambassador teachers who joined us through the climate change Teacher Ambassador Program earlier this year. Sign up for the [NCSEteach newsletter](#) [14] to keep up to date on workshops, new curriculum, and the latest TAP developments. Feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions: hoge@ncse.com [15].

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