

Invitation to Graduate Students: Work with a NERA Mentor at our 2011 Conference

By Brian R. Evans, Christine Clayton, and Tom Levine

NERA continues to be a place where regional educational researchers learn from each other, and where researchers-in-training find opportunities and resources to compliment those at their home institutions. During the past several years, at our annual conference, we have created a forum for mentoring graduate students that compliments the informal contacts and conversations available at our gathering.

If you are a graduate student who might be interested in having a half-hour conversation with a NERA mentor about your work, please keep reading. If you advise graduate students and think they might benefit from extra mentoring, please keep reading as well. Below, you will find short biographies of NERA Mentors who have volunteered to read work by three mentees and to meet with them at our annual conference.

What is expected of NERA Mentees and Mentors?

- 1) We will inform mentees in August about whether we were able to pair them to a mentor.
- 2) Four weeks before our conference, individual mentees will send their mentor up to 20 pages (double spaced, 12 point font size) of their own work in progress. They could send a dissertation chapter, a portion of a dissertation proposal, a journal manuscript, a grant application, or any similar artifact of research.
- 3) A NERA mentee will spend 30 minutes in individual meetings with a NERA Mentor. NERA Mentors will come ready to offer whatever suggestions, constructive criticism, or questions they think might help a graduate student given the current stage of their work and ongoing growth.
- 4) We'll ask all involved to make suggestions regarding the format of the mentorship program as we decide whether to continue it and how we might support and improve this program.

How to apply: Graduate students interested in participating should send an email titled "NERA Mentoring application" to Tom Levine at thomas.levine@uconn.edu by **9 p.m., July 15, 2011**. In the text of the email itself, please include the following:

- Your name, position/role, and home institution or organization, [i.e., Joe Jones, Ph.D. candidate (Multicultural Education), University of Delaware.]
- The topic of your research, described in a phrase or sentence.
- The name of the mentee—from the group below—whom you think would be the best fit for your work. We occasionally seek out additional mentors if we know of an experienced scholar and NERA mentor who would be a particularly good match for a graduate student.
- A 150 to 300-word introduction to yourself, your research and/or methodological interests, and the work-in-progress you would like send to a mentor four weeks before our conference. Please include something about the feedback you might request from your mentor.

Where we have more requests for mentoring than one of our mentors can handle, we will choose randomly from those requests we judge to be a very good match for our mentors, and then will choose randomly from those mentees whose work we judge to be a reasonably good match. Our apologies in advance if we are unable to match all who are interested in working with a mentor.

Scott Brown, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Connecticut

Over the course of his career, Dr. Brown has conducted research, and supported doctoral students' research, regarding cognition and instruction, learning in problem-based learning environments, instructional design, and assessment and evaluation. Scott has experience with using—and advising others in the use of—both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. He has been awarded over \$9M in grants and contracts and currently directs The GlobalEd 2 Project (www.globaled.uconn.edu). Based on his experiences as an author and journal editor, he can also help graduate students prepare journal manuscripts in areas beyond his own research interests.

Craig S. Wells, Associate Professor, Research and Evaluation Methods, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Dr. Wells has expertise in several statistical methods such as structural equation modeling, nonparametric statistics, and item response theory. His research interests include the study of non-parametric item response models, detection of differential item functioning or item bias, and assessment of model fit. He also has a keen interest in the philosophy of science and its applications to hypothesis testing. Dr. Wells would be happy to help students using quantitative methods with any aspect of their work from the initial design, proposal of studies through the process of conducting and reporting results, and power analyses.

Robin Grenier, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership, University of Connecticut

Robin S. Grenier, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Adult Learning in the Department of Educational Leadership. Her research interests include expertise development, informal and experiential learning, museums as places of learning, and qualitative inquiry. Dr. Grenier holds a Certificate in Qualitative Inquiry from the University of Georgia and teaches qualitative research courses at the University of Connecticut. She has much experience mentoring doctoral students in the design, application, and analysis of qualitative data. Dr. Grenier would be happy to assist with methodology, methods of data collection and analysis, and representation of data and work with students interested in qualitative research.