

The NERA  
 Researcher is a  
 quarterly  
 newsletter for  
 members of the  
 Northeastern  
 Educational  
 Research  
 Association

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# The NERA Researcher

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## The President's Message

### Old NERA and New NERA: Not so "Fara" Apart



**Lynn Shelley-Sireci**

First a disclaimer: I am old-school NERA. The first NERA conferences I attended were held at *The Nevele* where we socialized in the *Safari Lounge*, and the President's Reception was in the Presidential Suite where President Lyndon Johnson once slept (what fun we had in that shower!). For me, those early NERA conferences were defined both by their location, as well as the spirit of NERA – the scholarship, fellowship, and partnership. I was exposed to outstanding educational research, met some of the leaders in the field, and I was able to share my work in a supportive environment. Of course, I followed NERA to the *Hudson Valley Resort and Spa*. In fact, Kristen Huff and I were NERA Program Co-chairs for the last NERA conference held in the Hudson Valley. So, I have a tremendous affinity to what I call, "Old NERA." Old NERA was special!

When the decision was made to move NERA away from the Hudson Valley, there were concerns that the specialness of Old NERA would be lost. NERA Past Presidents Steve Sireci and David Moss worked diligently to find a place that would maintain the spirit of NERA. They knew the Rocky Hill Marriott would provide shared meals, opportunities for socializing, adequate meeting spaces, nice accommodations, and an affordable price, but what they did not anticipate is that "New NERA" would emerge with a vengeance.

The first year NERA was in Rocky Hill Connecticut, attendance increased by almost a third. And that increase has been maintained. New members got involved, and today most of the Committees and much of the Board of Directors is made up of NERA members who only remember New NERA. Since the inception of New NERA, the *Graduate Student Issues Committee* was formed, the look of our website was improved, the digital commons was added (so NERA papers can have their own permanent URL), the Conference proposal and review system went online, and NERA socials began to Rock! There is little doubt anyone present will forget NERA's Got Talent 2011 where the robot dance beat the Ukranian Silk dance. NERA also changed behind the scenes. We incorporated! The Board got insurance, and we now file taxes (like we should have all along).

But, despite so many changes, the spirit of NERA has been maintained – the scholarship, fellowship, and partnership is still alive and strong. NERA members do not keep returning because of the food or rooms (although perhaps some will return next year because of that dancing). The 2011 conference evaluations were clear – NERA members return because of the great research they are exposed to, the opportunity to share their research in a supportive environment, and the opportunity to network with leaders in the field. The words of Phil Archer still ring true... "Educational Research, it ain't as boring as it sounds."

Although today's NERA lacks moldy rooms, bland food, and an offensive mural (the Safari Lounge was always a shock to me), everything that truly made Old NERA special has been retained. So if you have not been to a meeting for a few years, please try us again. And if you have been to a meeting recently and like what you see, extend a special thank you to folks like Barbara Helms, Steve Sireci, David Moss, and Kristen Huff who worked so hard to usher in the New NERA.

## Message from the Editors

Greetings NERA Members! We hope you find this issue informative. It includes important information about the 43rd annual conference including deadlines and procedures for submitting your proposals! Our program co-chairs, Gil Andrada, Tia Sukin, and Craig Wells also provide a preliminary overview of what you can expect at the upcoming conference along with information about the keynote speakers that they have lined up. If you have not done so already, give some thought as to how you will participate in the 2012 conference!

This issue also announces the recipient of this year's Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award. The deserving winners were Dr. David J. Alba and Dr. Robert Gable for authoring their paper entitled "Crisis preparedness: Do school administrators and first responders feel ready to act?" Dr. Alba will present his paper at this year's AERA in Vancouver, Canada during the State and Regional Educational Research Association's (SRERA) session. Please see the full article in this newsletter for details on session time and location and consider attending the session and showing support for our winner.

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**Northeastern Educational Research Association  
43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, October 17-19, 2012  
Rocky Hill, CT**

**Conference Theme: *A Multidisciplinary Approach to Educational Research***

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***Conference Overview and Welcome***

We want to thank everyone for responding to the 2011 conference evaluation survey which has been immensely useful in helping us plan the 2012 conference. In addition, given the overwhelming praise from the survey, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the efforts of the 2011 program co-chairs, Carol Barry and Abby Lau, and past President, Thanos Patelis. It was very apparent from the survey results that the conference was an immense success.

Given the positive feedback from the survey, we plan to retain many of the aspects of the previous NERA conferences (e.g., professional development workshops, session types), making a few adjustments based on suggestions provided in the survey such as having fewer competing concurrent sessions as well as shorter concurrent sessions. The following provides a brief description of some of the conference aspects we have been planning.

**Conference Theme.** The conference theme for the 2012 conference is “A Multidisciplinary Approach to Educational Research.” We are organizing several invited sessions, panels, and professional development workshops that address the use of applying theories and research techniques from multiple domains in order to address educational issues.

**Conference Venue.** The conference will return to the Hartford Marriot Rocky Hill, taking place on October 17<sup>th</sup> through October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Membership and conference registration forms will be available on the NERA website (<http://www.nera-education.org>) in June.

**Keynote Speakers.** We are excited to have two excellent and riveting speakers scheduled for the 2012 conference: Dr. John B. King, Jr. and Dr. John Q. Easton.

**Dr. John B. King, Jr.,** is the Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York and has an impressive record in leading schools in closing the achievement gap and preparing students to be successful in college.

**Dr. John Q. Easton** is the Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences, has a prolific publication record involving school reform and recently received a presidential citation from the American Educational Research Association for his work on improving the quality of education in urban schools.

**Professional Development Workshops.** We are planning several pre- and in-conference workshops covering topics such as diagnostic classification modeling, contributions of sampling and equating error on score drift, use of NVIVO in educational research and applications of hierarchical linear models.

**Mentoring.** We will be continuing the formal mentoring program, lead by Thomas Levine. The mentoring provides graduate students the opportunity to meet with professionals in the education field to receive individualized feedback on research projects such as dissertations.

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## Call for Proposals

Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA)

43rd Annual Conference

October 17-19, 2012

Rocky Hill, CT

**Conference Theme:** “*A Multidisciplinary Approach to Educational Research*”

As a regional affiliate of the American Educational Research Association, NERA invites proposals for our annual meeting spanning all areas of educational research. We welcome proposals from new and experienced researchers and will consider both completed and in-progress research. This year, we especially welcome submissions regarding higher education and classroom curriculum and instruction research, areas NERA members indicated are of interest. Below you will find the general requirements for NERA proposals as well as specific guidelines corresponding to our five session formats. For more information about the conference, including FAQs about NERA proposals, visit NERA at [www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org).

### Submission Requirements

*Please keep in mind that should your proposal be accepted for presentation, the information you provide during the submission process will appear in the final program exactly as you submit it here.*

- Complete author information
- Affiliation information
- Descriptive title of 15 words or less
- No more than five keywords
- Abstract of 120 words or less
- Description of the proposal in **1000 words or less** not including tables and references. Summaries of research should include: study purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, results, conclusions and educational implications. *Warning:* Full papers will not be accepted as proposals.

### Submission Format

The proposal submission form will be online and accessible from the NERA website beginning in May. All required information will be entered into form fields with the exception of the description of your proposal which will be uploaded as a PDF or Word file. At the time of submission, authors will be required to select from a list of descriptive keywords to categorize the proposal.

### Submission Review Process

- Proposals *must* be submitted electronically by **June 5, 2012**
- Proposals will be blindly reviewed by 2-3 NERA members.
- Proposals will be judged according to the following criteria: educational or scholarly significance, perspective or theoretical framework, appropriateness of methodology, clarity of expression, appeal to NERA membership, and likelihood of proposed work being completed by conference date.
- Proposal decisions will be emailed to first-authors no later than **August 1st**. Details about session dates and times will follow soon after.

## Call for Recent Accomplishments

Have you just completed a research study or published an article? If so, we would like to know about it! We will be featuring members and their accomplishments on the NERA Facebook and LinkedIN pages in the upcoming weeks. Please submit a short description of your work and a link (if available) to Marisa Cohen at [marisatcohen@gmail.com](mailto:marisatcohen@gmail.com) for inclusion on the sites. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Frequently Asked Questions

Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA)  
43rd Annual Conference  
October 17-19, 2012  
Rocky Hill, CT

**Conference Theme:** “*A Multidisciplinary Approach to Educational Research*”

### **Does my research project have to be complete to be accepted to NERA?**

Not necessarily. Nearly completed research will be considered for the conference, but the research should show potential of being ready for presentation by the date of the conference. If reviewers feel it might not be ready, it may be accepted for an Individual Paper Discussion instead.

### **How are the proposal descriptive keywords used?**

These terms are used in several ways. First, they will be used to match the proposal to appropriate reviewers, then to match the proposal to an appropriate session and session discussant in the program. Please select the descriptor that is the best-match to your proposal as your first-choice and the remaining descriptors as next-best options.

### **What is the review process like?**

Reviewers are NERA members who have self-identified as being willing to review proposals in the same topic area as the proposal keyword. Final decisions are made by the program committee according to the reviews and availability in the conference program.

### **When will my research paper need to be ready?**

Discussants must be able to review research papers prior to the session in order to properly prepare for discussion. You will be asked to email your research paper to the discussant approximately one month before the conference.

### **Will a projector and laptop be available in my session?**

Institutional sponsors will be supplying LCD projectors for each session. Arrangements only need to be made to have a laptop present at the session. The chair of the session will arrange the laptop and file transfers to the laptop by email before the session. Presenters are expected to cooperate with chair requests.

### **How do I prepare a free-standing poster?**

Posters will need to be able to stand up on a table since no boards or easels are available at the hotel. Tri-fold foam or corrugated display boards are portable and inexpensive. They can be purchased at most office supply stores.

### **What if my proposal is accepted to NERA but I am unable to attend NERA when the time comes?**

Submitting to NERA is a sign that you intend to attend the conference if accepted. If something prevents you from being able to attend, and co-authors or colleagues cannot present in your place, you must withdraw your presentation *before* the session. Please email [programchairs@nera-education.org](mailto:programchairs@nera-education.org).

### **What are the conference registration fees?**

The conference registration fee for professional members will be \$85 and for students will be \$30; the registration fee for retired members is complementary with membership. All registrants must also be NERA members. Information about membership and dues can be found on the NERA website ([www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)).

## Call for Nominations for the 2012 Recipient of the Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award

Annually, one of the NERA Board of Director's major delights is to award the **Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award for Outstanding Leadership and Service**. This is given to a member of long standing who has generously given of self to NERA, to advance its mission and to enable it to thrive. As you will read below, the original statement which was a preface to the nomination statement about the Award's first recipient, Lorne Woollatt, highlights the intention of the award.

In 1981, just prior to our annual convocation, NERA lost a long-time member and supporter, Leo Doherty. He was one of the earlier members of ERANYS, was instrumental in its rejuvenation and growth, and was a guiding and steadying hand behind its expansion to NERA as the 300-member regional association it is today.

In addition to his association with NERA, Leo exhibited professional managerial leadership in his relationships with his staff and superiors. He was well-informed, provoked growth in his staff and associates, promoted qualified personnel, provided service to others needing his expertise, and translated the policy of his superiors into operations and products.

Leo was an ethical person. He personally demonstrated how staff should work honestly; he dealt fairly and equitably with his contacts; and he credits those who implemented activities with the achievement results. He was also humane. He encouraged people to commit themselves to goals that were personally meaningful to them, and he defended the individual's right to form appropriate relationships.

In his memory, NERA's Board of Directors, in response to members' requests, voted unanimously to institute the Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award. The 2012 NERA Board and the Awards Committee (and recipients of the Doherty Award) encourage creative thinking in seeking the 2012 Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award recipient. Please nominate someone you know in NERA who exemplifies the qualities of Leo Doherty. **Nominations are due by July 1st.** Send nominations and any questions you may have to Darlene Perner, Chair of the Doherty Award Committee at [dperner@bloomu.edu](mailto:dperner@bloomu.edu). Also please check the NERA website ([www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)) for information on the NERA Awards.

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<http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=881287>

and

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/NERA-Northeastern-Educational-Research-Association/173051016042611>

## Recipient of the 2011 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award

Congratulations to Dr. David J. Alba and Dr. Robert Gable for receiving the 2011 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award for their paper entitled "Crisis preparedness: Do school administrators and first responders feel ready to act?"

The Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award is presented annually in recognition of the paper deemed exemplary by the Award Committee. The award is named in honor of Lorne H. Woollatt, who was a distinguished New York State educator and active member of NERA.

Dr. Alba is a school principal and Chairman of the District Safety Committee for the Central Falls School District in Central Falls, RI. Additionally, he is a member of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Steering Committee for School Safety and Crisis Preparedness. The paper presented at the 2011 NERA Annual Conference was based upon his mixed methods dissertation research with regards to perceptions of crisis preparedness among Rhode Island public school administrators and first responders. Dr. Robert Gable was a co-author of this paper and Dr. Alba's dissertation advisor.

For those attending AERA this year in Vancouver, Canada, please note that Dr. Alba will present his paper at the following session:

State and Regional Educational Research Associations (SRERA)  
Distinguished Paper Session III  
Monday, April 16, 2012  
8:15am – 10:15am  
Fairmont Waterfront, Floor Concourse Level – Malaspina Room

The SRERA Business Meeting will be on Friday, April 13, 2012 from 6:15pm – 7:45pm at the Fairmont Waterfront, Floor Concourse Level – Malaspina Room.

Please check the AERA program for the most up-to-date information regarding these two sessions.

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**Invited Panels.** We are in the process of inviting experts to address topics in educational research and policy, especially related to the conference theme of conducting research with a multidisciplinary approach.

**Online Submission.** We will continue the online proposal submission process, making a few minor changes so that we can maximize its effectiveness. Please see the Call for Proposals and FAQs in this issue of *The NERA Researcher*. Also, we encourage you to distribute the Call for Proposals to educational researchers who may not have access to *The NERA Researcher*.

**Social Events.** The annual NERA conference has been a venue for creating a collegial and festive atmosphere by incorporating social events in its program. This year's conference promises to do the same.

We are looking forward to another successful and exciting NERA conference!

Sincerely,

Gil Andrada (Connecticut Department of Education)  
Tia Sukin (Pacific Metrics)  
Craig Wells (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

## QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: AN OVERVIEW FOR BEGINNING

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS

Felice D. Billups, EdD

Johnson & Wales University

Have you just decided to conduct a qualitative study, involving interviews, focus groups, observation or document analysis? Or have you already collected your qualitative data and you are unsure as to how you will analyze pages and pages of transcriptions or notes? Just as there are numerous statistical tests to run for quantitative data, there are a variety of options for qualitative data analysis. These options can seem intimidating to a beginning qualitative researcher, but understanding the process can ease the anxiety.

Qualitative data management and analysis is a simultaneous and ongoing process, creating a virtual spiral effect, and the strategies a researcher employs are critical to a successful outcome. Despite the seemingly endless resources regarding qualitative research, there are few extant standardized rules or procedures for managing qualitative data; furthermore, the process is labor-intensive and largely intuitive. The combination of continuous analysis and intensive immersion with your data can make this process seem overwhelming. Experts such as Bernard and Ryan (2010), Boeije (2010), Grbich (2007), and Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss the myriad data analysis options. Overall, however, there are a few basic steps that all researchers can employ to successfully manage their qualitative data which are common to all research designs.

While this brief overview is not designed to replace a more in-depth discussion on qualitative data analysis, I would like to offer a blueprint for beginning qualitative researchers to help you develop a better understanding of the process. There are essentially four basic steps involved in all qualitative data management:

- 1) Phase I: Raw data management (working with the words and notes from transcriptions and document/observation rubrics)
- 2) Phase II: Data reduction (the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming raw data into workable 'chunks' or categories)
- 3) Phase III: Data analysis and interpretation (the process of analyzing data to tell the story, represent the experience, reflect the essence of the participant's perspective)
- 4) Phase IV: Data representation (the process of compressing an array of information into an organized pattern of findings that allows for conclusions and recommendations).

Phase I. Raw data management begins with hundreds of pages of transcripts or notes; the beginning researcher may not know where to start. Just as you must 'clean' or prepare your raw quantitative data, you must do the same with raw qualitative data. Except for the grounded theory analytical approach, your best starting point is to immerse yourself in your data by reading your notes holistically. Over the course of a few days, reading your notes or transcripts as an entity and making notes in the margins (often called memoing) will help you begin to understand, internalize, and make sense of your data. This immersion process prepares you for Phase II.

Phase II. Data reduction is the next step in this sequence of data management. During this phase you will develop a preliminary set of codes or categories that you use to cluster the raw data into units or chunks that share similar qualities (this is often called winnowing). The data reduction process involves 4 distinct steps:

- 1) Initial Coding (creating initial codes that are either a priori (pre-existent codes derived from theoretical frameworks or the literature) or in vivo codes (derived from the raw data, i.e. emerging from participants' words, using context-bound jargon or language);
- 2) Secondary Coding (developing a code book, revising and consolidating codes, and labeling final code categories – codes are often referred to as pattern/descriptive/interpretative (Miles & Huberman, 1994), first cycle/second cycle coding (Saldana, 2009), or open/axial/selective for grounded theory analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008);

- 3) Clustering (assigning groups of related, coded data into clusters and assigning preliminary labels to those clusters – which will eventually become preliminary thematic or content labels)
- 4) Thematic groupings (organizing clusters of codes into groups that generate meaningful themes, which relate back to participant words and allow for meaning to be assigned to themes – and you may use participants' words as the 'labels' for these groupings).

As you can see, you begin with a large volume of words/phrases/notes and you must work to reduce and collapse these data into clusters that share similar meanings; from these clusters you generate themes. While you may begin with as many as 30-40 initial raw code categories, you will eventually reduce your code groups until you end up with a smaller number. You may find that some codes can be assigned to multiple clusters – this is a very common occurrence; you may also discard some of your coded data, finding that it can be consolidated into another set of data or that it is not meaningful. All of these decisions are part of the data reduction phase.

As codes can be organized into the clusters of units having similar meaning, those clusters may ultimately become your final 4-7 themes or concepts; these themes must relate back to your research questions, and, in fact, address your research questions substantively.

At this point in the process, data reduction involves a variety of computer assistance, visual aids, or hands-on tactics. Many researchers use large post-it note wall pads to create initial and subsequent codes and clusters; visualizing the data on a large surface, like a wall or board, allows for synthesis and understanding. Other researchers use the 'long table' approach (Krueger & Casey, 2010) to organize data with pieces of paper spread out over a table; labeling transcripts with colored markers and cutting the pages into strips, organized by highlighter color (coding) is another way to see the codes and categories take shape. Word processing tools can also be utilized to organize data into sub-units. While this overview does not intend to include a detailed discussion of the many computer software programs that facilitate data management, some of the more common packages include ATLAS/TI, HyperRESEARCH, Nvivo, MaxQDA, or NUD\*IST. These packages assist with organization, clustering, concept mapping, and even theory development; data voice recognition software is also available to convert audio files into text, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking@.

Once you have organized your data into working themes or 'meaning units', you are ready to move to Phase III – data analysis and interpretation.

Phase III. The third stage of managing qualitative data requires analyzing and interpreting the data, which is an iterative process. This process cannot be entirely separated from the data reduction phase, as it involves a continuous review of the data as the codes and clusters are developed. The themes that emerge from the data become the story or the narrative. Generally, the process of organizing, coding, re-coding, and creating thematic categories allows you to see the emergent concepts that tell a story.

While the work of preparing, manipulating, and organizing your data (Phases I and II) brings you to this point, you will now process your data through a specific data analysis strategy. Some of the most common types of analytic strategies can apply to several different designs. For instance, if you conduct a descriptive or interpretative design, you may apply Boyatzis' thematic strategy (1998) or Colaizzi (1978); if you conduct a phenomenological study, you may use Moustakas' (1994) or Giorgi's (1994) holistic or 'essence meaning' approach. If you used a grounded theory design, you will use the constant comparative analytical approach to develop theory (Glaser, 1992; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Seidman (2006) advocates for the life story/storytelling approach for narrative designs, while Yussen and Ozcan (1997) propose a five-step approach that likens storytelling to a play or theatrical portrayal; Krueger & Casey (2010) suggest the 'key concept' strategy for focus group research. You must decide which approach best suits your study and what you seek to discover. While there are many viable options for analysis, Creswell (2006) provides an excellent overview of some of the more common analysis methods, which serves as a useful starting point for the beginner.

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**Phase IV.** The final phase of managing qualitative data involves data representation, or reporting: how do you tell the story with your data and how does your data address your research questions? You can organize your manipulated data into stories (using direct quotes from participants), visual representation (using pictures or images), or figures, charts and tables (to provide an overview of language or phrases emerging from participant interactions or to profile participant characteristics). The typical format for reporting qualitative data usually consists of the following sections: 1) overview of research purpose and objectives, 2) brief review of research procedures and analysis, 3) findings, organized around key themes or concepts, sufficiently detailed with participants' direct quotes, 4) interpretation of what these findings mean, with a link to the literature to support the interpretation, and 5) recommendations and a conclusion.

From the beginning to the end of a qualitative research study, you must be sufficiently immersed in your data, not only to represent the 'essence' of your findings but to also communicate alternative meanings and help your reader feel as if they were living the participant's experience. The end result of this process will have subsequently transformed pages of raw notes into a meaningful narrative, representing the voices and perspectives of your participants.

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## The Graduate Lounge

by Whitney Zimmerman, The Pennsylvania State University

### Our Mission

The mission of the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) is to support the involvement and professional development of NERA graduate student members and to reach out to new graduate students in an effort to increase the diversity of institutions and programs represented at NERA.

The Committee can be contacted at [neragraduatestudents@gmail.com](mailto:neragraduatestudents@gmail.com)

### New Members

The Graduate Students Issues Committee (GSIC) has elected two new members: Jerusha Gerstner and Oksana Naumenko!

**Jerusha Gerstner** ([gerstnjj@dukes.jmu.edu](mailto:gerstnjj@dukes.jmu.edu)) is in her second year in the Psychological Sciences Program at James Madison University with a concentration in Quantitative Psychology. Her current research interests include instrument validation and structural equation modeling. Jerusha is the current GSIC Chair-Elect; she will take over as the Chair after the 2012 NERA Conference.

**Oksana Naumenko** ([naumenox@jmu.edu](mailto:naumenox@jmu.edu)) is a first-year student in the Psychological Sciences: Quantitative Psychology Concentration Program at James Madison University. Her first-year apprenticeship research involves practical application of Generalizability Theory in higher education program evaluation. Additional interests in measurement include techniques for handling missing data and applications of item response theory. Her substantive areas of interest include academic integrity and assessment of English Language Learners.

### Summary of Results from the 2011 Graduate Student Online Survey

We had a total of 31 students respond from at least 9 different institutions. The feedback we received will help us plan the GSIC sponsored sessions for the 2012 conference. Here are some brief highlights from the survey:

- Both of the 2011 GSIC in-conference sessions were well received
- Several respondents suggested that the GSIC sponsor a session at the 2012 conference related to interviewing and employment issues

## Call for Nominations

The NERA Executive Committee is seeking nominations for the following open elected positions:



NERA President (3-year term as President-elect, President, Past President)

NERA Board Member (3-year term)

NERA Board Member (3-year term)

Please send nominations (name of nominee, email address, and position) by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to: Thanos Patelis, NERA Past-President and chair of the nominations committee ([tpatelis@collegeboard.org](mailto:tpatelis@collegeboard.org)).

## The College Board

### Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,200 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT<sup>®</sup>, the PSAT/NMSQT<sup>®</sup>, and the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

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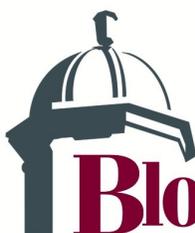
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## Member News

**Amy Hendrickson** was promoted to Senior Psychometrician at the College Board. Amy began her career at the College Board in 2006 after being an Assistant Professor for the Department of Measurement, Statistics and Evaluation at the University of Maryland.

**YoungKoung Kim** was promoted to Associate Psychometrician at the College Board. She began her career at the College Board in 2004 as a Data Analyst and completed her Ph.D. in Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics in 2009 at Columbia University.

**Nicholas Hartlep** has the following two publications:

Hartlep, N. D. (2012). Just What is Response to Intervention and What's It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?: A Critical Race Theory Examination of RTI. In Gorlewski, J., Porfilio, B., & Gorlewski, D. (Eds.), *Using Standards and High-Stakes Testing for Students: Exploiting Power with Critical Pedagogy* (pp. 87-108). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Hartlep, N. D. (2012). Ethnicity and Race: Creating Educational Opportunities Around the Globe edited by Elinor Brown & Pamela Gibbons. *Teachers College Record*. <http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 16640

## Communications Committee Report

The NERA Communications Committee would like to welcome Marisa Cohen from St. Francis College to our committee. We look forward to the valuable contributions that she will make to the committee's work this year.

The 2012 Communications Committee is beginning to work on the various tasks we plan to accomplish this year including:

- Releasing the full version of the NERA Editorial Guide on the NERA website
- Developing a NERA Branding Guide which will present new vectorized versions of the NERA logo and the NERA pillars and help streamline all branding for the organization
- Authoring a second edition of the NERA Editorial Guide that will focus on guidelines for making good PowerPoint presentations
- Exploring new innovative ways to encourage increased usage of NERA social networking websites
- Working with the NERA Board of Directors and NERA 2012 conference co-chairs to assist with any of their communications needs

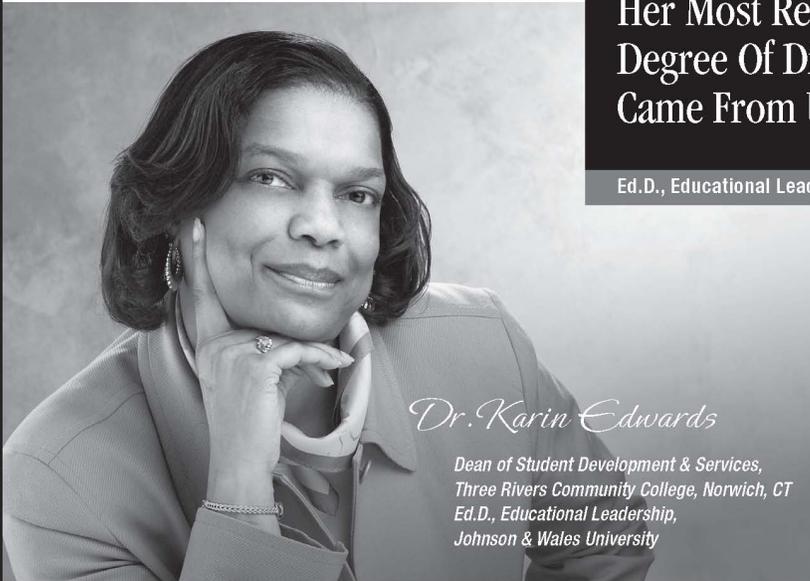
One way the Communications Committee hopes to increase usage of our Facebook and LinkedIn pages is to feature some of your accomplishments on these pages for NERA members to read more about. If you have recently completed a research study or published an article, we invite you to submit a short description of your work and a link (if available) to Marisa Cohen at [marisatcohen@gmail.com](mailto:marisatcohen@gmail.com) for inclusion on the sites.

Steven Holtzman  
Chair, Communications Committee

## Report from the NERA Membership Committee

Thanks to the continued efforts of our members to be involved and get others involved, NERA has 318 members as of last count. Your feedback on the conference and aspects of membership has been so helpful, and we are currently working on populating the committee with NERA members who have expressed interest.

In the meantime, a new dedicated email address has been set up for the Membership Committee to use in correspondence inside and outside the organization. Will you be attending a conference or meeting that would be a perfect place to let attendees know about NERA? If you have any thoughts on how to promote the conference and NERA activities or on making the organization even better in general, please contact the committee at [Membershipcommittee@nera-education.org](mailto:Membershipcommittee@nera-education.org). We will respond to you as soon as possible, and we greatly appreciate any input!



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## ANNOUNCEMENT

### **TEACHER-AS-RESEARCHER AWARD sponsored by the**

### **Northeastern Educational Research Association**

The Teacher-as-Researcher Award is presented annually by the Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) to a preschool-grade12 teacher who has conducted a self-initiated classroom research project or applied research findings to inform his or her own teaching. The project must be conceptualized, developed, and implemented as part of the nominee's own teaching practices and have had at least one cycle of tryout and evaluation. The project should also be related to a clearly defined theoretical focus and represent an innovation that has led to some real change in practice.

Classroom teachers are invited to apply directly for this award or be nominated by NERA members, school administrators, faculty mentors, or others familiar with the teacher's research. All applications should be submitted no later than **June 1, 2012**.

The 2012 awardee will be invited to speak about the research project at a session at the annual October NERA meeting in Rocky Hill, CT and be presented with the award at that time. The award includes a plaque, NERA membership, and \$150 toward travel, meals, or lodging at NERA's conference site.

For an application form or other inquiries about the award, contact:

Dr. Rochelle Goldberg Kaplan, TAR Award Committee Chair  
Department of Educational Leadership and Professional Studies  
1600 Valley Road  
William Paterson University  
Wayne, NJ 07470  
e-mail: [kaplanr@wpunj.edu](mailto:kaplanr@wpunj.edu)

**NORTHEASTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (NERA)  
TEACHER-AS-RESEARCHER AWARD APPLICATION  
43<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE, October 2012  
Hartford Marriott, Rocky Hill, CT**

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(after June 1, 2012)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach the following information using the guidelines provided:

1. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF THE RESEARCH
2. ABSTRACT: Please summarize the research project in **no more than 250 words** including its purpose, procedure, and outcomes
3. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH: (**maximum of 1000 words**)
  - a. Rationale for conducting the study
  - b. Description of project methods including participants, site and procedures
  - c. Report and analysis of research findings
  - d. Discussion of the impact of the research on teacher's practices that occurred or will occur as a result of the project
  - e. Bibliography of relevant references related to the research
  - f. Any other information seen as relevant by the nominee
4. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY TO EDUCATORS: Describe how the results contribute to improved educational practice or professional knowledge of educators in your field (**maximum 100 words**).

Name of Nominating Person (if other than applicant) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation and Position of Nominating Person: (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominating Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Send the application coversheet and narrative as a Word document to:

Dr. Rochelle Goldberg Kaplan, [kaplanr@wpunj.edu](mailto:kaplanr@wpunj.edu), no later than June 1, 2012.

## Teach Your Children Well: A Conference to Honor Ronald K. Hambleton November 9-10, 2012 | University of Massachusetts Amherst

The Center for Educational Assessment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst cordially invites you to a conference honoring one of the most influential and prolific researchers in the fields of educational research and measurement: Professor Ronald K. Hambleton. For more than 40 years, Professor Hambleton - "Ron" to many - has been an influential teacher, leader, and researcher. He has touched the lives of individuals, organizations, states, and countries around the world through his teaching, research, and service. This two-day conference will bring together senior leaders in the educational research and measurement communities to reflect on the history of our field, share current research, and discuss future directions in educational research and assessment practices. The conference will feature workshops, poster sessions, and invited presentations on the themes that characterize the career (thus far!) of Professor Hambleton. Invited speakers and conference themes include:

1. **Criterion-Referenced Testing:**  
W. James Popham, University of California, Los Angeles (Emeritus), Martha Thurlow, National Center for Educational Outcomes, & Robert L. Linn, University of Colorado at Boulder (Emeritus)
2. **Item Response Theory:**  
Richard M. Luecht, University of North Carolina Greensboro, H. Swaminathan, University of Connecticut, & Bruno Zumbo, University of British Columbia
3. **International and Cross-Lingual Assessment:**  
Avi Allalouf, National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, Israel, Jose Muñiz, University of Oviedo, Spain, & Fons von de Vijver, Tilburg University, The Netherlands
4. **Computer-Based Testing:**  
Krista Breithaupt, Medical Council of Canada, Wim van der Linden, CTB/McGraw-Hill, & Denny Way, Pearson
5. **Teaching Educational Measurement:**  
Gregory Cizek, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Brian Clauser, National Board of Medical Examiners, Barbara Plake, University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Emeritus), & Ross Traub, University of Toronto (Emeritus)
6. **The Future of Educational Measurement and Psychometrics:**  
Michael J. Kolen, University of Iowa, Craig Mills, American Institute of CPAs, Kimberly O'Malley, Pearson, Larry Rudner, Graduate Management Admissions Council, & Kevin P. Sweeney, The College Board
7. **Accountability Testing, Measuring Change, and Score Reporting:**  
Robert L. Brennan, University of Iowa, John Mazzeo, Educational Testing Service, & Lisa Keller, Jennifer Randall, Craig Wells, and April Zenisky, UMass Amherst

**Plus: Conference Sponsor Panel Session:** Featuring Krista Breithaupt, Medical Council of Canada; Marc Gesaroli, National Board of Medical Examiners; Ida Lawrence, Educational Testing Service; Craig Mills, American Institute of CPAs; Thanos Patelis, The College Board; Richard Patz, CTB/McGraw-Hill; Jon Twing, Pearson; David Wilson, Graduate Management Admissions Council

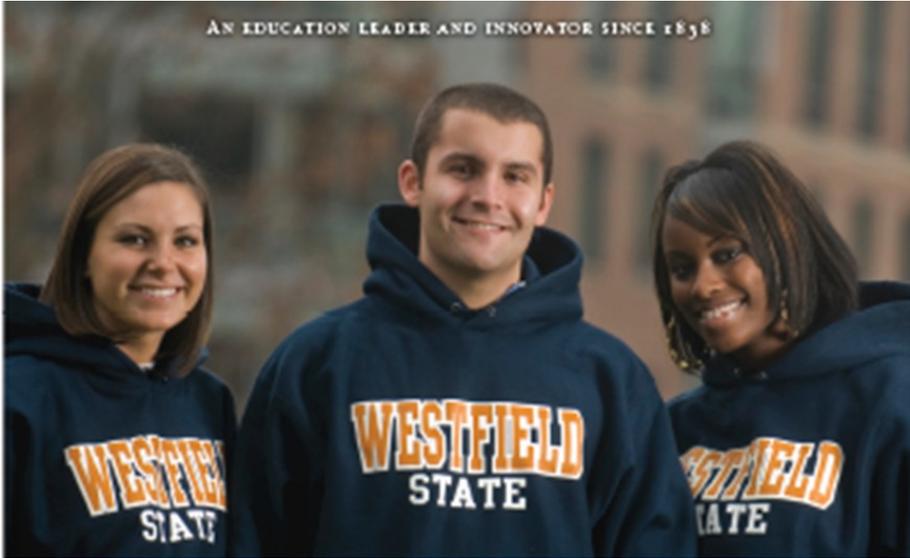
The conference will also include two peer-reviewed poster sessions (one specifically for graduate students) and the following workshops:

- *Computerized-Adaptive Testing:* Kyung T. Han, Graduate Management Admissions Council and Fred Robin, Educational Testing Service
- *Differential Item Functioning:* Michael Jodoin, National Board of Medical Examiners
- *Evidence-Centered Design:* Kristen Huff, New York Regents Research Fund
- *Validity:* Leah Kaira, Pearson Evaluation
- *Standard Setting:* Mary Pitoniak, Educational Testing Service

*Call for poster submissions and conference registration information coming soon.*

**Sponsored by** the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the College Board, CTB/McGraw-Hill, Educational Testing Service, the Graduate Management Admissions Council, Medical Council of Canada, the National Board of Medical Examiners, Pearson, and the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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## Book Review: *Ethnicity, Race and Education: An Introduction*

**Author:** Sue Walters

**Publisher:** Continuum International Publishing Group

**ISBN:** 978-1-8470-6232-1 **Pages:** 175, **Year:** 2012

For decades educators and sociologists have debated over various meanings of the terms *race and ethnicity*. Often times mainstream societies use those terms interchangeably. While these terms are heavily used, recent studies have shown relationships between ethnic/race identity and student achievement within primary schools. Sue Walters is the author of *Ethnicity, Race and Education: An Introduction*. She is a leading scholar at the Institute of Education at the University of London. She has done extensive work on the topics of race, language, ethnicity, and identity among children and youth. This book is a pioneering text insofar as its approach to dismantling several assumptions about race and ethnicity labeling within the context of educational institutions. *Ethnicity, Race and Education* is cutting edge and comprehensive.

At the commencement of this study, the author provides three leading questions in order to frame the direction of this book. She posed the following questions, “Does your ‘race’ and ethnicity make a difference to your achievement in school? Does education reproduce ethnic differences and racial inequalities or can it challenge and change them? Why does an understanding of the role that ethnicity and ‘race’ play in education matter?” (p. 1). Walters intensely expounded upon the social, historical and political facets of the importance of power and identity in regards to ethnicity and race, including the effects of such discussions. This review will summarize, critique, and critically appraise the book chapter by chapter. One final evaluation will be provided at the end to reveal whether or not Sue Walter (2012), a leading scholar on ethnicity and race, accomplished her ambitious goal: to show how race and ethnicity impact the educational achievement and motivation of students, particularly those who have black and brown faces.

Chapter 1, *What Do We Mean by ‘Race’ and Ethnicity*, is a vital chapter that can assist readers in capturing an in-depth understanding of the terms *race* and *ethnicity*. The author suggests that the term *race* was employed in order to “classify all humans into a small number of *rac*es based primarily on physical differences.” (p. 6). Although the term *race* has been identified as having no scientific value, it still remains to be used to manipulate political power; increase the opportunity gap among people based on skin complexion; and in policy discourses. Over the past century the term *ethnicity* emerged onto the scene as a leading term in the social sciences and humanities. Walters suggests that ethnicity is mostly determined by cultural factors such as shared language, ancestry, heritage, dressing styles, customs and religion. The author contends that it does not carry the same stigma as *race*, notwithstanding the notion that ethnicity is “something that a person or group can choose for themselves” (p. 10), while on the other hand race is ascribed to people based upon skin complexion. Walters also suggest that ethnic ties are often employed on a circumstantial base:

“The debate is focused on whether ethnic ties (our sense of belonging to an ethnic group arising from our ties and identifications with other people, and originating in our birth and socialization within a family and culture) remain deeply embedded in our sense of identity throughout life or whether such ties and a sense of belonging to an ethnic group only play an important role in our lives at certain times and places?” (p. 11).

This passage alludes to the notion that persons claim ethnicities according to where they are during various stages of life. Readers of this text will see several examples of when it is advantageous to identify with certain cultures, while other times it can be to one’s disadvantage (the primordialist vs. instrumentalist view).

Chapter 2, *'Race', Ethnicity and School Achievement* is cutting-edge insofar as it connects *race* and ethnicity to student achievement in primary schools. As seen in chapter 1, *race* is often used as a way to classify persons for political and economic advantages/disadvantages. Unfortunately, the use of *race* does not change within educational institutions. Although *Brown v. Board of Education of 1954* supposedly resulted in desegregation, because of institutional racism, equality for all students regardless of skin pigmentation was not gained. Walters says "Some White parents did not want their child educated in a classroom with lots of colored students, and expressed concerns about the presence of immigrant children hindering the English language acquisition of their children" (p. 30). Being in a classroom with dark skinned students was interpreted as a disadvantage for white students. Thus, alluding to the idea that dark skinned students will impede the European learning process and pedagogical practices. Research indicates that NCLB serves students unequally: white middle-class students well, minority and poor students not so well (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This chapter empowers voices who advocate on behalf of students who are constantly placed at-risk and those who are disadvantaged.

Chapter 3, *'Race', Ethnicity and School Experience* suggests that quantitative research is not sufficient when seeking to understand the complexities and experiences of students who are disadvantaged. In order to capture a detailed understanding of the lives of this student population, researchers must call upon their voices. Statistical studies identify the numeric values of the academic outcomes of ethnic minority students. These numbers are often used as a tool for placing students on academic tracks, while the data should serve as an indicator for providing additional support for students who are not excelling. It is from this standpoint that the author encourages educational stakeholders to consider qualitative research as a way to investigate the experiences of minority pupils. Walters suggests that "qualitative research studies allow for a focus on process and on meanings; how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences and how they structure their social worlds" (p. 72). This chapter provides several qualitative research study cases that reinforce the importance of this scholastic form. Qualitative research does not diminish the need for quantitative research, instead it seeks to expound upon quantitative data.

Chapter 4, *'Race', Ethnicity and Research* reflects heavily upon the contributions of chapter 3 in order to contribute to the debate between educational researchers and social scientists. This chapter challenges scholars to rethink how theory and methodology are inexorably weaved together in both qualitative and quantitative work. Walters challenges the status quo who views theoretical positioning as a positivistic, objective and rational inquiry. The author employed qualitative research methodologies to show the relationship between race, ethnicity, and education by saying "Early research demonstrated that African-Caribbean and Asian pupils had struggles in school and that teachers had negative expectations and ideas about African-Caribbean pupils, particularly boys, and showed how these worked against this pupil group." (p. 99). *Teacher expectation* was a leading theme captured within the nuts-and-bolts of this study. Within this chapter, readers will discover ways that *teacher expectation* influences *student motivation* and *work ethic*. To this extent, the author recommends qualitative methodologies as a way for readers to capture how inequalities and racism are reproduced and become a normal part of our everyday institutional worlds, even within the context of educational spaces. Hartlep (2010) says "Research is important so long as it is well directed and well intentioned" (p. 51)

Chapter 5, *Taking Action around 'Race' and Ethnicity* is the final chapter of this scholastic text that Sue Walters has authored. This chapter does an outstanding job of providing historical background of what has been done over the past fifty years to take action against racism and to address the disadvantages of minorities. The author encouraged local and national governments to consider a continuum of assimilation, integration, cultural pluralism, multicultural education and anti-racist educa-

(Continued on page 22)

## Call for Nominations for the Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring

The Thomas F. Donlon Award for Distinguished Mentoring was established in 2000 in recognition of Tom's long and valued contributions to NERA, particularly as a mentor to so many colleagues. Since then the award has been presented annually to other NERA members who have demonstrated distinction as mentors of colleagues by guiding them and helping them find productive paths toward developing their careers as educational researchers.

The practice of mentoring in education has been going on for centuries and most of us can name a person who helped us move our careers along by being more than just a friend or colleague. That person may have been an advisor in developing your research agenda or perhaps brought you to NERA for the first time after suggesting that you might be ready for a conference presentation.

At this time nominations are again being sought for this annual award. Nominees must be NERA members and may be nominated by any member(s) of NERA to whom they served as mentors. If you would like to see a member of NERA who was your mentor be recognized for his/her contributions to your success, send your nomination to **Stephen G. Sireci via email at [sireci@acad.umass.edu](mailto:sireci@acad.umass.edu) by July 1, 2012**. In addition to the nomination letter, all nominations must be accompanied by *at least three letters of support* indicating the ways in which the nominee distinguished him/herself as a mentor. Up to five separate letters of support can be sent for each nominee. The award will be presented at the annual 2012 NERA conference. Please contact Steve if you have any questions about the Donlon Award or the nomination process.

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Book Review: *Ethnicity, Race, and Education: An Introduction*  
(Continued from page 21)

tion as ways to continue pursuing the goal of equality and equity in education for all students. It is with firmness and grace that she concludes this text by calling all readers to action. Finally, Ladson-Billings (1998) contends that "we must expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We [social justice educators] will have to take *bold* and sometimes *unpopular* positions" (p. 22, italics in original). Walters did an astounding job at employing the terms *ethnicity and race* as a foundation for this project. Although a plethora of topics are presented in this text, these terms remain consistent throughout each topic discussed. It is through a critical lens that I applaud Sue Walters for her commitment to composing this book. *Ethnicity, Race and Education: An Introduction* is a clarion call for all educators, parents, students, teacher education programs, and political activists who are passionate about providing equal access and opportunities for all students to receive a quality education.

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