



The NERA Researcher

Inside this issue

The President's Message



Ross Markle

Terms like “unprecedented,” “uncertain,” and “tumultuous” seem trite at this point, having almost lost their ability to articulate life amid a pandemic. At various moments over the last six months, I couldn’t help but think, “Of all the years for me to be NERA President, it had to be *this* one.” Yet, I also feel fortunate. As I look at graduating seniors who longed to walk across a stage, or Olympic athletes who trained their entire lives to peak at a particular moment—only to have those chances taken away—I do feel a sense of understanding. After all, looking back at past issues of *The Researcher*, this is typically the article where the President summarizes much of the work of the past year and highlights the elements of this year’s conference to which they are looking forward.

With regard to those accomplishments, let me say how proud I am of NERA’s Leadership in shepherding us through these times. The Officers, Board Members, Conference Team, and Committee Members have been so gracious and flexible with their time, even as some dealt with fears and uncertainties about their jobs and personal lives. They have been thoughtful and innovative with solutions to problems that we never thought we’d encounter. All the while forfeiting the one small reward that comes with such positions: the chance to enjoy time with colleagues and be recognized for their efforts that the NERA Conference traditionally provides.

Rather than discuss our efforts and plans to have NERA 2020 in a rich, engaging, virtual environment (I will leave that up to the message from the Conference Co-Chairs), I’d like to share some broader reflections on the importance of our work and NERA’s role in supporting it. Again, the President’s Message would typically lay out information for the conference, but I’d like to take a somewhat unconventional approach given an unconventional time.

While the pandemic has undoubtedly been a frightening public health concern, I cannot help but view it through the lens of education. As I write this, nearly six million Americans have contracted COVID-19, leading to more than 180,000 deaths—numbers that *will* rise by the time you read these words. The United States has not only failed to curb the spread of the disease but watched as other countries did so successfully. For example, Italy, which averaged more than 500 deaths per day in late March and early April, has averaged fewer than ten per day for the past month.

Our country has failed to respond to this pandemic because our people have not been sufficiently educated to demand a response. This indictment is not a socioeconomic proclamation, stating that more people should have gone to school or received a college degree. Instead, our society remains uneducated

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The NERA Researcher

The NERA Researcher is the official newsletter of the Northeastern Educational Research Association.

Message from the Editors

Dear NERA Members,

We want to send our best wishes to all our NERA family at this still unprecedented time and hope that you and your families, friends, and loved ones are all safe and well. As you have no doubt heard, our conference co-chairs—Jonathan, Thai, Madison, and Andrew—continue to plan a great virtual 51st annual NERA conference. In the coming weeks, you will receive emails with additional information about the conference.

This issue also contains Ross' very thought-provoking President's Message. If you have not read it, please do.

We also provide information about the conference and, in particular, that it is **free** this year for all current members. Keep an eye out for emails with additional information about the conference – did I already say that?!

We also have information about the upcoming election (NERA, that is), the Mentoring Program, and more. We are sure that you were all looking forward to gathering together in Trumbull in October, but we look forward to seeing you virtually and know we will still have a great conference.

Stay safe, well, and healthy,
Barbara J. Helms & Kate Nolan
The Editors

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because its people have not truly *learned* the necessary skills to understand something like this pandemic and insist that our government act appropriately.

This knowledge and understanding begin with basic numeracy and literacy. In the early days of the pandemic, arguments arose that “more people die from the flu” because people couldn’t distinguish between a raw number and a percentage. As time went on and doubts continued, our society lacked the *information literacy* to effectively parse out which information should be trusted and prioritized, listening more to anonymous social media posts than to advice from the Centers for Disease Control. All the while, a lack of ethical decision making allowed some, such as Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, to make outlandish statements like, “Well, we can’t just shut everything down because a few old or compromised people are going to die. That’s just a part of life.”

However, what role does a group like NERA play in all of this? From my perspective, NERA and similar organizations exist to bring critical issues to the attention of their members. This educational crisis has shown that we, as researchers, should be thinking more intensely about specific questions. For example, What *are* the outcomes of education? While we have focused so intensely on literacy and numeracy for the past century, should we not rethink or reprioritize factors such as information literacy and ethical decision making?

Issues of access, success, and completion across the educational spectrum now have more intense meaning. Thus, what interventions, policies, and practices can help to re-centralize the role of schooling and ensure that all citizens receive a quality education and are skilled in areas such as these.

More tactically—and more immediate, given what we are likely to face in the next few months—how do we create a meaningful virtual education? How do we ensure access across race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status?

In earnest, I had pushed for a conference theme of “Say it Loud, Say it Clear: Communicating Results and Driving Change” because I would like to see more researchers considering the broader impact of their work. I know this might upset some of our members, but purely methodological exercises have never interested me. I’m always that person in the back of the room who annoyingly asks (though usually to myself), “yes, but what are the *practical* implications?”

We, as researchers, have an incredible wealth of knowledge to bring to bear on both the educational community and society at large. We could write articles or blog posts to inform our friends and colleagues about the issues I’ve discussed or others that might help create a more “educated” society. We could write letters or draft petitions to inform our elected officials on these issues where ignorance permeates the conversation. We can also support and vote for candidates that value education.

However, these are all things we could do, no matter what our current job or research interest. How valuable might we be, as a community, if we chose to focus more on these societal questions? What if our organizational missions *and* operational practice promoted a well-educated society that values science in a public health debate? I don’t have an easy answer, and I don’t intend for anyone to quit their job tomorrow, but at the very least, I hope it is something we can discuss the next time we meet at NERA—whenever that might be.

Sincerely,
Ross Markle

Member News

Rebecca S. Natow, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at Hofstra University, was selected to be a Richard P. Nathan Public Policy Fellow with the Rockefeller Institute of Government for 2020-2021.

Elizabeth A Carter, Ph.D.

((Professional Member, Capella University Alum), is a contributing author in the recently published research textbook, **Cases on Performance Improvement Innovation** by IGI Global (ISBN 978-1-7998-3673-5). This book of case studies, assembled and edited by Drs. Darlene Van Tiem and Nancy Crain Burns, shares innovative research that illustrates many applications of performance improvement. This research is based on analysis, selection of strategy, monitoring, and evaluating results to accomplish organizational change through people, processes, and organizations. Dr. Carter’s chapter, “Member Value? Evaluating Professional and Learning Networks” describes the use of communities of professional practice to increase employee engagement and development. You can preview the book here: <https://www.igi-global.com/book/cases-performance-improvement-innovation/243750>.

Dr. Carter was also published in the summer edition of *Insights*, a professional insurance journal published by The Institutes CPCU Society. Her article, “Maximizing Employee Learning and Development,” similarly promotes communities of practice as a mechanism of learning as companies move from formal training environments to informal/social venues. Earlier this spring, Dr. Carter was recognized as a 2020 Distinguished Dissertation Award Winner by the International Society of Performance Improvement.

NERA Communications Committee Chair **Bo Bashkov** has accepted a new position as Lead Research Scientist with IXL Learning, a K-12 personalized e-learning company. In his new role, Bo will build and lead a team of research scientists in conducting efficacy/validity research.

Please submit your accomplishments to theneraresearcher@nera-education.org.

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2020 NERA Virtual Conference

“Say it Loud, Say it Clear: Communicating Results and Driving Change”

October 14–16, 2020

Dear NERA Members,

We are working hard to ensure we bring you a virtual experience that meets your expectations for the usual high-quality NERA content; and bring you together as a community, despite not being able to be together in-person in Trumbull this year. Below are answers to questions we’ve been receiving from some of you about this year’s virtual conference.

Will the dates of the conference stay the same?

Yes, we will meet during the regularly scheduled NERA dates: October 14th–16th. We will have a half-day on Wednesday (starting after lunch), a full day on Thursday, and a half-day on Friday (ending before lunch). All sessions will be scheduled in the Eastern Time Zone.

How much does it cost to attend the virtual conference?

Thanks to our generous sponsors, we can cover all conference costs through sponsorship dollars and membership dues. Thus, NERA 2020 is complimentary with a NERA membership. More information about joining or renewing your membership may be found [here](#).

What do I need to attend the virtual conference?

You will need a good internet connection, your device or computer, valid NERA membership, and a Whova account registration. All sessions will be on Zoom via the Whova platform—further details and guidance on how to navigate the virtual platform will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

How do I register for the virtual conference?

You will receive more information about how to access the Whova platform and register for the conference in the upcoming weeks.

[What if I am not available during the virtual conference dates?](#)

The content will be available on-demand following the conference for all NERA members.

Should I expect conference sessions to be different this year?

You can expect many sessions similar to those you see during a typical NERA conference. We will have a series of [invited sessions and workshops](#) across each of the days, sessions accepted from the call for proposals, GSIC sessions, the President’s address, an awards presentation, the annual business meeting, and social times.

We hope you are as excited about this year’s conference as we are. We will release the formal program and more details in the coming weeks. Stay tuned, and let us know what questions you have.

NERA conference co-chairs

Madison Holzman, Andrew Jones, Thai Ong, Jonathan Rubright
nera.cochairs@gmail.com

2020 NERA Conference Invited Speakers, Workshops, and Sessions

The theme for NERA 2020 is "**Say it Loud, Say it Clear: Communicating Results and Driving Change.**" We are thrilled to announce our invited speakers, workshops, and sessions that will help to bring this theme to life. It is our goal to have at least one featured session or workshop aligned to each of the following nine content areas supported by AERA:

Measurement and Psychometrics

Research Methods

Education and Psychology

Policy and Politics

Teaching and Teacher Education

The Professions

Social Context in Education

Technology in Education

Graduate Student Issues

We'll see you on October 14–16th.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Nathan Kuncel



Dr. Kuncel is the Marvin D. Dunnette Distinguished Professor of Psychology and a McKnight Presidential Fellow at the University of Minnesota. His research is focused on the measurement of human cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics and their relationship to important life outcomes, including academic and job performance.

Invited Workshops

A Practical Introduction to Extracting Linguistic Variables from Text

Victoria Yaneva, Ph.D., *NBME*

Christopher Runyon, Ph.D., *NBME*

Come to this three-hour workshop if you want to learn how to extract a variety of linguistic variables from text. We are going to present practical ways to do so and provide an example of how these can be used in a simple machine-learning model for predicting variables of interest (stay tuned for details). More broadly, this workshop will also be an introduction to techniques from the field of Natural Language Processing (NLP), which allow extraction of rich linguistic data corresponding to multiple levels of linguistic processing.

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Quasi-Experimental Research Designs within the Educational Context

S. Jeanne Horst, Ph.D., *James Madison University*
Beth A. Perkins, MA, *James Madison University*

It is the fortunate educational researcher who has the privilege of randomly assigning students to experimental conditions. Thus, within the context of educational research, quasi-experimental research designs are common. In this three-hour webinar, we will explore quasi-experimental research designs. The first hour will offer an overview of quasi-experimentation, including pros and cons of several quasi-experimental methods (e.g., regression discontinuity designs, propensity score matching, and generalized boosted models). The remaining two hours will offer applied examples of traditional and current quasi-experimental approaches. Resources, including R code, will be provided for participants' use following the workshop.

New to R? A Beginner's Workshop Starting with the Basics

Derek Sauder, Ph.D., *American Board of Internal Medicine*

In this workshop, participants will be introduced to R assuming no previous knowledge. As such, the workshop is geared towards R novices. It will cover topics such as: (1) what is R and why use it, (2) how to get data into R, (3) how to manipulate data in R, (4) R packages, and more! Participants will be provided all R code used in the demonstration and be given the opportunity to practice with R during the workshop. A laptop with R installed will be required.

Using Critical Qualitative Methods and Research to Examine Daily Life

Maleka Donaldson, Ed.D., *University of Hartford*
Aubry Threlkeld, Ed.D., *Endicott College*
Chris Buttimer, Ed.D., *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
Wendy Sims-Schouten, Ph.D., *University of Portsmouth*

Interested in expanding your methodological repertoire? Join this two-hour workshop that will introduce you to four applied qualitative approaches that can be used to explore the workings of daily life: portraiture, autoethnography, action research, and critical realist discourse analysis. The workshop will first offer an overview of each method—including insights into study design, data collection, and analysis—that is anchored in examples drawn from past research studies. After a discussion of the particularities and the differences among this set of approaches and a Q&A session, workshop participants will be invited to field their own research ideas, receiving critical feedback and support for future projects from the facilitators and fellow attendees.

Invited Sessions

Panel: Validity Evidence Based on Testing Consequences

Kristen Huff, Ed.D. (Panelist), *Vice President, Assessment and Research, Curriculum Associates*
Keith Markus, Ph.D. (Panelist), *Professor, CUNY*
Steve Sireci, Ph.D. (Panelist), *Professor, Distinguished University Professor, UMass Amherst*
Debbi Bandalos, Ph.D. (Moderator), *Professor, James Madison University*

Coordinated Session: Using Scores for Multiple Purposes in the Professions

Carol L. Barry, Ph.D. (Panelist), *Senior Psychometrician, American Board of Surgery*
Daniel P. Jurich, Ph.D. (Panelist), *Manager, Psychometrics, NBME*
Pamela K. Kaliski, Ph.D. (Panelist), *Senior Measurement Scientist, American Board of Internal Medicine*



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2020 NERA Membership New or Renew

Membership in NERA introduces you to a community of educators who are interested in all aspects of educational research. We have over 300 members representing 20+ states and offer an annual conference to our membership. We welcome experienced researchers, junior faculty, and graduate students.

Please remember: this year's virtual conference is FREE for all NERA members and that membership is one of the ways that is making it freely available to all members. You will receive more information from the co-chairs regarding conference registration and access.

Membership is annual (from October to October).

Membership Levels

Professional Member: \$50.00/yr. Full-time Student*: \$25.00/yr. Retired Member: \$25.00/yr.

*Please note that anyone who is a registered student (regardless of whether they also are employed full-time) is eligible for the student rate.

To [join](#) NERA, you must complete the online form. Payments are accepted via PayPal.**

To renew your membership, members should use the link sent annually in the summer. Contact the [NERA Treasurer](#) with questions.

If you have not yet renewed, you can expect to see a renewal reminder this week from treasurer@nera-education.org with your personal link for renewing membership. After renewing your membership, you will receive a link to sign up for the virtual NERA 2020 conference. Please note that we are only able to send the conference sign-up link to current NERA members. If you are able, we ask that you renew membership by September 25th to help us plan and prepare for our virtual environment.

If you are unable to join us for this year's virtual conference, the content will be available on-demand following the conference for all NERA members, and membership will ensure that you remain updated on NERA initiatives and continue your association with colleagues and friends.

In accordance with NERA's commitment to sustainability, members receive an electronic version of the newsletter.

If you have any questions about membership or the organization, please feel free to contact the Membership Committee (membershipcommittee@nera-education.org) or any of the [board members](#).

**NERA Membership Refund Policy
All membership purchases are final.

NERA Elections are Coming!

Rochelle S. Michel, Ph.D.
Past President and Chair, Nominations Committee

NERA Colleagues,

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, I am excited to announce that we will be voting on the following slate of candidates for the following elected positions:

President (1 position)

Nina Deng, Kaplan, Inc.
Andrew Jones, American Board of Surgery

Secretary (1 position)

Sarah Ferguson, Rowan University
Katrina Roohr, Educational Testing Service

Board of Directors (3 positions—2 positions for a 3-year term and 1 position for a 2-year term)

Bozhidar "Bo" Bashkov, IXL Learning
Tabitha Bellamy, New Jersey Department of Education
Jade Caines Lee, University of New Hampshire
Madison Holzman, Curriculum Associates
Jonathan Rubright, National Board of Medical Examiners

Shortly, each member will receive an e-mail with the candidates' biographical statements, as well as voting instructions. If you have questions about the election, please contact me at rochelle.michel@gmail.com.

Rochelle S. Michel, Ph.D.
NERA Past President and Chair, Nominations Committee



NERA Mentoring Program Update

Katrina Roohr, Educational Testing Service
Tanesia Beverly, Law School Admissions Council

The application window to participate in the NERA Mentorship Program in 2020 as either a mentor or mentee has closed. We received many applications and would like to thank all mentors and mentees who signed up to participate. We will be notifying all mentors and mentees with their assignments in mid- to late-September. We are very excited about implementing the program this year. The mentoring program is an invaluable opportunity for professional development, career guidance, and research consultation.

This year's mentoring program will be completely virtual and flexible in terms of scheduling. We are also strongly encouraging mentors and mentees to extend their interactions beyond the conference. We will be reaching out to those involved in the Mentoring Program throughout the next year to check-in and see how things are going. We also are hoping to get more feedback from mentors and mentees to find ways to best support these relationships moving forward.

If anyone has any questions about the NERA Mentoring Program, please feel free to reach out directly to Katrina Roohr (Kroohr@ets.org) or Tanesia Beverly (Tanesia.beverly@uconn.edu).



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Membership Committee

Rory Lazowski, Chair

Greetings from the Membership Committee! Earlier in the year, we were busy building our database of potential NERA members as well as developing a survey for members who have not renewed their membership so that we could better understand why.

We were also involved in outreach and communication efforts to get the word out on NERA's first summer webinar of 2020, "Intentional Online Learning: Shirking Assumptions of the Traditional Classroom," aired on June 18th and led by professionals from Thomas Edison State University. As part of this outreach, we were able to leverage both the potential members' database and the non-renewal database to advertise the webinar and encourage participants to become members of NERA. The Membership Committee worked collaboratively with the Communications Committee and the Infrastructure Committee in this effort, and we thank both committees for their help and guidance along the way!

Next up, we will be deploying the survey to members who have let their membership lapse. The survey has been finalized and will be sent out very shortly. We hope to gain valuable insight into why they have not renewed their membership. However, more importantly, we will provide them with an opportunity to return to the great NERA organization once again!

Rory Lazowski, Chair
rlazowski@collegeboard.org



Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation (PARE)

April Zenisky and Lisa Keller, Editors

Hi NERA Members,

Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation (PARE) is looking for your manuscripts! *PARE* is an on-line journal providing access to refereed articles that can have a positive impact on assessment, research, and evaluation. Manuscripts published in *PARE* are scholarly syntheses of research and ideas about methodological issues and practices. *PARE* is intended to help members of the community keep up-to-date with effective methods, trends, and research developments from a variety of settings, and is also committed to highlighting research that focuses on equity in assessment and measurement.

As you consider publication outlets for your work, add *PARE* to your list! Submission guidelines and recently published articles are at <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/>, and you can always send questions to the Co-Editors Lisa Keller and April Zenisky at pare@umass.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

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The Graduate Lounge

Beth Perkins, *James Madison 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 to increase the diversity of institutions represented at NERA.

Plans for NERA 2020 GSIC-Sponsored Conference Sessions

Join us, virtually, for the 51st Annual NERA Conference from October 14th–16th, 2020! The GSIC is sponsoring two sessions specifically for graduate students (although we hope the sessions will appeal to a wide range of NERA attendees). Keep an eye out for the conference program to mark the dates and times of the sessions on your calendar!

Session 1: *“Navigating the In-Person or Virtual Interview Process”*

Session 2: *“A Good Dissertation is a Finished Dissertation, but What Comes Next? Post-Dissertation Potential”*

Benefits of Serving on the Graduate Students Issues Committee

Serving on the GSIC is a great way to get involved with NERA and build relationships with other graduate students and professionals. Responsibilities include collaborating with students from various institutions to plan GSIC-sponsored, in-conference sessions and the GSIC student social. GSIC members also work with members of other NERA committees to help with additional tasks as needed. Members typically serve a 2-year term. If you are a graduate student and have questions about how to get involved with NERA, contact neragraduatestudents@gmail.com.

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2020 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award: Call for Best Paper Award Submissions Cancelled

This award is named in honor of Lorne H. Woollatt, a distinguished New York state educator who published *The Evolution of State-Local Governmental Relationships in New York State* in 1948 and was an active member of NERA. The first author of the award-winning paper receives a \$500 stipend to travel to AERA and present their work at the annual American Educational Research Association conference during one of the Distinguished Paper sessions of the Consortium of State and Regional Educational Research Associations. Due to the virtual format of this year's conference, the Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award will **not** be given. Stay tuned for next year.



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