

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

### Inside this issue:

Board of  
Directors 2

Message from the  
Editors 3

### 39th Conference

Program  
Highlights 4

Keynote  
Speaker 6

NERA Mentor  
Program 7

Pre-Sessions 9

In-conference  
Workshops 10

Registration 11

Member News 12

Lorne H.  
Woollatt  
Distinguished  
Paper  
Competition 13

The Graduate  
Lounge 14

Research  
Summary:  
Cyberbullying  
and Internet  
Predators 15

Visit us on the web  
at:

[www.nera-  
education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)

# The NERA Researcher

Volume 46, Issue 3

September 2008

## The President's Message



**David Moss**

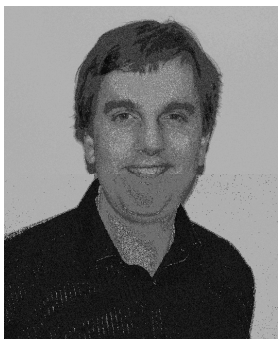
With the summer season behind us (I hope you took my advice and wore your sunscreen), the recent start of the academic year and mere weeks to our annual meeting, I once again find myself taking stock of NERA and what we value as an organization. Each time this year I receive an unsolicited email which notes some statistics and humorous facts about the incoming freshman class – not merely at the University of Connecticut, but from a national perspective. I usually find 30 seconds to glance at the email because I find that it reminds me of the continually expanding generation gap between me and my students. For example, traditional students entering college this year were *born* in 1990 (yikes!) and essentially have lived their entire lives on-line and wireless. Scholars have published very interesting research in recent years about this “wired generation” and describe their transformed notions of social networking and learning. Although easy to dismiss these realities as “just kids today,” I believe that as researchers, educators, and policy makers we do so at our peril. Thus, such an annual email filled with facts and figures about our newest students on campus remind me to reach out across what generational and technological divide may exist. Over the years I have found even the smallest of gestures, such as meeting a student for coffee, goes a long way to build professional relationships that help me be a more effective scholar and teacher.

As a mid-career faculty member, I find the same is true looking toward the other end of the continuum of our professional workforce. Folks who have been in the profession for more years than I have seen dramatic changes in policy and practice in education, while at the same time seen fads come and go with seemingly little change. What success I may have enjoyed here on campus over the past decade can be credited to a large extent to the guidance and patience of those senior scholars who took the time and effort to welcome me into this academic community. To this day I still rely on their institutional memory for guidance in a wide range of areas.

Thus, across the professional continuum in institutions of higher education, organizations, companies, as well as in the K-12 setting, effort must be placed on connecting the various students, clients, faculty, administrators, researchers and staff who comprise our communities – all with the noblest goal of ensuring opportunity and equity through education.

As we plan for our upcoming meeting, I strongly encourage you to think

*(Continued on page 3)*



**Thomas Levine**  
Program Co-Chair

**We were  
delighted at the  
avalanche of  
proposals that  
crested on June  
15; with more  
than 140  
proposals,  
including many  
full symposia!**



**Helen Marx**  
Program Co-Chair

## NERA 2008 Board of Directors

### President:

David Moss  
University of Connecticut  
[david.moss@uconn.edu](mailto:david.moss@uconn.edu)

### Past President:

**Steve Sireci**  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[Sireci@acad.umass.edu](mailto:Sireci@acad.umass.edu)

### President-Elect:

Kristen Huff  
The College Board  
[KHuff@collegeboard.org](mailto:KHuff@collegeboard.org)

### Secretary:

Darlene Perner (2006-2010)  
Bloomsburg University  
[dperner@bloomu.edu](mailto:dperner@bloomu.edu)

### Treasurer:

Barbara J. Helms (2004-2009)  
Education Development Center, Inc.  
[bjhelms@gmail.com](mailto:bjhelms@gmail.com)

### Directors:

Barbara Wert (2006-2009)  
Bloomsburg University  
[bwert@bloomu.edu](mailto:bwert@bloomu.edu)

Katharyn Nottis (2005-2008)  
Bucknell University  
[knottis@bucknell.edu](mailto:knottis@bucknell.edu)

Dolores Burton (2006-2009)  
New York Institute of Technology  
[dtburton@optonline.net](mailto:dtburton@optonline.net)

Brian Preston (2005-2008)  
Southern Westchester BOCES  
[bpreston@swboces.org](mailto:bpreston@swboces.org)

Thanos Patelis (2007-2010)  
The College Board  
[TPatelis@collegeboard.org](mailto:TPatelis@collegeboard.org)

Lynn Shelley-Sireci (2007-2010)  
Westfield State College  
[lshelley@wsc.ma.edu](mailto:lshelley@wsc.ma.edu)

## NERA 2008 Chairpersons

### Committee Chairs:

**Lorne H. Woollott Distinguished  
Paper Committee**  
Craig S. Wells  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[cswells@educ.umass.edu](mailto:cswells@educ.umass.edu)

### Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award

Diane E. Liebert  
DLE Associates  
[diane444@comcast.net](mailto:diane444@comcast.net)

### Thomas Donlon Mentoring Award

Samantha Feinman  
Lecturer, Pace University  
[sfeinman@pace.edu](mailto:sfeinman@pace.edu)

### Teacher-as-Researcher Award

Dolores Burton  
New York Institute of Technology  
[dtburton@optonline.net](mailto:dtburton@optonline.net)

### Graduate Student Issues Committee Chair:

Andri Ioannou  
University of Connecticut  
[andri.ioannou@gmail.com](mailto:andri.ioannou@gmail.com)

### Program Co-Chairs:

Helen A. Marx  
University of Connecticut  
[helen.marx@uconn.edu](mailto:helen.marx@uconn.edu)

Thomas H. Levine  
University of Connecticut  
[thomas.levine@uconn.edu](mailto:thomas.levine@uconn.edu)

### Program Co-Chairs' Assistant:

Meg Monaghan  
University of Connecticut  
[mmonag01@yahoo.com](mailto:mmonag01@yahoo.com)

### Current NERA Membership

Professional	173
Retirees	6
Graduate Students	91

**The President's Message**  
Continued from page 1

beyond the excellent papers, posters, symposia, and addresses we have planned for our 39th annual conference, and *explicitly* consider how we can reach out to each other in a supportive and productive way. In the same vein of reading the program to strategically outline which papers and posters we want to see, I encourage you to look at the ample informal opportunities built into the conference and plan to meet with our newest members as well as take some time to check in with those who have been attending NERA for much longer than incoming college students have been alive!

We have much to learn from each other beyond grant writing, publishing, and job hunting (although I personally have learned a great deal about these over a meal or a chat in the hotel lobby) which can serve to enrich us as both individuals and a community...and I hope you'll make the effort to get the most out of a conference designed from the ground up to foster and strengthen educational research while at the same time connecting people in an enduring and enjoyable way.

I look forward to chatting with you in a few weeks.

Sincerely,

David M. Moss

NERA President & Associate Professor in the Neag School of Education  
at the University of Connecticut

***"I strongly encourage you to think beyond the excellent papers, posters, symposia, and addresses... and explicitly consider how we can reach out to each other in a supportive and productive way."***

## Message from the Editors

**Read about the new pilot mentoring program designed to bring together experienced researchers with researchers-in-training on page 7!**

Greetings NERA Members! We hope you all had a safe and enjoyable summer. Fall is upon us and among other things that means the 39<sup>th</sup> NERA Conference is just around the corner.

Our conference chairs, Tom Levine and Helen Marx, have worked hard to create an exciting program. This issue of *The NERA Researcher* includes a list of program highlights as well as more detailed information about the excellent pre-conference workshops and in-conference events. In addition, there is information about a new pilot mentoring program designed to bring together experienced researchers with researchers-in-training (see page 7).

As was the case last year, the conference location is again the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill. Information about conference rates and how to reg-

ister for the conference can be found on page 11, or go online to [www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org). Also online you will find a full conference schedule, abstracts for special sessions, and information about the roles and responsibilities of presenters and discussants.

We hope you find this issue of *The NERA Researcher* informative. Please let us know if you have ideas on ways to improve this publication. Finally, we look forward to seeing you in October.

The Editors

Jennifer Kobrin  
The College Board  
[jkobrin@collegeboard.org](mailto:jkobrin@collegeboard.org)

Kevin Meara  
Educational Testing Service  
[kmeara@ets.org](mailto:kmeara@ets.org)

## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### Message from the 2008 Conference Co-chairs

#### **“Strengthen Educational Research”—your own, and all of ours—while joining us at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual NERA Conference!**

*As program chairs, we write to invite you to our 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference! All of the signs and buzz augur an outstanding conference. We were delighted at the avalanche of proposals that crested on June 15; with more than 140 proposals, including many full symposia. We have had more interest in sharing research at NERA than any of us can remember. For those of you who are new to NERA, we hope you are as excited as we are to have you joining us this October. NERA is a welcoming space for young and experienced researchers alike; we are thrilled that you are interested in our organization, and urge you not to miss our October conference. We have made arrangements for a great keynote speaker and outstanding pre-session leaders, and are also planning a variety of exciting in-conference opportunities, all in support of this year's theme, “Strengthening Educational Research.” You'll find some of the highlights of the program below. We hope this list will convince you to arrive early Wednesday afternoon for one of the pre-sessions, and to stay through some of the special sessions and symposia we'll offer Friday. All the times noted are tentative.*

#### **Wednesday, 10/22, 12:15-1:45 p.m.: “Thinking through qualitative data”**

Engage in discussion about the nature of ethnography and qualitative data analysis with Tom Schram, whose own research includes ethnographic studies of Laotian refugee students in rural New Hampshire and inner-city teachers in northeastern Brazil. Schram is the author of *Conceptualizing and Proposing Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (2006).

#### **Wednesday, 10/22, 1:00-3:15 p.m.: “Current Topics in Item Response Theory.”**

Due to the success of last year's pre-session, we have persuaded Swaminathan to return with Jane Rogers to address “Current Topics in Item Response Theory.” Note that Ronald Hambleton—co-sponsor of the next workshop—plus Swaminathan and Rogers literally wrote the book on *Fundamentals of Item Response Theory* (1991).

#### **Wednesday, 10/22, 4:00-5:30 p.m. “Reporting Test Scores in More Meaningful Ways: Some New Findings, Research Methods, and Guidelines for Score Report Design”**

Let Ronald K. Hambleton and April L. Zenisky help you rethink the end-users and uses of test scores. Find a description on page 10.

#### **Thursday, 10/23, 10:15-11:15 a.m. NERA Members' Poster session.**

Look across a wide swath of cutting edge and emergent research by our graduate students, faculty members, and researchers in schools and organizations. We've scheduled no other sessions and saved this prime time for our poster session. We look forward to our entire

membership gathering to engage poster presenters and each other in dialogue about our research.

**Thursday, 10/23, 11:30-12:30 p.m. Keynote Address: Strengthening Educational Research.**

We are delighted to offer a keynote address by Marilyn Cochran-Smith, the John E. Cawthorne Millennium Chair in Teacher Education for Urban Schools at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College. Dr. Cochran-Smith's experiences as researcher, journal editor, doctoral program director, and past AERA President uniquely qualify her to help us consider the challenges and possibilities of strengthening educational research.

**Friday, 10/24, time TBA. "Grant writing workshop".**

Hear Stan Shaw, an experienced and successful grant writer and teacher of grant writing, share tips on this essential support to your research.

**Friday, 10/24, 9:00-10:30. "An introduction to growth curve modeling using HLM"**

By popular request—for the topic and the presenter—University of Connecticut's Betsy McCoach is teaming up with Anne Black at Yale to offer this introductory workshop, which is described further on page 10.

**Friday, 10/24, 10:45-noon. "The past and future of teacher education".**

Michael Andrew, Distinguished Professor and Director of Teacher Education at the University of New Hampshire, has spent several decades thinking about and carrying out teacher education. Come let his perspective on past trends and issues, the state of teacher education now, and key concerns going forward inform your research and your practice.

\* \* \*

*The heart of our conference—paper sessions, symposia, and working groups—promise to be just as strong as the events listed above. We have a stimulating group of thematic symposia lined up for Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning, including sessions on fostering student engagement across differences, college readiness, special education and rehabilitation research, leadership preparation practices, and many more timely topics.*

*We hope this list whets your appetite for the exciting and substantive research and workshops that your colleagues want to share with you. A full conference schedule—describing many more symposia, paper sessions, and other events—should be available at NERA's website by the time you are reading this article.*

*As always, you can email questions about the conference to us at [neramembers@gmail.com](mailto:neramembers@gmail.com). We look forward to renewing our acquaintances or to welcoming you to NERA for the first time this October!*

**Tom Levine and Helen Marx, 2008 NERA Conference Co-Chairs**



## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### Conference Theme and Keynote Speaker

Our conference's theme this year, "Strengthening Educational Research," responds to challenges we all face. At a time when many question the relevance and rigor of educational research, identifying the challenges and barriers to conducting high quality research is more pressing than ever. With an eye toward impacting policy and practice, how can we strengthen educational research?

As we address this question, we will hear from Dr. Marilyn Cochran-Smith, the John E. Cawthorne Millennium Chair in Teacher Education for Urban Schools at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College.



Dr. Marilyn  
Cochran-Smith

Dr. Cochran-Smith served as President of AERA in 2004-05. During her six years as editor of the *Journal of Teacher Education*, she led the review of almost 2000 manuscripts. She co-chaired the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, which reviewed the findings and rigor of a wide swath of research in

teacher education. In addition to her national leadership in educational research, she directs the doctoral program in curriculum and instruction for the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. All of these experiences have put Dr. Cochran-Smith in a unique position to think with us about the problems and possibilities of educational research, and to offer perspective on how we can strengthen our work. Cochran-Smith is the author or editor of seven books and more than 100 articles, chapters and editorials. Her recent books include: *Walking the Road: Race, Diversity and Social Justice in Teacher Education* (Teachers College Press, 2004); *Policy, Practice and Politics in Teacher Education* (Corwin, 2005); and *The 3rd Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Times* (Routledge, 2008).

**Join us on  
Thursday  
October 23  
11:30 - 12:30 p.m.  
for the Keynote Address**

## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### NEW Pilot Program: Interested in working with a NERA mentor?

Our NERA conference theme this year is strengthening educational research. NERA has always been a place where regional educational researchers could find and learn from each other, and where researchers-in-training could find opportunities and resources to compliment those at their home institutions. This year, at our annual conference, we're piloting a more formal arrangement for mentoring in our efforts to strengthen educational research. If you might be interested in participating in a 2-hour roundtable with a NERA Mentor, read on. On the next page, you will find short biographies of several NERA Mentors who will each read work by four mentees in advance of the conference, and will facilitate a conversation about their work at the conference.

#### *What is expected of NERA Mentees and Mentors.*

1. Four weeks before our conference—right around the time of notification—four mentees will send their mentor and the other three members of their mentor group up to 20 pages (double spaced, normal font size) of their own work in progress. What they send could comprise a dissertation chapter, a portion of a dissertation proposal, a journal manuscript, a grant application, or a similar artifact of research.
2. Any mentee, by participating, agrees to read the three submissions from the three other mentees in advance of the conference.
3. A NERA mentee will spend 2 hours with her or his NERA Mentor and peer mentees engaged in about 30 minutes of conversation about each person's work. Participants will have a chance to comment on and learn from colleagues' work in progress.
4. NERA Mentors will come to the table ready to facilitate the conversation and offer their own feedback and suggestions to their four mentees.
5. We'll ask all involved to make suggestions regarding the format as we decide whether to continue the program and how we might support and improve it.

#### *How to apply:*

Graduate students and (self-defined) junior faculty interested in participating should send an email titled "NERA Mentoring application" to [neramembers@gmail.com](mailto:neramembers@gmail.com) by 9 p.m., September 21, 2008. Please include, in the text of the email itself:

1. Your name, position/role, and home institution or organization, [i.e., Joe Jones, Ph.D. candidate (Multicultural Education), University of Delaware.]
2. The topic of research and the nature of the document you'd like to share with a mentor and fellow mentees [i.e., "first half, draft dissertation proposal about..."]
3. The name of the mentor—from the group on page 8—whom you think would be the best fit for your work.
4. A 300-word introduction to yourself, your research and/or methodological interests, and the work-in-progress you would like to contribute to a mentoring roundtable.

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. We will also work to ensure that doctoral students are well represented at these tables, but members with any background and position are welcome to apply. Our apologies in advance if, this year, we are unable to match all who are interested with a mentor.

## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### 2008 NERA Mentors



**Sara Finney**

**Sara Finney**, Associate Professor, James Madison University

Interests: Structural Equation Modeling, Validity, EFA vs. CFA, Mixture Modeling  
The majority of Dr. Finney's research involves the application of structural equation modeling to gather construct validity evidence for various

self-report attitudinal/affective measures (e.g., achievement goals, social goals, academic motivation, self-efficacy). Additionally, she has studied various practical issues associated with structural equation modeling (e.g., non-normality, item parceling). Her other interests include the application of mixture modeling to explore possible taxonomic structure, statistics education, and student learning and development outcome assessment in Student Affairs. For more information see <http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/people/finney.htm>

**Timothy Reagan**, Visiting Professor of Educational Leadership, Central Connecticut State University.

Interests: Educational linguistics, educational leadership, critical pedagogy  
Dr. Reagan's academic work includes research and publications in the areas of applied and educational linguistics, foreign language education, critical pedagogy, educational leadership, and comparative and international education. He is especially well-known for his work on reflective practice, the linguistics of sign languages (both American Sign Language and South African Sign Language), language policy and language planning in education, and critical linguistics in foreign language education. He was one of the founders of the International Society for Language Studies, and the founding co-editor of the Society's Journal *Critical Issues in Language Studies: An International Journal*. (drawn from wikipedia.com)



**Tom Schram**

**Tom Schram**, Associate Professor, University of New Hampshire

Interests: Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Development, and Cultural Anthropology

Three fields of interest define Dr. Schram's work: (1) Qualitative Research Methodologies—how to conceptualize field

-based qualitative research, fieldwork methods, and data analysis; (2) Anthropology and Education—ethnographic research, cultural therapy, and schooling among Southeast Asian immigrants; and (3) Teacher Education—school-university collaboration and teacher preparation. His research history includes the life history and socialization of an experienced elementary school teacher (1988-1990); patterns of adaptation among Laotian adolescents in a rural New England community (1991-1994); portfolios and collaborative inquiry among interns and teachers (1994-1995); national reform in mathematics education and the role of the NCTM Standards (1992-1995); collaboration, cultural therapy, and educational reform in northeastern Brazil (1995-1998); how novice researchers conceptualize and design qualitative inquiries (1999-2002); and the nature of ethnographic fieldwork and reasoning (2003-ongoing).

**Michael Young**, Associate Professor, University of Connecticut

Interests: Educational Psychology, Situated Cognition, Technology

Dr. Young earned his Ph.D. in educational psychology, with a minor in cognitive psychology. His research concerns situated cognition as a theory for understanding how people think and learn, and focuses primarily on how educational technology can enhance thinking and learning. Dr. Young is also interested in the use of technology in teacher education and in K-12 teaching. For more detail, see <http://web.uconn.edu/myoung>.



## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### Pre-Session Workshops Wednesday, October 22



**Tom Schram**

#### Thinking Through Qualitative Data

**Tom Schram, University of New Hampshire**

How do we work with and through data generated through ethnographic fieldwork? What are some foundational tools of inquiry for making sense of what people do and say? This workshop will address these questions and related issues that include:

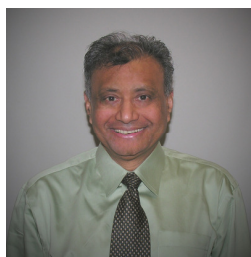
- How might we think about the central analytical task of the ethnographer?
- What are the essential operating assumptions of the ethnographer?
- How can we generate and frame data sets from field notes?
- What sorts of questions can we ask of our data to move our analysis forward?
- How do context and sequence matter in qualitative data analysis?

In addressing these questions, Tom will draw upon examples from his own research and his experience working with doctoral students across a range of qualitative studies. Workshop participants will be encouraged to share their own insights, experiences, frustrations, and ideas about making sense of data generated through qualitative fieldwork.

*Tom Schram is an Associate Professor of Education at the University of New Hampshire. He is an educational anthropologist who has conducted fieldwork in the United States and Brazil, and currently teaches graduate seminars in qualitative research design, ethnography, field relations and qualitative data analysis.*

#### Current Topics in Item Response Theory

**Hariharan Swaminathan and H. Jane Rogers**  
**Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut**



**Hariharan  
Swaminathan**

The purpose of this NERA pre-session workshop is to introduce participants who already have a basic understanding of item response theory to current topics that are not normally covered in a basic course. The topics include:

- Dichotomous and polytomous item response models
- Computer software: WINSTEPS, BILOG, PARSCALE, MULTILOG
- Mixed format tests that include both dichotomous and free response items
- Scaling of mixed format tests
- Vertical scaling: problems and solutions
- Dimensionality



**H. Jane Rogers**

The participants are expected to have an understanding of the basic concepts of item response theory. As the computer programs (WINSTEPS, BILOG, PARSCALE, and MULTILOG) used in the training session are commercially available, they will not be provided to participants. Nevertheless, participants who have access to these programs are encouraged to bring their laptops so that they can follow the illustrations on their laptops (the data used for the illustrations will be provided).

Text: Hambleton, R.K., Swaminathan, H., Rogers, H.J. (1991). *Fundamentals of Item Response Theory*. Sage Press.

## **Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008**

### **In-Conference Workshops**

#### **Reporting Test Scores in More Meaningful Ways: Some New Findings, Research Methods, and Guidelines for Score Report Design**

**Ronald K. Hambleton and April L. Zenisky**

**University of Massachusetts at Amherst**

***Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 22, 4:00-5:30 p.m.***

Testing practices in education and psychology have advanced considerably in recent years through the introduction of item response theory models, generalizability theory, automated test assembly, and new test designs such as computer-adaptive testing. At the same time, methods for reporting test scores and diagnostic information to candidates, the culmination of the testing process, remain largely understudied and undervalued as a problem in educational and psychological assessment. This is most unfortunate too because of the large amount of evidence suggesting that candidates and other score users such as teachers, policy-makers, psychologists, and the media, are often confused by the meaning of test scores resulting in misinterpretations, and candidates are often disappointed by the limited amount of diagnostic information they receive from hours of testing.

The goals of this workshop include: (1) providing evidence about the shortcomings of score reporting methods in education, psychology, and credentialing, (2) describing several promising ideas (e.g., benchmarking and item mapping) and providing examples for enhancing the clarity and meaning of score reports (e.g., more use of focus groups, “think-aloud” studies, and experimental research to compile data for validating score reports), (3) offering guidelines for score report design based on our recent research in preparing score reports and score scales, and (4) providing attendees with exercises to gain experience in both constructively criticizing score reports and designing better score reports. Examples of good and bad practices presented in the workshop will come from our work with several national and state testing programs, and several credentialing agencies.

---

#### **An introduction to growth curve modeling using HLM**

**D. Betsy McCoach, University of Connecticut, and**

**Anne C. Black, Yale University**

***Tentatively scheduled for Friday, October 24, 9:00-10:30 a.m.***

While, there are many ways to analyze longitudinal data, growth curve modeling is one of the most common methods used to study growth processes over time. Using the multilevel framework to model growth over time, we can estimate starting values and growth trajectories for every person in the sample. We can also introduce person-level covariates (such as IQ, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) to explain differences among people in terms of their starting values and their growth rates. Finally, we can include time-varying covariates to model the impact of independent variables that change over time (such as amount of time spent on homework, semester GPA, etc.) on individuals' growth trajectories. Thus, multilevel modeling allows us to create a rich model of individual growth processes. In this session, we will introduce participants to the basic concepts behind growth curve modeling, and we will demonstrate an application of growth curve modeling using the HLM software program.

## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 22-24, 2008

### Conference Location and Registration

#### Registering for NERA's conference is quick and convenient:

- Go to the NERA website, <http://www.nera-education.org/>.
- Choose "Annual Conference." You'll find one link that will bring you directly to the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill Hotel's reservations page and the special conference rates. There are separate links at the bottom of the webpage for registering for the conference.
- Pay for your conference registration and room reservation using PayPal, a very secure portal for online financial transactions. The NERA website also provides a link for downloading a registration form, which you can print and mail along with a check if you prefer to register for the conference in this way.

**Please note:** Graduate students must register for the conference, even though they'll pay no registration fee if they are NERA members.

#### Reserving Your Room at the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill:

We were able to secure excellent rates to offer NERA members, including a special graduate student quad rate described below. Conference attendees may reserve a double and split the regular cost, or may reserve a single room. The Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill is offering us single occupancy rooms at \$193.00 per night plus tax, and double occupancy rooms at \$271.00 per night plus tax. A room reserved for Wednesday night includes Wednesday dinner and Thursday breakfast and lunch; a room reserved for Thursday night includes Thursday dinner and Friday breakfast and lunch. To receive any of these special rates, reservations must be made through NERA's webpage by Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

#### New Conference Quad Rate for Graduate Students:

It will be even easier for graduate students to afford all the opportunities at our annual NERA Conference this October. The Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill is offering a special Graduate Student quad rate of \$427.00, which includes meals and accommodations for four students per night, and thus comes to \$107 per student. This special rate is available for graduate students ONLY. The graduate students are responsible for finding their roommates. One student will have to use a credit card to reserve the room for the quad. ***Re-member, each graduate student must also register for the conference individually.***

Conference registration requires a separate on-line form available through the NERA website. Graduate students pay only \$15 for their annual membership dues, and pay no registration fee for the conference.

**The deadline to  
reserve rooms at  
conference rates is  
October 1st.**

## Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) Member News and Announcements

**Anthony Artino, Jr.** successfully defended his dissertation on May 1, 2008 and graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Dr. Artino recently published articles in the *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *TechTrends*, and the *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, and was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD.

**Mary Yakimowski**, Director of Assessment at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education was voted on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Test Directors.

**Drs. Steven Nathanson, John Pruslow and Roberta Levitt** published the results of a 2 ½ year research study entitled: "The Reading Habits and Literacy Attitudes of Prospective and Inservice Teachers: Results of a Questionnaire Survey." The article will appear in the fall issue of *The Journal of Teacher Education*.

**Peter Swerdzewski** graduated with his Ph.D. from James Madison University's Assessment and Measurement Program, and was honored during the May 2008 commencement ceremonies with the Department of Graduate Psychology's Overall Outstanding Student at the Doctoral Level recognition, as well as the department's Outstanding Scholarship Award. Dr. Swerdzewski and his co-authors Sara J. Finney and J. Christine Harmes were the winners of the inaugural NERA Graduate Student Issues Committee Paper Award. Dr. Swerdzewski has joined the College Board as an Assistant Research Scientist and will be conducting research that focuses on the higher education community.

### Membership Committee Report

The Membership Committee continues to be pleased by the response to the 2008 Call for Proposals. Early indications suggest that our efforts to spread the word about NERA and broaden representation within the organization are succeeding. Thank you to all of the members who have graciously helped out by posting information about NERA on their electronic mailing lists, talking with colleagues, and encouraging graduate students to get involved! This year's submission pool reflects the work of over 40 different affiliations, including universities, state departments of education, secondary schools and educational research organizations.

We are especially pleased to have received submissions from several groups that have not been strongly represented in the past. Welcome to our colleagues from Boston College, New York University, Siena College, University of Wisconsin, and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, among others!

The Membership Committee would also like to extend a huge thank you to the 50+ members who volunteered to review proposals this year! Your help has been invaluable. We will continue to broaden and deepen our membership pool. I look forward to hearing any suggestions - come visit at the registration table at the annual conference.

-Meg Monaghan

## 2008 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Competition

In 1990, NERA renamed its distinguished paper award to honor Lorne H. Woollatt, a distinguished New York State educator and an active member of NERA. The award, now known as the Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award, is presented annually to a NERA member whose paper is deemed exemplary by the Award Committee.

Any paper reviewed and accepted by the Program Committee and presented at the 2008 NERA Annual Conference may be submitted for competition. Only one paper can be selected so the Committee is looking for an outstanding paper. We encourage submissions from those who received high marks or positive feedback from the Program Committee reviewers, your session's discussant or others. The winning paper will automatically be accepted for the 2009 AERA Annual Meeting as part of a session sponsored by the AERA/SIG: Consortium of State and Regional Educational Research Associations (SRERA). The award also includes a monetary stipend to help de-

fray the recipient's travel expenses to AERA.

If you wish to enter your paper into the competition, please email two copies of your paper to the 2008 Committee Chair, Craig Wells at [cswells@educ.umass.edu](mailto:cswells@educ.umass.edu) no later than October 30, 2008. Please send one BLIND copy of your paper and one copy with your name and the following information: affiliation, address, email address and phone number.

Please note that the paper is to be based on your NERA presentation and should not include information that differs substantially from that which you actually presented at the NERA conference. Papers in the Research-in-Progress sessions are not appropriate for submission. In addition, papers should be limited to no more than a total of 20 double-spaced pages (not including Tables/Figures or References).

---

### NERA Elections:

Election ballots were mailed out before September 1 and are due on September 30. We are pleased to have a terrific slate of candidates for Board and President-Elect. This slate ensures NERA will continue to have strong leadership for the foreseeable future. The candidates are:

#### President-elect:

Brian Preston  
(Southern Westchester Boces),

Katharyn Nottis  
(Bucknell University)

#### Board of Directors:

Sara Finney  
(James Madison University),

John Young  
(Educational Testing Service),

April Zenisky  
(University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Please join me in thanking these colleagues for agreeing to help serve NERA.

Thanks. --Steve



## The Graduate Lounge

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) cordially invites all NERA graduate student members to attend the GSIC Session at the 39th Annual Conference on Thursday afternoon, October 23, 2008, at the Hartford Marriott, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

After our successful GSIC session in October 2007 – publishing in professional journals and exploring career options – we are now planning the second GSIC session around common interests of graduate students. Our session this year will focus on how to construct a good curriculum vita/resume and tailor it across different job areas (academics, education, private organizations/corporations); and how to prepare for an interview. Expert guest speakers will talk about their

experiences and recommendations. There will be a question and answer section at the end of the session where attendees will be able to address their individual needs and concerns. A flyer with the details about the GSIC Session will be provided to all graduate students at the registration desk.

Besides organizing the GSIC session, GSIC is planning the election of the committee members for 2008-2009. Announcements for committee openings will be posted on the NERA website in September (please check <http://www.nera-education.org/gsic.php>). GSIC 2008-2009 membership will be finalized following the conference in October and announced in the *NERA Researcher*.

Andri Ioannou, Chairperson

### GSIC Members 2007-2008

**Carol Barry**  
James Madison University  
[barrycl@jmu.edu](mailto:barrycl@jmu.edu)

**Megan France**  
James Madison University  
[francemk@jmu.edu](mailto:francemk@jmu.edu)

**Andri Ioannou**  
University of Connecticut  
[andri.ioannou@gmail.com](mailto:andri.ioannou@gmail.com)

**Leah Kaira**  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[lkaira@educ.umass.edu](mailto:lkaira@educ.umass.edu)

**Christine (Lewis) Shea,**  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[clewis@acad.umass.edu](mailto:clewis@acad.umass.edu)

**Asil A. Özdoğru,**  
University at Albany  
[aozdogru@yahoo.com](mailto:aozdogru@yahoo.com)

### **Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award Competition**

We would like to encourage all graduate students to participate in the 2008 Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award Competition. The deadline for submission will be within one week of the end of the 2008 NERA Conference. An announcement about the award will be sent to all NERA graduate student members beginning October 2008, and will also be posted on the NERA website.



## Cyberbullying and Internet Predators: A Concern for Educators and Parents

**Stacey L. Kite**  
Johnson & Wales University

**Robert K. Gable**  
Johnson & Wales University

**Lawrence Filippelli**  
Scituate Middle School

Social networking sites (such as Myspace and Facebook), instant messaging programs, and text messaging are initiating numerous problems for school administrators on a national level (McKenna, 2007). Stacey L. Kite, Robert K. Gable, and Lawrence Filippelli at Johnson & Wales University are conducting a research project on the Internet behaviors of middle school students, specifically with regard to cyberbullying and Internet predators.

Adolescents are willing to divulge personal information on the Internet, information that they may not share in person. Cyberbullying is a way for bullies to attack their victims both in and out of school (Franek, 2005). Furthermore, Shariff (2008) found that some students, who would not bully in school, might participate in cyberbullying.

The Internet allows us to find a myriad of information about people, places, and things. The issue with this opportunity is that it also allows others, with less than good intentions, to search for information about students. The increased usage of electronic forms of communication has opened the door to new and dangerous predators to our children.

The first phase of this study surveyed 588 students in grades 7 & 8 from an urban and a suburban school. The survey revealed that 78% of students had not threatened or bullied another student via the Internet. Although this is a high percentage, there is a concern for the 10% that indicated that they had engaged in this behavior. According to the literature, an individual that is bullied is likely to become a bully themselves in the future (Shariff, 2008). Therefore, this number has the likelihood of multiplying over time. The findings for some of the other survey items revealed that 71% of the students did not feel a predator

could contact them based on the information they revealed online. Likewise, 63% did not believe an Internet predator could track them based on the information they posted on Myspace or Facebook.

The second phase of this study focused on knowledge of appropriate behaviors, and the actual behaviors regarding social networking sites. Relationships of student responses to gender, grade level, and school type were examined. Significant relationships were found for bullying behaviors, knowledge of appropriate behaviors, Internet predator risk, and Internet usage.

The third phase of the research recently gathered a new sample of 1,400 middle school students who completed a revised version of the survey. The revised survey included additional items on student knowledge and behavior, and items relating to a new dimension – parental involvement.

This line of research aims to understand the status of behaviors and views of middle school students. The results could potentially assist schools in developing educational programs and safeguards to protect students.

### References

- Franek, M. (2005/2006.) Foiling cyberbullies in the new wild west. *Educational Leadership*, 63, 39-43.
- McKenna, P. (2007). The rise of cyberbullying. *New Scientist*, 195 (2613), 60.
- Shariff, S. (2008). *Cyberbullying: Issues and solutions for the school, the classroom, and the home*. New York: Routledge.

**NERA RESEARCHER**  
Dr. Barbara J. Helms, Treasurer  
P. O. Box 66114  
Auburndale, MA 02466-1903

---

# **The NERA Researcher**

## **Volume 46, Issue 3**

### **September 2008**

---