

The NERA Researcher

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Newsletter of the Northeastern Educational Research Association

Editors: *Geraldine Mongillo, William Paterson University, and Heejung An, William Paterson University*

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stephen G. Sireci



Passionate Research

Every September, I read the sentence I am about to write. I can't believe this is my last *NERA Researcher* column! After my inspiring Presidential address on October 18, I will no longer be President of NERA, and the important job of writing this column falls to President-elect David Moss. David, thanks for all of your help over this past year. It has been a pleasure working with you over the past year and I look forward to working with you and the other Board members as Past-President in 2008.

I am really excited about the 2007 conference next month. I know that some of you remain disappointed the conference is not in the Catskills this year, but what we may lack in scenery we will make up for in content. April Zenisky and Amy Dresher have put together a terrific program. Proposals were up over 10% this year and the 2007 program features more paper sessions, two keynote speakers, two pre-conference workshops, and two poster sessions. (See the conference program summary inside this newsletter.) I predict it will be one of the best conferences yet. And good news—the way things look right now for the Yankees, I won't need to cut the Presidential Address short so that we can watch the World Series.

In my last column, I tried to stir up some debate and invited members to comment on my thoughts related to educational assessment policy. Since I did not receive a

single response, I've concluded that either everyone agrees with me or no one actually reads this column. I thought about doing a little experiment to test the second hypothesis where I send in gibberish to see if I got any reaction, but I chickened out at the last minute. Instead, I'm going to use my last inches of this paper pulpit to talk about passion—passion for educational research. Why? Because I believe that if we remain passionate about educational research, our research endeavors will be more interesting and will have a more positive impact on society. After all, education is a communal moral imperative, and passionate educational research will help improve education on several levels—assuming one thing—the research is not only passionate, it is methodologically sound.

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Message from the Editors

Greetings NERA Members! Summer is waning and the fall is upon us. Autumn is a time for transformation and like the season this year's conference will bring change. A major change this year is the location of the 38th annual conference which we will hold at the Marriott in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Our conference chairs, Amy and April, have worked long and hard to create an exciting, and informative event. This issue includes a preliminary conference schedule, pre-session announcement, information about the Keynote speakers, and much more. As you will read, this year promises to be a stimulating and enlightening conference.

Looking forward to seeing you in Connecticut!

- Gerri & Heejung

The Editors

Geraldine Mongillo

William Paterson University
Wayne, NJ 07470
mongillog@wpunj.edu

Heejung An

William Paterson University
Wayne, NJ 07470
anh2@wpunj.edu



New NERA Website Coming Soon!

The new site is being designed and created as we speak. Jaime Bernard of Infinite Blue Creative, Inc. in Newton, MA is doing the design work. The executive committee has reviewed the draft homepage and were very pleased. We are currently working on the text and are hoping early September. Once that happens, people will be able to register and pay their membership dues and conference fees online if they register in advance. We will send a mass e-mail to everyone as soon as we are live.

NERA Officers, Board Members & Chairpersons

Stephen G. Sireci, President

[University of Massachusetts, sireci@acad.umass.edu](mailto:sireci@acad.umass.edu)

Theresa Rooney, Past President

[York College/CUNY, rooney@york.cuny.edu](mailto:rooney@york.cuny.edu)

David M. Moss, President-Elect

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

Darlene Perner, Secretary

[Bloomsburg University, dperner@bloomu.edu](mailto:dperner@bloomu.edu)

Barbara J. Helms, Treasurer

[Education Development Center, Inc., bjhelms@gmail.com](mailto:bjhelms@gmail.com)

Amy Dresher, Program Co-Chair (2006-2007)

[Educational Testing Service, adresher@ets.org](mailto:adresher@ets.org)

April Zenisky, Program Co-Chair (2006-2007)

[University of Massachusetts, azenisky@educ.umass.edu](mailto:azenisky@educ.umass.edu)

Dolores Burton, Director (2006-2009)

[New York Institute of Technology, dburton@nyit.edu](mailto:dburton@nyit.edu)

Kerry Dunn, Director (2006-2009)

[Marist College, kerry.dunn@marist.edu](mailto:kerry.dunn@marist.edu)

Kristen Huff, Director (2004-2007)

[College Board, khuff@collegeboard.org](mailto:khuff@collegeboard.org)

Katharyn Nottis, Director (2005-2008)

[Bucknell University, knottis@Bucknell.edu](mailto:knottis@Bucknell.edu)

Brian Preston, Director (2005-2008)

[Southwestern Boces, bpreston@swboces.org](mailto:bpreston@swboces.org)

Barbara Yingling Wert, Director (2006-2009)

[Bloomsburg University, bwert@bloomu.edu](mailto:bwert@bloomu.edu)

Dolores Burton, Chair, Teacher-as-Researcher Award Committee

[New York Institute of Technology, dburton@nyit.edu](mailto:dburton@nyit.edu)

Richard Schwab, Chair, Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award Committee

[University of Connecticut, richard.schwab@uconn.edu](mailto:richard.schwab@uconn.edu)

Diane Liebert, Co-Chair Distinguished Paper Award Committee

[DLE Associates, diane444@comcast.net](mailto:diane444@comcast.net)

Douglas Penfield, Co-Chair Distinguished Paper Award

[Rutgers University, dougpen@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:dougpen@rci.rutgers.edu)

Liora P. Schmelkin, Chair, Tom Donlan Memorial Award Committee

[Hofstra University, Liora.P.Schmelkin@hofstra.edu](mailto:Liora.P.Schmelkin@hofstra.edu)



38th Annual Conference, October 17-19, 2007

Making Differences Through Educational Research: Bridging Research and Practice

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The theme of the 38th Annual Northeastern Educational Research Association conference is ‘Making Differences through Educational Research: Bridging Research and Practice’, and we are most pleased to present a program that addresses this topic from a particularly diverse range of perspectives and disciplines. This year’s program consists of 65 individual papers, 14 symposia, 29 posters, 3 working group discussions, and a number of other special sessions!

The 2007 conference will feature two keynote speakers. First, on Thursday morning at 10:45, **Dr. Cora B. Marrett** of the National Science Foundation will speak on ‘*Educational Transformation through Research*’. The second keynote speaker is **Dr. Wayne J. Camara** of The College Board, who will talk on Friday morning at 9:15 about ‘*Research Required in Changing an ICON - The New SAT*’. We are very happy to have both of these distinguished individuals joining us.

Opening the conference on Wednesday from 12:15-2:15pm are two pre-sessions, both on topics suggested by the NERA membership. Robert K. Gable of Johnson and Wales University will lead one discussion on ‘**Program Evaluation Methodology: Are We Thinking Clearly?**’ while UConn’s H. Swaminathan and Jane Rogers will provide an ‘**Introduction to Item Response Theory.**’

We’d also like to let you know about three Invited Sessions at this year’s conference. Start your conference Wednesday afternoon at 2:30pm reflecting on NERA and the place of educational research in today’s society with a gathering of **NERA Past Presidents**. On Thursday at 9:15am, we’ll have Brian Preston of Southern Westchester BOCES and Matt Militello of UMass-Amherst lead a session on **Using Assessment Data in the Classroom**. Lastly, we’re very excited about the first-ever Graduate Student Issues Committee-organized **Graduate Student Issues Session**. This is an interactive session with Steve Sireci, Kristen Huff, and David Moss who will be discussing topics of interest to graduate students (Thursday at 4:45 pm).

As in previous years, the conference will also have several Working Group Discussion sessions.

- **Measurement Problems Revisited (2 meetings)**: Thursday, 8-9 am and Friday, 10:30-11:45 am
- **Exploring the Scholarship of Engagement**: Thursday, 8-9 am
- **Enriching the ‘Evidence’ of Learning in School Leader Preparation Programs**: Thursday, 9:15-10:30 pm

To accommodate all 29 posters, the 2007 program has two **Poster Sessions**: Wednesday 3:45-4:30 pm and Thursday 4:00-4:45 pm. Discussants are being assigned to all posters, and refreshments will be available during the poster sessions!

The 2007 Teacher-As-Researcher Award winner, **Ms. Beth Mowry**, will present her study “Peaks and Valleys: A Teacher/Researcher Teaches Science to Students With Special Needs” on Wednesday from 4:30-5:45 pm!

NERA President Steve Sireci will provide his Presidential Address on Thursday evening at 7:30, followed by the President’s Reception.

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The **NERA Business Meeting** will take place on Friday at 8-9am over breakfast, and the membership is encouraged to attend this meeting of the association.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind conference presenters about the **Lorne H. Woolatt Distinguished Paper Award**. Any paper reviewed and accepted by the Program Committee and presented at the 2007 NERA Annual Conference may be submitted for competition. If you wish to enter your paper into the competition, please bring five (5) blind copies with you to the NERA Annual Meeting and place them in the Distinguished Paper Competition box at the Registration Desk. (Submitters should include their name, address, phone number, and e-mail address on a separate, attached piece of paper so that the committee will be able to contact them.)

Lastly, NERA has a new venue - the **Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill** in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. It's located just off Interstate 91, ten minutes from Hartford (including the train and bus stations), and Bradley international Airport in Windsor Locks is conveniently just 25 miles away. The meeting rooms are newly renovated, and conference attendees have gym/fitness privileges at the nearby West Side Athletic Club. **REMINDER:** In order to receive conference rates for hotel rooms (\$175 single occupancy/night; \$254.50 double occupancy/night), conference attendees **MUST** book rooms by September 26, 2007. Hotel accommodations can be made online at <http://cwp.marriott.com/bdlrh/nera/> or by calling 1-800-228-9290 and mentioning NERA (or the NERA block).

For more information about the 2007 Conference, including a PDF of the Program and the downloadable conference registration form, we encourage NERA members to check out the NERA Conference Webpage at <http://www.nera-education.org/conference07.html>. Any questions about the conference can be sent to us at neramembers@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Connecticut at the 2007 Conference!

April Zenisky and Amy Dresher, 2007 NERA Conference Co-Chairs

The Graduate Lounge

Graduate Student Issues Council of the Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) cordially invites all conference attendees (especially graduate students!) to attend the inaugural



Graduate Student Issues Session
at the 38th annual NERA Conference
Thursday, October 18, 2007
4:45 – 6:00 pm
Hartford Marriott
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

First of its kind at NERA, the **Graduate Student Issues Session** is organized by the Graduate Student Issues Council for all NERA conference attendees, with special focus on common interests of graduate students. The Session will have well-known expert guest speakers to talk about their experiences and recommendations in publishing in professional journals, exploring career options, and other issues related to graduate student life. There will be Question and Answer section at the session that will allow session participants to address their individual needs and concerns.

Topic

- Nonacademic job hunt
- Publishing in journals
- Academic job hunt

Speaker

- Dr. Kristen Huff, The College Board
- Dr. Steve Sireci, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
- Dr. David Moss, University of Connecticut

**Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA)
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HOTEL INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill

<http://cwp.marriott.com/bdlrh/nera/>

100 Capital Boulevard, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Phone: 1-860-257-6000; Fax: 1-860-257-6060

NERA's Annual Meeting has a new venue for 2007! Located in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill will host this year's conference. Among the amenities of this location we'd like to share with you are to-be-newly renovated meeting rooms, a variety of transportation options for getting you to the conference in comfort, and the choice of booking your accommodations either online or by phone.

**Important Notice regarding 2007 Conference Rates:
Make Your Hotel Reservations Early!**

The following hotel rates are in effect for the 2007 NERA Conference, **but you must book by September 26, 2007 to obtain these rates:**

- Single occupancy room: \$175.00 per night
(includes dinner on night of arrival and breakfast and lunch the next day)
- Double occupancy room: \$127.25 per person, per night (total: \$254.50 per night)
(includes dinner on night of arrival and breakfast and lunch the next day for each person)

Hotel rooms booked after **September 26, 2007** are charged at the following rates (and include meals as well):

- Single occupancy room: \$254.00 per night
- Double occupancy room: \$167.00 per person per night (total: \$334.00 per night)

You can book your hotel accommodations online at <http://cwp.marriott.com/bdlrh/nera/> or by calling 1-800-228-9290 and mentioning NERA (or the NERA block)

Traveling to the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill

The Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill is located just off Route 91 in Rocky Hill, CT. Rocky Hill is ten minutes from Hartford, including the train and bus stations. In addition, Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT is just 25 miles away (estimated one-way taxi fare is \$40). The Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill provides complimentary on-site parking for conference attendees.

We look forward to seeing you in Connecticut at the 2007 Conference!
April Zenisky and Amy Drescher, 2007 NERA Conference Co-Chairs

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2007 CONFERENCE KEYNOTES

Cora B. Marrett

Assistant Director of Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation

'Educational Transformation through Research'

Dr. Cora B. Marrett, in her work at NSF, leads the NSF's mission to achieve excellence in U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education at all levels and in both formal and informal settings. Previously, Dr. Marrett had served as the University of Wisconsin's senior vice president for academic affairs and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. In 2005, she received the Erich Bloch Distinguished Service Award from the Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) Network and has received the NSF's Distinguished Service Award for her leadership in developing new research programs and articulating scientific projects. As a sociologist with her doctorate from UW-Madison and an honorary degree from Wake Forest University, she has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Marrett is widely published in sociology, has held a number of public and professional service positions, and has been on the faculty at UW-Madison, University of North Carolina, and Western Michigan University.

Wayne J. Camara

Vice President for Research and Development, The College Board

'Research Required in Changing an ICON - the New SAT'

At the College Board, Dr. Wayne J. Camara is responsible for monitoring, coordinating and conducting all research and product development associated with the range of College Board assessments, services, and programs including the SAT and Advance Placement. Dr. Camara also has a long record of involvement in the professional organizations for psychology and measurement, was project director for the 1999 revision of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, and is active on multiple external technical advisory groups. He holds a Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology from University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, as well as graduate degrees in school psychology and educational measurement. His principal areas of research include standards and professional practice in testing, legal and regulatory issues relating to assessment, test validity, and public policy issues concerning assessment.

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CONFERENCE PRE-SESSIONS
October 17, 2007

PRE-SESSION A:
12:15 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

Program Evaluation Methodology: Are We Thinking Clearly?

Robert K. Gable
Emeritus Professor, Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut
Director, Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Johnson & Wales University

This pre-session will focus on current Federal policies and controversies in program evaluation methodology. Topics will include: the history of program evaluation models, the role of quantitative and qualitative research strategies for effective program evaluation, and the implications of the US Department of Education and Institute of Education Sciences promotion of Evidence-Based Education (EBE).

PRE-SESSION B:
12:15 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

Introduction to Item Response Theory

H. Swaminathan
Professor, Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut

H. Jane Rogers
Associate Professor, Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut

This session covers the basics of item response theory and its use in educational testing applications. Topics include the models available for dichotomous and polytomous responses, computer programs available for IRT scoring, procedures for assessing goodness of fit, and an overview of applications of IRT to equating, test construction, and computerized adaptive testing. The session is aimed at meeting the needs of individuals who are or expect to be using test scores based on IRT procedures and need an understanding of the basic concepts and issues. Participants with BILOG and/or PARSCALE are encouraged to bring their laptops, but laptops are not required.

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RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES FOR NERA 2007 PRESENTERS, CHAIRS, AND DISCUSSANTS

Presenters

Individual paper presenters should be prepared to summarize their papers in about 12 minutes, highlighting all major points. These could include:

- Explanation of the rationale you used for doing your research
- Statement of your research problem and your research questions
- Brief description of methods and procedures
- Report of results in relation to your research questions
- Critical assessment of your conclusions and the implications of your findings for further research

The presentation should be balanced among each aspect of the study (1-3 minutes on each) with more time devoted to the aspects you want to highlight. **Do not read your paper.** Work from note cards and your slides and try to engage your audience as active listeners.

Presenters should prepare overheads (transparencies or PowerPoint slides) to maximize the time and organize the flow of the presentation. Slides should be visually clear, not crowded with a lot of text, and serve to focus audience attention. Detailed charts and narratives should be reserved for the full paper that you are strongly encouraged to provide to the audience at your presentation.

Note that the hotel provides only an overhead projector for transparencies. In the past, session presenters have coordinated with each other to share a laptop and laptop projector for the session. We encourage such cooperation. We discourage the use of multiple laptops within a session as it tends to be disruptive. For those using laptops, bring back-up copies of your slides on transparencies so that the overhead can be used in case there is a problem with the laptop and/or the laptop projector.

Each session will have a chair and discussant. It is important that you provide the discussant with copies of your full paper no later than **September 18, 2007** to provide ample time for preparation of summary remarks for the session.

Poster Presentations

Presenters should post visually-based information on a three-part poster board display like those found at science fairs or promotional shows (i.e., tri-fold foam presentation board, which can be found at Staples or OfficeMax). The display will be placed on a table and tables will be located near outlets in case you want to use any electrical equipment as part of your display.

The display should be easily read and clear from a distance of at least 3 feet from the board. Include a page with lettering for the title, author, and affiliation at least 36-pt font. The rest of your lettering should be **at least 28 point font**. Be sure to include diagrams, figures, photos, bulleted text, or other visuals that describe your research and that may include information on any of the following:

- **BRIEF** rationale you used for doing your research
- **BRIEF** statement of your research problem and your research questions
- **BRIEF** description methods and procedures used
- **BRIEF** description of anticipated or actual results in relation to your research questions

(Continued from Responsibilities and Guidelines for NERA 2007 Presenters, Chairs and Discussants — page 8)

- **BRIEF** description of implications of your study for further research

POSTER PRESENTATIONS THAT CONSIST MOSTLY OF TEXT ARE THE LEAST EFFECTIVE!
Please make your poster presentation as visually-appealing as possible. Be brief and succinct with text!

All poster presentations will have a Discussant. If you have a paper prepared, then you are required to submit the paper to your Discussant. If you do not have a paper prepared, then you are required to provide a summary of the research to your Discussant. The deadline for providing either the paper or the summary to your Discussant is **September 18, 2007**. This will allow the discussant to have time to prepare a thoughtful response to your presentation.

Theme-Based Paper Session/Symposium

For theme-based paper sessions/symposia, the Chair should open the session by explaining the general theme, format, and order of presentations as they will occur. The Chair, Presenters, and Discussant(s) should follow the respective guidelines as outlined in this document. The Chair, Presenters, and Discussant(s) should work together to highlight the connecting theme of the session/symposium.

For theme-based sessions/symposia, the organizer should take responsibility to ensure that the Discussant(s) receive the full papers from the presenters no later than **September 18, 2007** to provide ample time for preparation of remarks for the session.

Working Discussion Groups

The Working Discussion Group was set up to allow the same group of individuals to meet twice over the course of the Conference for the purpose of discussing in-depth a common emerging research theme. The goal of this session format is to establish or support collaborative ongoing research and/or publication efforts of participants. To accomplish these goals, the Organizer will provide session participants with the relevant preparatory readings for the session no later than **September 1, 2007** as well as a contact sheet with participants' names and email addresses.

At the start of the session the Organizer should explain the general theme and format for discussion as it will occur. The actual structure and amount of sharing of previous research will be up to the Organizer. Be sure to tell participants what is expected of them ahead of time. This will make the sessions more productive and comfortable for everyone.

You should also be prepared to provide an oral narrative to explain your research to your audience. Be prepared to answer questions about your research.

If you have a paper prepared, then please bring ample copies of the paper as handouts. If you do not have a paper prepared, then please bring ample copies of either (a) a short summary of the research and/or (b) copies of the poster presentation.

Role of the Chair

The session Chair opens the program by introducing the title of the session and the timeframe for the presentations, usually 12 minutes per presentation. The Chair then sets the context for the session with brief introductory remarks about the topic, introduces each Presenter in turn, and maintains careful time limits for each presenter and for the Discussant. To do this the Chair usually holds up "warning" time cards at the 3 minute and 1 minute marks of the Presenter's talk.

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(Continued from *Responsibilities and Guidelines for NERA 2007 Presenters, Chairs and Discussants* — page 9)

After all the Presenters and Discussant have completed their remarks, the Chair then moderates discussion from the floor, collects any papers left over, and adjourns the session in time to clear the room for the next session. The session Chair should pace the presentations and orchestrate audience participation as needed.

Role of the Discussant

The Discussant prepares appropriate analytical remarks about the papers to be presented in advance of the session. The most effective Discussants do not summarize the individual papers (as the audience has just heard the summaries from the Presenters). Remarks should include helpful suggestions for improving upon the research or directions for continued research in the future. The Discussant's remarks are intended to stimulate further thinking and encourage subsequent audience participation in the discussion of the research. In general, the rule of thumb for Discussants is to find something positive to say about each paper or poster presented and then to develop a formative, constructive commentary that will be helpful to presenters as well as thought provoking for the audience. An important function of the Discussant, therefore, is to pose questions that will lead to dialogue among presenters and audience.

For Discussants at **poster sessions**, the role is a little different in that comments are made directly to individual presenters about their research. The comments, of course, may have a larger audience than just the presenter and this must be taken into consideration in allowing for wider discussion if it seems to be warranted. Since there is no Chair at a poster session, the Discussant may need to actively monitor time limits for discussion and length of responses.

Discussants for **theme-based sessions and symposia** should analyze, interpret, and connect the individual papers as they relate to the theme of the session/symposium.

(Continued from *the President's Message* — page 1)

For us to be successful educational researchers, I believe there are three things we need. First, we must be passionate about the problems and issues we study. Second, we must strive for excellence in research methodology. Third, we must learn from our research.

With respect to being passionate in our research endeavors, I'm talking about pursuing research you believe will make an important difference, or discover new information, or answer some burning question. I sometimes get involved in research I do not care about. These activities either stem from external funding needs for our graduate students, or from doing a favor for a colleague that involves statistical analysis, survey development or program evaluation. But what keeps me going is the research I *choose* to do, and the passionate graduate students and colleagues who involve me in their research. Currently, my passion lies in improving the information provided by educational tests and helping develop sensible educational assessment policies. These passions have led to research in a wide variety of areas including test development, computer-based testing, cross-lingual assessment, and assessment of special populations such as students with disabilities and English language learners. Educational tests are

undergoing greater scrutiny these days, and they should be, because they are being used for more and more purposes. It is an exciting time to be contributing to knowledge in this area, and this excitement feeds my research passion. So, my first piece of farewell advice to the NERA faithful is to follow your heart in your research endeavors. For if we cannot be passionate in our primary research endeavors, why pursue them? Research is hard work, and if you want to enjoy your work, research topics that are important to you.

Like in love, passion is not enough without hard work. We've all seen too many examples of good research topics explored with bad research studies (not at NERA, of course!). Thus, in striving for excellence in research methodology, we must be sure to consider and discuss the strengths and limitations of our research designs. Serious problems often prohibit investigation using experimental designs, but non-experimental, quasi-experimental, survey, and other designs have a long history of providing very useful information. Designing a research study allows us to use our creativity in acquiring information, but all research designs are limited. To be successful, we must empower ourselves through a variety of research skills such as proficiency in statisti-

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**Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA)
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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, October 17, 2007						
	<i>Nutmeg Salon A</i>	<i>Nutmeg Salon B</i>	<i>Nutmeg Salon C</i>	<i>Nutmeg Salon D</i>	<i>Hartford Room</i>	<i>Nutmeg Foyers</i>
12:15-2:15 pm	Pre-session I: Program Evaluation Methodology: Are We Thinking Clearly? (Gable)	Pre-session II: Introduction to Item Response Theory (Swaminathan, Rogers)				
2:15-2:30 pm	Break					
2:30-3:45 pm	A1 Paper Session: Computer Applications in Assessment	A2 Paper Session: Legal and Social Issues	A3 Symposium: Increasing Student Engagement in Higher Education	A4 Invited Session: NERA Past Presidents	A5 Symposium: Ethical Practices in Education and Research	
3:45-4:30 pm						B1 Poster Session / Refreshment Break
4:30-5:45 pm	C1 Symposium: Special Education and Rehabilitation Research, Part 1	C2 Paper Session: Teachers and Teaching Practice	C3 Paper Session: Topics In Postsecondary Research	C4 Paper Session: Modern Psychomet- ric Analyses for Educational Test Data	C5 Teacher-As- Researcher Award Winner Presentation	
6:15-7:00 pm					Grand Ballroom Welcome Reception	
7:00-8:30 pm					Grand Ballroom Dinner	
8:30-10:00 pm	New Member Orientation					

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(Continued from the President's Message — page 10)

cal analysis, research design, survey development, interview and observational protocol development, running focus groups, and so forth. We cannot become masters in all aspects of research methodology, but we should become masters of some. Proficiency in basic statistical analysis is one area in which we must all be proficient; not only so that we can analyze our own data, but also so that we can sufficiently understand the volumes of "research" results with which we are bombarded every year. So, my second piece of farewell advice is to acquire skills in many areas of research

methodology and apply them to the greatest extent possible. Control for threats to internal validity as best you can and openly discuss the limitations of your research. In many cases, the heuristic value of your research will emerge as you and others extend the research to address the limitations you point out.

My third piece of farewell advice is to listen to your data and learn from your results. Whenever we begin a research study, we typically think we know the answer we are going to get. That is, we have a hypothesis and we

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Thursday, October 18, 2007					
	Nutmeg Salon A	Nutmeg Salon B	Nutmeg Salon C	Nutmeg Salon D	Grand Ballroom
7:00-8:30 am					Breakfast
8:00-9:00 am	D1 Working Group: Exploring the Scholarship of Engagement:	D2 Working Group: Measurement Problems Revisited, Part 1	D3 Symposium: Special Education and Rehabilitation Research, Part 2	D4 Symposium: Using Mixture Modeling to Study Education-Related Variables	
9:00-9:15 am	Break				
9:15-10:30 am	E1 Paper Session: Curriculum and Classroom Research	E2 Paper Session: Evaluating Tests and Constructs: Methodological Studies	E3 Invited Session: Using Assessment Data in the Classroom	E4 Symposium: Research on Examinee Test-Taking Motivation	E5 Working Group: Enriching the 'Evidence' of Learning in School Leader Preparation Programs
10:30-10:45 am	Refreshment Break				
10:45-11:45 am					F1 Keynote: Dr. Cora Marrett 'Educational Transformation through Research'
12:15-1:15 pm	Lunch				
1:15-2:30 pm	G1 Symposium: Research and Practice in the Assessment of General Education	G2 Paper Session: Models and Methods for Educational Data Analysis	G3 Paper Session: Technology-Based Learning Tools	G4 Symposium: Action Research in Sensory Integration	
2:30-2:45 pm	Break				
2:45-4:00 pm	H1 Symposium: Bridge Over Muddy Waters	H2 Paper Session: Testing the Tests: Considerations for Psychometrics	H3 Symposium: Creating Life-long Readers	H4 Symposium: Statewide Evaluation of Reading First	
4:00-4:45 pm	I1 Poster Session / Refreshment Break				
4:45-6:00 pm	J1 Symposium: A Comparison of Methods for Analyzing Pretest/Posttest Data	J2 Symposium: Selection and Development of Effective School Leaders	J3 Paper Session: Teaching and Testing Special Populations	J4 Invited Session: Graduate Student Issues Committee Session	
6:30-7:30 pm	Dinner				
7:30-8:15 pm	President's Address				
8:30-10:30 pm	Presidential Reception				

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from Schedule at a Glance — page 12)

Friday, October 19, 2007				
	Grand Ballroom Salon III	Grand Ballroom Salon I	Grand Ballroom Salon II	Connecticut Suite
8:00-9:00 am	Breakfast and the NERA Business Meeting			
9:00-9:15 am	Break			
9:15-10:15 am	K1 Keynote: Dr. Wayne Camara 'Research required in changing an ICON - the new SAT'			
10:15-10:30 am	Refreshment Break			
10:30-11:45 am	L1 Working Group: Measurement Problems Revisited, Part 2	L2 Paper Session: Issues in Educational Reform, Improvement, and Accountability	L3 Paper Session: Going Global: Research in International Education	L4 Paper Session: Teaching the Teachers
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch and Recapitulation			

(Continued from the President's Message — page 11)

want to confirm it. On many occasions, however, my results were completely contradictory to my expectations. I used to consider such instances as failures, until I realized that what I was looking at was new information. Let me give you one example. I was doing some work with the Gallup Organization where we evaluated different language versions of one of their survey instruments. The data involved two waves of survey results. The first wave came from a quickly translated version of the survey; the second wave came from a revised version of the survey that used the principles of test adaptation developed by the International Test Commission. Our hypothesis was that analysis of differential item functioning would identify more translation problems with the first, hastily translated, version of the survey relative to the second version of the survey. Although we found that to be true for some items, there were several items that did not exhibit statistical differences across languages using the first version of the survey, but did exhibit differences using the second version. That is, the more rigorous translation process made the items worse. (If you are interested in a copy of this article, send me an e-mail (Sireci@acad.umass.edu) and I will be happy to send it to you.) After considering these depressing results, we realized some items were actually “over-translated” and some differences were due to changes in the population over time that were not consistent across the cultural groups studied. So, we learned something new. I have

too many examples of this type of enlightenment than I am willing to admit, or to share with you, but the important message is—don't despair when this happens to you. Take a breath, regroup, and realize the most important discovery of all may lie within your contrary results.

So much for the academic portion of my farewell column. If you have made it thus far, I can rule out the aforementioned “nobody reads my column” hypothesis and I thank you for that. To summarize, be passionate, be competent, and listen to your results.

Since 1990, I have seen many passionate and competent researchers at NERA, and it has been a real honor serving as your President this past year. This service would have been abysmal without the help and support of several colleagues such as Barbara Helms, April Zenisky, Amy Dresher, Geri Mongillo, Heejung An, Darlene Perner, Kristen Huff, Brian Preston, Dolores Burton, Diane Liebert, Theresa Rooney, Diane Zager, and many others who keep this organization moving forward. Finally, I'd like to thank one of the most passionate couples I know—Kurt Geisinger and Janet Carlson. Kurt, thanks for introducing me to NERA. Janet, thanks for lying to me and telling me being President was not a lot of work. Free drinks for both of you at the Presidential Reception. As for the rest of you, I look forward to seeing you all at the Rocky Hill Marriott in October! Be sure to book your rooms today.

2006 Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award

The Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring was created to recognize Tom Donlon's long and valued contributions to NERA, particularly as a mentor to so many colleagues. Presented for the first time in 2000, the award is given to someone identified for distinguished mentoring. Beginning with Odysseus, who asked his friend, *MentOr* to educate his son, Telemachus (Janas, 1996); the practice of mentoring in education has been going for centuries. Most of us can name a person who helped us along and was more than just a friend or a colleague. That person guided you, helped you find the right path and pointed you in the right direction and, perhaps, brought you to NERA your first time—after suggesting that you might be ready for your first conference presentation.

The 2006 Thomas F. Donlon award recipient is Scott Brown. We remember him as the 2001 recipient of the Leo D. Doherty Award for Outstanding Leadership and Service. Scott Brown has been an active member of NERA for at least two decades and has made significant contributions to the organization, including NERA program co-chair (1983-84), board director (1985-1988) and President (1991-92).

It is not Scott's long record of service to the organization that is being recognized by the Donlon Award—it is Scott's outstanding and ongoing record as a mentor. As a Professor of Educational Psychology in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, Scott has seen many students through the labyrinth known as graduate school. Several of his former students were on hand for the presentation of this award at this year's conference coming from Chicago and other parts of the country solely for the purpose of saying thank you to Scott and honor him. Over the years Scott has brought many of his students to NERA and supported them in their efforts as presenters. It is not only his students who have benefited from his support. Scott has been a source of support and guidance to many members of NERA as well as to his faculty colleagues.

Congratulation, Scott, and thank you for all your support.

2007 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 2007 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 2008 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 defray 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 2007 Committee Chair, Craig Wells <cswells@educ.umass.edu> no later than October 30, 2007. 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).



Membership Report

180 members at the moment:
130 Professional; 8 Retired; 42 Students

Board Meeting Highlights

Darlene Perner

Date: March 23, 2007

Present at the Marriott: S. Sireci, K. Dunn, B. Helms, D. Moss, D. Perner, B. Preston, A. Zenisky;

Present by Conference Call (parentheses denote time of call in): A. Drescher (12:30), D. Burton (12:35), K. Huff (12:45), T. Rooney (12:45), A. Özdoğru (2:00), G. Mongillo (2:40), B. Wert (2:50); **Regrets:** K. Nottis

The meeting began at 12:35 p.m.

Introductions: Steve began the meeting with welcome and introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the 01/19/07 meeting were approved.

Conference Update: Steve reported that there will be some room changes at the hotel. Amy and April will work out the schedule to accommodate this change. In return for this accommodation, NERA will receive complimentary coffee breaks for the conference. The money saved from coffee breaks can be used for some special events. April reported on the conference keynote speakers and the featured pre-session and sessions. The Call for Proposals is out; session proposals are due June 1. Amy stated that they will try to involve Past Presidents in a session regarding the past and future of NERA. Compliments were given to all who helped to make the hotel selection and change. Information was requested about train schedules to the hotel as well as other information that may be helpful to our members. April indicated that it is possible that the hotel will have a Web page for us. [Note from April following this meeting: The dedicated NERA hotel reservation link is <http://cwp.marriott.com/bdlrh/nera/> and on this page is the hotel's link to transportation options.]

A motion to accept the conference budget with additional funds for quality of conference purposes was unanimously approved with our thanks to Amy and April.

Current Composition of Committees and Activities:

Steve discussed the list of NERA Committees and members which he distributed. He will finalize committee chairs and members as soon possible. He reported that Anthony Artino is the recipient of the Distinguished Paper Award. Dolores will introduce him at the AERA conference.

Teacher-as-Researcher Committee Report: There was discussion about the issue of defining who should qualify for this award. Brian and Dolores will develop a

proposal regarding this issue for presentation in October.

Budget Report: Barbara H. reported that as of March 20, 2007, a total of 175 members have renewed or joined NERA and 115 registered for/attended the 2006 conference. Barbara H. also went over a detailed spreadsheet budget. Over the last few years, we have increased our assets. A motion to accept the budget report was unanimously approved with special thanks to Barbara H.

Technology Committee: To date, two vendor proposals have been sought for redesign of our Web site. Steve expressed his thanks to Mike for maintaining the Web site. Steve appointed Brian as the Interim Chair of the Technology Committee.

NERA Researcher: Gerry indicated that the next issue of *The NERA Researcher* is scheduled for May. April indicated that they will be sending a mass e-mail in mid April and one in early/mid May. Flyers will be printed and mailed (through the post and electronically) and distributed at the AERA conference; the TAR flyer will be included in the distributions. It was agreed that the next *Researcher* be a June Issue. It was noted that Hotel Registration needs to be done by Sept. 27th.

Graduate Student Issues Committee: Asil reported that the members of this committee are: Chair: Asil Ozdogru (Albany), Christine Lewis (UMass), Andri Ioannou (UConn), Adam Prunty (Westfield State College) and Leah Kaira (UMass). He stated that the committee will have guest speakers to address how to publish papers and look for jobs. Asil also reported that the committee discussed having an award for a graduate student best paper and/or best poster. Kristin voiced her support for the committee and this award and commended Asil for showing great leadership. A motion that the Board supports a graduate student award and that the Graduate Student Issues Committee submits a proposal for what this award should be was unanimously approved with thanks to Asil.

Old Business: The issue of subsidizing graduate students to attend the NERA conference was discussed. A motion that six rooms, double occupancy for one night be budgeted from the operating budget to support graduate students through application pending approval of the criteria was approved with one abstention.

New Business: David expressed the need of continuity with the financial aspects of the organization and a motion to extend the term of the current Treasurer, if the Treasurer is willing, by one calendar year until Fall 2008 with the next election for Treasurer being Fall 2008 for a 3 year term of office was approved unanimously.

Steve thanked everyone for their participation and the meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm.

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