

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

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The NERA Researcher

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The President's Message

What is so special about a NERA Conference? Scholarship, Fellowship, Partnership



Lynn Shelley-Sireci

Every time I return from a NERA Conference I'm on a bit of a high for a few weeks, and the 2011 conference was no exception. It takes time for me to float back into real life, and during my return to reality I am overflowing with ideas for future research, encouraged by the supportive feedback I received, optimistic about blossoming friendships, excited about the latest information I will pass on to my students, and I want to talk to everyone about what a great conference I attended.

Naturally colleagues ask, "What is so special about a NERA Conference?" But in the midst of a *NERA high* I can usually only clumsily blurt out, "NERA is just awesome." I know I'm not alone in experiencing a *NERA high* – other NERA Conference attendees report the same feelings. Of course, it's possible the "high" results from exhaustion due to three days in sessions, six meals in the Rocky Hill Marriott, two evenings of socializing, and returning to mountains of laundry and unfinished work. But, I think it is more than that. Other conferences might fill us with new ideas; but a NERA Conference goes far beyond just scholarship. NERA is special.

At NERA's last Board of Directors meeting Kristen Huff reported that the steering committee was proposing a new NERA motto, "Scholarship, Fellowship, Partnership." As soon as the words came out of her mouth, the room began to buzz. The board loved it. For all of us, those three simple words captured what NERA is all about.

Scholarship. Occasionally, when colleagues try to justify why they are not involved with NERA they say, "it's ONLY a regional conference," or "it is too supportive of graduate students." The underlying implication is that the research presented is not rigorous. This misperception could not be further from the truth. Yes, it is a regional conference (which means it is easier to get to, less expensive to attend, and requires less time away from home); and, yes, NERA is highly supportive of graduate students (offering free membership, reduced conference rates and special programs). But these factors have nothing to do with the quality of the content of the program.

The educational research presented at NERA is peer reviewed, and of high quality. Sessions are thought provoking and cover a range of contemporary issues in educational research. A quick glance at NERA's program reveals some of the biggest names in the field of educational research, representing some of the most prestigious institutions in the world! Notice how many attendees are from outside the Northeast (e.g., Buros in Nebraska, James Madison in Virginia), and in 2011 presenters came from as far away as the University of Granada, Spain, and the University of British Columbia, Canada.

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Message from the Editors

Greetings NERA Members! We hope you enjoyed the 42nd annual conference! Our conference co-chairs, Abby Lau and Carol Barry, did an excellent job in organizing this year's conference, and we thank them for their hard work and dedication to NERA. This issue includes many highlights from the conference including the presidential address, award recipients, and photos (some of which showcase the hugely successful "NERA's Got Talent"). In addition, there is a recap of the mentorship program, and a first-hand account from Mariya Yukhymenko describing her experience as a participant of the program during this year's conference.

In this issue, you will also find a special article by Theresa Rooney who shares her experience of being a student again while on sabbatical from her teaching responsibilities at CUNY. In her article, Theresa also talks about her experience as a first-time presenter at NERA, and encourages others to share their initial NERA experiences with her and/or the Graduate Student Issues Committee.

Lynn Shelley-Sireci explains in her president's message why NERA is so special, and as you read this issue with all of the highlights from the conference we're sure you will agree! As always, if you have any suggestions for improving the newsletter or ideas for articles, please let us know.

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Fellowship. Why would people travel so far to attend a NERA Conference? A NERA Conference offers fellowship in a way other conferences do not. We are a community.

Despite different disciplines and theoretical approaches, we share a language, a set of values, and goals. We're passionate about education, and view research as a means of improving it. NERA members share a common identity and goals; hence, we do not need to compete. One of the most frequently used words to describe a NERA conference is "supportive." Attendees feel supported by each other. Discussants are not out to prove how smart they are, audience members are not trying to trip-up presenters. We believe that what we are all doing is important, and should be nurtured. So discussants offer feedback, but it is constructive; and audience members ask questions, but they are with the goal of enlightening.

Partnership. Partnership takes fellowship a step further. Partners share interests, as well as work together. To form a partnership, one must first interact socially. And NERA is a social conference. We share all of our meals, and spend our evenings socializing together. We constantly interact with each other.

Again, looking at the NERA program reveals countless research collaborations, many of which began at NERA conferences. But just as importantly, NERA often begins professional partnerships. New professionals find opportunities for career growth and development at NERA. They are recruited onto NERA's committees and soon contribute to the running of the organization. And for many graduate students, a NERA Conference is a first step into a professional world outside the cocoon of graduate school, and NERA is where future employers are met.

So, now enough time has passed that I have recovered from the *NERA high* (and am now firmly in the October Storm doldrums), so I can answer the question, "What is so special about a NERA Conference?" It's those three words: Scholarship, Fellowship, and Partnership. Although the main goal of NERA is to share scholarship, NERA's incredible members also provide fellowship and partnership, making NERA a very special organization!



Socializing at NERA

NERA Presidential Address: History, People and Measurement in Education By Thanos Patelis, The College Board

(Presidential Address delivered October 20, 2011 at the 42nd annual meeting of the
Northeastern Educational Research Association)

I've been told that the criteria for a good presidential address involve the following:

1. Provide something substantive
2. Make it entertaining
3. Keep it brief

I warned folks in starting my presidential address (somewhat in jest) that I was going to offer none of these. In actuality, I was hoping to offer a little substance, use picture, cartoons, and a video to make it entertaining, and try to at least finish in time for the reception. I offer the theme of my presentation here and recognize that it presents a perspective that some would argue against. However, I wanted to highlight the value of studying and learning from history to help us tackle the challenges that we face now and in the future. The specific aspect of history that I will present and the point of my address is that the context that existed back in the late 1890's in the formation of The College Board is similar to the context that we face today in the efforts surrounding the Common Core Standards (see Common Core Standards Initiative, 2010) and their assessments.

The People

"Art is I; Science is we"

...Claude Bernard

Before I begin my presentation of this historical analysis, and as many past presidents have done in their presidential addresses, I want to reflect on what brought me to NERA and receive this privilege of being elected president of this wonderful, professional, collegial organization and given this opportunity to address the membership. As many have indicated, the major reason that we all came here, have stayed, and continue to actively participate in NERA is the people. So, in addition to the scholarship that occurs during the NERA conference, it is the people of this organization (you all) that make it a destination to come to share research, get feedback and support, and develop both as scholars and professionals.

History and Measurement in Education

Historia est vitae magistra (tr. history is life's teacher)

The main purpose of my presentation is to argue that as we (the educational communities) move forward in developing new assessments to represent the Common Core State Standards that we can learn from similar efforts in the past. I am suggesting here as well as in other forums (Patelis, 2011) that the context that led to the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board in the late 1890's shared some similarities to the context of today in the formation of the Common Core State Standards and the two consortia in the development of assessments. If indeed the contexts are similar, we can approach the challenges ahead with an informed point-of-view and try to avoid potential obstacles.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) initiated a state-led effort to develop a consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2010). The reasons for this were that (a) there are disparate standards across states, (b) increased mobility of students within and across states, and (c) there is an increased economic competition globally requiring different and more advanced skills.

With the Common Core Standards Initiative well under way, this presentation is proposing that the context that existed in the late 1890's that facilitated the creation of The College Board—to standardize the experiences of high school students and the expectations of colleges for college admissions—is present today and facilitated the development of Common Core Standards Initiative. The presentation will outline some of the contextual factors in the late 1890's first. Then, the contextual factors of today will be outlined. Assuming people are convinced that the context of that time period and today are similar, the final part of this presentation will offer educators and policy makers working on the Common Core Standards Initiative now suggestions from what worked in 1900 in the formation of The College Board.

Context of the Late 1890's

Coming off the end of the Civil War, the first Department of Education was established on March 2, 1867 (1867 Department of Education Act). However, it did not have a secretary at its helm like other departments (e.g., the Department of War.) Instead, it had a commissioner.

By 1869 public high schools were well established and by 1880 the number of high schools increased 200 times. The entrance requirements at Harvard University increased to include examinations on ten possible subjects that included Geography, Algebra, Geometry, Physical Geometry, English Grammar, English Composition, Ancient History, US History, Greek and Latin. However, each college would alter the number and quality of its admission requirements at will. For the preparatory schools this uncertainty caused significant problems in their efforts to prepare their students (Feuss, 1967).

Additionally, there was a shortage of college students in the 1870's. This created a fierce competition for students that forced the University of Michigan in 1871 to accept students from selected high schools without any examination as long as they took a specified course of study and received a recommendation of the principal of the school (Angus & Mirel, 2001). For schools to participate in this, they had to permit representatives from the university to inspect the high school courses and to maintain at least one course of study that would qualify students to enter a degree program. This became quite popular with high schools in many states across the mid-west. But eastern universities strongly opposed these systems preferring university-based examinations.

In 1892 the National Council of Education (NCE), which was a group of 60 prominent educators from the National Education Association (NEA) appointed a committee of 10 members to develop a document indicating uniform high school programs and requirements for admission to college. The committee included five university presidents, the US Commissioner of Education, a college professor, and three headmasters/principals with only one being from a public school. One of the university presidents had been a principal in a high school. The report was widely disseminated and became known as *The Committee of Ten* (Angus & Mirel, 2001; Feuss, 1967).

There were three fundamental principles that were interwoven in this historically important document that both offered the first comprehensive program for secondary education and planted the seed for the eventual formation of the College Entrance Examination Board (Feuss, 1967). The three principles in summary were (a) all students no matter what their ultimate goal (i.e., college or not) should be taught in the same way, (b) schools and students can select their course of study but they should be rigorous, and (c) if high schools offered the nine subject fields in the acceptable level of rigor, every college and university would accept these for admissions to at least one of their degree programs (Angus & Mirel, 2001). The report was met with significant criticism from many sides. The practical education advocates complained that the curriculum focused too much on classical courses. The emerging field of educational psychology led by G. Stanley Hall criticized the report for its lack of non-cognitive and more global types of ability. Others criticized that the make-up of the committee was comprised too heavily with university members. Related to this, secondary school teachers criticized the accuracy and reliability of the scoring of the examinations by college faculty. Regardless of the criticisms, the report offered significant attention to a standardized secondary school curriculum that involved an increased number of subjects for high schools and it highlighted the impact of universities on high school curricula (Wechsler, 2001).

As a result of these criticisms, secondary school teachers, in a meeting sponsored by the National Education Association in 1895 in Denver, formed the Committee on College Entrance Requirements charged with studying current practices and considering methods of making them more uniform. This committee was called the *Committee of Twelve*. After four years of work in 1899, the committee collected and analyzed the published requirements of sixty-seven leading colleges across the country and found significant diversity. While they agreed not to force a standard set of college entrance requirements for each institution, they worked to persuade each college to state their requirements in terms of national norms so that high schools could construct their curriculum and course of study in response to these specifications.

The growing consensus in support of a close articulation between high schools and colleges was facilitated by the practical leadership of Professor Nicholas Murray Butler, professor of philosophy at Columbia University in action through meetings and in print through the *Educational Review*, which he started in January 1891. His efforts and with the cooperation and support of the president of Harvard University, Charles Eliot, and eventual support of the president of Columbia University, Seth Lowe, led to a proposal (or prediction) in a meeting on December 2, 1899 in Trenton, New Jersey of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. The proposal was that in five years a uniform set of college admission requirements AND an administration of these uniform requirements would be established. After much debate and final clarification by President Eliot that if the College Entrance Examination Board be constituted, its role would not involve admitting students to any one college, but would be to define the subjects of admission, to conduct examinations in these subjects at uniform times, and to certify performance, with the decision of which students to accept remaining with the individual college. The members of this association unanimously approved the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board. Historically, its formation was the direct consequence of a gradual clarification of the need to have a tight connection between high schools and colleges with a clear, uniform articulation of requirements. This enlightened outcome, after much discussion arose as a result of the economic conditions affecting colleges and societal needs for colleges to open their gates for increase student access to these post-secondary institutions, in as much as the outcry from secondary schools for known, clearly articulated requirements.

After this meeting in Trenton, NJ, being endorsed by 12 universities in the middle states and involving three high schools, the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board was officially announced on November 17, 1900. Professor Butler was put in charge of a committee to develop a constitution for this organization and develop a system of examinations that would be universally adopted by post-secondary institutions. This report became the *Plan of Organization and Constitution* and outlined the qualification for membership and detailed the system of examinations (Feuss, 1967).

Some specific information about the system of examinations that was eventually developed is provided here (Feuss, 1967).

- It was stipulated that in each subject tested the College Entrance Examination Board could designate a college teacher to be Chief Examiner and one additional college teacher and one secondary school teacher to act as Associate Examiners.
- They were assigned a staff of Readers to read and score the answer books.
- Answer books were scored on a scale of 100 and any answer book receiving a score of 60 or below needed to be read by two readers.
- The fee for a candidate was set at \$5.00.
- The examination subjects were Chemistry, English, French, German, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, and Physics. Four subjects were added in the second year (i.e., Spanish, Botany, Geography, and Drawing) making a total of 13 discipline-specific examinations.
- All examinations were essay-based.
- The first set of examinations was administered the week of June 17, 1901 at 67 centers in the United States and two in Europe.
- 973 candidates (758 of them were seeking admission to either Columbia College or Barnard College) submitted 7,889 papers.
- 39 men and women traveled to Columbia University Library to score these examinations.
- 40.7% of the papers scored were below 60 – the grade considered passing.

There were critics who said that the passing rate was too high, but Professor Butler offered an open review of the questions. Folks found the examination were thorough, better balanced, and represented deep content. Professor Butler commented that the collective process provided higher quality examinations and more accurate scoring than what any one university could offer individually (Feuss, 1967).

The Examiners and Readers spread the word at their institutions and associations. As a result, colleges from New England joined as members in 1901. This marked the beginning of a trend. But, it took almost a decade since the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board before Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Wesleyan, and Amherst joined.

As outlined above, the growing competition for students, concern over economic issues, and the need for uniform, transparent admissions requirements that helped articulate and organize the high school course of study were the driving forces behind the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board. Subsequently, standardized, objective assessments in 13 discipline-specific assessments were developed and administered. While it took approximately, 29 years (from 1871 with economic pressures faced by the University of Michigan to accept students using courses taken in high school to 1900) for these issues to culminate in the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board, the development of the assessments was done relatively (amazingly) quickly in one year.

The Context of Today

In 2008, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) put out projections of public and non-public school graduation rates (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2008). The projections indicated that many states in the west and south will have significant growth in high school graduates, while in the northeast and mid-west, a number of states will see declines. Additionally, white non-Hispanic students are declining as the number of Hispanic students who will be graduating from high school are on the rise. So, like the situation in the late 1890's, colleges will be challenged with changing demographics and in the northeast and mid-west increased competition for students will pose economic challenges. Additionally, the increased number of students in the west and south will pose both economic challenges (more facilities, more professors, etc.) and academic difficulties in the form of courses, academic advising, courses of study, etc.

Even though the US scored below the average scores on the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), little attention and few policies have been introduced in the US to address this issue (Bieber & Martens, 2011). According to OECD, in 2007 the US ranked sixth in postsecondary attainment in the world among 25- to 64-Year-Olds (OECD, 2009).

The popular press and public opinion polls indicate that the key to future economic growth in the US is anchored in education (Runnigen, 2010; Gorski & Fram, 2010). This has fueled political pressure to revisit educational standards and performance.

Concerns were voiced communicating a sense of urgency that the United States' once prominent place for post-secondary training and college graduation rates had fallen. A 28-member panel composed of college presidents, university chancellors, admissions and enrollment deans, school counselors, administrators and other education experts, chaired by the chancellor of the University of Maryland System, William "Brit" Kirwan, was formed and called the Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education. The end result of the work of this panel was to establish a goal that 55% of young adults in the United States should receive a postsecondary credential by 2025 and to offer 10 recommendations that state educators and policy maker can use to achieve this goal (College Board, 2008).

A progress report using data representing these 10 recommendations showed that the US was currently 13.4 percentage points away from the goal of obtaining 55 percent by 2025. Additionally, none of the US states with the exception of DC were at this goal (Lee & Rawls, 2010).

As these conversations were occurring, significant efforts to define college level standards and expectations not only for admissions to college, but also for success in college, were underway. A significant contribution to this was the publication of the results of a three-year research project to identify the knowledge and skills necessary for college readiness (see Conley, 2005). This effort led to the development of Standards for Success by Conley (2003) and was developed based on studying what students are expected to do in a sample of colleges across the US. Overall, college readiness involved four elements of (a) key cognitive strategies, (b) key content mastery, (c) academic behaviors that related to self-management, and (d) contextual awareness that related to knowledge about college.

Similarly, other initiatives were underway to develop a specification of what defines college readiness from the perspective of expectations from colleges and universities. These efforts included the American Diploma Project (Achieve, 2004), College Board Standards for College Success (College Board, 2006a; 2006b; 2009), the ACT College Readiness Standards (ACT, 2010) and the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (THECB & TEA, 2008).

As these conversations and efforts were emerging in June 2010, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers released common core state standards for grades K-12 in English language arts and mathematics. The standards are state-initiated and state-developed, rather than federal. They are also voluntary, meaning that states decide whether or not to adopt them. More detailed information is available on the Common Core State Standards Initiative Web site (www.corestandards.org). Later in 2010, 43 states and the District of Columbia adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in language arts and mathematics and set a strong foundation for successful interstate collaboration. The voluntary banding together of large numbers of states into two State Comprehensive Assessment Consortia presents a unique opportunity to enhance our technical capacity to create much higher quality yet affordable assessments for the future that will measure student progress against these new CCSS. Both the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) have received more than \$175 million each from the US Department of Education to design, develop and pilot test the next generation of K-12 assessments over the next four years. (Forgione & Doorey, 2010).

These consortia are similar to the *Committee of Ten* and *Committee of Twelve* formed back in the late 1890's. Their charge was to operationalize these standards into valid, objective assessments. An overview of these consortia is provided by Forgione and Doorey (2010). However, there is a push in both systems to explore innovative methods in the assessments.

Two major differences between the efforts in the late 1890's and today are (1) the strong presence and involvement of higher education back then and (2) the truly national reaction that has occurred so quickly now.

Lessons Learned

Summaries of the contexts associated with the late 1890's and in this past decade (2000-2010) have been presented above. It is the contention of this paper to indicate that the needs and issues the US faced in the late 1890's were similar to the needs and issues faced now. The result of the context and efforts in the late 1890's to address the economic and societal need for getting students into college more efficiently was the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board and an open, valid assessment system. The admissions decisions were still the purview of the colleges and universities, but an organized effort to articulate the expectations of colleges and thus influence the articulation of high school courses of study and launch a uniform, objective assessment system was launched.

Similarly today, we have a statement of the common core state standards for grades K-12 in English language arts and mathematics presented by two organizations representing the interests of states. The ex-

pression of these standards has led to the formation of the two consortia that are now focused on the development of the assessment systems with funding from the US Department of Education.

While there are similar economic and societal needs, the outcomes and the entities involved in the late 1890's and now are very different. The role of state agencies and the US Department of Education represents a major difference. The cooperation across states in the form of two consortia represents a very different outcome today. There are, however, some lessons from the early 1900's that may be worth mentioning here to mark the conclusion of this presentation:

- Start with ambitious goals, but take a pragmatic, reasonable scope and build from there.
- If this is about college, make sure that college and university leaders are involved.
- Make the enterprise self-sustaining economically.
- Ensure that sound measurement principles are not compromised.
- Once there is a commitment to start, design and implement the assessment system as quickly as possible.

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Northeastern Educational Research Association Highlights from the 42nd Annual Conference, October 19-21, 2011

Looking back on NERA 2011: Educational Research for the Good of Society

The 2011 Conference Committee would like to thank all of the participants and volunteers for making this year's NERA conference productive. This year NERA drew a crowd of nearly 300 registrants representing 18 states (California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin), as well as Canada, Nigeria, and Spain. The program included 2 pre-conference workshops, 4 in-conference workshops, 113 individual research paper presentations, 11 symposia, 29 research posters, 4 working group sessions, 3 paper discussion sessions; 6 invited panels, 2 GSIC-sponsored panels, 4 special sessions, and a mentoring session. Clearly, if success is measured in numbers, we can call this year's conference a success!

All of this was possible because of the numerous NERA members who offered their time and talent to fulfill a variety of volunteer roles necessary to run the conference. We have received a lot of positive feedback about the conference so far and we know this is attributable to the good work of many NERA members. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize those individuals who contributed to the success of the 2011 conference. We hope all will join us in expressing gratitude to these colleagues when you see them.

First and foremost, we would like to thank Thanos Patelis for giving us the opportunity to put this conference together, guiding us through the process, supporting NERA through a transition to new technology, bringing NERA new institutional members, engaging excellent keynote speakers, and providing a multitude of helpful suggestions and great ideas. Thanos is now joining an illustrious group of NERA past presidents who were honored during Wednesday's welcome reception. Along with Thanos, we are grateful for all of NERA's past leaders who have helped make NERA the organization it is today. A special thanks to other former NERA presidents: Kristen Huff, Robert Gable, David Moss, Katharyn Nottis, Sharon Cramer, Stephen Sireci, and Scott Brown, who shared their favorite tunes for Wednesday's reception playlist.

Next, we'd like to thank the NERA Board of Directors for their guidance and feedback during initial planning phases for the program and especially for their vote of support allowing us to implement a new online conference management system. We relied heavily on two members of the NERA leadership throughout the year. Namely, we extend deep appreciation to Helen Marx, the NERA Treasurer, for helping with the registration list, snacks, hotel bills, expenses, stipends, and much more. Likewise, we thank Barbara Helms for her dedication to maintaining a quality website for NERA and her guidance and wisdom on many other matters. An extra special thanks goes to our friend and mentor, Sara Finney for her ongoing support and her generous assistance in sorting through the 200+ proposals we received in June.

NERA volunteers extend far beyond the leadership of the organization. The conference would not have been possible without the scholarly service of many. We want to again recognize the 80 NERA members who reviewed session proposals to assure the quality of the program content (see conference program for reviewer names). In addition, we thank the 30+ NERA members who served as session discussants, providing feedback to authors and enhancing the productivity of each research session. Finally, we are greatly indebted to the workshop leaders and members of our invited panel sessions; all of these professionals shared their extensive expertise free of charge, which is ultimately what makes NERA a high-value conference. We are of course also extremely grateful to our keynote speakers for their time and effort. In different ways, both keynote speakers effectively challenged NERA members to think about the 2011 conference theme, *Educational Research for the Good of Society*.

A number of other individuals contributed to the conference by facilitating or chairing sessions. We'd like to thank all of our session chairs for their commitment to NERA. Specifically, we'd like to acknowledge

Kevin Sweeney for introducing our Wednesday night keynote speaker, Dr. Diana Pullin from Boston College, and Wayne Camara for introducing our Thursday keynote speaker, Governor Roy Romer. We also appreciate Susan Eichenholtz, Darlene Perner, Deb Bandalos, Thanos Patelis, and Katrina Crotts for introducing the 2011 NERA award recipients. Finally, we thank Katharyn Nottis, the 2010 NERA President, for her introduction to the Presidential Address.

This year NERA continued its tradition of providing graduate students an exceptional professional development opportunity. The mentoring session on Wednesday was a major way in which NERA served graduate students' interests, and we owe this session to the organizer, Tom Levine, as well as this year's NERA mentors, Craig Wells, Scott Brown, and Megan Welsh. Katrina Crotts, chair of the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC), also did a great job planning sessions that target graduate students' interests. We are very grateful to Katrina, as well as the other graduate students on the committee: Antonio Ellis, Dan Jurich, Jason Kopp, Minji Lee, Becca Marsh, and Whitney Zimmerman.

We were fortunate to again have Kevin Brewer from The College Board handling all of the projectors and managing the registration desk. He was a tireless and friendly support for us throughout the conference. Jess Gregory from Southern Connecticut State University was a great help to Kevin at the registration desk on Wednesday, as were NERA graduate students who volunteered their time to help staff the desk throughout the conference. We thank Antonio Ellis, Nicholas Hartlep, Amanda Soto, Whitney Zimmerman, Lindsey Le, Sahaya Josephine, Louise Bahry, and Jun Li for their help welcoming and assisting NERA members.

Again this year the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill staff, led by Laurie, Wilfredo, and Robert, was a pleasure to work with. They have an excellent team, and we are very grateful for all their efforts to make our conference meetings comfortable. Additionally, we owe much thanks to William Klein and Julie Amodeo of Palisades Conference Management who eased the burden of conference organizing considerably with their technology tools, manpower, and expertise. They were extremely helpful and responsive to us throughout the year.

Last but not least, we'd like to remember participants from what we think was the most memorable part of the NERA 2011 conference—the NERA's Got Talent show. We want to thank Mariya Yukhymenko, Keston Fulcher, Lindsey Le, Minji Lee, and Katrina Crotts for showcasing their talent for our entertainment. The competition in this session was intense! It is now safe to conclude that NERA does in fact have talent. This exciting show would not have been possible without our witty and glamorous judges: Kristin Huff, David Moss, and Sara Finney. Nor could the evening have been half as much fun without our charming host, Peter Swerdzewski. Topping off the evening was a rocking performance by NERA's own rock band, the Messickists. Thank you to the band members for helping NERA members dance the night away: Katrina Crotts, John Mazzeo, Mary Pitoniak, Steve Sireci, Helen Marx, and Gil Andrada (in spirit).

We were struck by the sense of community in the room during Thursday's reception and we will cherish those memories. We'd like to archive these memories for the NERA scrapbook, along with other moments from the 2011 conference. We ask that you share your photos with us by sending them to program-chairs@nera-education.org. It's always nice when we can see these pictures on our website or in the next year's conference slideshow.

In addition to pictures, we know that the 2012 program co-chairs, Gil Andrada, Tia Sukin, and Craig Wells are looking for your input to help shape next year's conference. So, also send comments and feedback about the NERA conference using the same email address. We are excited for the program the 2012 co-chairs will plan with Lynn Shelly-Sireci, the current NERA President. We hope you will be a part of it, and we look forward to seeing you at NERA in the future.

Abby Lau and Carol Barry, 2011 Conference Co-Chairs



Romer Address



Conference Co-chairs Carol Barry and Abby Lau



Poster Session Discussions



NERA's Got Talent!



The Messickists

2011 Recipient of the Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award for Outstanding Leadership and Service to NERA

The Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award is given to a NERA member who exemplifies the qualities that Leo Doherty brought to NERA members, his colleagues, and students over his longstanding career. The award, instituted by the NERA Board of Directors in 1981, honors the memory of Leo Doherty. He was instrumental in the development and growth of NERA as a professional association for educational research. His leadership qualities, which were both ethical and humane, encouraged others to pursue and achieve their goals.



The recipient of the 2011 Leo D. Doherty Award is **David M. Moss**. Dr. Moss has demonstrated the characteristics of Leo Doherty in numerous ways. He received his Ph.D. in Education at the University of New Hampshire in 1998, and has been a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction of the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut since that time.

Many scholars initially attend NERA to present their research and to network with colleagues in related fields. Perhaps they get hooked on the intellectual community that NERA offers and eventually become active in the behind-the-scenes committee life that forms the rich infrastructure of this organization. Dr. Moss first attended NERA in 1994 and was immediately tapped for service as Chair of the Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Committee. He never looked back.

In subsequent years he chaired and served on numerous committees and was elected to the Board of Directors for a three year term (2000 – 2003). In 2001 he served double duty as a Program Co-chair and was responsible for relocating the conference to a new venue. He remained very active with NERA and was elected President in 2008. Striking a balance between tradition and innovation, he has been integral in the development and implementation of many of the aspects of NERA that we now see as routine, such as: on-line conference paper submissions, formal conference proceedings, institutional support for our annual conference, and electronic voting for our annual elections.

Beyond the context of NERA Dr. Moss is an award winning scholar and teacher. He has been invited to deliver several keynote addresses (Science Education at the Crossroads and New England Philosophy of Education Society) along with numerous invited addresses, including most recently at the Society for International Education (NAFSA). He has presented nearly 100 original research papers at regional, national, and international conferences over the span of his career. Dr. Moss has authored over 60 articles, book chapters, and reviews on such topics as international teacher education, student understandings of the nature of science, and interdisciplinary education. His published books include *Critical Essays on Resistance in Education* (Peter Lang, 2010), *Interdisciplinary Education in an Age of Assessment* (Routledge, 2008), *Portrait of a Profession: Teachers and Teaching in the 21st Century* (Praeger, 2005), and *Beyond the Boundaries: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Learning and Teaching* (Praeger, 2003). Dr. Moss has also been named a University of Connecticut Teaching Fellow, which is the highest honor for instructional excellence and leadership across the university.

His current research interests are in the areas of culturally responsive teaching, teacher education reform, and environmental education. He also directs the UConn study abroad program in London, England where he mentors and advises a cohort of about a dozen graduate-level teacher interns each autumn. He describes this work as among his most professionally challenging and fulfilling.

Dr. Moss is currently serving NERA on an *ad hoc* committee of former Directors and Presidents who are advising the Board of Directors and Executive Officers on critical issues facing our organization. He also contributes to NERA as a leader, mentor, and friend. He is creative thinker, and provides wisdom and

wit, all of which greatly benefit NERA and its membership. Dr. Moss has described his longstanding service to NERA and our profession as “The best job you can have to make a real impact with others – and not have to wear a necktie everyday...”

2011 Teacher-as-Researcher Award

The Teacher-As-Researcher (TAR) 2011 Award recipient, **Lisa Ames**, graduated from Bucknell University in 2007 with a B.A. in Mathematics and a minor in Education. Since then she has been a middle and high school mathematics teacher at Wood-Ridge High School in Wood-Ridge, New Jersey. As a first-year teacher, Lisa immediately enrolled in the Teaching Children Mathematics M.Ed. program at William Paterson University where she has distinguished herself as an excellent student and completed her degree in May 2011. Her master’s thesis served as the basis for the classroom research project, *The Effect of Geometer’s Sketchpad on High School Students’ Conceptual Knowledge of Quadrilaterals, Inductive Reasoning, and Motivation*, for which she won the TAR award.

Ever since Lisa was in middle school, she dreamed of becoming a mathematics teacher. She felt that her own love of mathematics would enable her to teach others to appreciate what is often perceived as a difficult and uninteresting field of study. What she found as a first year teacher was that it was a real challenge to teach students with a wide range of abilities including gifted youngsters and students with learning disabilities. She decided she needed to know more about adapting her curriculum and teaching strategies to meet the needs of all her students. Lisa pursued this direction within her master’s program and by attending additional workshops that began to transform her teaching. By the time she got to her fourth year of teaching, she really felt that she was able to reach most, if not all of her students, by examining their individual understandings of the mathematics that she was teaching and proceeding with instruction from that vantage point. In teaching high school geometry, though, Lisa was still a bit stumped about how to teach some very difficult subject matter beyond a rote or procedural level. This concern led Lisa to conduct the research with her own students that led to her receipt of the TAR award.



As Lisa searched for ways to make the geometry learning of her students more conceptual rather than procedural, she found that technology could play a very large role in student success. In particular, she read a lot about the effectiveness of using the *Geometer’s Sketchpad*, an interactive computer application that allows students to construct and compare geometric figures and relationships in a virtual environment. She saw reports that this software was supposed to provide all students with the motivation to learn more about geometry concepts through an inductive reasoning process, but she was not sure if this would be more effective with her own students than the way she had been teaching them without the software.

Lisa developed three hypotheses that she wanted to test out with her own tenth and eleventh grade students.

- 1) Would students learn more about geometric properties through this highly visual discovery-based technology tool than through using paper and pencil constructions to illustrate geometric properties as it is usually taught?
- 2) Would students be able to solve more conceptually-related problem sets about the properties of quadrilaterals using an inductive method of reasoning when working with the *Geometer’s Sketchpad* than they would when working with paper and pencil constructions?
- 3) Would students’ motivation to solve geometry problems be greater when using the *Geometer’s Sketchpad* than without it?

In order to test her hypotheses, Lisa worked with 38 tenth and eleventh grade students enrolled in two of her geometry classes. Students from both grades were in each class. Both classes were given the same basic instruction and worked on the same problems, but the first period class with 18 students worked on the problems using the *Geometer's Sketchpad* while the fifth period class with 20 students worked on the problems using only pencil and paper and other manual construction tools such as rulers. Both before and after instruction, the students were given a 10-question multiple-choice test and a 10-question open-ended test, both of which were intended to measure students' knowledge of the geometry content to be learned. Students also completed a 10-question motivation questionnaire about their attitudes toward geometry. Instruction lasted for six weeks.

By comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention test results, Lisa found that the *Sketchpad* group did no better than the paper and pencil group on the multiple-choice test of knowledge of properties of quadrilaterals, but that the *Sketchpad* group did perform significantly better than the paper and pencil group on the open-ended assessment that required more inductive reasoning. This suggested to Lisa that while students could learn facts about properties equally well under either method of instruction, the *Geometer's Sketchpad* seemed to increase students' abilities to reason and figure out relationships about the properties of quadrilaterals. She noted, though, that the motivation questionnaire did not show any significant differences between the groups on the before and after measures indicating that either the measure was not really getting at the effects of using the technology or that the use of the technology was not apparent after such a short trial. Based on her research, Lisa plans to continue to use the *Geometer's Sketchpad* for additional concepts and procedures in her geometry curriculum in the future and will try to determine if the impact of using the application will have long-range effects and the extent to which it will be effective with different kinds of students.

Teacher-as-Researcher Award: Application Alert for 2012

The TAR Award was established by NERA in 1993 to recognize teachers for their outstanding efforts at conducting classroom research in order to improve their teaching practices. Such recognition is in keeping with NERA's mission to "promote educational research" and "encourage the development of research among junior researchers."

Those of us who are involved in teacher education understand that teachers are naturally researchers and that they engage in this process on a daily basis. Unfortunately teachers do not always recognize that so much of what they do is actually part of a research process in which they hypothesize anticipated effects of instructional procedures, assess the impact of those procedures, and finally change their practices based on what they find out. NERA is positioned to help teachers become more aware and value these research elements in their work. As NERA members, you all can be part of this challenge.

We hope that you will take up this challenge by seeking out and recommending a teacher whose work is familiar to you and whom you believe is worthy of recognition as the NERA 2012 Teacher-as-Researcher Award recipient. Classroom teachers are invited to apply directly for this award or be nominated by NERA members, school administrators, faculty mentors, or others familiar with the teacher's research. The application deadline is June 1, 2012.

The 2012 recipient will be invited to speak about their research project at a session at the annual NERA meeting in October and be presented with the award at that time. The award includes a plaque, NERA membership, \$150 toward travel, and two full-days of meals and lodging at NERA's annual conference.

For an application form, see page 28 of this issue. For other inquiries about the award, contact:

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

2011 Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring

Sara Finney, a professor at James Madison University, is the 2011 Thomas F. Donlon Mentoring Award recipient. Sara is described by her students as a person and professor who always goes above and beyond for her students in terms of both teaching them, helping them with their work and personally bringing them into the professional research community and introducing them to practicing researchers in many different ways but particularly at annual NERA conferences. Jason Kopp said, "Sara has been an outstanding mentor over the course of my graduate career. Honestly, Sara has been everything I could have asked for in an advisor. She combines an extensive knowledge of the field and program with a willingness to be extremely helpful and available. I have seen my own skills grow by leaps and bounds as a product of having her train me."



Many of her students have said that it is through knowing Sara that they developed their interest in Quantitative Psychology and pursued careers in various quantitative areas and endeavors. Sara's students comment that her feedback to them on many things, and not just their work, was always timely and apt and particularly so during the dissertation process. Others pointed out that the same was true during the early years of their career. As Carol Barry said, "Fortunately for Sara's advisees, her dedication goes far beyond the more "technical" aspects of advising. In addition to helping students fulfill academic and program requirements, Sara is a mentor in the true sense of the word, being fully invested in students' personal and professional growth."

All agreed that Sara was an ideal and deserving recipient of the Donlon Award for Outstanding Mentoring as did the Donlon Committee. Pamela Kaliski said "I cannot imagine a recipient more ideal and deserving of this award than Dr. Sara Finney. The value of her mentorship and advising pays off for me in my career every single day. She was and will always be one of my role models, which in and of itself makes me a better person. Not only has she trained me to be successful in my career, she has taught me how I can use some of these valuable qualities in my own career. She is the type of advisor and mentor who comes along once in a lifetime, if at all, and I am incredibly fortunate to have had her as my advisor while I was at JMU."

Congratulations to Sara for a job well done and for your commitment to mentoring young scholars and researchers!



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Advanced Announcement of the 43rd NERA Annual Conference:

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Educational Research

Greeting NERA members. Congratulations on another successful NERA conference. Using the informative and constructive feedback we received from the conference evaluation survey, we are currently planning NERA's 43rd Annual Conference. Many of the exciting aspects of the previous conferences will be retained such as professional development workshops, research presentations, symposia, theme-based panels, and mentoring for graduate students. We are also in the process of inviting two keynote speakers who will provide a provocative and insightful perspective on educational policy and research. The 43rd NERA Annual Conference will be held October 16-18, 2012, at the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill, in Rocky Hill, CT. For additional details, please visit the NERA website (www.nera-education.org) and continue to read the *NERA Researcher*. We hope to see you at the NERA conference!

Tia Sukin (Measured Progress)
Gil Andrada (Connecticut Department of Education)
Craig Wells (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
NERA 2012 Co-Chairs

Communications Committee Report

By Steven Holtzman

The NERA Communications Committee hopes that all NERA members enjoyed the 2011 conference. Two highlights of the committee's work at the conference were:

1. All conference attendees received a quick reference version of the NERA Editorial Guide which included some helpful tips for members to use while preparing written work. The full version of the NERA Editorial Guide will be posted online shortly.
2. The committee hosted two raffles at the conference for our social networking users. The winner of the Facebook raffle was Jennifer Kobrin and the winner of the LinkedIN raffle was Nicholas Hartlep. Each winner received a \$50 VISA gift card.

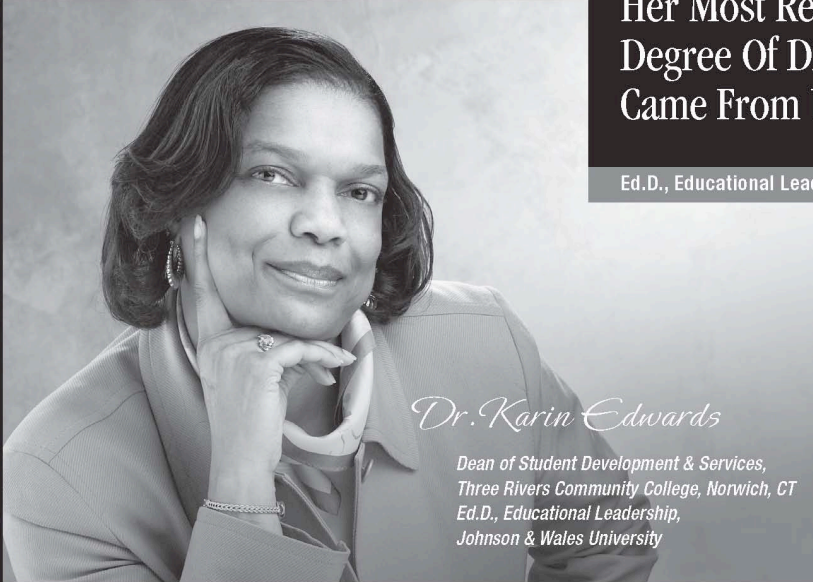
We would like to thank all of the NERA members who have joined the Facebook and LinkedIN groups over the past couple of months. The committee encourages members to use these groups to share any information that may be of interest to the NERA community including links to interesting articles, opportunities in educational research or questions that other members could assist with. We hope that these webpages will facilitate communication among members outside of the annual conference, helping to build invaluable relationships. As an additional incentive, the committee will host one more raffle in January, where anyone that posts on either website will have a chance to win a \$50 VISA gift card.

The Communications Committee is currently seeking a new graduate student member, so please contact us if you are interested in helping.

Member News

Chuck Secolsky and Brian Denison have just completed editing Handbook on Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation in Higher Education for Routledge. It contains 42 chapters in six sections with renowned authors from the fields of measurement, assessment, and evaluation. Contributors include John Creswell, Robert J. Mislevy, Ron Hambleton, Rebecca Zwick, Noreen Webb, Richard Shavelson, Kurt Geisinger, David Erlandson, Robert Stake, Trudy Banta, Michael J. Kolen, Deborah Harris, Betsy McCoach, Margaret LeCompte, Mary Pitoniak, Deanna Morgan, Bruce Thompson, Kikumi Tatsuoka, and Jeff Seybert. The book publishes in December 2011. More information can be found at: <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415880763/>

Nicholas D. Hartlep was awarded a scholarship and participated in the 2011 First Trip Home: Birth Family Search Tour for Overseas Korean Adoptees in Seoul, South Korea. The program is run by Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (GOAL, website www.goal.or.kr/).



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By Whitney Zimmerman, The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) hosted two sessions for graduate students at the conference this year. The first session, *Early Careers in Educational Research*, featured four recent graduates in a variety of careers paths. Topics included preparing for the job search, interviewing, and transitioning from being a graduate student to being a professional. The GSIC would like to thank the four panelists who participated in this session: Tia Sukin from Measured Progress, Peter Swerdzewski from Regents' Research Fund, Abigail Lau from Emmanuel College, and Aryn Karpinski from Kent State University.

Our second session was entitled *Promoting the Integration of Educational Research and Policy* and featured an interactive discussion about the intersection of educational policy and research. GSIC member Jason Kopp described the session as being "extremely informative... The panelists provided excellent strategies for framing empirical findings in such a way that policy-makers will be more likely to pay attention." The GSIC would like to thank the panelists who participated in this session: Ellen Forte from EdCount, LCC, Cathy Wendler from Educational Testing Service, and Luz Bay from Measured Progress.

The GSIC hosted a Graduate Student Social again this year. Graduate students enjoyed complimentary appetizers while mingling with students from a variety of programs and universities.

The GSIC will continue working on our mission of supporting NERA graduate students through conference sessions targeting graduate students, the Graduate Student Social, and the Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award. The winner of this year's Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award will be announced in the spring. We also plan on reaching out to recruit new graduate student members from diverse programs in education.

Two GSIC members completed their service this year: Katrina Crotts from the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Research and Evaluation Methods Program and Daniel Jurich from James Madison University's Psychological Sciences Quantitative Psychology Concentration Program. Katrina served as the GSIC's chair for the last year and Daniel played a vital role in organizing the review of papers for the Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award. Thank you both for your service!



Friendships at NERA

Membership Highlights

This year's conference attendance continued to be strong. The number of attendees at this year's conference was 294 with an overall membership of 334 (2010 was 337, 2009 was 362, 2008 was 320). The attendance of graduate students remained strong at 104.

	Membership	Conference Attendance
Professional	223	190
Student	111	104

NERA Continues to Provide Mentors to Graduate Students

By Christine Clayton, Thomas H. Levine, and Brian Evans

At this past October's conference, NERA's mentoring program matched six graduate students with three NERA mentors. The program invites graduate students to apply over the summer, to submit up to twenty pages of work in progress to a mentor, and then to meet for 30 minutes with their mentor to discuss their work. NERA thanks Craig Wells (University of Massachusetts at Amherst), Scott Brown (University of Connecticut), and Megan Welsh (University of Connecticut) for serving as mentors. The spring issue of the *NERA Researcher* will include instructions for how graduate students can request mentoring at our 2012 conference.

My Mentoring Experience

By Mariya Yukhymenko, University of Connecticut

The elevator stopped on the second floor and the doors opened. I stepped out and saw a sign on the wall "Connecticut Room is to the left." My mentoring experience was about to begin in that room. I was both thrilled and a little anxious to talk about my dissertation study to someone I had never met before. Almost six months ago, I submitted my proposal and applied to the NERA mentorship program (the application process was easy). Soon afterwards, I found out that during the NERA conference I would meet with Dr. Craig Wells, an Associative Professor at the Research and Evaluation Methods Program in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. So, here I was entering the door to be mentored.

There were a few reasons why I decided to apply for the mentorship program. First and foremost, I wanted to get feedback on my dissertation proposal from someone else, not just my advising committee. When applying to the NERA mentorship program, I was just starting to work on my proposal. I believed that sharing my work with another professor would help my dissertation be a stronger and better study. Second, I realized that by the time the mentoring occurred, I would be farther along in the process and I would have additional questions. These questions concerned the methodological part of my dissertation, since I wanted to explore other possibilities for analyzing my data. Finally, I wanted to network. I wanted to meet and share my study with a professor from another institution. The mentorship program provided me with all of these opportunities.

When I walked into the room, I felt a welcoming and more relaxed atmosphere compared to a conference session. There was no complication with regards to his input; that is, since the mentor is not on one's advising committee, one may or may not adopt the mentor's ideas. Dr. Craig Wells brought up a few possible issues related to data collection and data analysis. His input was extremely helpful.

I believe there are many advantages of participating in the NERA mentorship program. After being mentored during the NERA conference, I am more confident about my dissertation, which is the most important study in my graduate school career. Additionally, I acquired external validation of the study that I am about to start. Now, I am more aware of some possible issues related to the data collection and data analyses. As a result of this meeting, one more important demographical item was added. I also met a professor from another university and got a chance to share my future dissertation research with him. Finally, I got the opportunity to present my study to someone who I did not know, which I am going to have to do again soon during job interviews. I was also able to examine the extent to which my research is marketable. Overall, I received valuable input and had a valuable experience, and I highly recommend that other graduate students participate in the NERA mentorship program and share their research with a mentor.

If “Life” is my research topic, then I am exploring the question: “Can you go home again?”

By Theresa Rooney, York College/CUNY

During this past fall semester, I have had the chance to explore this question as I “went home” to a School of Education at a university in the role of full-time student in a doctoral program. My formal studies officially ended when I completed my doctoral degree back in 1995. Since then, I have been employed as a full-time college faculty member, a position that has given me many opportunities for practical experimentation within the area of literacy studies. However, I have found fewer opportunities to engage in formal research projects. I love being in the teaching profession, but my graduate studies and dissertation still remain as fond memories of the most intensive learning I have ever experienced.

My return “home” to learning in a School of Education was made possible by a sabbatical from my institution and an invitation by long-time NERA friend Steve Sireci to be a visiting scholar at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), where he has been a faculty member about as long as I have at my own City University of New York (CUNY) college. His passion for education and the learning experience, coupled with his leadership and expertise in the psychometric field, encouraged me to pursue this opportunity to “go home.”

In late summer I spoke with Steve about what I wanted to accomplish during my time at UMass. I had pondered that question since I began writing my sabbatical application. I sought some type of professional development experience that would allow me to grow both intellectually and professionally. Since graduate school, my professional activities had focused on teaching students, administering programs, and committee work. I developed new skills for these activities but in some areas, particularly those related to psychometrics and assessment methodology, I suspected that my abilities had dulled for lack of exercise.

Thus this opportunity held much appeal. On Labor Day weekend I moved to an apartment in Northampton, MA, and began attending four classes in the Research and Evaluation Methods Program (REMP) in the School of Education at UMass. I should have slept well that first weekend because of the effort of the physical move from my place in Queens, New York! However, sleep was fitful in the days before classes began, partly because of my worries about possible waning intellectual capabilities as I moved on in years, and also because of the anxiety of being in a new situation.

I was both excited and worried about the courses I had chosen, which centered around the theme of “tests”. I knew how the technological revolution has influenced higher education, from experience at my institution. I had even bought a keyboard for my iPad so I could take notes with it in class. It was the content of these courses that loomed as an intimidating factor.

In my first week of classes, I was immediately struck by how different it felt to be student again, in a classroom where I was the participant rather than the facilitator. I had forgotten how transformative the classroom learning experience could be. This semester, I have three professors (Steve Sireci, Ron Hambleton, and Lisa Keller), who all began their classes in a focused, exciting way, presenting course outlines rich with the types of knowledge I had hoped to encounter. I walked out of each classroom reassured that my middle-aged mind was ready for this academic learning experience, and my regular sleep patterns resumed.

As part of my experience this fall, I have engaged with graduate students who also demonstrate a special kind of intellectual energy, something else I had forgotten. Thoughts of “school” seem to dominate their lives—whether it is their classes, their assignments, or their own research projects. Most UMass doctoral students have offices on campus so their work and their studies are in the same physical space. Their classmates, doctoral cohort, and faculty often provide whatever social and emotional connections that they

have time for. I am not really a part of their world, but it is exciting to experience it nevertheless. However, I am not a “real” doctoral student. I am merely on break from my professional responsibilities, a welcome change after 17 years. But I have had years of experience in the field and have long since moved through the beginning stages of my career. These doctoral students still have many “first-time” experiences and opportunities ahead of them. In particular, I enjoyed witnessing the UMass students prepare for NERA this year and reassuring them that the anxiety related to their paper presentations would subside as soon as they began speaking.

I well remember presenting my first paper in 1992, possessing that special graduate school enthusiasm—full of nervous energy and excitement at the prospect of sharing my research findings in a conference setting, but also trepidation. Up until then, my audience had consisted of my professors, with an occasional report to my classmates. Presenting at a professional conference meant taking my work to another level.

At that time, NERA was held in the Catskill Mountains of New York at the Nevele Hotel, a more “rustic” setting than the Marriott in Rocky Hill. I had spent hours preparing my overhead slides and hoped that there would be an overhead projector in the room. (That was cutting edge technology at the time and, fortunately, someone had brought one from their home campus.) As the time drew nearer, I rehearsed my presentation and felt comfortable with it. However, when I stood in the meeting room, ready to speak, my mouth had gone dry. My advisor was sitting next to me, ready to help with a glass of water, but I could barely swallow. I was able to get the initial words out, and discussed my results for my allotted time. After I sat down, the subsequent speakers’ words blurred together as the oxygen seeped back into my brain. All I could focus on was that I had succeeded in presenting my first scholarly paper. It wasn’t until my advisor took me to the Safari Lounge that I began to breathe normally.

So can one go home again? Yes and no. “Going home” to doctoral studies has been a valuable experience, and I will miss everything about it when the semester ends. My unique position has allowed me to focus on those areas of study most relevant to my own interests without worrying about trying to master everything. The social component of learning has also revealed itself to be surprisingly powerful. I relish the time spent in class where we can discuss particular components of the lectures. I find studying with others enhances my learning. It is also a lot more fun!

As I was leaving NERA this year and returning to my “home” in Northampton and my studies in REMP, I realized that I had enjoyed the conference, but that initial sense of wonder and accomplishment that accompanies that first experience would not be replicated. My first professional conference and scholarly presentation was a “once-in-a-lifetime” experience.

However, I believe many others this year may have had a “first-time” experience at NERA, given the record number of graduate students in attendance. So to move slightly from my initial question, I am wondering how many students presented their first paper and how they felt about the experience. I invite you to share your experiences with me (theresa62@me.com) and/or the Graduate Students Issues Committee. Finally, I encourage you to make NERA one of your professional homes.

January Board of Director’s Meeting

The NERA Board Meeting will begin Friday at noon on January 27, 2012 and continue through Saturday, January 28th at the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill.

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**NORTHEASTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (NERA)
TEACHER-AS-RESEARCHER AWARD APPLICATION
43rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE, October 2012
Rocky Hill Marriott, Rocky Hill, Connecticut**

Name of Applicant: _____

Affiliation of Applicant: _____

Position of Applicant: _____

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

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Attach the following information using the guidelines provided:

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

Name of Nominating Person (if other than applicant) _____

Phone Number _____ Email: _____

Affiliation and Position of Nominating Person: (Please Print)

Signature of Nominating Person: _____ Date: _____

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

Dr. Rochelle Goldberg Kaplan, kaplanr@wpunj.edu, no later than June 1, 2012.

Membership Committee Report

Elizabeth Stone & Barbara Wert

The Membership Committee is poised to take on new committee members in the New Year. In 2011, the Committee has analyzed attendance data from the past several years in order to identify pockets of membership for targeted outreach. We hope to make this analysis a regular part of our work. We expect to start reaching out to NERA members in the next few months in order to find out what influences whether or not members attend the conference and what we as an organization can do to provide more benefit. Please take some time to respond and let us know your thoughts!



Lisa Ames, TAR Award Recipient



College Board Group



Ahh...milk and cookies at NERA



Bruno Zumbo and EAP

~ DATIC 2012 ~

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University of Connecticut <http://www.datic.uconn.edu/>

Modern Approaches to Missing Data**June 4-8, 2012***Instructor:* Ofer Harel*Web address:* <http://datic.uconn.edu/>

Missing data is a common complication in applied research, however, many practitioners are still ignoring this problem. Numerous examples from missing data literature demonstrate that dealing with missing data correctly is very important. Failure to correctly account for missing data creates many potential problems, including biased results, reduced power and inefficient estimates. Multiple Imputation (MI) is a comprehensive method used to handle problems of analyzing incomplete data. This workshop will introduce the vocabulary and main assumptions in the missing data literature followed by the introduction of the main ideas of MI with an emphasis on practical implementation of both fully and semi-parametric procedures. R, an open source (free) statistical software, which has steadily gained in popularity, will be introduced and used as the main statistical software for implementing imputation.

Dyadic Analysis Using Multilevel Modeling**June 11-15, 2012***Instructors:* David A. Kenny, Tessa V. West, & Randi Garcia*Web address:* <http://datic.uconn.edu/workshop-dyadic.cfm>

The workshop on dyadic data analysis will focus on data where both members of a dyad are measured on the same set of variables. Among the topics to be covered are the measurement of nonindependence, the actor-partner interdependence model, the analysis of distinguishable and indistinguishable dyads, mediation and moderation of dyadic effects, and over-time analyses of dyadic data. The software package used in the workshop will be SPSS, but there will be discussion of other packages (e.g., HLM) and structural equation modeling. Although the workshop does not require any prior knowledge or experience with multilevel modeling, participants are expected to have a working knowledge of multiple regression or analysis of variance, as well as SPSS.

Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)**June 18-22, 2012***Instructors:* D. Betsy McCoach, & Ann A. O'Connell*Web address:* <http://datic.uconn.edu/workshop-hlm.cfm>

Each HLM workshop covers basics and applications of multilevel modeling with extensions to more complex designs. Participants will learn how to analyze both organizational and longitudinal (growth curve) data using multilevel modeling and to interpret the results from their analyses. Although the workshop does not require any prior knowledge or experience with multilevel modeling, participants are expected to have a working knowledge of multiple regression as well as SPSS (or SAS). Analyses will be demonstrated using the software HLMv6. Instruction will consist of lectures, computer workshops, and individualized consultations. The workshop emphasizes practical applications and places minimal emphasis on statistical theory.

Dyadic Analysis Using SEM**June 25-29, 2012***Instructors:* David A. Kenny, Randi Garcia, & Tessa V. West*Web address:* <http://datic.uconn.edu/workshop-dyadic.cfm>

The workshop on dyadic data analysis will focus on data where both members of a dyad are measured on the same set of variables. Among the topics to be covered are the measurement of nonindependence, the actor-partner interdependence and common fate models, mediation and moderation of dyadic effects, and growth curve models of dyadic data. Most of the focus is on distinguishable dyads (e.g., husbands and wives). The software package used in the workshop will be Amos, and it is presumed that participants have some familiarity with Structural Equation Modeling (e.g., model specification, chi square difference, and model fit).

Structural Equation Modeling**July 16-20, 2012***Instructor:* D. Betsy McCoach*Web address:* <http://datic.uconn.edu/workshop-sem.cfm>

This introductory workshop on Structural Equation Modeling covers basics of path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and latent variable modeling. Using AMOS Graphics, participants will learn how to build, evaluate, and revise structural equation models. Although the workshop does not require any prior knowledge or experience with SEM, participants are expected to have a working knowledge of multiple regression, as well as some experience using a statistical software program such as SPSS.

To register for any of these workshops, please go to <http://www.datic.uconn.edu/>

Modern Modeling Methods Conference: 2012 Call for Proposals

The Modern Modeling Methods (M³) conference is an interdisciplinary conference designed to showcase the latest modeling methods and to present research related to these methodologies. The second annual M³ conference will be held May 22-23rd, 2012, with two pre-conferences on May 21st (“An Introduction to Multiple Imputation” and “Methods for Network Dynamics”) and a post-conference on May 24th (“Cautiously Adding Dynamics to Longitudinal Analyses”). Keynote speakers for the 2012 conference include Donald Rubin (Harvard University), Tom Snijders (University of Oxford), Peter Bentler (UCLA), and Jack McArdle (University of Southern California).

We are currently soliciting both methodological research papers and papers that illustrate methodological techniques in the area of modeling, broadly defined. Papers related to multilevel modeling, structural equation modeling, mixture modeling, and longitudinal modeling are especially encouraged.

Conference proposals for the Modern Modeling Methods conference may fall into one (or more) of four categories: Methodological Innovation, Methodological Application, Methodological Illustration, or Methodological Evaluation. Methodological Innovation proposals introduce a new technique. Methodological Evaluation proposals present the results of empirical research evaluating a methodology. Most often, these will involve simulation studies. Methodological Application proposals present the methods and results of a real research study in which the technique was used. Methodological Illustration proposals provide a pedagogical illustration of when and how to use the technique; these papers are designed to help the audience be able to implement the technique themselves. Methodological research proposals should be no longer than 1,000 words and should include purpose, background, methods, results, discussion, and significance. Methodological illustration papers should be no longer than 1,000 words and should include a description of the methodology to be illustrated as well as an outline of the paper/talk. All proposals should be submitted electronically at <http://www.modeling.uconn.edu/proposals.cfm>.

Proposals for the 2012 conference are due by **January 5, 2012**. Notifications of presentation status will be mailed by **February 6, 2012**. For more information about the modern modeling conference, see our website: www.modeling.uconn.edu. If you have any questions about the conference, please email D. Betsy McCoach (betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu).

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