

The NERA Researcher

The President's Message



John Young

Dear NERA Colleagues,

I hope that you have had an enjoyable and productive summer. Since my last message to you, there have been a number of positive developments for NERA that I would like to share with you. The planning for this year's conference, **"Equity and Excellence in an Era of Accountability"**, continues on track. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the conference co-chairs, Pamela Kaliski, Ross Markle and Javarro Russell, and all of the NERA members, we received a record number of proposal submissions (260), nearly one-third more than for last year's conference. More importantly, these proposals came from individuals at more than 100 different institutions, an indication

of the success of our outreach efforts. More than 220 submissions were accepted and we anticipate a stimulating and well-attended conference. In early July, I spoke with our keynote speaker, Jonathan Alger, the President of James Madison University, to discuss his upcoming presentation. He looks forward to speaking at our conference and to meeting the membership. In addition, we had a very successful fund raising campaign for institutional sponsorship of our conference with a total of more than **\$15,000** for this year.

As you have experienced by now, we have a new NERA website and conference proposal submission system in place. The website is well-designed, attractive, and has a number of useful features for members. The transition to our new IT provider, Vieth Consulting, has been smooth, thanks to the hard work of the Infrastructure Committee, led ably by Steven Holtzman, with contributions from the other committee members, Javarro Russell, Liz Stone and Tia Sukin. With IT support being our single biggest expense, the contract with Vieth saves us more than **\$7,500** over last year's costs, which places NERA in a much stronger financial position. Also, videos from last year's conference have been posted on the NERA website at http://www.nera-education.org/conference_videos.php. These include Charlotte Danielson's keynote address, the keynote panel on fairness, and three invited panels. Thanks to Jennifer Randall and her students for recording these videos and the presenters for allowing us to record their presentations.

The NERA Executive Committee and the Board of Directors had an efficient and productive spring meeting in the form of a conference call on May 19th. An important outcome from that meeting was a decision to purchase weather-related insurance for our conference. Because we have certain financial obligations to the Marriott Hotel, having this insurance will mitigate our risks with regard to negative impacts on conference attendance caused by severe weather. Another important outcome was a decision to endorse the statement on diversity authored by the Diversity Committee (the statement can be found on our website under "About NERA"). Thanks to Ellina Chernobilsky, Chair of the Diversity Committee, and her committee members, Kevin Crouse, Jennifer Randall and Caryn Terwilliger, for their collective efforts in crafting such an elegant and inclusive statement.

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The NERA Researcher

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

Message from the Editors

Dear NERA Members,

We hope you had a productive and/or a relaxing summer. With the annual conference approaching fast, this issue is packed with information. Some of it is also on the website.

Be sure to check out this year's conference co-chairs' special message on p. 4. Pamela Kaliski, Ross Markle, and Javarro Russell have worked tirelessly all summer to ensure you have a wonderful conference experience this fall. Please note that unlike previous years, we have not included hotel information in the newsletter: this information is on the website (link is in the message from the co-chairs).

In this issue you will also find the tentative preliminary conference schedule (p. 5). Mark the workshops you would like to attend for when you register, as those fill up very quickly. Speaking of workshops, you will find a detailed description of the in-conference workshop and follow-up sessions on teaching English learners. Information on all workshops is available on the NERA website.

A special feature in this issue is a short article about the trustworthiness and rigor of qualitative research by Felice Billups. You can read it on pages 10-12.

Finally, Haifa and I would like to thank Barbara J. Helms for her continued support as proof-reviewer of the newsletter. We appreciate your help. Thank you!

Bo and Haifa
The Editors

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(Continued from page 1)

As one of my presidential initiatives to add value to your NERA membership, the on-going series of NERA webinars has been highly successful, based on registration and attendance figures. To date, there have been five webinars, with the most recent ones in June, led by Jennifer Kobrin of Pearson ("The Promise of Learning Progressions for Identifying Pathways for Student Success") and August, led by Dena Pastor of James Madison University ("Modeling Item Response Profiles Using Factor Models, Latent Class Models, and Latent Variable Hybrids"). Thanks to all of the webinar presenters to date, who have helped make this initiative a notable success. Please send me or Steven Holtzman (sholtzman@ets.org), my Presidential Advisor on Special Projects, any ideas or topics you may have for future webinars.

Lastly, since no one correctly identified the location of my photo in the last newsletter (it was taken at the Mets' spring training stadium in Port St. Lucie, FL), I'll make the same offer of two free drinks (on me) at this year's conference to the first person who can correctly identify the location of this photo! As always, please consider serving NERA in some capacity and feel free to contact me at jwyong@ets.org. See you in October!

Update from your Presidential Advisor on Special Projects

As the 2014 NERA Conference approaches, I want to take this opportunity to thank John Young for the opportunity to have served as NERA's Presidential Advisor on Special Projects for the 2013-2014 year and provide a recap on the different projects NERA has taken on over the past year.

- NERA has hosted five webinars which provided great professional development opportunities for NERA members outside of the conference. These webinars also gave non-members a chance to see what NERA has to offer.
 - Applying for 2014 Summer Internships - John Young, Educational Testing Service
 - Expanding Education's Predictors and Criteria: The Research and Assessment of 21st Century and Noncognitive Skills - Ross Markle, Educational Testing Service
 - Taking the Mystery Out of Qualitative Data Analysis - Felice Billups, Johnson and Wales University
 - The Promise of Learning Progressions for Identifying Pathways for Student Success - Jennifer Kobrin, Pearson
 - Modeling Item Response Profiles Using Factor Models, Latent Class Models, and Latent Variable Hybrids - Dena Pastor, James Madison University
- The webinars were very successful and attracted up to 100 participants. I would like to thank all of the presenters for making them possible. All presentations can be found at <http://www.nera-education.org/webinars.php>.
- NERA has established a relationship with a new infrastructure vendor, Vieth Consulting, who is providing new innovative technology to manage NERA's website, proposal management system, e-mail distribution system and membership database. Members should notice that our website has been redesigned and all member services should be running smoothly with additional capabilities.
- Videos have been posted online from the 2013 NERA conference. These videos can be found at http://www.nera-education.org/conference_videos.php.
- NERA discussion boards have been created and are on our website. There is a general forum, a mentoring forum and a GSIC forum. We hope that members take advantage of these discussion boards.

On behalf of the NERA leadership, I hope you each have a chance to take advantage of the new services that NERA has to offer. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to me at sholtzman@ets.org. I look forward to seeing you at the 2014 NERA conference.

Steven Holtzman
NERA Presidential Advisor on Special Projects

Member News

Jason Kopp, a recent graduate of James Madison University's assessment and measurement doctoral program, accepted a new position as Assessment Design Specialist at the Educational Records Bureau.

Daniel Jurich, who also obtained his doctorate in assessment and measurement from James Madison University, accepted a new position as Psychometrician in the Scoring Services department of the National Board of Medical Examiners.

Mathew Swerdloff published an article entitled *Leading in a New Era: Embracing Media Tools in Our Schools* in the New York State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Online Newsletter. The article is available online at: <http://goo.gl/3ctwZN>.

2014 NERA Elections Are Coming!

All NERA members in good standing for this year will receive an email in September with directions regarding the online election process. If you are a member and do not have a current email address on file with NERA, please contact Elizabeth Stone (NERA Treasurer) at members@nera-education.org. Since our primary aim is to increase participation in the election process, please vote!

Our election this year consists of President, Secretary, and two Directors on the Board. We have two candidates running for President, two candidates running for Secretary and four candidates running for the Board of Directors. Please keep your eyes open for biographies of all candidates coming your way before the election in late August.

Message from the 45th Annual Conference Co-Chairs

Hello NERA members! We are looking forward to seeing you this fall for another amazing conference. To date, many of you have already participated in making this conference one for the record books. With the help of many volunteers we were able to receive and review over 260 proposals. Thank you for all of your help. The many proposals we received this year made the process of accepting and rejecting very difficult. Throughout our conference planning process we focused on maximizing the diversity and the quality of the proposals accepted. At this time the proposals have been rated and acceptance letters have gone out. We are now in the phase of putting together the program of events chosen especially for you.

On the next page you will find NERA at a Glance. We have many exciting sessions planned for this year's conference. Keeping with tradition, there will be preconference workshops on Wednesday. Registration will open early Wednesday morning and concurrent sessions will begin at 1:00pm. As usual we will have receptions on Wednesday and Thursday evening following our dynamic speakers. Graduate students can also look forward to a slate of activities planned by the Graduate Student Issues Committee.

Registration is now open. We urge you to get registered and prepare your lodging and travel arrangements to our new location at the Trumbull Marriott in Trumbull, CT. Registration and hotel information is available at http://www.nera-education.org/conference_registration.php.

Feel free to contact us with any questions at neraconference2014@gmail.com.

See you in October!

Pamela Kaliski, *The College Board*
Ross Markle, *Educational Testing Service*
Javarro Russell, *Educational Testing Service*

You can also stay up-to-date with conference announcements and deadlines by engaging with us through social media:



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45th Annual Conference

NERA at a GLANCE

Conference Theme: *"Equity and Excellence in an Era of Accountability"*

WEDNESDAY, October 22nd

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Preconference Workshop: Using Think Aloud Protocols for Educational Research

Presented by: Juliette Lyons-Thomas, Postdoctoral Fellow, *Regents Research Fund/Columbia University*; Kadriye Ercikan, Professor, *University of British Columbia*

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Preconference Workshop: A Hands-On Introduction to R

Presented by: Monica Erbacher, Assistant Professor, *James Madison University*

1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

In-Conference Workshop: Preparing All Teachers to Succeed with English Language Learners

Presented by: Tom Levine and David Moss, *University of Connecticut*

1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

In-Conference Workshop: Introduction to Phenomenological Interviewing as Qualitative Research

Presented by: Irving Seidman, Professor Emeritus, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

GSIC Sponsored Event: Validity & Fairness: An Interview with Dr. Michael Kane

Presented by: Michael Kane, *Educational Testing Service*; John Young, *Educational Testing Service*; Kristen Smith, *James Madison University*

4:45 PM – 5:45 PM

GSIC Sponsored Event: Meet and Greet

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Invited Speech: Made to be Broken: The Paradox of Student Growth Prediction

Presented by: Andrew Ho, Professor of Education, *Harvard Graduate School of Education*

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

NERA Welcome Reception

THURSDAY, October 23rd

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

In-Conference Workshop: Hierarchical Linear Modeling
Presented by: Michael Chajewski, Associate Psychometrician, *The College Board*

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

In-Conference Workshop: Item Response Theory with jMetrik
Presented by: J. Patrick Meyer, Associate Professor, *University of Virginia*

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Poster Session 1

9:30 AM-10:45 AM

GSIC Sponsored Event: Creating and Maintaining a Professional Web Presence
Presented by: Monica Erbacher, Assistant Professor, *James Madison University*; Kathryn Pinder, *James Madison University*; Heather Harris, *James Madison University*; Rochelle Fisher, *James Madison University*

12:30 PM-2:00 PM

Keynote Address: Educational Research, the Law, and Public Policy: Perfect Together?
Presented by: Jonathan Alger, President, *James Madison University*

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Keynote Interview: Wayne Camara, Senior VP of Research, *ACT*
(Interviewed by Kristen Huff, *Regents Research Fund*)

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

NERA Awards Ceremony
Presidential Address: John Young, Director of Research, *Educational Testing Service*

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

President's Reception

FRIDAY, October 24th

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM:

NERA Business Meeting - **all members are encouraged to attend**

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM:

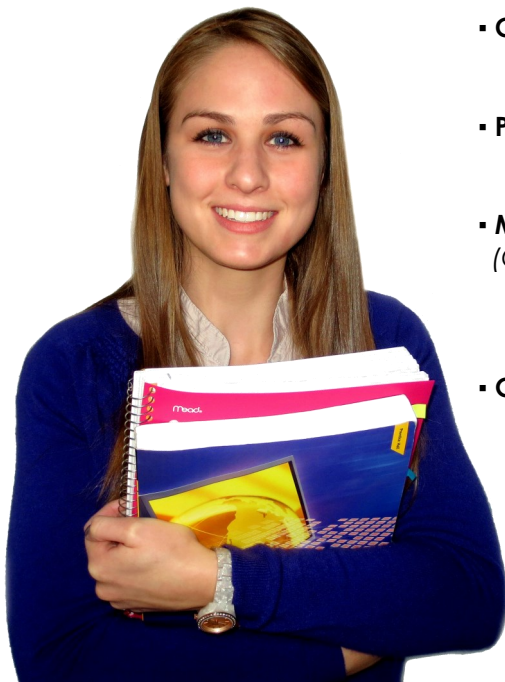
Poster Session 2

11:30 AM– 1:15 PM

Invited Speech: Asking the Right Questions
Presented by: Michael Kane, Samuel J. Messick Chair, *Educational Testing Service*



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JWU alum **KARIN EDWARDS**

has worked at public and private two- and four-year institutions for the majority of her career in education.

Edwards has served in several leadership positions including nine years as senior student affairs administrator and nine years as a senior-level administrator outside of student affairs.

She currently serves as the dean of student development at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, Conn.

Preparing All Teachers to Succeed with English Learners

Wednesday, 10/22 – Thursday, 10/23

NERA In-conference Session Series

This series of in-conference sessions will help teacher education instructors and program directors to improve teachers' preparation to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students.

English learners (also called ELLs and emergent bilinguals) are “the fastest-growing student population in U.S. schools” (Nutta, Mokhtari, & Strebel, 2012, 1); however, most preservice teachers are inadequately prepared to work effectively with this growing group (e.g. Cummins & Miramonte, 2005; Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Menken & Antunez, 2001). To empower teacher educators to do things differently, our sessions offers practical approaches for engaging busy faculty in professional development and course revision. At the University of Connecticut, faculty began learning together and changing their courses in 2005; since 2010, 18 faculty have participated in a formal faculty learning community and documented its benefits. Based upon our work, our sessions will offer the following:

Wednesday, October 22, 1:30-4p.m.

In-conference session: Improving Teacher Preparation for Work with English Learners

Part One: Preparing pre-service teachers for ELLs: Rationale and methods for teacher educators developing their own knowledge and practices [40 minutes, presentation, discussion, & application]

We open explaining the urgency of preparing teachers for cultural and linguistic diversity. We identify what both pre-service teachers and their instructors—teacher educators—need to learn; we then provide participants with four broad approaches participants could adapt to their own context to improve teacher preparation for linguistic diversity.

Part Two: How to Recruit and Retain Busy Faculty into Collective Faculty Development [20 minutes, presentation and small group problem solving]

Participants will learn strategies for recruiting and retaining busy faculty members in a sustainable and ongoing process of change.

Part Three: Protocol-guided Discussion as a Tool for Supporting Faculty Learning and Change in Practice [50 minutes, introduction and then modeling with audience fully participating]

Participants will gain an experiential understanding of one method of promoting insight into practice -- building local practical knowledge, and motivating a group to support each other and curricular change. Participants will leave with resources that would support their ongoing learning about the use of protocols and with an understanding of some of the issues and needs that collective professional development must address regardless of whether it uses protocols.

Part Four: Tensions of—and Strategies for—Infusing New Learning about ELLs into Existing Teacher Education Courses [40 minutes, panel presentation by faculty followed by questions and answers]

Participants will learn specific challenges and strategies for infusing new material into a single teacher education course. Participants will raise questions. Individuals or teams from schools might begin drafting next action steps or questions if time allows.

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*In-conference session Thursday, 10/23 8:15-9:45a.m.
Improving Teacher Preparation for Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:
Changing Individual Teacher Educators' Curriculum & Instruction*

Part Five: How a Course's Conceptual Framing Can Facilitate Preservice Teacher Learning about Emergent Bilinguals

[40 minutes, presentation and discussion with audience]

The first part of this session will: 1) explain how instructors of teacher education courses can use conceptual framing to meaningfully integrate learning about English language learners into courses focused on other topics; 2) identify options for conceptual frames that can help preservice teachers weave understandings about emergent bilinguals into other courses; 3) illustrate how two different conceptual frames created different opportunities for preservice teacher learning.

Part Six: Positioning Both Teacher Educators and Preservice Teachers as Learners about Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

[30 minutes, presentation and discussion with audience]

In university-based teacher education courses, both preservice teachers and teacher educators can adopt a stance of inquiry regarding linguistically and culturally diverse K-12 learners. This session presents such methods, assignments, and experiences to empower teacher educators to position themselves and their students as learners about—and from—culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Discussion [20 minutes, open discussion and small group work as needed].

*In-conference session Thursday, 8/23 10-11:30a.m.
Improving Teacher Preparation for Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:
Program Level Challenges and Strategies*

Part Seven: Do Practices Supported in Teacher Education Coursework Show up in Practice or in Other Ways? How Can We Tell? [40 minutes, presentation and discussion]

This session provides practical options for collecting data that can measure changes in outcomes like classroom practice, attitudes, knowledge, and/or lesson planning. We provide suggestions for adapting methods to different contexts and available resources, and suggest how such data can be used to guide further course revision and professional development.

Part Eight: Identifying Readings, Reform Points within Your Program, Obstacles, and/or Other Ways of Moving Forward

[50 minutes, presentation, discussion, and joint problem solving]

To help participants take next steps, this session will help them identify: options for initial readings; resources within their institution that could help them begin individual or collective work; promising points to begin work within their program to maximize impact; Participants will also leave having been offered—and gained for themselves—advice regarding methods of overcoming roadblocks. We'll close with small groups drafting or refining action steps for their individual work and/or work with colleagues.

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Trustworthiness and the Quest for Rigor in Qualitative Research

Felice D. Billups, Ed.D.
Johnson & Wales University

Researchers expend considerable effort ensuring that their studies are rigorous, valid, reliable, and actionable. Consumers expect these studies to be professionally accomplished with precision and objectivity, grounded in sound ethical practice. These expectations, however, are typically oriented towards quantitative designs; the guarantee of rigor, validity, reliability, and generalizability are not applied to qualitative designs in the same way. If different standards are applied to qualitative research to ensure quality and rigor, how can we better understand those standards to effectively evaluate qualitative studies?

Trustworthiness, a concept coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is considered the quintessential framework for evaluating qualitative research, but receives minimal attention from most researchers, especially if they are predominantly oriented to quantitative methods. In fact, many quantitative researchers expect that the same principles of validity, reliability, and generalizability can and should be applied to qualitative designs. This is not the case and a thorough understanding of the evaluative criteria for assessing qualitative research is a necessary component in any researcher's toolkit.

Four elements comprise the original trustworthiness framework: credibility (truth), dependability (consistency), transferability (applicability), and confirmability (neutrality). Authenticity is a fifth element, added since the original discussion and endorsed by some qualitative researchers as an equally important evaluative element (Polit & Beck, 2011). These elements are explained below, preceded by a chart that shows the connection and interpretation of these elements compared with the quantitative paradigm. The visual display of the quantitative and qualitative terms often helps researchers understand the commonalities these evaluative criteria share (see Table 1).

While this chart attempts to show the progression from the quantitative to qualitative frameworks for evaluative

criteria, the terms cannot be matched **exactly**. The discussion below attempts to further explain each element of trustworthiness.

Credibility: Are the qualitative findings believable? In the quest for credible qualitative results, findings must appear truthful and capture a holistic representation of the phenomenon under exploration. The most robust of the trustworthiness strategies, there are many ways to apply credibility to evaluate qualitative findings:

1) **Prolonged engagement**, in conjunction with **persistent observation** (intense focus on the aspects of setting and phenomenon), suggests that the researcher must spend considerable time in the research field to thoroughly understand participant perspectives and to offset the researcher's own bias (although *how* much time depends on the nature of the study (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989)). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) note, "if prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth" (p. 304).

2) **Peer debriefing** involves feedback from another researcher to compare conclusions; peers may address questions of bias, errors of fact, competing interpretations, convergence between data and phenomena, and the emergence of themes, all of which can be a lengthy but important process to reinforce credibility.

3) **Member-checking**, different from peer debriefing in that select participants are asked to review the findings or preliminary analysis to assess whether those findings reflect what they expressed to the researcher. This feedback may be obtained either in writing or in face-to-face conversations, and is also a way to obtain additional data. Member checking is, however, considered controversial

Table 1
Commonalities between Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Quantitative Lens	Qualitative Lens	Bridge	Essential Question
Validity	Credibility	Truth	Are results believable? Do they appear truthful?
Reliability	Dependability	Replicable	Are results consistent over time?
Generalizability	Transferability	Applicable	Are the results applicable to similar settings?
Objectivity	Confirmability	Neutrality	Corroborated through triangulation?
Accuracy	Authenticity	Reality(ies)	Are all 'realities' represented?

for many reasons and is a process which must be carefully applied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2011).

4) **Triangulation** involves using multiple data sources to produce greater depth and breadth of understanding. This effort is critical in qualitative studies as a way to corroborate findings and/or to build a more holistic picture of the phenomenon. Triangulation is accomplished through one or more of the following approaches: methods triangulation (different data collection methods including interviews, journals, focus groups, observations, and documents), data triangulation (using different participants or data sources within one study in subsets of people, time, and space)(Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), analyst triangulation (using multiple analysts to review findings through cross-case or within case analyses), or theory triangulation (using multiple perspectives to interpret the data).

5) **Negative case analyses**, which include disconfirming evidence to search for other interpretations in a study; the use of conflicting findings to build a richer picture of the phenomenon likewise allows for continuous refinement of the results (Creswell, 2013).

Dependability: Are the findings stable and consistent over time and across conditions? Would the same data collection methods yield the same or similar results? Ensuring that the same research process would generate the same essential findings often depends on external audits, which involve external researchers who examine the purpose, methods, and findings of a study to determine whether the findings and interpretations of one researcher can be supported by another (Miles & Huberman, 2014). External audits (also known as inquiry audits) are an important strategy for feedback, to assess the truthfulness of preliminary findings. The drawbacks to this strategy, however, may instead produce conflict between two researchers' perspectives, in which case the primary researcher may decide to revise the study.

Transferability: While the goal of qualitative research is not to produce results which are statistically generalizable, the intent is to produce findings which other researchers can interpret for similar settings, even to the point of applying the research design for their own purposes. Are these findings comparable? As Trochim indicates (2006), the concept of proximal similarity is included in this strategy. As Lincoln and Guba note (1985), "by describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail, one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times,

settings, situations, and people" (p.306). This work is accomplished through the strategy of 'thick description', a term first used by Ryle (1949) and extended by Geertz (1973). 'Thick description' is the use of notes and field notes in a study where the researcher includes extensive detail and explicit descriptions when recording conversations, observations, and interpretations during data collection. 'Thick description' allows the researcher to more easily evaluate how this same circumstance of people, place, and phenomenon could be applied in a similar setting, under similar conditions, with similar participants.

Confirmability: Are the findings accurate? Can you find other ways to corroborate your results? These efforts are crucial in a rigorous qualitative study, not only to generate confidence in the results but also to reflect the truthfulness of the participants' perspectives. There are several strategies that can be employed to apply this concept but two of the most common include **audit trails** and **reflexivity**.

Audit trails are likened to a blueprint for the research process, outlining detailed procedural records maintained by the primary researcher. This blueprint is accessible to an external researcher so s/he can attempt replication; if a study can be replicated with similar results, confirmability is strengthened.

By contrast, **reflexivity** is the incorporation of the researcher's background, knowledge, bias, methodology, and perspective superimposed onto a study. Another way to express reflexivity is to say that it represents what the researcher knows about himself and the participants, continuously recorded as a way to offset preconceived notions about the research that might interfere with data analysis and interpretation (Malterud, 2001). To what extent has the researcher worked to neutralize his or her own bias, motivation or interest as findings are reported? While it is important to embrace bias as an essential component of qualitative research, this role of 'researcher as data collection instrument' must be balanced by allowing each participant's voice to offset the natural assumptions of the researcher. As noted above, the goal of qualitative research is not to aim for generalizability but to seek depth, detail, and the multi-layered perspective of each participant's experience with the phenomena in question.

Authenticity: This final element in the trustworthiness framework comes more recently to the discussion but is strongly endorsed by many qualitative researchers (Polit & Beck, 2011; Patton, 2002). This strategy focuses on the contextual purpose of the research, i.e. what is the intended value of the research? How does the research benefit participants? Are all the realities represented to give meaning to the findings?

Arguably, the concept of trustworthiness is complex and this overview can only provide a general sense of the value and application of the elements for evaluating qualitative research. There are many excellent resources on this topic, included in the list below; while Lincoln and Guba (1985) are most commonly cited, many other researchers have entered the conversation (Whittemore Chase, & Mandle, 2001), offering important contributions and insights. Overall, researchers who do not believe there is any way a qualitative study can be as reliable, valid, believable, or useful as a quantitative study should be assured that when the principles of trustworthiness are diligently applied, a qualitative study is just as rigorous and valuable as any quantitative study. But as Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) note: "While strategies of trustworthiness may be useful in attempting to evaluate rigor, they do not in themselves ensure rigor" (p. 9). The quest for rigor in any qualitative study ultimately resides with the quality of the researcher's purpose and practice, and the verity of the unique depth and breadth of each participant's 'lived experience'.

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RESOURCES

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**Executive Director, Center for Assessment and Research Studies - 0406170
James Madison University**

James Madison University (JMU) invites applications and nominations for an Executive Director (ED) to lead the university's Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS). This is a twelve-month position with a tenure-track appointment in the Department of Graduate Psychology.

The CARS Executive Director, working collaboratively with college and academic unit leaders, will be the principal champion for fostering a culture of assessment on campus. The ED will represent JMU in the national discussion on higher education assessment, help to advance the visibility of JMU and CARS, serve as a role model for assessment practitioners both on and off campus, and provide administrative and budgetary oversight of CARS. The ED will be responsible for contributing to and supporting the research of CARS faculty and graduate students. Interaction with students is an integral part of this position and includes teaching one course per year, advising students (M.A. and Ph.D.), and supervising student research and/or practice.

Required qualifications include:

- A terminal degree in her/his discipline
- A strong record of research in assessment, evaluation, statistics or a related area
- Strong communication skills, interpersonal skills and a collaborative management style
- Strong administrative and mentoring skills
- Organizational leadership experience and success in an academic setting
- Strong knowledge of inferential statistics and measurement theory
- Experience teaching and mentoring student research at the college level
- A strong record of assessment practice that includes experience working with external assessment/research organizations and stakeholders
- Respect for a wide range of faculty roles including teaching, scholarship, service and assessment practice.

Applications must include:

- A letter of application that contains a concise statement describing how the applicant's vision and experience align with responsibilities of the position,
- A current curriculum vitae,
- A list of at least five references with contact information. References will not be contacted until a candidate is being considered for a campus visit.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, with review of applications to begin October 6, 2014. The desired start date is July 1, 2015. Salary will be commensurate with experience. For the full invitation for applications, see:

<https://joblink.jmu.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/frameset/Frameset.jsp?time=1408192066928>



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Call for the 2015 Jason Millman Promising Measurement Scholar Award Due by November 30, 2014

In 1995, the Department of Education at Cornell University initiated the Jason Millman Promising Scholar Program to honor the lifetime work of Dr. Jason Millman, to recognize his contributions to the field of applied measurement, and to continue Dr. Millman's support of scholars in their formative years who are just beginning their research careers.

Since 2003, the National Council on Measurement in Education with the support of the Millman endowment has continued the tradition of this award. As in the past, it is designed to honor Dr. Millman's work by recognizing a scholar at the early stages of his/her career whose research has the potential to make a major contribution to the applied measurement field. In addition to recognition by NCME, the successful candidate will receive \$1,000. Only one candidate will be chosen to receive the award each year and will be presented the award at the annual meeting.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the 2015 Jason Millman Award an applicant must have received his/her first doctoral degree after April 1, 2010 and be a member of NCME. If confirmation is required, the review committee will use the date printed on the nominee's diploma. The nominee must also have two or more unique papers either accepted for presentation at an NCME annual meeting or published in NCME publications within the last five years; and have the support of his/her professional colleagues indicating that his/her work represents a significant contribution to the field of applied measurement.

For full consideration, the nomination (application) package must include:

1. A letter of nomination from a professional colleague who is an NCME member in good standing;
2. At least two and at most three additional letters of recommendation from persons other than the nominator that address (i) the candidate's contributions to the field of measurement as a teacher, and/or as an applied measurement practitioner, and/or as a measurement researcher; and (ii) the reasons that the candidate's work represents a significant contribution to the field of applied measurement.
3. At least two and at most three unique papers presented at any of the last five NCME annual meetings or published in the last five years in an NCME publication. Please note the following:
 - A. NCME annual meeting papers may be in a revised format.
 - B. Non-published or published dissertations do not qualify as papers, although papers developed on the same or similar topics may qualify.
 - C. Candidate must be the first author on all multiple-author papers. In this case, the candidate must provide a statement that defines his/her contributions to the paper.
4. Candidate's current curriculum vita.
5. A letter from the candidate outlining his/her career goals and how his/her work contributes significantly to the field of measurement.

The nominator and the nominee agree that this work will not be nominated for a similar award in AERA and that the nominee will not be nominated for additional NCME awards that will be given during the 2015 Annual Meeting.

Submit electronic files or one set of hard copies of all materials by **November 30, 2014** to:

Tia Sukin (tsukin@pacificmetrics.com)
Pacific Metrics
1 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Building 1, Suite 150
Monterey, CA 93940

For Additional Information: Go to the NCME Website or contact Tia Sukin at tsukin@pacificmetrics.com.



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NERA Communications Committee Report

Jonathan Steinberg
Educational Testing Service

Hello NERA Members! Hope you are having an enjoyable summer. I wanted to share how the Communications Committee has been helping out the organization over the last few months. As noted in my last article, with the help of Joshua Marland, he and I helped with the migration of the NERA membership list over to our new vendor. I am hopeful this will allow for more effective communication among the membership about NERA activities.

While it is always appreciated when people from various committees submit requests for communications to be sent out, we need to formalize some of the procedures that our committee helped institute last year while adapting to the need for publicizing NERA activities using other media outlets. NERA President Dr. John Young approached us before the summer to develop a social media policy and we are working on a set of recommendations to be put before the Board later this year.

Please continue to let your friends and colleagues know about our LinkedIn group and our Facebook page so that we get more people connected to NERA. As always, if you have any suggestions about how the Communications Committee can better serve you as NERA members, please feel free to contact me at jsteinberg@ets.org.

Jonathan Steinberg
Chair, Communications Committee

Membership Committee Update

The 2014 NERA Membership Committee is working hard to increase NERA membership and conference attendance this year. We ask each of you, as NERA members, to do your part by personally inviting at least two friends or colleagues to attend NERA this year as new members. Members who bring the most new members will win prizes!

Update from NERA Mentorship Program Co-Chairs Ross Markle and Jonathan Rubright

The application window to participate in the 2014 NERA Mentorship Program as either a mentor or mentee has closed. Many thanks to all of the mentors and mentees who signed up to participate. This year, a total of 16 mentors volunteered, up from 10 in 2013. Additionally, we have more diversity in the professional lives of mentors, including both professors and professionals. We are very excited to implement the program this year, and look forward to seeing great mentoring in Trumbull!

Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award

Educators are encouraged to submit a 15-20 page original research paper on any educational issue of interest for the Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award. There may be single or multiple authors. The submission will be peer reviewed and rated on a thirty-five point rubric. The winner(s) will be notified by both email and post in the beginning of January. The author of the winning distinguished paper will receive a stipend of \$500 and present at the American Educational Research Association Conference. Papers may be submitted in blind and authored copies via email after the NERA Conference in October to Dr. Johan van der Jagt at jvanderj@bloomu.edu.

The 2014 winner of the Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award is Michael Deasy of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. His co-authors are Lorraine Dagostino, James Carifio of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Mark Fenster of the University of Notre Dame in Maryland. Their paper entitled, *Developing Basic and Higher Level Reading Processing Skills: Exploring Reading Instruction with the PIRLS Database* discusses the need for accurate analyses of effective reading strategies to promote world-wide literacy.

The Lorne H. Woollatt Award was renamed in 1990 to honor this New York educator who published, *The evolution of state-local governmental relationships in New York State (Staff study of the Fiscal policy for public education in New York State)* in 1948. Woollatt was an active member of NERA.



The Graduate Lounge

Kristen Smith
James Madison University

Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award 2013 Winner

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) would like to congratulate **Joseph A. Rios** of The University of Massachusetts Amherst and his co-authors M. Fernanda Gándara, Minjeong Shin, and Lisa Keller. Joseph's paper titled **"The Impact of Ignoring Statistical Information on Domain Representation in a Multistage Test"** was selected to receive the 2013 Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award! The GSIC would also like to recognize the runner up: Mariafe Panizo of James Madison University and her co-authors Jonathan A. Kratz, Vesna Hart, and S. Jeanne Horst. The GSIC would like to thank the 19 raters who graciously volunteered their time and expertise to select our winner; their names as well as the abstract of the winning paper are featured on the [GSIC page](#) of the NERA website.

We encourage all graduate students to submit their papers for this year's 2014 Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award.

Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award 2014

If you are the first author on a paper you present at the 2014 NERA conference, please consider submitting your paper for the 2014 Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award. The recipient will be recognized at the 2015 NERA conference. Papers must be submitted by Monday, November 4th.

NERA 2014 Conference

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) would like to encourage all graduate students to attend the 45th Annual NERA Conference October 22nd - 24th at our new location in Trumbull, Connecticut! The conference will feature several exciting events geared toward graduate students:

- Two in-conference sessions
- Graduate Student Social
- Professional Development Workshops
- Poster Session

In-conference Session #1: Validity & Fairness: An Interview with Dr. Michael Kane

This invited session will provide an opportunity for NERA graduate students to get to know a renowned researcher in the field of educational measurement and a pioneer of validity theory, Dr. Michael Kane. He will share his experiences from graduate school and the beginning of his professional career. The session will include ample time for audience questions. Don't miss this unique opportunity to actively engage with Dr. Michael Kane.

In-conference Session #2: Creating and Maintaining a Professional Web Presence

All graduate students are invited to attend this hour-long workshop on creating and maintaining a professional online presence. This session will include a discussion of options for creating online accounts such as profile-based web pages, and an interactive portion to construct or improve a profile or webpage. Participants are encouraged to bring their laptops and electronic copies of materials to post online (think CVs, research synopses, etc).

Call for New GSIC Members

Serving on the GSIC is a great way to get involved with NERA and build relationships with other graduate students! GSIC members collaborate with students from various institutions to plan GSIC-sponsored sessions and events. New members are selected each year after the NERA Conference.

For more information on how to apply and get involved, please contact: neragraduatestudents@gmail.com.

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Completion of the course of study for school guidance counselors offers students the opportunity to apply for Massachusetts certification as guidance counselors.

Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis

The core courses in Applied Behavior Analysis have been approved by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Behavior Analysis certification exam. In addition students are required to complete a practicum each semester while enrolled in the program.

The department of psychology at Westfield State University also offers a certificate program in Applied Behavior Analysis.

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