Volume 56 | Fall 2017

The NERA Researcher

NERA NORTHEASTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

The President's Message

Craig Wells

Dear NERA Colleagues,

As I am writing my last President's Message, the air temperature is cooler, dusk arrives earlier, and it is beginning to feel like autumn. The arrival of fall brings the start of the new school year and also means that the NERA conference is quickly approaching. Although spring is typically considered the start of new beginnings, for many of us NERA members, fall is our beginning. There is the beginning of the school year when parents prepare their children for a new grade. This morning, I just walked my excited and nervous six-year old daughter to the bus stop for her first day of 1st grade where she will begin another journey learning new ideas, practicing new skills, rekindling old friendships as well as meeting new friends. For teachers, fall is a time to meet their new students, and prepare and present new lessons to engage and challenge them so that they will continue to grow. Administrators prepare for the new school year, organizing professional development opportunities for their teachers and establishing systems to provide supports necessary for teachers, staff, and students to be successful. In a university setting, we are welcoming new students, orienting them to their new communities and preparing them to be successful in their career development. The fall has always felt revitalizing for me, but not just because of the change in the weather, but because a new academic year has begun and with every new academic year comes the opportunities to try and to learn something new.

This fall, I am challenging myself by learning new ways to enhance my teaching. As I am preparing to teach my statistics classes — two classes that I have taught many times in the last 13 years — I am trying a new strategy to enhance students' learning experiences by "flipping" my classroom. In the flipped classroom, students watch a video of a lecture prior to class and then they work on "homework" exercises in class. The purpose of using a flipped classroom is to increase student engagement, learning, and fluency by providing new knowledge through independent learning opportunities and providing instructor support to students while they solve problems. As I am preparing my lesson plans and lectures, I am learning how to use various technologies to create "lectures." In doing so, I have had to consider how to present material to students in a format that is simple and convenient to use, covers the essential concepts, and ideally is somewhat entertaining to keep the students' attention. I am also developing assignments for class activities to reinforce the important ideas in the previewed lessons and practice the skills I want them to know

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue

Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Appointed Positions 2
Message from the Editors 2
Member News 3
2017 NERA Conference Announcement 4
Becoming a Member and Registering for the 2017 Conference 7
2017 Conference Highlights 9
Call for Lorne H. Woollatt Award Submissions 12
Communications Committee Update 13
Membership Matters 14
Organizational Culture or Organizational Climate: Is There a Difference? 16
Internship Applications: Some Guidance on Best Practice 22
The Graduate Lounge 28

The NERA Researcher

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

Message from the Editors

Greetings NERA Members,

We hope that everyone had a pleasant summer and is ready to hit the ground running again this fall! This issue of *The NERA Researcher* is full of information regarding fall happenings at NERA, particularly information regarding our Annual Conference in October.

In this issue you will find conference highlights, as well as logistical registration information. We also have updates from the Membership and Communications committees, as well as the Graduate Student Issues Committee. In addition, we have a special piece by Felice Billups highlighting the differences between organizational culture and climate. Graduate student NERA members may also be interested in a compilation of best practices for internship applications authored by J. Carl Setzer, Matthew Schultz, and Lisa Keller. We hope you enjoy reading and we'll see you in Trumbull!

Thanks again to Barbara J. Helms for her continued assistance in proofreading *The NERA Researcher*!

Katherine Reynolds and Katrina Roohr
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so that students will leave my classes understanding the material and knowing how to implement the methods in novel contexts. Learning how to teach a course using a flipped model has been challenging for me and yet it has been invigorating. Although it would be easier for me to continue to teach the courses the same way as I have done in the past, I believe it is important to continue to improve, learn, and try new things.

As October draws near and with it the arrival of the annual NERA conference, I eagerly anticipate the exciting opportunities our conference co-chairs have been organizing for us to learn, share, and discuss new ideas through research presentations and posters, workshops, keynote speakers, panels, interviews, personal conversations, and, of course, my presidential address. There will also be a few new things in the upcoming conference. For example, consistent with the theme of this year's conference, *Using Technology to Enhance Education: Challenges and Opportunities*, we will have a new session dedicated to demonstrating the use of technology in research and supporting education. This year we will have two organizations present their technology products: *iReady* and *Stata*. *iReady* is an adaptive and diagnostic assessment developed in alignment with common core standards for K-12 mathematics and reading instruction created by Curriculum Associates. Because *iReady* was built on a vertical scale, it also provides a measure of growth. *iReady* has received numerous awards and recognition and the demonstration is sure to be interesting for the NERA audience. *Stata* is one of the top software packages for statistical analysis and is used by universities and in industry. In addition to providing all of the basic types of analyses (univariate, multivariate, and power analyses), *Stata* continues to add new features and models such as structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, Bayesian statistics, latent class analysis, and item response theory. Those interested in conducting statistical analyses in their research will find the *Stata* demonstration valuable.

I am very excited for the new things I will learn at the upcoming NERA conference. The program co-chairs, Daniel Jurich, Jason Kopp, and Whitney Smiley, have worked tirelessly to put together an excellent conference program. We received a very large number of diverse and high quality proposals that were thoroughly reviewed (thanks to all of the reviewers), so I am confident the paper and poster sessions will be informative and enlightening. In addition, there will be five workshops that will cover various topics including using avatars in mixed reality simulations to support teacher preparation, applications of an alignment evaluation framework, how to create a viable action/mixed methods research proposal, moving from paper to online assessments, and using *R* to automatically generate research reports. In addition to the paper and poster sessions, workshops, and technology demo sessions (previously described), Virginia Edwards will provide a keynote address, and a keynote panel will discuss important issues about school choice initiatives. The conference will also include an interview with Kurt Geisinger and a panel discussion with the NERA past-presidents. If you are planning on attending the conference, I encourage you to register for the conference and reserve a hotel room as soon as possible. You can also encourage your colleagues and peers to attend the conference with you, so they can see how NERA members embrace the opportunities that fall sends our way. I look forward to seeing everyone in October!

Member News

Dr. Darlene Russell and **Dr. Kabba Colley** of William Paterson University were granted a Fulbright-Hays Research Award to Senegal. Their research, *Exploring the Agroecology and Cultural Narratives of the SeneGambia River Basin: A WPUNJ & Univerisité of Thiès STEAM Initiative*, will be a 12-week project in Senegal and The Gambia. Four graduate students/in-service teachers will be selected to participate in the project.

Dr. Cheryl Durwin of Southern Connecticut State University and colleagues recently published the third edition of the textbook *Ed Psych Modules* (formerly at McGraw-Hill), with their publisher, SAGE Publications. The book can be found here: https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/edpsych-modules/book241975%20

Citation: Durwin, C. C., & Reese-Weber, M. (2018). *Ed Psych Modules* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Please consider submitting your professional accomplishments for recognition in *The NERA Researcher*!

Submissions may be sent to theneraresearcher@nera-education.org.

NERA NORTHEASTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

2017 NERA Conference Announcement

48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 18-20, 2017

Trumbull Marriott Merritt Parkway, Trumbull, Connecticut

Using Technology to Advance Education: Challenges and Opportunities

After reviewing over 200 proposals, sessions are scheduled for the 2017 NERA conference! Many thanks to all who submitted proposals to share their work with us, and to all who volunteered their time this summer to review proposals. As we have said many times, there would be no conference without all of you.

From Wednesday through Friday, there will be more than 50 sessions across broad areas such as teacher practice, education policy, postsecondary education, educational measurement, curriculum and instruction, educational leadership, and teacher education. In addition, there will be multiple sessions highlighting educational technology and its role in education. The sessions are organized in a variety of formats, allowing for varying degrees of interaction between presenters and audience members:

- **Paper sessions:** Traditional sessions in which 3-5 papers are presented followed by comments from a discussant and questions from the audience;
- **Symposia:** Theme-based sessions organized around a single topic;
- **Roundtable:** A session which allows for maximum interaction among presenters and audience members;
- **Poster Forums:** There will be multiple poster sessions throughout the conference, including one focused specifically on educational technologies.

Plenary Sessions

Throughout the conference, there will be invited sessions addressing various topics:

Keynote Speaker: Our keynote this year will be given at Wednesday's dinner by Virginia Edwards, who served as editor of the esteemed newspaper *Education Week* (http://www.edweek.org) from 1989 to 2016, and who led the establishment of *Education Week*'s digital presence.

Keynote Panel: We will be hosting a panel during Thursday's lunch discussing various aspects of the school choice movement given the new administration's policy platform. This panel will feature Preston Green, Professor of Educational Leadership and Law at the University of Connecticut; Kathryn McDermott, Professor of Educational Policy at the University of Massachusetts; and Casey Cobb, Professor of Educational Policy at the University of Connecticut.

Invited Panel: Former NERA President John Young has assembled a panel of past NERA presidents including April Zenisky, Darlene Perner, Lynn Shelley, Kristen Huff, and Thanos Patelis to discuss previous and potential future trends in educational research based on their abundant and diverse experiences. This will occur during lunch on Friday.

Continued on page 5

Network with NERA members using our LinkedIn group page!

"Like" NERA on Facebook!
https://www.facebook.com/NERAconference

Follow us on Twitter!
@NERAconference

Invited Interactive Conversation: We are excited to announce an interactive conversation focused on changes in educational technology with Dr. Kurt Geisinger, Director of Buros Center for Testing and Professor at the University of Nebraska. We will be soliciting audience questions through social media that will be presented to Dr. Geisinger at the session allowing for both pre-submitted questions and real-time discussion. Details on how to submit questions will be provided soon.

Workshops

There will be two pre-conference workshops and three in-conference workshops:

- **How to Create a Viable Action or Mixed Methods Research Proposal** – Thomas Christ, University of Bridgeport
- **Moving from Paper to Online Assessments: Psychometric, Content, and Classroom Considerations** – Susan McNally & Ye Tong, Pearson
- **Applications of an Alignment Evaluation Framework** – Ellen Forte, Elizabeth Towles Summers, Elizabeth Greninger, & Lauren Deters, edCount LLC
- **Using R to Automatically Generate Technical, Research, and Score Reports** – Andrew Jones, American Board of Surgery, and J. Carl Setzer, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
- **The Teachlive Lab: Using Avatars in Mixed Reality Simulations for Teacher Candidates and Professional Educators** – Jody Piro, Marcia Delcourt, & Catherine O'Callaghan, Western Connecticut State University, Wes DeSantis, Ridgefield High School, and Erik Gundel, Greenwich High School

Mentoring

A key part of every NERA conference, the mentoring program provides graduate students with the opportunity to meet with professionals in the field. Mentors can provide individualized feedback on research projects and/or dissertations, as well as provide guidance during the conference.

Please see the conference highlights in this edition of the *Researcher* and visit the Conference tab on the NERA website for additional information about the conference. We look forward to seeing you in Trumbull! Email us if you have any questions: NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com.

Thank you,

Whitney Smiley
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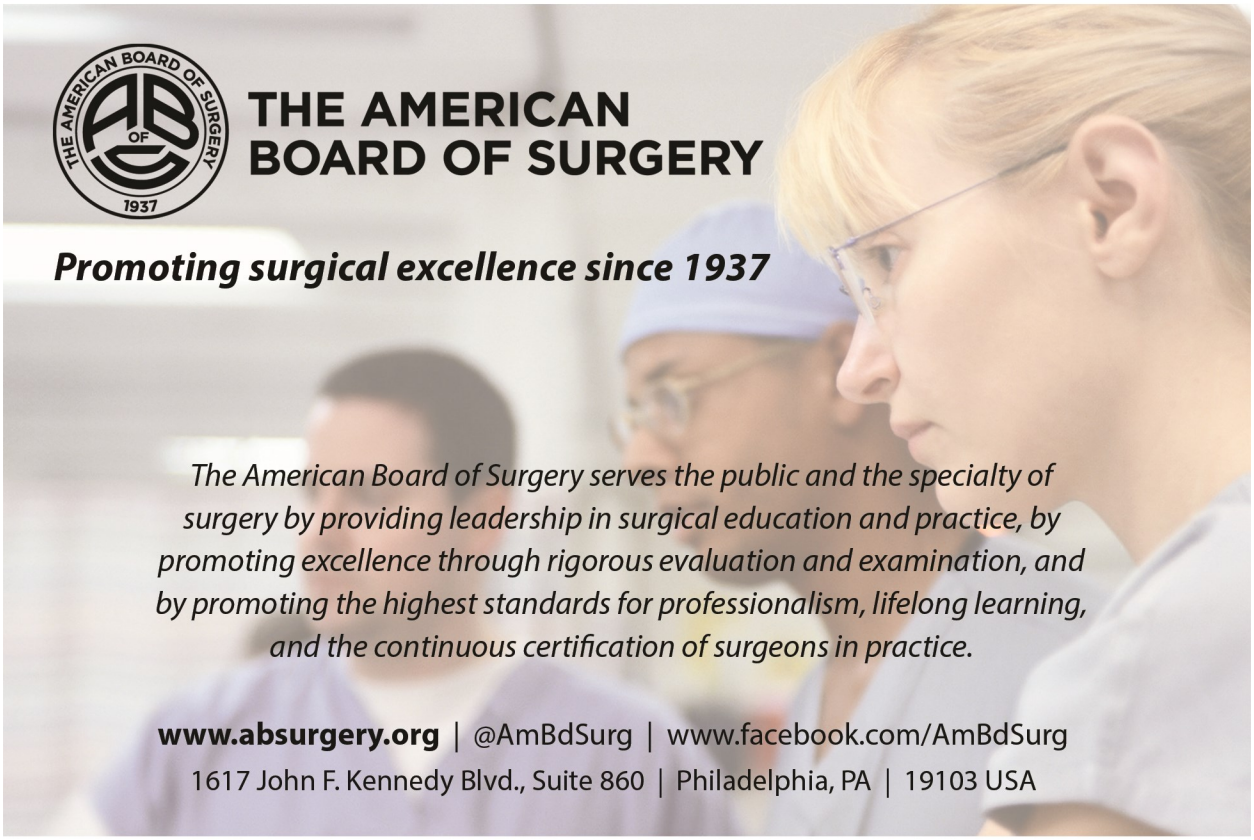
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Becoming a NERA Member and Registering for the 2017 Conference

All attendees of the 2017 NERA Conference must also be NERA Members, so you must renew your membership or join NERA before you can register for the conference. To pay your membership dues and register for the conference, please go to the NERA website **http://www.nera-education.org/**. If you need to renew your membership, you should have received your invoice via email.

Membership Dues (October 15, 2017 – October 14, 2018)

- Professional members - $40.00
- Full-time Student members - $15.00
- Retired members - $15.00

Once you have renewed your membership or become a new member, you can register for the event. Instructions for registration are as follows:

- Go to **this link.**
- Once you begin the online registration process, we request that you pay special attention to the section titled "Event Information".
    - We need to get an estimate of how many meals you will have at the hotel, so when you check the "Please check here if you plan to attend at least one meal" box, you will see a list of all possible options.
    - If you want to sign up for any pre-conference or in-conference workshops, you must indicate that during the registration process. Click "pre-conference and in-conference workshops." A list of all workshops will show up. Check the box by the workshop(s) you want to attend. This will be your way of signing up. There is limited capacity for the workshops, and they are first come, first serve, so sign up early to hold your place.
    - Click the "new member" box if you are a new member. If someone referred you, please indicate who in the open box that will pop up.
- Please use PayPal to pay your membership.
    - *Refund Policy*: All membership purchases are final. The deadline to receive a refund for registration is two weeks (14 days) before the conference. Conference registration cancellations received prior to the deadline are eligible to receive a refund less a $10 service fee. Cancellations received after the stated deadline will not be eligible for a refund. Cancellations will be accepted by email in writing and must be received by the stated cancellation deadline. Refunds will be credited back to the original credit card used for payment, or for members paying by check or cash, NERA will issue a check within 14 days.
- Please note that the following meals are included with conference registration: dinner Wednesday; breakfast, lunch, and dinner Thursday; breakfast and lunch Friday.

Continued on page 8

- Please note that to receive the regular registration rate, **you must register for the conference by October 1st!** After this date, a late fee will be added to the regular rates. As a reminder, the following are the registration fees for this year:

2017 Conference Registration Fees – On or Before October 1st (after October 1st):

- Professional member - $185.00 ($225.00)
- Full-time Student - $60.00 ($100.00)
- Retired member - $120.00 ($120.00)

Reserving Your Room at the Trumbull Marriott

Registering for the Trumbull Marriott

Finally, don't forget to register for the hotel by September 26th to ensure you get the discounted rate of $145 per night. **You can register for the hotel here**, or call 1-800-682-4095, and then tell them you are attending the NERA conference.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at **NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com**.

Let us know if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing everyone at NERA in October.

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NERA NORTHEASTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

NERA 2017 Conference Highlights

The following presents an overview of the conference schedule and listing of special sessions.
Once released, please see the conference program for a complete schedule and description of all sessions.

Wednesday, October 18th

Morning

Pre-Conference Workshops:

- Creating a Viable Mixed Methods Proposal
- Moving from Paper to Online Assessments

Afternoon

Workshop: Applications of an Alignment Evaluation Framework

GSIC-Sponsored Session: The Art of the Interview: Helpful Tips from Experienced Professionals

Afternoon (continued)

Highlighted Session on Educational Technology

Educational Technology Themed Poster Session

Concurrent Paper/Symposium/Roundtable Sessions

Evening

Graduate Student Social

Keynote Address by Virginia Edwards

Welcome Reception with Music

Thursday, October 19th

Morning

Workshops:

- Using R to Automatically Generate Technical, Research, and Score Reports
- Using Avatars in Mixed Reality Simulations

Concurrent Paper and Symposium Sessions

Afternoon

Keynote Panel on School Choice

Concurrent Paper/Symposium/Poster Sessions

Educational Technology Demonstrations

Afternoon (continued)

Interview with Kurt Geisinger

NERA Mentoring Social

Looking Ahead to NERA 2018 Feedback Session

Evening

NERA Awards Presentation

Presidential Address by Craig Wells

Reception with Games, Music, and Photo Booth

Friday, October 20th

Morning

NERA Business Meeting

GSIC-Sponsored Session: Getting Ready to Publish

Teacher as Researcher Sessions

Concurrent Paper/Symposium/Poster Sessions

Lunch

Plenary Panel with Past Presidents

Farewell Lunch and remarks

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Call for Lorne H. Woollatt Award Submissions

This award is named in honor of Lorne H. Woollatt, a distinguished New York State educator who published *The Evolution of State-local Governmental Relationships in New York State* in 1948, and was an active member of NERA. Each year, the award is given to a paper presented at the Conference. The author of the award-winning paper receives a $500 stipend to present the paper at the spring American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference during one of the Distinguished Paper sessions of the Consortium of State and Regional Educational Research Associations.

The winning paper is chosen by a committee of NERA members who review the papers that were entered into the competition. Each submitted paper is scored on the importance of the topic and need for the study; the quality of the research design, data analysis, results reporting, and conclusions; and the contribution the research findings make to the knowledge-base of the field. To be considered for the award, a paper must be no more than 20 pages and be the paper that was presented at the NERA conference.

The Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Committee invites presenters at the 2017 conference to enter their research papers into the competition by sending an email to Abby Lau (lau.abigail@gmail.com) no later than November 15, 2017. In the email, please indicate the session number, date, and time during which the paper was presented, and attach two copies of the paper. One copy should include the names, affiliations, and email addresses of each author on the title page, and one copy should not include any author information on the title page.

The committee looks forward to recognizing last year's winner, Dr. Anne Niccoli, at the upcoming conference. More information about her 2016 paper can be found on the NERA website awards page: http://www.nera-education.org/lorne_h_woollatt_distinguishe.php.

Any questions about the award can be directed to Abby, current chair of the committee.

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Communications Committee Update & Call for Social Media Coordinators

Communications Committee Update

Happy fall, NERA members! As we near the 2017 NERA Conference, the Communications Committee has a few updates to announce. First, we have received feedback that on occasion an email with NERA news or information has bypassed a member's inbox and ended up in their spam/junk folder. Please check these folders for NERA related emails, and revise your email settings accordingly.

Second, we sincerely thank Dr. Chastity Williams-Lasley at Duquesne University for her years of time, effort, and service as Social Media Coordinator. We are excited to welcome Frank Padellaro, a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, as incoming Social Media Coordinator. Additionally, we would like to announce some changes to our social media positions.

Open Call for Social Media Coordinators

We are in the midst of restructuring the social media component of the Communications Committee to increase our presence on social media, and better support some of the goals towards which NERA strives. Our hope is that these changes facilitate more frequent discussions between education scholars and practitioners, promote the exceptional research being conducted in our field, and keep our members and potential members informed of current events, awards, and announcements from NERA.

Who Should Contact Us?

We are looking for one or more volunteers to write, search for, collect, coordinate, and post weekly content for NERA's three social media outlets: LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Ideal individuals are scholars and/or teachers in the field of education who regularly check education journals for emerging trends, have questions they would like to discuss with scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds, and are familiar with the style/language of posts and process of posting on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Volunteers that are selected to join our committee as Social Media Coordinators will be responsible for posting weekly content such as empirical articles, popular press articles, and discussion questions, all of which represent cutting edge methods, topics, and controversies in the fields of education and education research, as well as posting NERA news as requested. Additionally, these coordinators will have significant social media responsibilities during the annual NERA conference, such as collecting audience questions organized by hashtag during specific sessions.

Advantages of the Position(s)

NERA thrives on its many volunteers and those who give their time in many service positions. For graduate students, junior faculty members, and new professionals, these positions are fantastic avenues for becoming familiar with the field of education research and where it is headed, as well as getting your name out into the field. For junior and senior faculty members, researchers, and professionals, these positions count as service credit to an external professional organization. For senior faculty members, researchers, and professionals, these are opportunities to share your perspectives on the evolution of education research with a broad following. No matter what your status, if the field of education research is your passion, we want to work with you!

Continued on page 14

Interested?

If you are interested in joining the Communications Committee as a Social Media Coordinator, please contact Monica Erbacher, the Chair of the committee, at monicakerbacher@gmail.com. Please include the following information in your email:

- Name,
- Current position/status and institution,
- Areas of expertise, and
- How familiar you are with LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter (e.g., I have accounts on all three, use Facebook and Twitter daily, and use LinkedIn weekly).

The Communications Committee is a friendly group. We hope you will consider joining our team and helping us improve NERA's social media presence!

Monica K. Erbacher
University of Arizona
Communications Committee Chair

Membership Matters

The membership committee has been working hard to brainstorm ideas for the annual NERA conference. Committee member Nick Curtis, created a survey for the members to use as a tool for providing feedback and ideas for ways to enhance the NERA membership experience. We encourage all members to please complete the 5-minute survey at http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3itMqW3KlZZaxn.

As we prepare for the conference in beautiful Trumbull, CT, we are planning to continue the raffles and prizes that added a bit of pizazz to the plenary and luncheon sessions. Those of us with professional social media pages will continue to publicize NERA and NERA membership, and encourage all of our members to do the same. The pages create a great platform for far reaching recruitment, and we are grateful to all those who continue to recruit and help us retain quality researchers in our membership.

If you ever have questions, concerns, would like to join the Membership Committee, or have ideas about ways to enrich NERA membership, please reach out to Tabitha at tabitha.mckinley@doe.state.nj.us. Membership is the heartbeat of our great organization.

Making the Most of Your Membership,

NERA Membership Committee

Tabitha McKinley (Chair)
New Jersey Department of Education

Nick Curtis
James Madison University

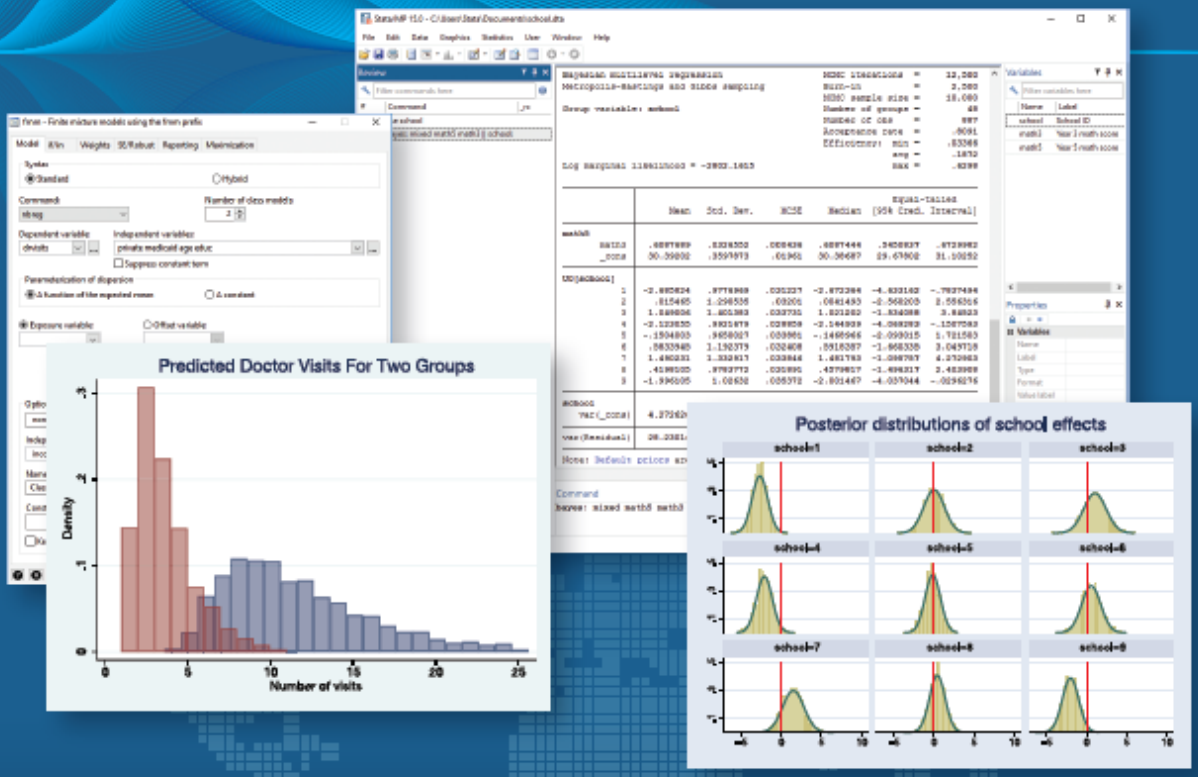
Francis Rick
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Rochelle Michel
Educational Testing Service

Matthew Madison
University of California Los Angeles

Tanesia Beverly
University of Connecticut

Announcing STATA release 15



New in Stata 15

- Latent class analysis
- Multiple-group SEM for binary, ordered, count outcomes
- Multiple-group multilevel SEM
- Nonlinear multilevel models
- PDF and Word documents with Stata results and graphs
- Nonparametric regression
- Finite mixture models
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Organizational Culture or Organizational Climate: Is There a Difference?

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Johnson & Wales University

Introduction

How does organizational culture differ from organizational climate? Is climate a component of culture or vice versa? Many scholars argue that these concepts merely represent two ends of the same continuum (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Cameron & Quinn, 2005), while others suggest that they reflect entirely different constructs (Denison, 1996; Denison Consulting, 2007; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). Since many colleges and schools regularly conduct culture audits and climate studies, it is important to consider the ways in which organizational culture and organizational climate are distinguished to effectively assist researchers and practitioners. As Peterson and Spencer (1990) originally noted, "the interest in organizational culture and climate makes these two complex and confusing concepts an important arena for researchers to understand" (p. 1). This statement remains true today.

The Study of Culture and Climate in Organizational Behavior

The study of organizational culture and climate has evolved over the past 70 years. Organizational climate captured the interest of researchers in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the movement to diagnose organizational effectiveness and workplace productivity. Culture studies, while long associated with the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics, gained momentum as a focus for education in the 1980s. Viewing culture as a way to understand organizational cohesion, scholars explored facets of culture from multiple perspectives (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2013; Noordin, Omar, Sehan, & Idrus, 2010; Schein, 2010; Stover, 2005; Tierney, 1988). As frameworks to examine organizations, the two concepts retain important differences. Yet, despite their different disciplinary origins, these concepts also share many properties; these commonalities cause researchers to confuse the terms and use them interchangeably in their debate about organizational functioning (Jung et al., 2009).

How Do Culture and Climate Overlap?

If culture and climate are interdependent and interrelated, it is because both concepts describe the internal environment of an organization, framing different levels of behavior in different time frames, and for different organizational purposes (Jung et al., 2009; Peterson & Spencer, 1990). Culture, as a construct, focuses on the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, and ideologies that members possess (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Schein, 2010). Organizational culture may serve purposes that are instrumental (social adaptation), and interpretive (sense of meaning for members) (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Stover, 2005). It provides a structure for understanding the values and deeply rooted beliefs of an organization manifested through observable markings such as traditions, rituals, dress, language, symbols, and saga. This complexity supports culture as both a product and a process (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985).

Conversely, climate, as a construct, can be defined as the *current* common patterns or important dimensions of organizational life rooted in individual member's perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions (Peterson & Spencer, 1990). Seen in a more pragmatic way, climate is the individual's response to organizational culture (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Schneider et al., 2013). Thus, climate is more concerned with the current perceptions and attitudes of daily interactions rather than the deeply held meanings, beliefs, and values of the organization (Noordin et al., 2010). Climate is also defined by how organizational members experience their work and their workplace on a daily basis (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Hagedorn, 2000; Patterson et al., 2004; Schulz, 2013). This outward reflection of an individual response to the inner 'essence' affects cultural development or stagnation; if climate is felt as positive and productive, organizational culture is sustained and deepened. Organizational members who feel harmony in their environments, who feel a sense of belonging and connection with the cultural values and beliefs, respond by deepening their organizational commitment (Noordin et al., 2010; Von

Continued on page 17

Bergen, Bressler, & Collier, 2012). Conversely, if climate is toxic, culture is strained; the toxicity can actually become embedded in the organizational culture to the extent that the culture assumes the negativity over time. The two dimensions, then, are inextricably intertwined and mutually dependent (Stover, 2005).

Unique Properties of Culture

Culture is defined in myriad ways. One definition positions culture as the "interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for members who they are and how they are to do things" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 217). This definition is extended by Ouchi and Wilkin's (1985) view that culture is "an embodiment of accumulated wisdom from the past and the ongoing source of innovation and renewal as new members challenge old ways" (p. 457). More broadly, Schein (2010) expresses culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough …to be taught to new members…" (p. 12). In practical terms, Bolman and Deal (2013) refer to culture as a form of organizational glue or the accepted ways things are done and understood. The features of culture are reflected in the organization's unique character, rooted in a saga or rich history, with revered leaders who embody the organization's values, and where culture bearers exhibit, uphold, and share cultural norms to and with others. In these important ways, culture remains holistic and subconscious (Cameron & Quinn, 2005; Hogan, 2014; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Schein, 2010).

Unique Properties of Climate

If culture is all-encompassing, how can we distinguish organizational climate? Climate is defined as an organizational member's perspective on the important dimensions of organizational life, such as organizational goals, governance, decision-making, group dynamics, work patterns, and response to cultural norms and interventions (Noordin et al., 2010). Satisfaction with the work and the work environment can be found in the nature of the work, support for that work, perceptions of feeling valued, perceived control of the work, career advancement, challenge in the work, demands on time, and recognition from peers and superiors. These measures contain attributes of morale, which significantly impact teacher and faculty performance (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Morale is highest when individuals have a say in their governance and decision-making; correspondingly, stress that occurs from dysfunction in the workplace and declining morale create demotivation, where the individual perceives the climate as negative. If there is dissension, disengagement, or disagreement with the culture, climate might be viewed as a way to measure an individual's agreement with the ways in which culture is supported or disregarded in their work practices (Denison, 1996; Hagedorn, 2000; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1973; Patterson et al., 2004).

Thus, climate is more connected with the transitory perceptions and attitudes of individuals, rather than with the deeply held cultural values. Since climate focuses on common participant views of various organizational phenomena, it is somewhat easier to compare changes in a specific arena of climate, in a single institution, and over time or across various subgroups (Pemberton, Ray, Said, Easterly, & Belcher, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013). Peterson and Spencer (1990) summarize the major features of climate, expositing "climate's primary emphasis is on individual views of a workplace, a focus on current patterns of beliefs and behaviors in response to cultural norms, and a phenomenon possessing an ephemeral or malleable character" (p. 8). Therefore, climate is pervasive, but possesses face validity; if culture is the organizational atmosphere, climate is the seasonal or daily weather pattern (MacNeil et al., 2009; Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Stover, 2005).

Applying Culture and Climate Frameworks to Organizational Studies

What does all of this mean for those who wish to study culture, and/or climate in educational settings? For educators, the key to obtaining valuable information on the state of affairs within a community rests with using the right tools. There are numerous instruments and inventories available to researchers and practitioners in both realms. Culture studies tend to be qualitative in nature, while climate studies tend to be more focused on individual behaviors, organizational dimensions, or organizational properties, making those studies more quantitatively oriented.

Culture audits and inventories typically focus on the traditions, myths, artifacts, symbolism, espoused versus embedded values and beliefs, and the organizational member's attachment to dominant culture features. To what extent culture is explicit versus implicit is often the focus of these culture audits. In other words, what lies under the surface that directs the observable behaviors and cultural markings? These markings are represented in mission statements, organizational charts, marketing

Continued on page 18

materials, public documents, and public ceremonies and events. The fact that these cultural values and beliefs are often held in the subconscious of the individual make them hard to identify, where they remain unchallenged and unrecognized (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Culture audits serve as a bridge to make the subconscious more visible and transparent to internal and external observers.

Many pre-designed instruments are available to practitioners; conversely, just as many organizations create their own instrumentation to assess organizational culture. Although focused on the public administration field, Jung et al. (2009) presented an excellent review of cultural audit instrumentation available to practitioners. Tierney's organizational culture inventory, long held as a standard for cultural assessment (1988), applied six dimensions and twenty questions to the study of organizational culture, which has proven to be an effective precursor to a subsequent study of organizational climate. Helfrich, Li, Mohr, Meterko, and Sales (2007) employed the Competing Values Framework instrument (CVF; Cameron & Quinn, 2005) to assess organizational culture, a tool that is easily applied to colleges and schools. Additionally, Schein's (2010) cultural model provides a framework for researchers to explore how culture moves from the subconscious level of assumptions and beliefs to the more variable level of commonly shared values, to the surface level of observable cultural forms. The forms speak to the values regarding those things we believe about the culture; i.e. the forms tell the story about what we deeply believe. How do you measure this activity in a culture audit? Schein (2000, 2010) provided a series of questions to guide researchers in this quest, building on prior research which used phenomenological approaches to capture this elusive ethos.

Climate assessments and inventories commonly involve the design and development of instruments which measure student, faculty, and administrator views of a wide variety of organizational phenomena in colleges and schools. As with cultural audits, many schools and colleges develop their own instruments to assess climate, or partner with consultants to conduct internal studies. A number of comprehensive inventories and questionnaires can be found from a quick scan of the literature. In particular, Hagedorn's (2000) theoretical constructs comprise a climate survey, which measure overall assessment of climate, satisfaction with salary and the work, desire for more interaction with colleagues, and the emotional quotient for feeling a sense of belonging. In other comparable approaches, quantitative measures are often the baseline for describing, comparing, or establishing the relationship between individual perceptions of climate and organizational functioning. Frequently, climate is the preferred lens with which to measure a school's health (MacNeil et al., 2009). Although older, Miles' (1971) comparable Organizational Health Inventory is still used to measure the relationship between school leadership and climate across 10 dimensions. Additionally, many colleges use climate assessments to monitor the presence of diversity and attitudes towards inclusion on their campuses (Hart & Fellabaum, 2005); more recently, Harris (2016) used the 'walking interview' approach as a method to diagnose multiculturalism on a campus's climate, departing from a more traditional approach of employing inventories or questionnaires.

Lastly, some experts have developed inventories and instruments to assist practitioners and scholars wishing to study culture and climate simultaneously. August and Waltman (2004) developed the culture, climate, and contribution model, which examines the intersection of cultural impact on daily manifestation of climate as it affects worker productivity. This model has been adapted for some college campuses during periods of retrenchment and resource constraints as a lever to re-structure the organization and maximize community commitment (Noordin et al., 2010). Overall, researchers benefit from a varied and deep range of options to study organizational climate and culture for schools and colleges to better understand myriad institutional challenges, enhance member's commitment and generativity, and develop cohesion.

Conclusion

If culture is about a group's consciousness and collective identity, climate focuses on the individual's response to and fit within that culture. While scholars do not universally agree on these defining distinctions, they often acknowledge that culture and climate share many dimensions, such as the degree to which they mutually shape organizational member's behavior, the extent to which the congruence among cultural values and beliefs relate to perception of climate, and the consensus among organizational members regarding the meaning of cultural components. A study of either construct, or of the two together, provides a view of how organizations provide members with an understanding of their shared purpose and meaning, the acceptable processes for socialization, a sense of identity and distinction, and a

Continued on page 19

framework for making sense of the non-rational and informal aspects of an organization that are not captured in formal documents or procedures, objective characteristics of the members, or quantitative measures of resources (Bustamante, 2009; Schein, 2000; Schneider et al., 2013; Stover, 2005).

Essentially, then**,** culture and climate are often applied to the study of organizational cohesion and function in many of the same ways and with comparable perspectives on these constructs. This lack of clarity may make it difficult to decide on an approach and instruments for these studies. Denison (1996) even argues that there may not be any material difference between climate and culture other than the individual theorist's perspective. One thing remains evident, an authentic assessment of an organizational environment, from the lens of culture, climate, or both, is vital to sustaining a generative and productive place in which to teach, learn, and develop.

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Internship Applications: Some Guidance on Best Practice

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Each year graduate students from the testing, measurement, and assessment fields look forward to internship announcements from various organizations. Internships are an excellent opportunity for graduate students to gain real-world experience working at a testing or assessment organization. They are also great for the organizations, who benefit from not just the interns' efforts, but also from the particular expertise and knowledge an intern may provide on a given project. Applicants should keep in mind that the organizations they are applying to can be quite varied, both in terms of the format of their internships as well as the composition of their current staff (so far as research interests and professional expertise). So far as internship format, some are entirely onsite, while others combine onsite experience with remote-like work, which is typically very much an independent endeavor (though with regular interaction with a mentor/advisor in the organization). Further, some internships are highly structured, with deadlines throughout the summer, while others are less structured and require the intern to be more self-directed and independent. Thought should be given to which type of experience you are interested in, and which type would allow you to be successful. Being aware of your strengths and limitations with respect to the degree of structure you need will help ensure a good experience on both sides. Organizations can vary widely so far as the testing focus (for example, educational versus certification/licensure) as well as the internal staff size and expertise. Applicants should learn as much as possible about the expected nature of the internship at each organization.

Each listing organization conducts an applicant review process, which may vary considerably across organizations. Applicants are almost always well-qualified for an entry-level position, and many applicants bring extensive research and applied experience to the table. The review process is often not an easy one for the organization because of the quality of the applicant pool, and very often the selection of any given candidate is primarily about the perceived fit of applicants to a particular project of interest to the organization.

The purpose of this article is to provide some additional guidance regarding the application process. This article was written from the perspective of internship-offering organizations and is intended specifically for graduate students considering applying for an internship. Our recommendations are based on years of reviewing applications and overseeing internships.

The Best Applicants Have Goals

Internships have a purpose. Companies offer internships for both altruistic and self-serving purposes. Internships (1) maintain a pipeline for future employments, (2) enhance the academic and industrial relations, and (3) often provide opportunities to solve or research issues that might otherwise lag due to a lack of internal resources. The organization should ultimately get a return in value for your time, such as completing a relevant research project, preparing and delivering a presentation, or contributing to operational work (e.g., focusing on research topics of concern to the operational delivery of the exam). For the intern there are benefits as well. Interns gain applied experience at an organization, which can be particularly valuable when the time comes to look for a full-time position. In some cases, the intern may be offered a job at the employing organization, and the intern now has a better sense of the organizational climate, type of work, workload, etc. The intern also gains experience conducting applied research, ideally related to a topic of interest to both the intern as well as the organization. In addition to carrying out

Continued on page 23

the research, the intern typically also gains experience preparing presentations, meeting submissions and delivering presentations at industry forums, such as the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), American Educational Research Association (AERA), and NERA, etc. Finally, a successful internship will likely earn you one or more good recommendations, which can be especially useful if you are seeking employment in an assessment organization.

With these synergistic purposes in mind, the chances of you getting an internship are greatly increased when you are keenly aware of what the organization wants to accomplish during the internship and whether you can make the case that you have the experience and skills to fulfill that need. In that sense, you should pay close attention to the internship announcement and the descriptions of the projects listed, if available. The project or role description suggests there is a need for that particular project within the company. Often, the project description is somewhat vague, allowing room to tailor the project to the intern. In fact, it is possible that the organization has a topic they wish to address, but not a particular approach they intend to use. In this case, the organization may be interested in your thoughts so far as how you would approach the research in question, and you could consider a focused proposal if that seems appropriate.

If specific projects are not clearly stated, then consider reaching out to the contact person in the announcement and generate a discussion to clarify the needs of the organization. If project descriptions are vague, then you may also consider performing a review of the organization's previous internship papers, presentations, or other white papers. Try to learn something about the organization, such as the measurement direction it has chosen to take.

We strongly recommend against submitting applications to multiple organizations with the hopes that one will stick. Target your job! If you don't know what you want to do, then consider that you might be wasting the organization's time and resources. If you apply to multiple organizations (which we do not necessarily recommend, unless there is more than one that clearly aligns with your goals), then be prepared to provide an acceptance as soon as you are offered a position. Otherwise, it is disrespectful to the offering organization. Once you have accepted an internship, keep in mind you have made a commitment. Once organizations have had applicants accept internships, they typically notify all other candidates that they were not accepted, which means your decision to change your mind not only can damage your reputation with the organization you applied to, but also may have cost another intern the experience.

The remaining sections discuss some best practices related to specific components often seen in application requests.

Cover letter

Before you begin writing your application you should review at least one or two of the many resources available regarding how to write a cover letter. A cover letter should be well-formatted and fit the style of a formal business letter. It should also be brief and to the point, not duplicative of material included in the other parts of our submission.

The cover letter is your chance to write directly to the organization and state your goals for the internship, as well as how you can benefit their mission. Explain why you are applying for this particular internship. Be specific and explicit about your goals. For example, if you are interested in working for a certification/licensure organization after graduate school, then mention that goal in your cover letter.

In most cases, you will want to highlight one or two major accomplishments and explain how your experience would benefit the organization. Oftentimes the best cover letter is one that tells a (brief) story about how you got to

Continued on page 24

this point in your career and where you want to go from here. However, try to avoid a list of all your educational coursework and software proficiencies (unless specifically requested). Such information should already be available in your curriculum vitae. Finally, always remember to provide contact information.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation do matter in the application process. And, yes, having a prominent measurement professional write your letter may be influential in some ways. However, what is more important is having extant observers relate their experiences with you to the hiring organization. Therefore, you should consider discussing the letter with your professor, advisor, or another mentor in advance and perhaps ask him or her to focus on a particular accomplishment or research project. Letters of recommendation that simply reiterate your coursework are not helpful. Similarly, letters which do little beyond denoting that you are a good student and would be a good fit for the organization, without indicating why or how that would be, are not helpful either. Organizations want to know how you approach your research and tasks, whether you are thorough, can work independently, and whether you can adequately communicate your work.

Statement of Research Interests

Most organizations hire interns who will make an impact on a particular topic of interest. Therefore, the statement of research interest is your opportunity to elaborate how your previous experiences, current projects, and goals align with the organization's needs and projects. If the organization is hiring an intern to perform operational work, then perhaps you should showcase any experience you have performing calibrations, item reviews, differential item functioning (DIF) analyses, etc. On the other hand, if the organization is looking for someone to perform research on diagnostic classification models, then you should highlight your experiences with that specific topic. If you do not have any specific experience that relates to the organization's projects, then you will need to make a case as to how your previous unrelated experience could benefit the project. Again, be specific. Try to avoid saying you are interested in the organization's projects without saying why or how you developed that interest. For example, if you are interested in rapid-guessing responses to test items, then explain why that topic interests you. Perhaps you have seen first-hand how rapid-guessing has impacted other test results and you want to find a way to mitigate that impact. These types of statements provide the organization with better insight into your goals and motives for conducting research or operational work.

Curriculum Vitae

There are many resources and templates available for developing a curriculum vitae (CV). Take some time and find one that fits your needs and conveys the relevant information for the internship. A CV should have a summary and/or objective statement about who you are and your goals. You should highlight any experience with projects or tasks that are especially relevant to the internship. Be particularly careful to note previous internship/applied experience. If you are a returning student, note what you were doing during time gaps in your CV. Keep your CV organized and arranged by chronological order. You may even wish to consider a visit to your university career services office, which can often offer assistance, including providing templates of CVs for you to use.

Final Do's and Don'ts

- DO write professionally. Aloof writing does not convey an appearance of professionalism expected from an intern.

Continued on page 25

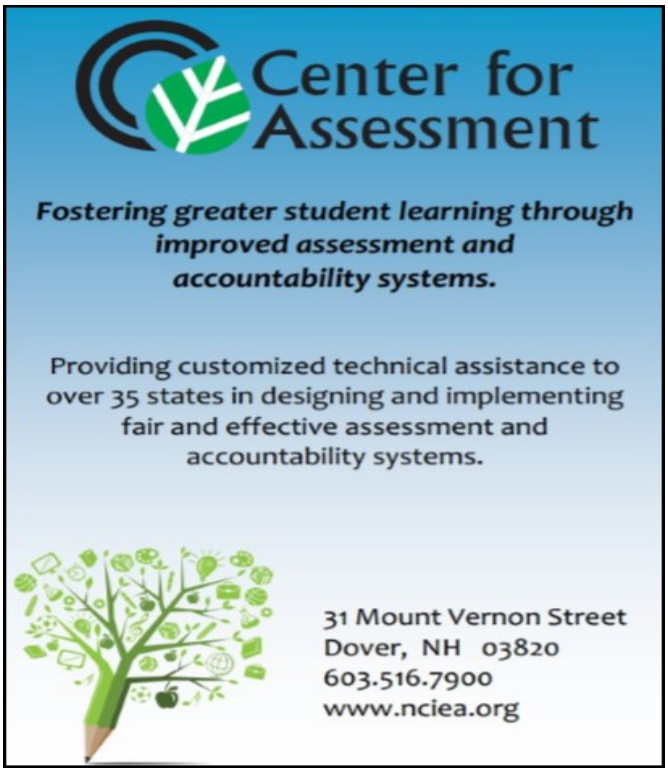
- DO proofread! Your ability to write concisely and cogently is on display. You should consider having a peer or advisor review your application. Ask for specific, constructive feedback. A typo or two is unlikely to sink your application, but rambling on about how great your graduate program is, or how much your advisor likes you, might.

- DO submit a fully completed application. Incomplete applications reflect poorly on your ability to complete work and is the first thing that will eliminate you from contention.

- DON'T just say your interests are in psychometrics, research, data analysis, validity, or some other vaguely huge topic. You would not be in a Ph.D. measurement or assessment program if that was not the case. This type of statement conveys the message "I don't know what you want me to do, but I'm willing to do it."

- DON'T over-exaggerate your skills on your CV. For example, do not claim you are proficient in R if you have minimal experience. You never know when a company might rely on one of your listed skills to complete a project, and finding that skill is non-existent reflects poorly on you, and will make it unlikely an organization will be a positive reference for you going forward.

Even if you follow all of these recommendations and others, it may not land you the internship. In most cases, the decision is often a difficult one with multiple, highly qualified applicants to choose from. In the end, the final decision frequently comes down to finding the person whose goals and interests align most with the organization's goals for a given project, and says much less about the individual's overall skills and abilities. Internships are usually highly competitive, so don't give up trying and certainly don't be discouraged. Also keep in mind that internship selections (or non-selections) are not necessarily indicative of future employment opportunities, and keep in mind organizations are likely to remember you and your application, even if you were not selected. In some cases, you could still establish a relationship with the employer which may lead to other opportunities in the future.



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Our Mission: The mission of the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) is to support the involvement and professional development of NERA graduate student members and to reach out to new graduate students in an effort to increase the diversity of institutions represented at NERA.

GISC News

The GSIC has selected topics for the two GSIC-sponsored sessions at this year's conference: "Getting Ready to Publish" and "The Art of the Interview: Helpful Tips from Experienced Professionals." Though aimed towards graduate students, we hope these sessions will appeal to a wide range of NERA members. If you have questions or thoughts about either of these sessions, feel free to contact us at neragraduatestudents@gmail.com.

The winner of the Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award is Kelly Foelber from James Madison University, for her paper *Comparing Missing Data Methods in the Context of Propensity Score Matching: A Simulation*. Congratulations Kelly! And thank you to our paper reviewers: April Zenisky, Felice Billups, Kurt Eisele, Steven Holtzman, JoAnne Cascia, Sudha Swaminathan, and Ross Markle. To see the abstract of the winning paper, visit the NERA GSIC website at http://www.nera-education.org/nera_gsic.php.

GSIC Call for New Members

Serving on the GSIC is a great way to get involved with NERA and build relationships with other graduate students! Responsibilities include collaborating with students from various institutions to plan GSIC-sponsored in-conference sessions, and the GSIC student social. 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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