

# The NERA Researcher

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## The President’s Message



NERA for the Gold! As I recently watched the 2021 Summer Olympic Games come to a close, many thoughts came to mind. It was very exciting to cheer on Gabby Thomas,

daughter of my NERA 2013 conference co-chair, Jennifer Randall, as she earned a bronze medal in the women’s 200m and a silver medal in the women’s 4 x 100 relay. She did a wonderful job in representing our country and I look forward to following the bright future she has ahead of her. Go Gabby!

On a broader perspective, it was bittersweet to watch this year’s Olympics. Athletes train for years and often, their whole life, to compete in the Olympic games. For many that had specifically trained for the postponed 2020 Summer Olympics, the 2021 Olympics may have been their only chance to shine. As the games approached, Delta variant cases rose and the world was concerned with a potential outbreak and the possibility of the games being canceled. Thankfully, with a wide variety of COVID-19 mitigation efforts in place, the events went smoothly, with minimal issues. This shows how society must be resilient and find innovative ways to proceed as this new phase of the pandemic progresses.

Although I will leave it to the conference co-chairs to describe everything that they have planned, I will use this opportunity to thank Haifa, Liz, Hank, and Jonathan for all of the time they have dedicated to make this conference possible. Throughout the past 18 months, nothing was certain and despite the ever-changing landscape, they have continuously found new solutions that promise the best possible NERA 2021 conference experience. They have secured two phenomenal keynote speakers, five workshop presenters and multiple panels, received 140 conference proposals, and are building multiple conference platforms to emulate the in-person NERA conference experience we look forward to each year.

As the conference approaches, I am reminded of the theme that my conference team and I chose almost two years ago for this year’s conference, *Using Data to Solve Education’s Challenges*. This theme is more important than ever today, as it is critical for all members of the education community to both know how to use data appropriately when facing challenges, as well as take advantage of the myriad of new data available through virtual platforms. Although there continues to be a great amount of uncertainty today, data-driven decisions can help deliver clarity on answering many questions that arise. Similarly, virtual learning has introduced data that was never available before that can be invaluable to researchers and improve the

*Continued on page 3*

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

### Message from the Editors

Dear NERA Members,

We want to send our best wishes to our NERA family at this still unprecedented time and hope that you and your families, friends, and loved ones are all safe and well. That is what we wrote to you last year at this time. It still applies this year.

Once again, our conference co-chairs—Haifa, Hank, Jonathan and Liz—continue to plan another great virtual NERA conference as we celebrate 52 years of membership and fellowship. With the knowledge gained from last year’s president and co-chairs, this year’s folks have been adding their own innovations for creating a great virtual conference. In the coming weeks, you will receive emails with additional information about the conference. In the following pages, in addition to Steven’s informative President’s Message, you can read about the keynote speakers, the invited panels and symposia, the featured workshops, the conference FAQs, and other related information.

We also have information about the upcoming NERA election, the Mentoring Program, and more. We are sure that you were all looking forward to gathering together in Trumbull this year, but we look forward to seeing you virtually, and we know that however it comes to you, it will be another great NERA conference.

On a sad note, Kate’s term as production co-editor of the *Researcher* is winding down this year. I will miss working with her very much, but there is a rumor going around that she is going to be a conference co-chair in 2022. If you think you would be interested in taking on the co-editorship, send an email off to Steven ([SHoltzman@ETS.ORG](mailto:SHoltzman@ETS.ORG)) or any of the board members.

Stay safe, well, and see you in October, Barbara J. Helms & Kate Nolan  
The Editors

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## Appointed Positions

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*Curriculum Associates*

educational experience for both students and educators. The keynotes, panels, invited sessions, submitted presentations, as well as my presidential address, will provide insights on these topics that I hope will be helpful, both in your professional and everyday lives.

As this is my last NERA *Researcher* presidential message, I would also like to note that the success of the NERA organization and conference wouldn't be possible without our Board of Directors, appointed positions, committee chairs, committee members, and dedicated members (like you!). Your contributions to the organization have been invaluable and have allowed the organization to accomplish its goals this past year. We have continued to build the NERA community, hosted six thought-provoking webinars (and one more to come) and cultivated new leadership opportunities, in addition to planning for the upcoming conference. Additionally, this work has allowed NERA to receive sponsorship offers from 17 institutional members, contributing over \$15,000 to help subsidize costs of the 2021 conference. On that note, I would also like to thank our institutional members, listed below, as the NERA conference wouldn't be possible without your support.

Organization	Level
Pearson	Diamond B
NCIEA	Platinum
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Cognia	Platinum
College Board	Platinum
edCount, LLC	Platinum
Educational Testing Service	Platinum
HumRRO	Platinum
Johnson & Wales University	Platinum
ACS Ventures	Gold
American Board of Internal Medicine	Gold
Buros Center for Testing	Gold
Curriculum Associates	Gold
Endicott College	Gold
James Madison University	Gold
National Board of Medical Examiners	Gold
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Gold

For these reasons, NERA continues to win the proverbial gold medal for being the premier regional educational research organization and conference. Over the past year, it has been a great honor to serve as your president and work with you to ensure NERA retains this status. I wish each of you a wonderful start of the fall and hope you can each strive for the gold in everything you do, despite any challenges presented through these unprecedented times. Please feel free to reach out to me at [sholtzman@ets.org](mailto:sholtzman@ets.org) at any point, with questions or concerns. I look forward to "seeing" you all at the 2021 NERA conference.

Steven Holtzman,  
Your NERA President

## Member News

**NERA Director Bo Bashkov and NERA member and former Conference Co-chair Whitney (Smiley) Coggeshall** co-authored a book chapter titled "Using a Measurement Framework to Examine Item Quality/Functioning" to be published in the upcoming volume *Basic Elements of Survey Research in Education: Addressing the Problems Your Advisor Never Told You About* (<https://www.infoagepub.com/products/Basic-Elements-of-Survey-Research-in-Education>).

**Beth A. Perkins, chair of the Infrastructure Committee**, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, "Does Coding Method Matter? An Examination of Propensity Score Methods When the Treatment Group is Larger Than the Comparison Group" on March 26, 2021. Her advisor was Dr. S. Jeanne Horst.

**Son Tan Hoang Pham, Ed.D.**, Stephen F. Austin State University, has successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, "Get Ready for Future Education: A Phenomenological Study on Artificial Intelligence" (<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/362>). His research methodology paper, *Three distinctions of the Heideggerian phenomenological research method*, has also been accepted to present at NERA 2021.

**Deborah Bandalos**, Professor and Director, Assessment and Measurement PhD Program, James Madison University was recently elected president of APA's Division 5, starting in 2022.

**Whitney Alicia Zimmerman, Ph.D.** started a new position as a Data Analytics and Research Consultant with Penn State, Outreach Analytics and Reporting, Data Analytics and Research Consultant, The Pennsylvania State University

**Catherine Snyder**, chair of the Education Department at Clarkson University, Schenectady, NY, has been appointed to the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) board of directors.

## Member News cont'd

**Charity Anderson, PhD**, Senior Research Associate, Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies, Rutgers University-Newark has a new publication: Anderson, C. (2021). "We went through a pandemic together": Strategies for facilitating transformative learning among non-traditional adult learners during a crisis. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 8(1), 110-114. <https://jotl.uco.edu/index.php/jotl/issue/view/32>

**Maleka Donaldson** (Assistant Professor, Smith College) recently published a new book entitled *From Oops to Aha: Portraits of learning from mistakes in kindergarten*. Published by Rowman & Littlefield, 3 April 2021. *From Oops to Aha!* pulls back the curtain on learning from mistakes in four public school Kindergarten classrooms: urban, charter, Montessori, and suburban.

Please consider submitting your professional accomplishments to The NERA Researcher for recognition! Submissions may be sent to [theneraresearcher@nera-education.org](mailto:theneraresearcher@nera-education.org).



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## 2021 NERA Conference

52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

October 13–15, 2021

VIRTUAL

### *“Using Data to Solve Education’s Challenges”*

Dear NERA Members,

The NERA 2021 conference is quickly approaching! We look forward to “seeing” you all at our VIRTUAL conference starting October 13–15. While a virtual conference may not be the most ideal way of convening, we are confident that it is the best way to ensure all NERA members can safely participate in this year’s conference.

Remember, NERA is YOU! Whether we are together in person, or miles apart, as long as we come together ready to learn from our peers, engage in thoughtful conversations, and participate in social events to make new friends or reconnect with old ones, then we will surely all enjoy a great conference.

We have been working hard to deliver a virtual conference that will bring us together as a community and provide the content and activities that are typical of NERA. As you will see in the coming weeks, we have a full program in store for you, with some of the highlights listed below.

For now, feel free to follow this [link](#) to register for the conference. This year’s conference will be \$9.95 (for all members) to help offset the cost of increased programming and an upgraded virtual platform. Additional information on the conference platform and how to access it will be sent to registered members in the coming weeks.

We can’t wait to share all of our planning with you and look forward to spending some quality time with our colleagues and friends at the 2021 NERA Conference. Below we would like to share some of the exciting speakers and featured sessions for this year’s conference.

NERA Conference Co-Chairs:

Hank Johnson, Haifa Matos, Liz Spratto, and Jonathan Steinberg

[Nera.cochairs@gmail.com](mailto:Nera.cochairs@gmail.com)

#### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:**

Wednesday, October 13—[Sarah Cohodes](#), Associate Professor of Economics and Education, *Teachers College, Columbia University*

Thursday, October 14—[Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger](#), CEO, *Data Quality Campaign*

#### **INVITED PANEL:**

Thursday, October 14—Perspectives on Incorporating Institutional Data into P-20 Infrastructure, Research, and Policy

- **Moderator:** [Heather Kelly](#), *University of Delaware*
- **Panelists:**
  - [Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger](#), CEO, *Data Quality Campaign*;
  - [Lynn Letukas](#), Senior Director, Global Academic Programs and Certifications, *SAS*;
  - [Kate Akers](#), Assistant Vice Chancellor, Advanced Data Analytics Shared Services, *Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education*

## INVITED SYMPOSIUM:

Date TBD—Developing Intercultural and Global Competencies for Teachers through Global Education

- **Chair:** [David M. Moss](#), *University of Connecticut*
- **Discussant:** [Jon Simmons](#), *University of Connecticut*
- **Presenters:**
  - [Laura Baecher](#), *Hunter College*
  - [Helen Marx](#), *Southern Connecticut State University*

## FEATURED WORKSHOPS:

- Allyship ([Aronté Bennett](#), *Villanova University*)
  - This workshop is dedicated to helping us understand the ways in which we can be allies for those who are marginalized or otherwise rendered voiceless. The foundation of the session is laid by defining allyship, with particular attention paid to differences in how it presents in corporate versus academic spaces. The discussion will then move to consideration of the aspects of our identities that permit us to serve as allies versus what makes us candidates for allyship. The workshop will conclude with tips, ranging from simple actions to advanced advocacy, ensuring that all attendees walk away with an approach appropriate for their position on the journey toward being an ally.
- Conducting Qualitative Research in a Quantitative World ([Felice D. Billups](#), *Johnson & Wales University*)
  - This workshop is designed for individuals who plan to conduct - or have conducted - a qualitative project but need to explain the value, quality, rigor, and verity of the approach to diverse audiences and stakeholders. In a world where numbers and statistical analyses are often seen as the only true representation of valid research, qualitative researchers need a strategy to persuade skeptics that qualitative research is legitimate and the findings are actionable. Topics will comprise: comparing the qualitative worldview with quantitative and mixed methods approaches; qualitative sampling and sample sizes; trustworthiness strategies to ensure rigor and quality in qualitative projects; researcher positionality and bias considerations; and a review of qualitative terminology. Graduate researchers and researchers new to the qualitative approach may find this session particularly helpful.
- Creating a Strong Personal Brand for Your Services ([Christine Stevens](#), *New England Institute of Technology*; [Heather Harris](#), *Independent Consultant*)
  - Working as a consultant can be a lucrative endeavor, but building up a personal brand and finding clients requires answering a few simple questions: What services are you offering? How do you let potential clients know the services you offer? Can you articulate clearly why they should work with you?
  - Developing your personal brand means understanding a few basic marketing concepts like your value proposition, your target market, and the “4 P’s,” which includes your promotional strategy. In this workshop, you will learn foundational marketing concepts that can help you grow your consulting business and how to best use social media to get the word out about your brand. A few case study examples will be discussed, and participants will have the opportunity to complete hands-on exercises to create and then discuss their own personal branding and consulting plans.
- Plot your data, plot your data, plot your data: Basic and advanced data visualization in R ([Monica Erbacher](#), [James Smith](#), and [Sergio Castro](#), *University of Arizona*)
  - This workshop will cover data visualization techniques in R. First, presenters will quickly walk through the basics of the R language as attendees import a data set and create more basic plots like histograms, box plots, bar plots, and scatter plots with legends and other extras. Then, we will move on to more advanced plotting functions, such as those in the ggplot2 package. Attendees will create more complex

versions of the basic plots covered as well as more advanced graphics such as overlapping density curves. Visualization techniques will address exploring linear and nonlinear trends, multilevel data, comparing groups, and getting to know your data. Best practices in creating plots will be demonstrated throughout. We will end with time for attendees to create visualizations using their own data, or attendees are welcome to practice with a provided data set. Attendees are welcome to use their own data throughout if that is preferable. This workshop is most appropriate for new, novice, and intermediate R users who are not familiar with more advanced packages like ggplot2. If you are familiar with the basics of R and with base plotting functions, you are welcome to skip the introductory part (approximately 45 min, tentative schedule is in development) and join in for the rest of the workshop

- Culturally Responsive Data Literacy ([Ellen Mandinach](#) and [Saroja Warner](#), *WestEd*)
  - Data literacy has been a topic of interest and confusion for over a decade, often conflated with assessment literacy. Data literacy firmly espouses that the data educators need to make informed decisions are more diverse than simply student performance indices (sic, test scores). With the growing complexity of students and the more recent events that have surfaced inequities to the most challenged students, data literacy has become even more important which is why the construct has transitioned into culturally responsive data literacy (CRDL). CRDL assumes an asset model, seeks a comprehensive understanding of students, and takes a whole child perspective to better address the interests, strengths, and backgrounds students bring to the classroom. This workshop will address the importance of CRDL and why educators learn to use data effectively and responsibly, beginning with educator preparation and being sustained and reinforced throughout their careers. The workshop will describe the skill set and dispositions of CRDL, what it means for educators to implement such knowledge, and the roles that educator preparation programs and school districts can and must play to help all educators become data literate. The workshop will explore the foundational research and theory and the translation into practice.

#### **FEATURED SYMPOSIA BY THE EDUCATORS-AS-RESEARCHERS COMMITTEE:**

- Date TBD—*Inquiry Strategies for Life-Long Learning*—**Moderator:** Marcia A. B. Delcourt
  - Data-Driven Feedback and Coaching to Improve Inquiry Skills of Preservice Teachers within a Mixed-Reality Simulation (Wes J. DeSantis & Marcia A. B. Delcourt)
  - Music Teacher Perceptions of Inquiry-Based Learning in the Secondary School Music Ensemble Classroom (Douglas Coates, Frank LaBanca, & Joseph Abramo)
  - An Exploration of Student-Directed and Teacher-Directed Inquiry Learning on Creative Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, and Civic Responsibility (Stephanie L. Bell & Marcia A. B. Delcourt)
  - Inquiry in Music Education: Theory and Practice (Joseph Abramo & Rex Sturdevant)
  - Developing an Inquiring Community of Practice with a Focus on STEM and Global Studies (Frank LaBanca)
- Friday, October 15—*Habits of Mind*—**Moderator:** Bena Kallick
  - The Impact of Habits of Mind: An Exploratory Study (Julio Vazquez)
  - The Relationship Between Habits of Mind and Performance Task Achievement in an International School in Southeast Asia (Philip G. Muscott)
  - STAR: Supporting Teachers as Researchers (Fostering Data-Informed Reflection in a Pandemic; Priscila Torres & Damian Bebell)

## Annual Conference FAQ

Hank Johnson, Haifa Matos, Liz Spratto, and Jonathan Steinberg, Conference Co-Chairs

Dear NERA Members,

We are working hard to ensure we bring you a virtual experience that meets your expectations for the usual high-quality NERA content; and bring you together as a community, despite not being able to be together in-person in Trumbull this year. Below are answers to questions we've received about this year's virtual conference.

### **Will the conference schedule stay the same?**

Yes (mostly), we will meet during the regularly scheduled NERA dates: October 13–15. We will take advantage of the virtual nature of the conference and offer a full day of conference programming on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. All sessions will be scheduled in the Eastern Time Zone (starting no earlier than 9 AM).

### **How much does it cost to attend the virtual conference?**

This year's conference will be \$9.95 (for all members) to help offset the cost of increased programming and an upgraded virtual platform. Additional information on the conference platform and how to access it will be sent to registered members in the coming weeks.

More information about joining or renewing your membership may be found [here](#).

### **What do I need to attend the virtual conference?**

You will need a good internet connection, your device or computer, and valid NERA membership to register for the conference. Additional information on the conference platform will be sent via email to registered members in the coming weeks.

All sessions will be on Zoom via the platform—further details and guidance on how to navigate the virtual platform will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

### **How do I register for the virtual conference?**

Please follow this [link](#) to register for the conference.

### **What if I am not available during the virtual conference dates?**

The content will be available on-demand following the conference for all NERA members.

### **Should I expect conference sessions to be different this year?**

You can expect many sessions similar to those you see during a typical NERA conference. We will have a series of [invited sessions and workshops](#) across each of the days, sessions accepted from the call for proposals, GSIC sessions, the President's address, an awards presentation, the annual business meeting, and social times.

### **By what date should I submit my paper and/or poster?**

Posters: Accepted posters must be submitted by September 24. More details on poster format and how to submit your poster will be forthcoming.

Individual Papers, Round Tables, and Symposia: Accepted individual papers, round tables and Symposia require authors to submit their full paper by October 1. More details on how to submit your paper will be forthcoming.

We hope you are as excited about this year's conference as we are. We will release the formal program and more details in the coming weeks. Stay tuned, and let us know what questions you have at [Nera.cochairs@gmail.com](mailto:Nera.cochairs@gmail.com)

## **NERA Elections are Coming!**

Ross Markel, Ph.D.

Past President and Chair, Nominations Committee

NERA Colleagues,

On behalf of the 2021 Nominations Committee, I am excited to announce that we will be voting on the following slate of candidates for the upcoming elected positions:

### **President**

Bo Bashkov, *IXL Learning*

Katrina Roohr, *Education Testing Service*

### **Board of Directors**

Sarah Ferguson, *Rowan University*

Henry "Hank" Johnson, *New England Institute of Technology (NEIT)*

Madison Holzman, *Curriculum Associates*

Jade Caines Lee, *Clark Atlanta University (CAU)*

In mid-late September, each member will receive an e-mail with voting instructions. If you have any questions about the election, please contact me at [ross@diahighered.com](mailto:ross@diahighered.com). Voting will close on October 1.

Ross Markle

Chair, Nominations Committee

## Membership Committee Update

Rory Lazowski, Chair, College Board

Now that the NERA Annual Conference is right around the corner (already?!), the Membership Committee has started brainstorming ways to welcome new and existing members in various ways during the conference. Last year, we gave out gift cards and winners were selected on a lottery system based on their attendance at various sessions and events throughout the conference, earning positive feedback, and will be continued again for this year's conference. We are also working with other NERA committees to discuss events we might plan for the conference, such as a virtual breakfast/coffee and online office hours for new members.

Given the conference will be virtual again this year, we wanted to cast a wider net to potential new members outside of the northeast region. To do so, we contacted each division in AERA and asked each division to share via email NERA's Call for Proposals for the Annual Conference. Members have also been sharing information about the conference and membership with various educational organizations and schools where they have personal contacts.

We are looking forward to continued planning for the NERA Conference in October! We are open to any suggestions you may have to help make the conference welcoming and inclusive to all members. So if you have ideas, please share them with the membership committee!

If you have any questions about membership or the organization, please feel free to contact the Membership Committee ([membershipcommittee@nera-education.org](mailto:membershipcommittee@nera-education.org)) or any of the board members.



### ➤ DESIGN

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## Announcement of Educator-as-Researcher Award Recipient

Salika Lawrence, Committee Chair, The College of New Jersey



The Educator-as-Researcher (EAR) Award Committee selected Britany Kuslis from a pool of nominees as the 2021 award recipient based on her research: *Perceptions of Principal Support and Teacher Self-Efficacy*. As the lead researcher on a project aligned to her everyday practice, Britany conducted research to improve P-12 educational practices.

Britany Kuslis was nominated by Marcia Delcourt, coordinator of the EdD in Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. To meet the submission guidelines for the committee's review, Britany's application included an abstract, a description of her research study and its significance to educators. See the abstract for her work on the following [page](#). Several distinguishing features of Britany's nomination led to her selection as the recipient of the award including her position as the lead researcher on the project, which was aligned to her everyday practice in a P-12 context. Additionally, the results of her study were found to have direct implications for her branch of education and the stakeholders with whom she works every day.

Britany is a student in the Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University as well as an instructional leader within her district, working with new teachers, serving as a Frontline Teacher Coach and a professional development presenter. She has facilitated workshops on mindfulness, leadership support, and teacher self-efficacy. In addition, Britany has worked with new teachers as both a Cooperating Teacher and a TEAM mentor and works with new teachers through Central Connecticut State University on the factors that impact both teacher engagement and success. The topic of her research—the impact of principal support on teacher self-efficacy—serves to investigate the interaction between these two professional interests. Currently, Britany is an English teacher at W. F. Kaynor Technical High School, teaching courses in Creative and Nonfiction Writing, Journalism, Media Awareness, and English III.

Britany is the first recipient of the new, remodeled Educator-as-Researcher—formerly the Teacher-as-Researcher—Award. The award is presented annually to an educator who has conducted a self-initiated classroom research project or applied research findings to inform their teaching. Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by a NERA member or other professional who knows about their research. The award recipient will be invited to attend the NERA conference to present the research to a NERA audience and receive the award. The nominee must be a PK-12 educator who conducted a school-related research project with their students, faculty, or constituents to improve educational practices. The project must be conceptualized, developed, and implemented as part of the nominee's context and practice and have had at least one trial and evaluation cycle. The project should also be related to a clearly defined theoretical focus and represent an innovation that has led to a concrete change in practice. The research, conducted during the past two years, can be part of a thesis or dissertation if the educator has primary responsibility for developing and implementing the project. Research topics may vary but should have some importance in the nominee's branch of education. The theory underlying the research and methods of instruction or implementation, data collection, and analysis should be well-articulated and documented by the nominee.

## **Educator-as-Researcher Award Recipient cont'd**

### **Perceptions of Principal Support and Teacher Self-Efficacy.**

Abstract:

Teacher perceptions of their principal are an important element for how teachers view both their profession and their own self-efficacy. This study was used to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principal's support and teacher self-efficacy. A mixed methods, convergent parallel design utilizing a multiple linear regression analysis was used to study these factors. Three surveys were used to investigate the relationship between teacher perceptions of principal support and teacher self-efficacy. Additional qualitative analyses were used to examine teachers' perspectives of these constructs. Initial results revealed that teachers' self-efficacy regarding their instructional strategies was significantly predicted by instrumental support (e.g., time, resources, feedback) from the principal, the number of years a teacher held their current position, and the emotional support a teacher received from the principal ( $R = .391$ ,  $p = .011$ ). The instrumental support from the principal, the teachers' age, and the number of years working with the current principal significantly predicted the teachers' self-efficacy for student engagement ( $R = .411$ ,  $p = .022$ ). Finally, teacher self-efficacy for classroom management was significantly predicted by the number of years working with the current principal, and the instrumental support from the principal ( $R = .332$ ,  $p = .016$ ).

This study will contribute to the growing recognition of the importance that teacher perceptions of principal support play in teacher self-efficacy. Principals influence the work and learning environment of teachers through support for instruction, making that support one of the most important elements of instructional leadership (DiPaola, 2012). This understanding will assist principals to be more aware of their supports and promote professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' self-efficacy to improve the school environment for all stakeholders. It will also provide insight to higher education institutions to seek ways to improve their administrator and teacher preparation programs.

## Update from the NERA Mentoring Program

Co-Chairs Bethany Fishbein, Boston College, Kerry Cotter, Boston College, &  
Sarah Ferguson, Rowan University

The NERA Mentoring Program strives to facilitate meaningful connections for NERA participants through two key approaches: 1) conference-based connections, and 2) year-round virtual events/discussions. The conference-based connections this year include the call for potential mentors and mentees sent out to members in early September, keep an eye on your inbox! Our goal with this part of the mentoring program is to connect graduate students and early career professionals with mentors who can provide career and professional advice and ideas specific to each mentees' goals. In early October, we will use the responses we receive from those interested in participating, to pair mentees and mentors together based on shared interests and career pathways. We hope you will sign up for this opportunity as either a mentor or a mentee!

Like last year, the conference mentoring program will be completely virtual for 2021. We plan to hold a virtual session during the conference week to connect mentors and mentees together in a shared space. More details on that will be shared as we get closer to the conference. We are also strongly encouraging mentors and mentees to extend their interactions beyond the conference week! Mentoring is not only a one-time occurrence; it can also be a series of conversations and connections throughout the year, however the pairs decide. The Co-Chairs will be reaching out to those involved in the Mentoring Program following the conference to check-in and see how things are going. We look forward to continuing our support of these connections following the conference!

Should you have any questions or suggestions for improving the Mentoring Program, please feel free to reach out to the co-chairs at [mentoring@nera-education.org](mailto:mentoring@nera-education.org).



## NERA Conference Ambassadors Update

Pamela Kaliski, Chair, ABIM

Hello NERA members! On behalf of the NERA Conference Ambassadors Committee, I hope everyone had a wonderful summer! We hope you are getting excited for the virtual NERA 2021 annual conference, which is right around the corner. As a reminder, the charge of the NERA Conference Ambassadors Committee is to welcome new and returning members to the annual NERA conference. We strive to achieve this, in collaboration with the NERA Membership Committee, by providing an open environment that encourages connecting with colleagues across the NERA membership in attendance, while also sharing our own NERA experiences with meeting attendees.

This year, we are collaborating with the NERA Membership Committee to ensure that we will have multiple opportunities to connect with you at the NERA conference, and to provide our members with easy ways to contact us at any point. Like last year, we are planning to host a virtual new member coffee/breakfast. We are also in the process of working with the conference team to determine how else we can be available throughout the conference to answer any questions as they arise and connect with our members over the virtual platform. Please be on the lookout for an update from us prior to the conference announcing our plans.

As always, we welcome any ideas or feedback from NERA members; please feel free to contact us if you have any thoughts or questions for us. ([PKaliski@ABIM.org](mailto:PKaliski@ABIM.org)) We are looking forward to seeing you at the NERA conference in 2021!

Pamela Kaliski  
Chair, NERA Ambassadors Committee



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**2021 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Announcement**

Rochelle S. Michel,  
Chair, Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Committee

Presenters at the 2021 NERA conference are strongly encouraged to submit an original research paper (no more than 20 pages) in competition for the Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award. It should meet the criteria of being an empirical/inferential or theoretically-based study with supporting data, and may include case studies. This award is named in honor of Lorne H. Woollatt, a distinguished New York State educator and an active member of NERA. The winner of the award receives a \$500 stipend to present their research paper at an invited session of the Consortium of State and Regional Educational Research Associations (SRERA) at the 2022 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting (to be held in San Diego, CA).

This year's award will be given to the best paper presented by one or more authors at the 2021 NERA conference. Each paper goes through a blind review by the award committee. 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 reported, and conclusions; and the contribution the research findings make to the knowledge-base of the field.

The Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award committee invites participants of the 2021 NERA conference to enter presented papers meeting the research study requirements described above. Please email two copies by Friday, November 5 to the committee Chair, Rochelle Michel ([rochelle.michel@gmail.com](mailto:rochelle.michel@gmail.com)). One copy should be a Blind copy without any author identifying information on the title page and one copy that includes a title page with the names, affiliations, and email addresses of each author.

We very much look forward to receiving your paper by November 5.

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## The Graduate Lounge

Matthew Speno, GSIC Chair, University of New England

Greetings!

I hope you are well, and your doctoral journey is progressing as you have planned or unplanned. The thing with earning a doctorate, one can plan the journey, but the road sometimes takes you to parts of yourself and your research you had no idea existed. I do hope you can put aside well-laid plans for detours along the way because it is important to see what these side roads are and if it does not lead to a rabbit hole, you will be fine and dandy!

Pam, Jesús, and I met this summer to discuss how GSIC can provide a resource for you during the doctoral journey. In the past, we have generally presented two sessions at the annual NERA conference with webinars, virtual meet-ups, and committee meetings peppered around. What came out of our meeting was a commitment to look at the GSIC leadership structure to ensure continuity and consistency moving forward in a post-COVID stance.

Although the NERA conference will be held virtually this year, GSIC will sponsor two workshop sessions and a social meet-up. Our sessions will provide resources and information for current doctoral candidates along with a session targeting your post-doctoral journey of employment, academia, and beyond.

Please feel free to reach out at any time with your ideas or just to say hi ([neragraduatestudents@gmail.com](mailto:neragraduatestudents@gmail.com)).





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