



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mark D. Reckase, Michigan State University



### I Am Honored to Follow in the Footsteps of Eric F. Gardner

I am very honored to be the president of NCME. In a sense, it is unbelievable. When I completed my undergraduate work at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, I applied to the graduate program in Psychology at Syracuse University. But, I did not apply to a program in psychometrics or quantitative psychology. Instead I applied for the doctoral program in social psychology because I was intrigued by the research on changing attitudes. Of course, to determine if attitudes change you also have to determine what they are – that is measure attitudes. When I arrived on campus at Syracuse University, my academic advisor and chair of the Psychology Department, Eric F. Gardner, indicated that the social psychology program was full and that he was temporarily putting me into the quantitative psychology program for that year. If, after the year, I wanted to move back to social psychology, that would be fine.

Well, I never moved back to social psychology. I have often wondered if that program really was full, or if Dr. Gardner, as we called him, decided that someone with high quantitative GRE scores should be in psychometrics. I never had the nerve to ask him the question directly and he is no longer with us so I can not ask him now.

Professor Gardner was the President of NCME in 1977/78. He gave his presidential address at the meeting in Toronto in March of 1978. The title of his talk was “Bias” and it was about all forms of bias related to measurement including statistical bias, test bias, and sampling bias. It clearly foreshadows the work on test and item bias that would appear in the following decades, but it was a much more general talk than that. It was about using information about bias to serve as a trigger to wise data analysis and appropriate actions when bias is detected.

As a graduate student and as a new assistant professor, I was so in awe of Dr. Gardner that I could not dream of following in his footsteps. He was a person who could derive from scratch on a blackboard in front of a group practically all of the equations in analysis of variance and regression. He was a co-author of some of the major achievement tests of the time such as the *Stanford Achievement Tests*. In those days, tests had authors and they were published like books. He did a fantastic dissertation on the use of Pearson Type III distributions to model equipercentile equating at a time when all analyses were done by hand on mechanical calculating machines. All of this was more than a graduate student or an assistant professor could ever hope to accomplish. One of my fondest memories was his look of pride and the congratulations I received from him when I became editor of the *Journal of Educational Measurement*. He had never been the editor of a journal and he let me know how special it was to get appointed to an editorship. For all that he did for me as an advisor and as the chair of my dissertation committee, I dedicate this year as president to him.

### NCME Today

The NCME of today is different in many ways than the NCME of 1978, but there are also many similarities. A major topic at NCME in 1978 was applications of item response theory to practical testing problems. There were fewer sessions on that topic in 1978 than there are at current meetings. There were sessions on the validity of tests and what standardized test results mean. There was a session on legal issues related to testing. It would be interesting to look at the meeting from 1978 and see how many of the sessions would fit into the program in 2008. Are there any historians of measurement that would like to do that for the next issue of the newsletter?

#### Revision to the Standards

I would like to do it myself, but for this column it is more important to give some information about what is different. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests* were not a major topic in 1978, although those *Standards* have been an NCME Board topic for many of the years of the existence of the organization. At this time, work is being done on a revision to

the *Standards*. A management committee has been appointed for this major project and they are about to appoint working groups to deal with specific parts of the *Standards*. One reason I am currently president of NCME is my inability to say “no.” When I was asked to be the editor of JEM, I said “yes.” When I was asked to be the program co-chair, I said “yes.” Saying yes does lead to work and it probably does not convert directly into pay increases. However, it does put you in contact with a lot of interesting people and it is those people that make the work interesting. I hope that you will say “yes” if you are asked to do work for NCME, especially if the work is on the *Standards*.

### Policy Issues in Educational Measurement

Another major project for the NCME Board is determining how NCME can become involved in policy discussions related to educational measurement issues. It should be no major revelation that educational measurement plays a major part in educational policy. One of the strategic goals of NCME is to increase the organization’s influence in the policy arena. It is important that all members of NCME help with this initiative. One way that you can do this is to help identify important policy issues that NCME should address as an organization. Another way is to become involved yourself. Be willing to make public statements about educational measurement policy.

I will try to bring up other ways that members can become involved over the year. Remember that NCME is your organization. The impact that the organization has on educational policy and practice is directly related to the level of involvement of the NCME membership. I hope to see that involvement increase in the coming years

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## **MEASUREMENT SPECIALISTS LOOK TO THE FUTURE**

*Ronald K. Hambleton, University of Massachusetts Amherst*

For the recent meeting of AERA and NCME in New York, Kristen Huff and Linda Cook suggested that we bring together six prominent measurement specialists and have each of them talk about one or two problems that they felt were timely for research in the next few years. All of the speakers were enthusiastic about their choice of topics.

Joanna Gorin from Arizona State University continued a theme the measurement field has been hearing for many years and at least as far back as the early 1980s—cognitive psychology will be the link to developing instructionally-relevant assessment measures, and she encouraged more research. Her feeling is that psychometricians and teachers live in two worlds (she didn’t mention in which world the psychometricians were living), and cognitive psychology can bring them together, and increase the impact of assessments on learning. Now that real progress can be seen, more of us need to be paying attention, and begin to participate in the transformation that is happening—cognitive-based testing is upon us.

Continuing the message, Suzanne Lane from the University of Pittsburgh lamented the limited utility of large scale assessment for measuring skills that educators value. Her plea included a request for substantially more research on how students acquire and develop knowledge and processes. For those in our field who are model builders, she wants to see more attention given to the development of psychologically important models linking cognitive variables to performance assessments. She too made a plea for linking cognitive psychology, testing, and instruction.

Increasing the measurement and statistics knowledge of K-12 teachers and administrators was the challenge Rebecca Zwick from the University of California at Santa Barbara presented to the field at the symposium. Of course, this problem is not new to most of us—many educators have a disappointingly low level of knowledge about educational testing, and in part this flows from a lack of training or ineffective training provided to them at the universities. Professor Zwick talked about some recent work she has been doing for the National Science Foundation in both identifying what educators need to know about measurement and statistics, and then she has been researching ways to develop these skills. She views this problem as one that more measurement specialists need to be committed to. It is difficult to justify all the assessment taking place if measurement and statistics literacy remains low among educators.

Jim Popham, from UCLA seemed disappointed that after all these years we still don’t seem to be willing and/or able to design tests for accountability that can identify quality instruction when it is present. He argued persuasively, I think, that tests to assess accountability are not very sensitive to instruction and therefore they are of limited value to educators. He challenged the measurement field to construct instructionally sensitive tests and proposed both judgmental and empirical strategies for evaluating test instructional sensitivity.

Whether you agree or disagree with his ideas, Howard Wainer from the National Board of Medical Examiners is one of the more interesting and provocative speakers in our field, and on this occasion he laid out his personal views about what is especially important to investigate in the coming years: Bayesian estimation, learning to handle missing data, picturing data,

and learning much more about causal inference and type I and II errors, were five of his favorite topics for more intensive research. He suggested too that we back off our intensive study of IRT, reliability, factor analysis, and DIF, arguing that we know enough to use these methodologies well in practice, while there are other more fundamental problems requiring our attention. He also singled out evidenced centered design and value added models for more attention.

Finally, a great thinker from the north, Bruno Zumbo from the University of British Columbia, was enthusiastic about multi-level variables in educational research, but felt that we have been surprisingly lax in our concern for reliability, generalizability, and validity issues. He noted that nearly all of our psychometric practices are geared to individual scores, but a good amount of data today are aggregated data, such as data being reported for a school, a neighborhood, or state, and we need to invent reliability and validity approaches for handling these data. Clearly, we are almost nowhere with respect to his concerns.

A spirited discussion among the presenters, and later, among the presenters and the audience took place with Professor Popham taking on all comers in his defense of the use of tests than can detect effective instruction when it is present. No attempt was made to achieve consensus and any of the suggested topics for future research but it was clear the presenters felt that research attention ought to be somewhat refocused to start addressing timely assessment questions that can make a difference in education. All of the topics suggested by the speakers were more or less agreed upon as important. The take-home messages for me were that (1) measurement training programs around the country need to expand their course offerings to insure some training in cognitive psychology, and linking theories of cognition to assessment development, and extending this work to score reporting (another important topic for future research), (2) tests need to be designed that have more sensitivity to detect good instruction of state curriculum objectives, (3) progress is being made regarding assessment skills for educators, but much more attention is needed, if the vast investment this country is making in assessment is to be worthwhile, and (4) graduate students and even university professors would do well to look around for the important unsolved problems and work on those rather than tweak well established methodologies. I found the session stimulating and expect many of those present did also. At a minimum you may want to write the speakers for their slides, and several provided papers too. I think we need to see more sessions like this one at upcoming meetings of NCME and AERA. Big ideas are important and we need to hear them, and lively debate is refreshing and enlightening, and may spur many of us on to greater research accomplishments.

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## 2008 NCME AWARD WINNERS

### **Roy Levy receives the Brenda H. Loyd Outstanding Dissertation Award**

*Mark Shermis, Committee Chair*

The 2007 Brenda H. Loyd Outstanding Dissertation Award was given to Dr. Roy Levy for his study titled “Posterior Predictive Model Checking for Multidimensionality in Item Response Theory and Bayesian Networks.” Dr. Levy’s dissertation explores the use of posterior predictive model checking (PPMC) for analyzing the fit of psychometric models, in the context of Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) estimation. His work extends the use and practice of PPMC to issues of central importance in psychometrics, namely assessing dimensionality and testing for conditional dependence given latent variables. He shows how PPMC can be tailored to all latent variable models, in conjunction with MCMC estimation. The study further demonstrates that PPMC can be adapted to new models that may be central to a new generation of assessments including contributions from cognitive psychology, task-design, and psychometric modeling. The committee commends the methodological contribution of his work and the clear writing style in which it was presented. Dr. Levy completed his research at University of Maryland, College Park, under the supervision of Dr. Robert J. Mislevy, and is currently employed as an Assistant Professor at the Arizona State University.

#### Comments from Roy Levy

Improperly modeling the dimensionality of data (e.g., by employing a unidimensional model for multidimensional data) results in violations of local independence and may have deleterious consequences the application of psychometric models. As such, investigations of dimensionality assumptions are crucial for assessment development and use so that inferences based on assumed models can be supported. The focus of this dissertation is on Bayesian mechanisms for addressing data-model fit in terms of the adequacy of local independence assumptions in light of multidimensional data structures. Specifically, this work employs posterior predictive model checking (PPMC), a flexible approach to critiquing models that holds a number of advantages over traditional model checking frameworks.

Factors hypothesized to influence dimensionality and dimensionality assessment are couched in a conditional covariance theory framework via geometric representations of items in multidimensional space. Motivated by the implications of this theoretical foundation, the first study in the dissertation investigates the utility of PPMC for criticizing unidimensional item

response theory (IRT) models fit to data that follow compensatory or conjunctive multidimensional IRT models. The second study builds upon the first by examining PPMC for performing model criticism in light of inadequately accounting for the dimensional structure of items in the context of a multidimensional Bayesian network with complex relations.

Key findings include (a) the success of PPMC with appropriately chosen discrepancy measures for performing dimensionality assessment, (b) support for the hypotheses regarding the factors that influence dimensionality assessment, (c) the importance of considering results in terms of patterns rather than one-at-a-time, and (d) the flexibility of PPMC for conducting model criticism across different settings. These contributions have implications for dimensionality assessment and model checking more broadly not only for familiar models, but also for those that pose difficulties for traditional approaches to model checking, such as models for complex relations among multiple latent variables and the items.

## **Cara Cahalan-Laitusis receives the Jason Millman Promising Measurement Scholar Award**

The 2008 Jason Millman award was presented to Cara Cahalan-Laitusis for her research on test fairness for students with disabilities. The purpose of the Jason Millman award is to recognize a scholar at the early stages of his/her career whose research has the potential to make a major contribution to the applied measurement field.

### Comments from Cara Cahalan-Laitusis

I am honored to receive the Jason Millman award that acknowledges early potential in a measurement scholar. I am grateful to those who nominated me and to the award committee for their support; particularly since my route towards a career in educational measurement is not typical. My training in school psychology at Fordham University and the education I receive every day from my professional colleagues at Educational Testing Service (ETS) have given me the foundation to examine educational measurement issues from both a practitioner and psychometric perspective.

In the mid 1990's I spent a year working in a diverse middle school completing the triennial psycho-educational assessment of students in special education. In most cases these students had a learning disability and were reading well below grade level. One thing that troubled me immensely was that many of these students were bright, but the reading instruction they were receiving was insufficient to move them to the point where they were reading to learn, rather than learning to read. In addition, their poor reading skills were holding them back in all subject areas because they could not access the instructional materials. I tried to convince the school administrators to allocate more resources for these students, but they were reluctant to do so. I believe one reason for this reluctance was that the school community had lower expectations for students in special education. These lower expectations resulted in students being systematically excluded from the state standardized test and this exclusion resulted in schools not being held accountable to teach students with learning disabilities to read at grade level.

This experience led me to focus my doctoral dissertation on targeted reading instruction using curriculum-based measurement to improve the rate of growth in reading fluency for struggling readers. In addition I have focused much of my research at ETS on improving the validity and fairness of large scale assessments for students with learning disabilities. During my time at ETS I have learned from my colleagues about measurement issues in assessment that most practitioners are unaware of. This knowledge of the importance of the psychometric qualities of an assessment, test development procedures, the principles of test fairness, and the predictive validity of test scores, has allowed me to contribute to the small community of researchers focused on improving the validity and fairness of assessments for students with disabilities. Because of my background and experience, I have been able to make these contributions from both a psychometrician's and practitioner's perspective. This area of research is complex because of the potential conflicts between accessibility and standardization, but it is extremely rewarding and I encourage others to consider working in this area.

I would like to thank my professors at Fordham University, particularly Dr. Abigail Harris who gave me the opportunity to engage in educational research projects that impacted the lives of children in Ghana and Malawi. I learned a great deal from these experiences which gave me the tools to engage in independent research projects. I would also like to thank my current and former colleagues at ETS who gave me the support to pursue this line of research and shared with me their time and wisdom, particularly Drs. Brent Bridgman, Linda Cook, and Ann Gallagher.

Since completing my doctorate in 2003 I have had three children and could not have continued to pursue my professional interests while balancing my family priorities without the flexibility provided to me by my colleagues at ETS and the support provided by my family. For this I am grateful to all, particularly my colleague and mentor Linda Cook, my mother Jean Cahalan Pawlik, and my husband Vytas Laitusis.

## **Jianbin Fu receives the Alicia Cascallar Award for an Outstanding Paper by an Early Scholar**

*Mary Pommerich, Committee Chair*

The Alicia Cascallar Award for an Outstanding Paper by an Early Career Scholar has been established to honor Alicia's professional commitment and accomplishments and to continue her practice of mentoring and encouraging promising new scholars in the area of educational measurement. The 2008 Alicia Cascallar Award was given to Dr. Jianbin Fu in recognition of his paper entitled *Cognitively Diagnostic Psychometric Models: An Integrative Review*. Dr. Fu works at ETS, and is a previous recipient of the Bradley Hanson Award (2007) and the Mary Catherine Ellwein Outstanding Dissertation Award for Quantitative Methods (2006).

### Comments from Jianbin Fu

It is my great honor to receive this year's Alicia Cascallar Award for my paper *Cognitively diagnostic psychometric models: An integrative review* presented at the NCME conference in Chicago 2007. I am very grateful to those who supported me to win this great award.

My paper provided an integrative review on cognitively diagnostic psychometric models. With the coinciding developments in psychometrics and cognitive science in the past fifty years, more and more researchers are interested in combining these two fields to a new psychometric area, often called Cognitively Diagnostic Assessment (CDA). Some researchers have heralded CDA as the new testing paradigm in the 21st century and have called for increasing research and use of CDA, because contemporary assessments are expected to provide more informative diagnostic reports to students, parents, teachers and principals that enable successful instructional intervention. Cognitively diagnostic psychometric models (CDPMs) are statistical models developed to determine each examinee's diagnostic status with respect to cognitive components and/or each item's measurement of those cognitive components. This paper reviewed a total of 62 CDPMs. These models, which included models for dichotomously, polytomously and continuously scored items, multiple time points and multiple strategies, represented the CDPMs most common in the literature as well as many less frequently mentioned ones. The paper first presented a hierarchical structure to show the interrelationship among the 62 models, and then adapted and extended a taxonomy proposed by Roussos (1994) to classify and organize the 62 CDPMs based on core components, such as knowledge structure, item structure and time component. Especially, the characteristics of seven types of attribute structures modeled in CDPMs are discussed in detail. This taxonomy as well as the hierarchical structure facilitated the understanding of the psychological meanings of these CDPMs, and made the differences and similarities among CDPMs very clear in terms of model structure and function. Finally, this review discusses the cognitive limitations of CDPMs, the building blocks of CDPMs and an upper level CDPM assembled from these blocks, and the future research of CDPMs.

## **Michael Kolen receives the NCME Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement**

*Krista Breithaupt, Committee Chair*

The NCME Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement is intended to honor a person whose contributions over a career have had widespread positive impact on the field of educational measurement. All of the nominees considered by our committee for the 2007 award were clearly deserving of recognition. However, Michael Kolen was selected because his ideas have widely influenced the nature of measurement and practice. Mike's lasting contributions have taken the form of computer software, journal articles, book chapters, textbooks, and conference presentations, especially in the areas of equating and scaling; he has provided extensive leadership for professional organizations, including President of NCME and editor of the *Journal of Educational Measurement*; he has served practitioners worldwide through various workshop presentations and in technical advisory capacities; and he has been an outstanding teacher and mentor of graduate students and young professionals with whom he has worked, both at ACT and the University of Iowa. Mike is currently Professor in the College of Education at The University of Iowa.

### Comments from Michael Kolen

I thank Krista Breithaupt and the Awards Committee. I am deeply honored to have been chosen for this award.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the individuals who made my career a possibility. First, thanks to Amy Kolen who was my pillar well before my career began and who will continue to be in the years ahead. I thank Darrell Sabers whose infectious enthusiasm attracted me to the measurement field; Douglas Whitney, who provided me with a strong educational and professional foundation; Leonard Feldt, an exceptional role model for research, teaching, and advising; H. D. Hoover, a teaching mentor when I was a graduate student and a colleague over many years; T. Anne Cleary, instrumental in my initial job search and an important support for the first few years of my professional life; Robert Brennan, who at ACT provided me with room to develop research skills, and who has been a collaborator ever since; and David Frisbie, a valued colleague during the faculty portion of my career.

As is true of so many in measurement, I discovered the field mainly by accident. In spring of 1973, Amy and I were to be married and were contemplating what to do when we finished our undergraduate work, mine being a BS in Psychology. She was accepted to graduate school with a teaching assistantship at The University of Arizona. In searching the course catalog, I found that Arizona had a graduate program in Educational Psychology--a reasonable area for me to pursue. The \$200-per-semester-tuition with a tuition scholarship helped make up my mind. While at Arizona, I eventually worked on an MA with Darrell Sabers. Near the end of my studies, Darrell helped me obtain funding for a Ph.D in Measurement and Statistics at The University of Iowa, a place that ultimately provided an excellent foundation for my career.

After two years teaching in a graduate program in educational research at Hofstra University, I took a position at ACT with Robert Brennan in 1981. In this position, I was able to develop research skills in an environment where we constantly had psychometric problems to solve. The first problem was how to move from an equipercentile equating process for the ACT Assessment, done by hand, to one that was done by computer. In the process, I developed and researched analytic smoothing methods. Over the next few years I worked on psychometric issues in ongoing testing programs and continued to research procedures for scaling, equating, and estimating reliability. During this time, I had the opportunity to conduct research with David Jarjoura, Deborah Harris, Bradley Hanson, Tianyou Wang, and many others. My work at ACT provided the foundation for the textbook on test equating that I co-authored with Robert Brennan.

In 1997, I became a Professor at The University of Iowa, where I have been since. I have benefited from having wonderful colleagues, superb graduate students, and tremendous support for research and service.

As David Frisbie said when he nominated me for this award, NCME is a professional home that many of us depend upon for professional sustenance. I thank NCME for providing me with so many opportunities to serve the profession: President, Board Member, Program Chair, and Journal Editor. In addition, I thank the hundreds of NCME members who gladly gave their time and energy to NCME while I was in these roles.

## **Hua-Hua Chang and Zhiliang Ying receive the NCME Award for Outstanding Example of Application of Educational Measurement Technology to a Specific Problem**

*Dehui Xing, Committee Chair*

The NCME annual award for Outstanding Example of Application of Educational Measurement Technology to a Specific Problem was presented to Dr. Hua-Hua Chang of the University of Illinois and Dr. Zhiliang Ying of Columbia University. The purpose of this award is to honor significant contributions to the field of educational measurement and the winner is chosen based on quality and inventiveness of the application on the practice of educational measurement. Selection criteria for the award include quality, innovation, and importance of the contribution. This award is in recognition of Hua-Hua and Zhiliang's work on balancing the influence of initial items in adaptive testing, one of their significant contributions to the field of educational measurement.

### Comments from Hua-Hua Chang

It is our great honor to receive the 2008 NCME Award for an Outstanding Example of Application of Educational Measurement Technology to a Specific Problem. I have known Zhiliang Ying since 1987 when I was a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At that time, Ying had just joined the Department of Statistics as an assistant professor and the department asked me to introduce him to the area. Later, I became his driving coach and one of his best friends. As such, I felt comfortable asking Ying for his help in proving theorems. Our academic relationship soon proved to be mutually beneficial, as I helped to reinforce Ying's interest in psychometric research. Champaign is such a unique place for collaborating on psychometric research, and there have been numerous former NCME Award recipients to come out of Champaign among them, Kikumi Tatsuoka, Bill Stout (my thesis advisor), Louis Roussos, and Sarah Hartz.

Today, one main challenge in educational measurement is to develop theories and methods for the wide-range implementation of computerized assessment. Together, Ying and I have developed new item selection methods and built a large sample foundation for computerized adaptive testing (CAT). The *a-stratification* method (Chang & Ying, 1999), and the use of *global information* (Chang & Ying, 1996), and *non-linear sequential designs in CAT* (Chang & Ying, in press) are among the products of our fifteen year (and ongoing!) collaboration. Throughout this collaboration, we chose to tackle research problems that emerged from real world applications. For instance, one problem was to identify a design flaw in the computerized testing systems that failed to generate reliable scores for thousands of GRE and GMAT test takers from 2000 to 2002 (e.g., Carlson, 2000 and Merritt, 2003). We proposed a theory, and presented both analytical and empirical evidence to support our hypothesis (Chang & Ying, 2007). We are so grateful that this research effort has been recognized by the 2008 NCME Annual Award. Finally, we believe that this award may imply that despite some shortcomings, CAT undoubtedly has a great future. We are confident that with new developments in psychometric theory developed by us and others, we are well armed with the necessary tools to solve the problems encountered in current large-scale CAT applications.

# **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2009 AWARD FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*Dr. Patricia A. Baron, Chair; Educational Testing Service*

Division D of AERA welcomes nominations for the 2009 Award for Significant Contribution to Educational Measurement and Research Methodology. This annual award recognizes published research judged to represent a significant advancement in theory and practice of educational measurement and/or educational research methodology. This award is not considered a lifetime achievement award; the significance of the contribution will be the primary consideration for this award. The research may be the work of an individual or a team of researchers. The winner will be announced and honored at the 2009 AERA annual meeting with a plaque and a \$1000 award.

## **Guidelines**

In selecting a winner, the following guidelines will apply:

- Quality and potential impact of the research on educational measurement and research methodology are the primary criteria for this award.
- The recognized publication may be, but is not limited to, a refereed research article in either a print or online journal, a paper published in a refereed conference proceeding, monograph, book chapter, and/or book. The work must have been published between August 1st, 2006 and July 31st, 2008.
- The nominee(s) must be the first or sole author(s) of the work and must be a member of Division D of AERA.

## **Application Procedure**

A complete nomination consists of:

- The nomination letter (self nominations are welcome);
- A copy of the nominated research publication including its bibliographic citation. If the publication is a book or monograph, the nominator should indicate which portion of the book or monograph is nominated for this award;
- At least one additional letter of recommendation (from person(s) other than the nominator) addressing the quality and potential impact of the research; and
- The nominee's vita.

Submit the complete nomination (one copy only) by November 30, 2008 to

Dr. Patricia A. Baron, Chair  
Educational Testing Service  
Rosedale Rd MS 01R  
Princeton, NJ 08541  
Phone: 609-734-1413  
[pbaron@ets.org](mailto:pbaron@ets.org)

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# **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2009 AERA OUTSTANDING QUANTITATIVE DISSERTATION AWARD**

*Sherri Miller, Chair; Assistant Vice President, EPAS Development Education Division ACT, Inc.*

Division D invites nominations of dissertations that make outstanding contributions to quantitative methodology of educational research. The winner will be recognized by the American Educational Research Association. Dissertations completed during the 2007-2008 academic year or prior to December 1, 2008 will be eligible for consideration.

Nominations must include five components: (1) a summary of the dissertation, prepared by the student (typed, double-spaced, 10-15 pages in length), (2) the full dissertation, (3) a letter stating that the summary was prepared by the student, (4) a letter from the student's major professor attesting that the dissertation was completed by the student during the time period specified,

and that the nominator chaired the dissertation committee, and (5) a letter from either the major professor or the student, providing a brief explanation (1-2 pages) of how the dissertation contributes to methodological understandings or practices. Materials may be submitted by email. In addition, the nomination should include email addresses of both the student and the nominator that can be used for all correspondence regarding the award.

Criteria for judging the merit of the dissertations will include the significance of the research questions addressed, the integrity of the methods used, and the contribution to the advancement of knowledge about research methodology.

All nominations are to be submitted by **November 30, 2008**. Late nominations or incomplete nominations will not be considered. Award winner will be contacted no later than February 15, 2009. Nominations for the quantitative awards may be sent to:

Sherri Miller, Chair  
Assistant Vice President, EPAS Development  
Education Division  
ACT, Inc.  
500 ACT Drive, P.O. Box 168  
Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168  
Phone: 319-337-1458  
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## ADVICE FOR PAPER AND SUBMISSION PROPOSALS

*Tasha Beretvas, University of Texas at Austin*

*Karen Barton, CTB/McGraw Hill*

The excitement of 2009 NCME proposal submission season is upon us. We are sure you are all excited about visiting the beautiful San Diego area!! Having served as the 2008 NCME Program Chairs, we would like to share our insights and advice about paper and symposium proposals as you prepare for your 2009 submissions.

The most important piece of advice hardly bears mentioning. Design the ideal study that has never been done, that is of the utmost importance to our field and that can be completed by the time the conference starts next April. Even if this is not the case, write the proposal so that it will convince your reviewers and the Program Chairs that this is so.

There are two parts to your successfully convincing reviewers and Program Chairs that your proposal is innovative, relevant, and feasible: the substance of the proposed research study and its description in the proposal. Clearly, authors of studies are convinced of the necessity of their work. While the authors of a proposal might fully understand the importance, design and results of their study, this has to be clearly and succinctly conveyed in the proposal. It does not matter how useful or important a study might be if this cannot be inferred from a proposal (i.e., from one that is poorly composed).

Reviewers consistently assign poor ratings to poorly written proposals. A well-written proposal is not only one that is easily understood but also meets the proposals' required word limit (1,200 to 1,500 words). We strongly encourage authors to keep to that limit as well as to provide enough text and substance to adequately describe the study. In other words – no 20-page proposals and no proposals of only a paragraph! Please refer to the Call for Proposals which outlines the necessary sections: (a) objectives of the inquiry; (b) source(s) of the information presented in the paper (including sample, instruments, etc.); (c) methods and/or techniques; (d) results and/or conclusions; and (e) educational importance of the study.

The proposal system has been improved so that the keywords you choose to describe your study are the same as those selected by reviewers as their areas of expertise. To help this year's Program Chairs find the most suitable reviewers, and to ensure the match of your study's topic with the reviewers' expertise, we strongly encourage you to choose your keywords wisely.

Another important facet of a successful proposal seems to be the completion prospects of the study. Optimally the proposal describes a study that is already finished or close to being completed. At very least, the scope and associated schedule of the project should be realistic. Reviewers are chosen for their expertise and cannot be hoodwinked!

Last, we want to encourage all NCME members and in particular those who are submitting proposals to offer to serve as volunteers. Be part of the process and watch it improve! The quality of the NCME program depends on the proposals' quality but also on the skills of reviewers, moderators and discussants.



## NCME MEMBERS SHOULD JOIN DIVISION 5

Neal Schmitt, Department of Psychology Michigan State University

Email: [schmitt@msu.edu](mailto:schmitt@msu.edu)



As President of APA's Division 5 (Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation), I would like to invite you to join our community of scholars – for free! Division 5 is one of the central divisions of the APA, and it is one of the key quantitative organizations where researchers and scholars at all stages of their career can come together to consider and discuss issues in measurement, statistics, and evaluation in psychology.

You may know that recently the APA Science Directorate charged a Task Force on Increasing the Quantitative Pipeline to address the critical shortage of quantitative scholars in the U.S. The Task Force instantly recognized that there are very few places for quantitative and measurement scholars to come together as a community. Division 5 was identified as one of those places, and we're proud to be an active part of APA for over 60 years since L. L. Thurstone became Division 5's first president.

We've provided a list of ten reasons why you might want to become a member (below), but one good reason to join right now is that we are offering free membership for your first year. (Thereafter, the rates are \$9 for graduate students, and \$43 for affiliates or members.)

Please note: You do **not** have to be an APA member to be a Division 5 member!

- Joining Division 5 takes about one minute! If you are interested in a free one-year Division 5 membership, go to the link below and complete the very brief bit of information.

[Join Division 5 \(Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation\)! \\*](#)

*Note. If you have any problems with the above link, please paste the following into your Internet browser:*  
[http://uncodum.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV\\_3gbJwLXppZHtkKE&SVID=Prod](http://uncodum.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_3gbJwLXppZHtkKE&SVID=Prod)

To the list of items below, I would add that Division 5 has long been an important ally in furthering the measurement interests of NCME members in the APA. Division 5's APA representatives (now Gwyneth Boodoo and Kurt Geisinger) are extremely active in supporting measurement and testing initiatives, policy, publications, and perspectives. In addition, Division 5, NCME, and APA's Science Directorate have a long history of collaborative projects in testing and assessment (e.g., the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, The Standards of Educational and Psychological Testing, and the Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment). One way we can retain and increase our influence in APA is through support of, and alliance with, Division 5. APA and the APA program remains central to many Division 5 members with educational measurement research and policy interests who hold dual divisional memberships with Division 15 (educational psychology); those of us who continue to attend APA or who might if there were more of interest in the program should be involved in Division 5's program.

Also, if you would like to help advance our programming, please consider volunteering for one of our divisional committees. We have several ongoing committees that would benefit from your ideas and contributions (e.g., the listserv hosted by the Division; programs of interest at APA, initiatives to further links between Division 5 and NCME, helping with our newsletter, working on membership). The future of Division 5 rests on our ability to serve all quantitatively oriented scholars.

Please feel free to contact either our Division 5 membership chair or me if you have any questions at all. I can be reached at [schmitt@msu.edu](mailto:schmitt@msu.edu); and Abigail Panter can be reached at [panter@unc.edu](mailto:panter@unc.edu).

### Ten Reasons to Join Division 5

1. Access to the field's primary communities of quantitative and assessment scholars. Started in 1946, Division 5 was a charter member of the APA with L. L. Thurstone as its first president.
2. Connect with quantitative psychology and measurement-oriented friends and colleagues, new and old. Our members range in professional experience from beginning graduate students with interests in assessment and quantitative psychology to psychology's top methodologists and measurement experts.

3. Access to the APA Division 5 listserv to post research questions, job opportunities, professional development issues related to measurement, statistics, and evaluation. Discuss assessment, evaluation, measurement, and statistics; Receive and post job announcements; Stay up-to-date on workshops or policy changes.
4. Participate in the Division 5 programming at the APA annual convention. Be a part of APA Division 5 convention symposia on topics of broad public and cross-disciplinary interest, such as legal issues in testing, standards for evaluation research, assessment, statistics, and methodological training of psychologists. Come and enjoy other Division 5 events – poster sessions, symposia, invited addresses, and social hours.
5. Choose one of APA's top methodology journals when you pay for divisional membership! *Psychological Methods* is devoted to the development and dissemination of methods for collecting, analyzing, understanding, and interpreting psychological data. *Psychological Assessment* publishes mainly empirical articles concerning clinical assessment.
6. Participate in discussions of how to promote high standards in research, measurement, and practical applications of quantitative methods in psychology and beyond.
7. Receive Division 5's quarterly newsletter *The Score*, which covers current issues in evaluation, measurement, assessment, and statistics; APA news relevant to Division 5; job announcements; activities of Division members; and the APA convention Division 5 program.
8. Receive discounts and first announcements about methodological workshops and advanced training opportunities.
9. Get involved and contribute to Division 5 programming, governance, committees, and community building.
10. Join for free in your first year! Signing up for your year free membership to Division 5 is simple. Just take one minute to fill out the online form, and please feel free to pass the link to your quantitative and assessment friends/colleagues, no matter what stage of their career.

## CALL FOR 2009 NCME AWARDS

Information regarding the 2009 NCME Awards call is available at: <http://www.ncme.org>

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