



*Division H is AERA's home for people dedicated to applied research, evaluation, assessment, and accountability in the schools.*

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### A Note From Our VP

**Faith Connolly**

**Division H Vice President**



Mary Yakimowski is thankful for the following individuals who worked during the summer on the Special Education and ELL Proposal Planning Advisory Committee. Their proposal was submitted to AERA in September. The individuals were: Jamal Abedi, Judy Arter, Manju Banerjee, Sue Bechard, Rolf Blank, Diane Browder, Faith Connolly, Linda Cook (Vice President of Division D), Stephen Elliot, Joan Herman, Cara Laitusis, Scott Marion, Joe O'Reilly, Stephen Sireci, Guillermo Solano Flores, Hariharan Swaminathan, Martha L. Thurlow, Gerald Tindal and Mary E. Yakimowski (Chair).

Some exciting things are happening this fall. Our Web team, led by Raymond Moy, is conducting a survey to identify ways to make the site more useful. Our graduate student representative senior member Burcu Kaniskan and junior member Whitney Wall are piloting a coffee mentorship in Denver, Mary Yakimowski has submitted a proposal with Division D for an assessment summit, and the Outstanding Publications awards for 2010 have been announced.

Raymond Moy and Stephanie Schneider are collecting information on the Division H web site. If you haven't completed it yet, please do. The survey can be found at <http://aeradivh.questionpro.com/> They, along with Ray Fenton and Trevor Mahlum, will use your input to make our website more relevant for you.

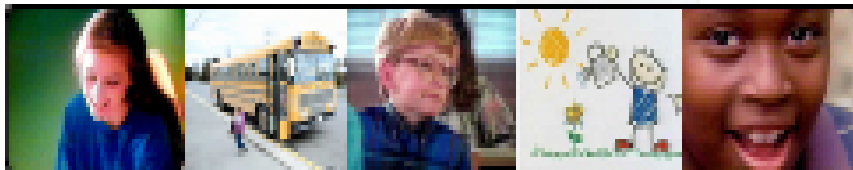
A new mentoring opportunity will be available for graduate students in Denver. Working with the web team, Burcu Kaniskan and Whitney Wall are creating an online form for both students and potential mentors to submit information to match students and mentors for a coffee meeting in Denver (see page 2). We all hope this will become a long-term opportunity for Division H students.

The Outstanding Publications Award submission opportunity is open. Six awards will be given this year. David Holdzkom is chairing the event this year and he is looking for judges interested in reviewing submissions. The deadline for submissions is December 31. For details visit our Web Site at [http://www.aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu\\_id=94&id=365](http://www.aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu_id=94&id=365).

More about each of these activities are included in this newsletter. Membership renewal is also fast approaching, so please make sure your membership doesn't lapse as it will affect our funding for the year and that will impact our ability to have another amazing Division social. Joe McCrary will be coordinating this social again this year.

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## Web Team Update

Raymond Moy

City University of New York



Are you signed up for the Division H listserv?

Don't miss out on one of AERA's largest knowledge-base resources – the AERA listserv archives. The archives contain over 16 years (from 1993 to the present) of announcements, questions, comments, discussions, and papers, both published and unpublished, submitted by AERA members.

Although the listserv materials are not vetted as are the official publications of AERA, they are the product of an open and accessible forum for scholars and professionals in the field of educational research. Not only can you use the listserv to let the rest of AERA know what you are working on and issues you are trying to resolve, but you can also search the archives to gauge the level of activity in your area and to develop leads for building mutually beneficial relationships.

The quality of discussions on the listserv is directly dependent on the number of users accessing it and their willingness to share information. In Division H, there are over 2,200 members, but only 263 are signed up to receive messages from the listserv. If you have not yet signed up or have not accessed the listserv recently, now's a good time to do so and/or reset your password.

Signing up is simple, requiring only your email address and a password that you create. To sign up, go to the Division H homepage:

[http://aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu\\_id=94&id=73](http://aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu_id=94&id=73),

And click on the [discussion listserv](#) link near the bottom of the left-hand panel to get to the listserv main menu, where you can register as a user, view the listserv postings, or view the listserv instructions.

Once you have signed up you can post items to the listserv and receive notifications of listserv postings.

Although you are registered to post to Division H you can search the archives of all Divisions and SIG's. Also, if you wish, you may register for other Divisions to post to their listservs as well.

If you have any questions, you can post them to the discussion listserv, or send a direct email to the Web Committee chair, Raymond Moy, at [moyr2@netscape.net](mailto:moyr2@netscape.net). Visit the discussion listserv regularly; respond, comment, or forward posts as appropriate; and share your experience!

## Graduate Student Mentorship

### Opportunity

*Burcu Kaniskan, University of Connecticut*

*Whitney Wall, Queens University (Belfast)*

The graduate student representatives of Division H plan to offer an exciting new opportunity for mentorship during the AERA annual meeting in 2010. All graduate students covet time to learn from those with experience – to glean from their knowledge and insight on theory, research, and how to make oneself marketable for a future job. Unfortunately, both students and professionals often lack the time or the resources to participate in long-term mentorship programs. This year, we hope to offer graduate students a less formal and more convenient way to network with experts in their fields by meeting over coffee during the week of the annual meeting. Interested students and professionals can apply online, and mentors and mentees will be matched according to similarities in research interests and career aspirations. For example, a graduate student hoping to work as a researcher/administrator for a school district would be matched with a member who is currently working in that field. Since schedules vary during the already packed week of the annual meeting, once we have matched mentors and mentees, we will allow them to decide upon a one-hour slot that suits them best that week. For this inaugural year of the program, Division H will sponsor 10 mentor/mentee relationships by providing a \$20 Starbucks gift card to be used during the coffee hour. We hope that, in many cases, this program will facilitate not only one hour of fruitful conversation but also a more long-term opportunity for mentorship.

## Joint Division H-Division D Proposal Update

Mary Yakimowski, University of Connecticut

In September a proposal was submitted to AERA entitled, the Assessment of Students with Special Education Needs and English Language Learners: A Focused Look at Research and Applications on Assess, Progress, and Student Involvement in Assessment (SPEDELL) project. This project was organized by AERA's Divisions D and H in collaboration with University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education.

The two divisional vice presidents convened a national Proposal Planning Advisory Committee to think of significant research problems that require a new approach to an issue or area of research or show the potential to advance research or break new ground. This project, if funded, would offer an exciting opportunity for a diverse group of academics and practitioners to deal with a critically important topic. Roughly 12% of our students receive special education services and 11% receive limited English language instruction. These students are involved in the assessments we develop and administer at all levels from the classroom to state to nationally to internationally. This project will allow the assessment community to summarize what research has found, to indicate the practical applications of this literature, and prioritize the direction of research in the future.

### Why collaboration for this SPEDELL project?

The SPEDELL project is focused on a topic of such importance to our students that we need a collaborative effort to address the issue from all sides. The SPEDELL project looks to combine the scholarship of members from Divisions D and H, which both have strong, often overlapping membership. Division D generally deals with the design, execution, and dissemination of research on educational measurement, methodology, psychometrics, statistical, and mixed methods and applications. Division H has a slightly different focus, as its members are primarily interested in the practical application of research on assessment in the schools, such as the administration and interpretation of assessments. Due to their scholarship, members of both of these divisions can provide unique insight

into various assessment topics and their implementations for the populations of interest. The University of Connecticut's Neag School is also integral to the success of this conference. At this institution in the Department of Educational Psychology, there is the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment (MEA) program with internationally known researchers. Through the close cooperation of the institution and these two divisions in co-sponsoring the conference, it is hoped that progress in education will be attained more efficiently so that special education and ELL students can ultimately maximize their educational experiences.

### What is the major focus of this SPEDELL project?

With the topic in mind, the general research focus of this conference will be:

*Assessment of students with special education needs and English language learners: What do we know from research, what practical applications are there based on research findings, and what are the next steps for research to better inform this area tied to these themes: access, progress, and student involvement in assessment?*

The planning committee aided in generating a list of research questions tied to the target populations and brainstormed conceptual and empirical issues prevalent in the field today. These were then prioritized into three themes: access, progress, and student involvement in assessment leading to enhanced learning.

Access is defined as *having* the opportunity to enter or make use of something. In the teaching-learning-assessment world of schools, students must have access to curriculum and instruction that is focused on the knowledge and skills that are valued and needed to make progress. Students must also have access to the tests and assessments used by educators to determine what and how well they have learned the valued content. Finally, students must have access to feedback about the results of these learning and testing events so they can understand what they need to work on next. Important questions relevant to the theme of access include those involving (1) the measurement of opportunity to learn on an individual student level, (2) the alignment of content standards, instructional coverage, and test content, (3) the use of Universal Design and Cognitive Load Theory to

## Joint Division H-Division D Proposal Update (cont.)

Design instructional materials and test items that all students can access in typical classrooms, and (4) the involvement of students to co-construct classroom and end-of-year test items to ensure they are highly accessible.

*Progress is defined as* movement toward a goal that is a positive and measureable change. The current status-based model of NCLB is insensitive to the measurement of individual student growth. Using only a status model approach to characterize student achievement is limited at best, particularly when more than 65% of students with disabilities (on average in most states) are not achieving proficiency on general achievement tests in reading and mathematics. Educators and students themselves often believe such status reports are inaccurate and don't reflect the progress they make within a school year or across several years. Growth models for characterizing changes in achievement are starting to be used in some statewide assessment systems, but even more sensitive and frequent measures (i.e., formative assessments, curriculum-based measures) are available throughout the year to measure student progress. Important questions relevant to the theme of progress include those involving (1) the grade level standards for growth expectations in reading and mathematics for students with and without disabilities; (2) the most appropriate and feasible models for characterizing achievement growth (i.e., difference gain scores, residual gain scores, linear equating, or multi-level); (3) what longitudinal achievement growth looks like when measured with formative versus summative assessments; (4) the technical challenges of using growth models on populations of students who have relatively high rates of mobility and status changes; (5) whether the typical growth trajectories of students with special education needs and/or English language learners differ from each other and the general school population, and (6) how can we target assessments that are appropriately difficult, aligned with content standards, but also accessible.

*Student involvement in assessment.* Students learn more deeply and effectively if they can answer three questions (Sadler, 1989): Where am I going? Where am I now? and How can I close the gap? The use of strategies for involving students in their own assessment is a powerful way to enable students to answer these questions. Such strategies include student participation in developing test items and rubrics, learning how to use a rubric to accurately assess

the quality of work, analyzing their own test performance for strengths and weaknesses and using the results to set priorities for next steps in learning, using rubrics for self- and peer-assessment, tracking progress over time, and communicating with others about status and progress. There is a body of research that shows the impact of these strategies on student achievement in general populations from grades K-16, but there is less information about using these strategies with special needs students and/or English language learners. Specifically, questions relevant to this theme involve (1) the impact of meaningful student involvement in assessment on the subsequent achievement of special needs and ELL students, and (2) strategies that work best, strategies to be avoided (if any), and strategies that require modification for these populations.

Given these themes, appropriate scholars in the field were identified for each area by the SPEDELL Proposal Planning Advisory Committee. They represent individuals from a range of disciplines or areas of inquiry who can contribute to substantial new advancements in ongoing research areas or to innovative study of new issues.

### What are the major outcomes of the SPEDELL project?

The SPEDELL project, if funded by AERA, will focus on three major outcomes:

- Convene scholars who are representative of diverse disciplines and fields of inquiry for assessing students with special needs and/or English language learners,
- Hold a conference with these scholars on research-applications on three themes that will involve depth more than breadth, and
- Develop three monographs based upon the outcomes of this special conference.

A secondary outcome of the SPEDELL project is that two graduate students from Divisions D and H, eight students from the Neag School, and two early career scholars will benefit from exposure to scholarship from experts in assessment research. The project will make available to those not attending the conference valuable information such as PowerPoints and multimedia presentations.

After this project, when participants have exhausted their brainstorming power, researchers will feel confident and be well-informed about what needs to be studied in order for educators to more efficiently and effectively improve assessment of their students in these populations of interest.

## 2010 Outstanding Publications Competition

*David Holdzkom, Wake County (NC) Public Schools*

*Vicki Cartwright, Orange County (FL) Public Schools*

The [guidelines for the 2010 Outstanding Publications Competition](#) have recently been finalized. For this year's competition, excellence will be recognized in each of the following entry categories:

1. Dissertation
2. Advances in Methodology
3. Educational Program Evaluation
4. Planning, Policy, or Management Research
5. Summary Reports/NCLB Information Materials
6. Small District Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Accountability Reports

Individuals and organizations may submit more than one entry up to a maximum of five per agency, institution, or school district. The same publication may not be entered into more than one category. The submission of work specifically developed and marketed as a commercial product is prohibited. Only entries that can be submitted electronically will be accepted this year.

This is an opportunity to share the many different ways we research and report applied research, evaluation, assessment and accountability for our school systems. We encourage each member to submit at least one report and/or volunteer to serve as a participant on one of our judging panels.

### The Judging Process

This year we will invite the Division H 2009 award recipients to serve as chairpersons to judge entries in their respective category. For categories with more than 20 entries, at the discretion of the chairperson, a second panel may be appointed to ensure timeliness of reviews. An invitation is also extended to all Division H members to serve as panelists.

### Recognition of Entries and Award Recipients

Depending upon the quality of entries as determined by the panel of judges, within each category the best submissions will be recognized for excellence as "First

Place—Best in Category". Awardees are recognized in many ways. They will be publicly announced during Division H's Annual Breakfast Meeting held in conjunction with AERA's Annual Meeting in Denver in April. All entries will be displayed at the Division H booth in the Exhibit Hall. Following the Annual Breakfast Meeting, winning entries will be noted with ribbons. Following the conference, Education Research Services (ERS) will make each submission available for borrowing. Names and winning entries will be publicized via the Division H website and newsletter.

### Requirements for Submission

Entries for submission must have been produced or published between November 30, 2008 and December 1, 2009 and not submitted for last year's competition. Entries in all categories will be judged on the technical quality and effectiveness with which they communicate to the target audience.

### Category Descriptions

Following are descriptions for each category. Please select the correct category for your submission.

#### 1. Dissertation

**Focus:** Dissertation developed in and approved by a graduate school program. The paper must address a study in applied research, evaluation, assessment, or accountability within a school/school district setting. The entry must be accompanied by a 1-2 page transmittal letter from a committee advisor indicating the most noteworthy attributes in recommending the dissertation for this honor.

#### 2. Advances in Methodology

**Focus:** Studies using innovative methodology and techniques. Outstanding reports in this category will advance the state of the art in program evaluation, assessment, accountability, or planning. They will explicate an innovation or methodological advance that is clearly discernible to the reader; including a description of methodology so that the study can be replicated; and discussion of special conditions that affect the use of the methodology.

## 2010 Outstanding Publications Competition (cont.)

### 3. Educational Program Evaluation

Focus: Evaluation studies in instructional arenas. This category focuses on evaluations to inform decision-makers. Studies can highlight any curricular area, project or program in a school system. It can be a formative implementation study, outcome study, or a combination.

### 4. Planning, Policy, and/or Management Research

Focus: Many organizations combine the planning function with the responsibility for policy and/or management. The research might relate to strategic plans, school/district improvement plans, building action plans, or facilities plans. Outstanding reports will describe the action plan, the criteria for monitoring and measuring implementation, the data gathered, and the results. Policy studies provide evidence of the implications of actual or proposed changes in policy or reports might focus on management of a problem area in an educational organization. Examples of entries include cost analysis and feasibility studies, policy evaluations, or school improvement plans.

### 5. Summary Reports/NCLB Information Materials

Focus: Program evaluations, district or school testing results, and accountability documents are often re-packaged to make them accessible to a variety of non-specialist audiences. This is especially true for documents intended to convey school/district outcomes for boards of education, parents, or the larger community. This category invites submissions of documents and other artifacts that summarize data or research-based outcomes and/or information that explains NCLB activities and outcomes.

### 6. Small District Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Accountability Reports

Focus: Small school districts (operationally defined as those under 5,000 students) confront difficulties in dedicating resources for assessment, accountability, evaluation, and research activities. This category is reserved for reports of studies developed by researchers and evaluators in small school districts. The topic and purpose of documents submitted in this category are open. Researchers and evaluators from small school districts are encouraged to participate in all categories, but this category is especially reserved for their work.

### How to Submit an Entry

David Holdzkom and Vickie Cartwright will be coordinating the work of the Outstanding Publication Competition Committee. You will need to submit an electronic copy of your document, any supporting materials, and the submission form to David Holdzkom at [dholdzkom@wcpss.net](mailto:dholdzkom@wcpss.net). Two printed copies of the publication, any support materials, and the submission form for use at the Division H Exhibits Booth must also be mailed to:

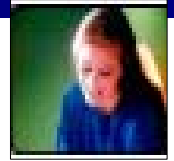
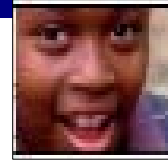
David Holdzkom  
Wake County Public Schools  
3600 Wake Forest Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Entries should include the following information:

- Save the [MS Word 2010 Submission form](#) using this naming convention: *OPC Cat X Submitter Name.doc*. Thus: OPC Cat 1 Jane Doe.doc
- Submit an electronic copy of the report in MS Word or pdf format.
- If applicable, include additional special material noted within the category requirements in MS Word or pdf format.
- For the Dissertation category also include a 1-2 page transmittal letter from a committee advisor or committee member in MS Word or pdf format.
- Submissions in the Alternative Reporting Category are not required to have the bullets listed above but should include any of the relevant information.

By making this submission, you are giving AERA Division H permission to distribute a copy of your publications to division members. No more than five submissions may be made by a single agency, institution, or school district.

It is VERY important that the name of a contact person be included. All materials are to be postmarked and emailed on/before December 31, 2009. Materials and emails should be sent directly to the Division H Outstanding Publication Competition Committee Chair David Holdzkom, as detailed above. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact David at (919) 850-1863 or by email at [dholdzkom@wcpss.net](mailto:dholdzkom@wcpss.net) or Vickie at (407) 317-3200 extension 2946 or [vickie.cartwright@ocps.net](mailto:vickie.cartwright@ocps.net).



## **Division H Leadership Team — Contact Information**

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